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(Inside front cover)

If this present dispensational program of pure grace had been revealed prior to Israel's rejection of The Risen Christ then they would have had an excuse, legitimate or otherwise, for that rejection. The "70" A.D. crisis definitely ended a cycle of ages and began another.

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To Complete The Word of God

..... Outside back cover

by Russell H. Schaefer

Re: Quotations, Dr. E.W. Bullinger who wrote: "There is no misquotation by the Apostle, but the perfect liberty of the Divine author: a liberty claimed and used by human authors in quoting their own previous writings."

(Fr. The Great Cloud of Witnesses, P. 460)

Re: The Comings of The Lord. Dr. E. R. Hooper, M.D. Toronto, Canada was asked: "What would you do if The Lord were to return today?" He aptly answered, "... continue correcting these papers."

Re: The Splendor of His Glory, The Riches of The Glory, The Hope of Glory, and The *Pleroma*: All these seek to see The Perfect Christ reflected in the Body of Christ as a fore-runner of what God has in store for all.

**His Visage was so marred more than any man,
and His form, more than the sons of men.**

Isa. 52:14

Burdened, under the terrible timber,

He leans and falls,

The furrowed brow an encasement of

our sins and woes.

The sorrows of Mankind are carved

upon His face: And,

on His thorned brow,

the pain inflicted on the race.

*Midst tramping beat of horse and soldier's feet, His gentle
words to a*

kneeling woman's tears, "weep

not for me." No, not for Him

we cry, but for those for whom

He dies.

In His stark beauty we trace out creation's

cause —

Lo, feel the Heart of God! Lo, share the

*glory of God's Giving Love — a Love that writes over all
men's sins "Forgive, Forgive"*

No gulf remains, no distance of stars,

space, or, sin.

*In Him, Heaven reaches down, and Lifteth up —
to Him .*

Russell H. Schaefer

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE OF QUOTATIONS

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

By Russell H. Schaefer

Nearly all of the Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are from the *LXX*, not the Hebrew or Aramaic text. Intriguing as it may be to suppose the original text of the New Testament to be either Hebrew or Aramaic, no definitive proof has been forthcoming to that effect. The occurrences of Hebrew and Aramaic words and phrases are no proof that the originals were in those languages, any more than the vast number of foreign words in William Shakespeare's work prove that the originals were other than English. Rather, it would be highly abnormal not to find Hebrew and Aramaic usage in the New Testament, as even Shakespearean idioms have become a part of our English-American heritage. In the Greek New Testament, which is the basis of nearly all New Testament translations, the Old Testament quotations are taken from the *LXX*, that is, the Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint, translated 300-130 B.C.

As to why the *LXX* was used as the basis of the quotations, it may have been because the Hebrew language was local, restricted, and largely unknown even to most of the Jewish people. It may have been a simple matter of finance. The Hebrew text was protected and controlled by the Scribes, an elite class, and an edition of the Old Testament with five errors or less cost in the amount of \$30,000; a *LXX* edition transmitted in one of the slave writing schools would cost about \$3.20. Greek was the language used throughout the Roman Empire and was the language of convenience everywhere. Each district and nationality would add its flavor to the language, just as it is done with English.

The problem of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament not only involves the usage of the Old Testament in the New but has a bearing upon interpretation. The Old Testament accounts were largely literal or factual in relationship to the events spoken of or the persons involved. The dictum of

interpretation has been, "Literal if possible, figurative if impossible." This would seem

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at first glance to be a sane and safe rule. However, one who takes the time to look up the New Testament usage of the Old Testament might be in for a very rude awakening. Any contravening of the accepted dictum by one claiming to love The Word of God is unacceptable, yet, a greater truth might be lost not to do so.

To state the contrary briefly so as not to be misunderstood: The New Testament quotations of the Old Testament have largely the spiritual import of the text in mind. Thus, the quotation may ignore the setting of the original text, the meaning of the original text, and application or interpretation of the original text. or, it may have a completely different thought than ever imagined by the original text usage. As a rule, the spiritual meaning is stressed in the New Testament. Nor is the wording of the original text slavishly used, as we are prone to do. There is freedom in quoting that is alien to fundamentalism. Sometimes New Testament writers bring together sections from several verses that are completely unrelated in the Old Testament. It is hoped that the following texts will illustrate New Testament quotations of the Old so that in looking at these quotations we may be made richer in spiritual things.

Before we go into the texts, it might be well to mention that the early Christians, and many Jewish writers, carried the analogous method of interpretation of both the Old and New Testaments into the realm of fancy. Fundamentalism and the literalism of the western mind have gone to the other extreme. Christ Himself had to correct the over-literalness of His disciples in respect to His statements that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. He bluntly told them, "The flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life." He was trying to show them vividly that His life must become a part of us in a spiritual way. His hearers were thinking in cannibalistic terms. Later, an association was made with the so-called Lord's Supper, or Communion, the drinking of the wine and eating of the bread. The true mysticism of The Word of God sets forth a living conscious relationship with God and a life lived in relationship and union with The Lord Jesus Christ. True worship is in Spirit and in Truth, not in physical

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postures, places, food, dress or drink. In the kindergarten of life or religion the area of touch, sound, sight and feeling is paramount; it is unfortunate that instead of growing up into Christ in all things we drag along the nursery toys.

Marcion (AD 140), instead of looking at the Old Testament as being the ABCs of revealed religion finding its fulfillment and fullness in the New Testament, looked upon the brutal physicalness found in the Old Testament and pronounced it an inferior revelation to the New. The physical and historical process is stressed in the Old Testament. The fulfillment of types and shadows would, of course, be spiritual, and lend itself to the highest conception of God.

In being the constant manifestation of God, The Lord Jesus Christ is and has always been The same Christ. As His person, office and work unfold, our perceptions take on added meaning and dimensions. We see Him, yet we do not see all that is to be seen. As photography is the study of light and form, so Christ is The Substance of our knowledge of God, His nature and His being. Truly the words to Peter, that "flesh and blood" had not revealed this to him, should alert us that there is a spiritual by-faith appropriation of the things of God in terms of Christ that is beyond the "flesh and blood" attainments. Truth in relationship to the person and perfections of Christ and the completeness of His work that is rejected is truth which we cannot bear the consequences of embracing.

The quotations from the Old Testament found in the New, upon investigation, offer some surprises. The original of the quotation is supposed to apply directly to the circumstance, person, or event to which it is related in the New Testament.

And he arising took unto him the child and its mother by night, and retired into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt called My Son (Matt. 2:14, 15).

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The original of this quotation is found in Hosea 11:1:

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.

The passage in Hosea has reference to Israel's being called out of Egypt, and as a nation being called God's Son, His Firstborn (see Ex. 4:22, 23). While Israel was in Egypt, the role of protector and provider — the Firstborn — was filled by

Pharaoh. Israel was again to assume her rightful place in order to be the medium of God's blessing all the nations of the earth. The pronouncement of Hosea was for the very opposite reason, to show how Israel was to fall from her role of Firstborn into bondage of the Assyrian, which for the Ten Tribes (the Northern Kingdom) took place about 600 B.C. The text in the New Testament applies the quotation to Christ, The only true Firstborn, not only now of Israel, the nations, but of all creation. Instead of having been in bondage in Egypt, He was there provided for and protected until Herod's death. If God's ultimate goal, of which Israel was the intermediate step, was fulfilled in Christ, then the passage and other kindred passages take on a luster of grace and beauty, and God is vindicated in all His ways.

Another passage a few verses on from the foregoing one is interesting:

Then Herod, seeing that he had been mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly enraged, and sent and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its bounds, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

**A voice in Ramah
was heard,
Weeping and
great mourning,
Rachel weeping
for her children,
And would not be
comforted,
Because they are
not (Matt. 2:16-
18).**

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In the original Old Testament text (Jer. 31:15-17) Ramah is a city of Benjamin, not Bethlehem. The context is just the opposite of the New Testament quotation. Rachel (ancient mother of the tribe of Benjamin) wept that her children were in captivity in Babylon. God offered her hope that her son (the tribe of Benjamin) would return from captivity. He did, with Judah. Thus, the Jeremiah passage

was a message of hope, while the New Testament quotation of it was one of despair. The feeling of the verse, aside from its original context and intent, was in keeping with the slaughter of the innocents. The letter of the text gave way to the sentiment of the verse, and God's Spirit let it serve to describe the suffering of those who died when Herod sought to kill The Christ.

There is no Old Testament passage which corresponds to the following quotation of Matthew's from "the prophets":

... and came and fixed his dwelling in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, A Nazarene shall He be called (Matt. 2:23).

Some of the sayings of the prophets are not recorded. This is likely the case here. If there is a connection between being a Nazarene and a Nazarite, it is obscure (Cf. *netser*, Isa. 41:1; see also 53:2).

In the verses following, a subject is presented about which much controversy has arisen. The context of the original verse in the Old Testament dare not be consulted or it would reduce (to some) the uniqueness of our Lord's Divine conception. Childbirth, while not taking away from the purity of Mary, would void any physical virginity on her part. This she admitted by her offering of two turtledoves or pigeons (Lk. 2:22-24) for her purification according to the Law. The birth process and virginity are mutually exclusive.

But all this hath come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by The Lord through the prophet, saying:

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Lo! a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they call His name Emmanuel, which is being translated, God with us (Matt. 1:22, 23).

The quotation is from Isaiah 7:14. It should read, "Behold the young woman," i.e., "my wife," the prophetess, Isaiah's second wife (Isa. 8:3), "is with child, and is about to bring forth a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel" (*The Student's Commentary*, George Williams, in loco). This child was also called *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, Haste-spoil-speed-prey. Before the child would be weaned or could talk (Isa. 7:16 and 8:4), judgment would fall upon the House of

David, the two tribes (Isa. 7:10-13), so that the land would be forsaken of both her kings (Isa. 7:16).

It was not at all unusual for persons to be signs in the Old Testament. One needs only to look at the various wives of Hosea, with their sons, as signs.

A wife of whoredoms ... So he went and took *Gomer*, the daughter of *Diblaim*, which conceived and bare him a son ... *Jezreel* ... a daughter ... *Lo-ruhamah* ... and ... a son ... *Lo-ammi* (Hos. 1:2-9).

Gomer means completion, i.e., filling up of idolatry. She was from *Diblaim*, which means a double cake of figs, symbol of sensual pleasure. *Jezreel* means May God Scatter, or May God Sow—Israel will be scattered and sown among the nations; yet may be sown in her own land. *Lo-ruhamah*, not compassionated, rendered "not beloved" in Romans 9:25 and "not having obtained mercy" in 1 Peter 2:10. God would take away the kingdom which belonged to them. The second son's name, *Lo-ammi*, means Not My People (notes from the *Companion Bible*).

Another wife was taken by Hosea (Hos. 3), an adulteress, the northern tribes being so designated. The cheap price paid for her marked the worthlessness of this wife, the symbolism being transferred to the adulterous people. Because of her unfaithfulness (hence, that of the people of Israel and Judah), there could not be a

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national relationship with God, a fact epitomized in the words written — no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no priestly functions. The varied functions of Hosea 3:4 make the prophecy inclusive of all the twelve tribes.

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul should bring together several texts from Hosea and combine them with passages from Isaiah:

As also in Hosea He saith - I will can the Not-My-People, My People And the Not-Beloved, Beloved. And it shall be - In the place where it was said to them - Not My people are ye! There shall they be called - Sons of the Living God (Rom. 9:25-26, from Hos. 1:10, 2:23).

Isaiah moreover exclaimed over Israel – Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea

The remnant shall be saved; For a complete and concise account will The Lord make upon the earth. And even as Isaiah hath before said - If The Lord of Hosts had not left us a seed As Sodom had we become And as Gomorrah had we been made (Rom. 9:27-29, from Isa. 10:22, 1:9).

The quotation is a lengthy one but it illustrates several things about this subject. The context of the Romans passage is in direct opposition to the original concept in Hosea. There it was spoken of the Ten and the Two Tribes, while in Romans Paul uses the language to mean the inclusion of the Gentiles, as he states in Romans 9:24. Paul looks upon the nations as being partners in God's original call to the riches of His glory (see Rom. 9:23, 24). Of course, Paul was correct in this, as over against the Jews' feeling that they alone were called to God's glory. The Gentile makes the same mistake as did the Jew. Pride knows no racial boundaries. It is too frequently

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forgotten that Abraham was a Gentile, not a Jew, not an Israelite, God's purpose was that in the Seed of Abraham (that Seed is Christ, as in Galatians 3:16), all families of the earth were to be blessed; and, they had indeed been, albeit they knew it not.

Paul uses the word Jews in Rom. 9:24 and adds to that the nations. He uses the Hosea passage to buttress this enlarged concept of the Jew. On the other hand, Paul's use of the passages from Isaiah projects the diminution and rejection of Israel as a theocratic kingdom and sees the salvation of God operating only on an individual basis to a remnant of that people. Paul is not here speaking of limits imposed upon God's grace, salvation, or justification to anyone or at any time. Rather, he asserts that Israel as a nation was rejected in the days of which Isaiah spoke; and parallel to this act 700 years earlier, in the case of the fathers of Israel, it could be true again in Paul's day.

It should be pointed out that even while the Twelve Tribes were in captivity, any one person could have communion and fellowship with God. The writers of the Captivity were good examples of this. But the nation of Israel would not function as a theocracy, a nation to be a light to the nations of the earth.

Paul's usage of these passages was for other ends than that seen in the original. It is possible that Paul looked at the condition of the people at the time of the prophecy and saw that in effect they were not different from the nations about

them; the physical marks on their bodies, their claims of being Abraham's physical seed, all were to no avail in giving them a special claim on God. Could it be that this is the reason he included the nations in applying the passages? It could be so. As they stand written, they are out of context. As they were used, they convey a blessed truth, that no one is out of the reach of God's grace, on a personal basis. Unfortunately, Israel sought God too frequently on a national basis, as though God owed them something because of a national calling.

God owes us nothing because of a national calling, whatever our forefathers may have had in mind for this America. We never were God's theocracy, but we can have a personal relationship just

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as well as did Daniel, or Jeremiah, or anyone else living then, or now.

In 1 Peter 2:10 the Hosea passage is again quoted. Peter addresses his epistle to the sojourners of the dispersion, and in this connection the Hosea text would call to mind God's former mercies to this people. Peter's epistle was in-keeping with the dispensational setting of the Book of Acts inasmuch as God was once again giving the Twelve Tribes an opportunity to become "His people." To use the terms as Peter does of a "chosen generation," "a kingly priesthood," "a holy nation" (see Exodus 19:5, 6) in 1 Peter 2:9 gives them a far different meaning than they had when they were used of Israel of old. Peter used the terms of a "spiritual house," not the temple at Jerusalem; of a "holy priesthood," but not to offer up bloody sacrifices as did the priests of old, rather to offer "spiritual sacrifices" (1 Peter 2:5). These were spiritual concepts; then, too, the "holy nation" must also be spiritual. This was God's intention all along.

Peter also explains that the Rock of Zion (1 Peter 2:6-8) is The Lord Jesus Christ, not a piece of stone, but a living person. The book of Hebrews uses the very same analogy in Hebrews 12:22 when it speaks of those who were leaving behind the ABCs of the Old Covenant and were coming to Him in Whom was embodied the New:

But ye have approached Unto Zion's Mountain (Heb. 12:22a).

Zion's Mountain is Christ, and these are said to have come to it at that time, not in some future time or place. They are also said to have come to the City of the Living God, not in an after life or a future state, but then. They were also receiving and possessing a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 10:28). Was the kingdom spiritual? Was Abraham seeking a spiritual kingdom as well? If he was

in reality seeking a "walled city," a "city of defense," ...? Was Christ this to him?

Paul, in the Galatian letter, writes what our literal western mind refuses to accept:

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Which things are an allegory (Gal. 4:24, KJV).

Which things may bear another meaning (Rotherham).

Notice the immediate context of the Galatian passage (Galatians 4:21-26): Two sons, two women, two covenants, two mountains, two cities.

According to Paul's own analogy the two sons represent respectively law and promise. The two women represent that which was of the flesh versus that which was of promise. The two mountains represent the covenants, one of bondage (the Laws of Sinai which the Twelve Tribes pledged to keep but did not) and the other Mount Zion (from whence the Deliverer was to come) giving freedom. The cities were both named Jerusalem. The earthly one was hardly the "possessor of peace," but it was there that The Prince of Peace was slain. In contrast to this, Abraham wanted a "City of Peace," a place where the heart could be at rest with itself and God.

Rotherham's translation, "... which things may bear another meaning," may sum up how so much of the usage and quotations may be used. Peter called Noah's ark "a figure" (1 Pet. 3:20, 21), and from the figure (not the literal ark) drawing the analogy, "a baptism that saves." It was not the washing away of the filth of the flesh; it was not "water," as that would have to do with the flesh, and no water touched those in the ark, as no water touched those crossing the Red Sea. Those in the ark were delivered from the water, so the figure consisted in the analogy of safety and of shelter. For those in Noah's day, this safe shelter was the ark; and in another and a different sense, Christ is that Shelter and Safe Place for us from any storm of judgment that might have fallen.

Truly, Christ called His death a baptism (Lk. 12:50) and Paul speaks of the believer's union with Christ's redemptiveness a baptism into death (Romans 6). No mere man can place another into Christ, into His death and into His resurrection. The blessed Colossian letter states that this was a spiritual baptism in which the believer and Christ were co-buried and co-raised through faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:12), not of man at all. Again and again

this special spiritual note is struck when figures or types or even historical events or persons are used to illustrate higher truths. Even in the Old Testament physical circumcision is used of not only the body but the mind and affections. It is carried a step higher in Colossians 2:11 where it identifies us in being "cut off" in the cutting off" of Christ, i.e., His death and rejection.

The early scholars may have been prone to over-spiritualize The Word of God in their efforts to understand it, but our western mind may be guilty of just the opposite. Whatever may be our reasoning, inductive or deductive, may the end product of it, as it was with Paul, be The Christ. Paul used analogical applications of the Old Testament in the sense of fulfillment, carrying symbolism to its utmost end. It was Christ who was The Passover (1 Cor. 5:7); it was Christ who was The Rock (1 Cor. 10:4); it is the believer who is the inner dwelling place of God through the spirit (Eph. 2:21, 22); and Christ is That Spirit who dwells there in love through means of our faith (Eph. 3:17); our blessings are all in Christ, in the heavenlies, not material or political (Eph. 1:3). "Christ is all, and in all, Christ" seems to be the constant thrust of Paul's message to us.

Some of the Old Testament writers depict a very high degree of spirituality as do most of the New Testament writers. It is common to all of human nature to desire physical blessings and material gain, if only to feel a bit of religious merit, as proof of our spirituality or walk with God. Unfortunately, as with Israel, the gifts soon take the place of the Giver; and religion, with its form, is so easily substituted for a vital living fellowship with God. It is difficult to understand that Israel's classroom of religion was not intended for our enrollment. We are given the opportunity to start off with a perfect Christ, a complete work, a simple faith, plus nothing of merit or demerit, and a future of exploring the riches of His grace and love, and serving Him because we find Him worthy of service, a service outflowing from love alone.

One of the unusual quotations in the New Testament is found in Galatians 3:16. The text is given in full, but the words actually

quoted will be italicized , otherwise they might be difficult to recognize.

Now unto Abraham were spoken the promises -and
unto *his seed*;

He saith not - And unto thy seeds as of many, But as of one – *and unto thy seed*, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

This is taken from Genesis 21:12, where the word "seed" is singular, corresponding with Isaac. In Genesis 17:7, 9 the word "seed" is plural [in meaning, not in the Hebrew form to correspond with "after thee, for generations," implying plurality of offspring. The text of Genesis 21:12 has to do with Isaac, the son that had been promised to Abraham with Sarah, his wife. Thinking that time was running out on both of them, Abraham had a child by a slave, the supposed heir, Ishmael. Abraham was 86 years old at Ishmael's birth (Gen. 16:16). He was 100 years old at the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:5). Therefore, Ishmael was 14 years old at the birth of Isaac.

Weaning of a child was looked upon as a special event and usually took place at five years of age, so Ishmael was nearly 20 years old when Isaac was weaned (Gen. 21:8). The "mocking" of Hagar over Isaac's transition from babyhood to boyhood was accompanied by persecution from Ishmael (Gal. 4:19), a persecution with the intent to murder, as Cain murdered Abel.

Instead of the death sentence, both mother and son were banished, Ishmael to become the father of the Arabian nation or people. Isaac means "Laughter." He was a promised son, begotten when both his parents were beyond the age of bearing children, a son of laughter, one meant to give joy and laughter. He was to depict an only son, one that would be obedient unto death, that would bear the wood up a hill, that would be "slain in type," who would ask his father, "... Where is the Lamb?" and who would elicit the response from Abraham, "My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb" (Gen. 22:1-13).

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It is no wonder, then, that Paul looked at the account of the calling of Isaac and saw a foreshadowing of Christ. Making use of the singular noun "seed," he boldly sets forth Christ as The summation of Abraham's seed. Truly, all pointed to Him eventually, all was fulfilled in Him; so Paul boldly, under inspiration, makes the transition and says, "... unto thy seed, which is Christ." Paul was making a spiritual application of the Genesis passage. No one looking at Genesis 21:12 would have come to Paul's conclusion aside from inspiration.

"Seed" is used in the plural in Genesis in relationship to Abraham. Paul feels at complete freedom to see in this plural usage the inclusion of "those of Abraham's faith" as Abraham's children and sons (Rom. 4:11-17; Gal. 3:6-8), and this, without distinctions of race or nationality.

A quotation that has been the center of a lot of controversy is found in Romans 9:12 and 13. Unwarranted conclusions deduced from these and similar verses may be an impeachment of God's character while devastating the aspirations of those who would express faith in God's Christ but feel they may not be among the elect. The quotation is the forte of those that feel that God Himself is not a totally free agent; that He, as well as we, is bound by some sort of fate from which there can be no appeal or change of destiny. In the following the quotation part of the text is italicized for clarity:

It was said unto her (to Rebekah, Gen. 25:23, 1834 BC) *the elder shall serve the younger*; even as it is written (to Israel, Mal. 1:1-3, 374 BC) *Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated* (Rom. 9:12, 13).

It must be noted that the quotation in Romans is from two different sections of The Word of God, periods separated by 1460 years. The choice of Jacob over Esau was made before either one was born, but the explanation in Genesis 25:23 is that God is speaking of nations, not individuals; of two manners of people, and that not of their personal relationship to God but their role in God's theocratic kingdom purposes to bring the Savior into the world and

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to be a blessing thereby to all nations. There is absolutely no evidence in The Word of God that Jacob was served by Esau during their lifetime. The opposite seems to be the case. Esau was called Edom (Red, Ruddy). As such, he and his descendants, Edomites, were to be given access to the congregation of The Lord, according to Deuteronomy 23:9. Deuteronomy cautions the Israelite:

Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; For he is thy brother (Deut. 23:7).

Seven hundred years after the pronouncement of Genesis 25:23 to the effect that the elder should serve the younger, Edom was servant to David; 150 years later, Edom (Esau) revolted under Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20). Esau or Edom was again conquered by John Hyrcanus in 129 BC, who compelled the Edomites to be circumcised "and to be absorbed into the Jewish nation. The builder of the last temple was Herod the Great, an Edomite. So, at the end, not only was the yoke of Jacob broken, but an Edomite ruled Israel!

It was "for cause" that God made choice of Jacob over against Esau. Jacob was a man of the field, a quiet man, a judicial, contemplative man with great potential for spiritual leadership (Gen. 25:27). From the descendants of this man, rather

than of Esau the Hunter, God made a choice that of Jacob would come The Seed of the Woman. Both sons were qualified as Abraham's seed. Of both God made great nations; both were given blessings. To Esau the promise was made, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above." But, both could not be the medium of the promised Messiah. Both could not be given the area wherein would be enacted God's unfolding glory in The Person of our Lord and the wonders of His words and works.

With respect to what nations, or nation, is to effect His purposes, God is sovereign. He may exalt one and let another decline if it suits His design. At a certain point in time He had chosen the whole nation of Israel, en masse, and gave national preference to the posterity of Jacob rather than Esau or Edom. The statement to Rebekah was directed to their posterity, when they would

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become nations. It did not affect the intimate personal spiritual life of either, nor was the pronouncement intended to do so. The same choices were made with respect to Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph's two sons; and this was also the case with David, the youngest son of seven brothers (1 Sam. 16:6-13). As for Manasseh, he would become a people but his younger brother Ephraim would become greater than he (Gen. 48:19). Nevertheless, both were blessed, though not to the same end. Twenty years after the rupture of their personal relationship, the brothers, Esau and Jacob, were to meet once again. Jacob called Esau his lord and himself Esau's servant (Gen. 32:18).

The choice of Jacob, i.e., Israel, over Esau, i.e., Edom, caused the history of the two people to, run parallel over centuries until the time of Malachi, the last prophet noted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Two centuries before Malachi, all Judah and Edom had been taken captive to Babylon (593 BC, 2 Chron. 36:20). Sixty years later, the Ten Tribes (known as Israel) came back from captivity, but Edom, or Esau, remained captive and their country was devastated. Jeremiah (49:7-22) gives a portrait of this devastation. Yet, although restored to their land, the Israelites complained that God was dealing harshly with them. This was the point in Israel's history that gave rise to the original text of which Romans 9:13 is a quotation. Within thirty years of the spiritual awakening attending the Exile's return to their homeland, Israel's condition was desperate. The prophet Malachi takes up their lament:

I have loved you, saith The Lord. Yet, ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?
(Mal. 1:2)

Then the prophet quotes what Edom (Esau) had been saying, that in spite of being impoverished they would return from their kindred exile and build the desolate places. Israel is assured that they are still in God's theocratic purposes, that their state is far better than that of the Edomites. This was all there was to the original text of loving Jacob and hating Esau. It has no sinister overtones of a "final destiny" as some would fain read into it. It had to do with the nation of Israel, not individuals who had been dead for

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nearly two thousand years. Even some of the finest men of God look at these verses as though God were making a choice among men as a chess-player (they have used this figure!), sending some to heaven and others to hell on a whim, capriciously.

But, is not the word "hate" used here? To some, the meaning must be weighted with dread. But, our English word carries with it an intensity of emotion and animosity that is not found in the Hebrew usage. Christ spoke of a man's "hating" his family or else not being His disciple (Lk. 14:26), but this is no problem with us as we know our Lord merely meant that the disciple should "love his family less." The Law spoke of a wife "loved" and another "hated" (Deut. 21:15). Of Jacob's wives it is written, "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah; and Jehovah saw that Leah was 'hated'" (Gen. 29:30). In each case, the context must determine how intense is the meaning of the word "hate." Scripture plainly de-clares that God "loves" the world (John 3:16), is the Savior of all men (1 Tim. 4:10), and desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). In the case of Jacob and Esau (Israel and Edom) both nations prospered, as promised (Gen. 27:29, 39); both were treated the same when they sinned. As nations, there was not a great deal of difference between them except for God's choice of Israel over Edom to accomplish His theocratic-redemptive purposes in the earth and for the earth. After the period covered by Malachi, the nation of Israel went into a spiritual eclipse and no divine voice was heard until John the Baptist came in the wilderness announcing the advent of the Messiah.

The point Paul is making in the Romans quotation is that God, at different times and places, selected individuals and nations, for cause, to accomplish certain purposes. God is free to use other instruments, or to change instruments as circumstances warrant. At one point in His program God included all the physical seed of Abraham; then a selection was made within the seed; then to just One Seed, The Christ; then the process was refined to include only those of the faith and deeds of Abraham; then the seed concept was broadened to include all

of those "of faith" although not physically related to Abraham at all. This last was possible once The Seed of

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the Woman, The Christ, had come. The need for a more rigid physical lineage could then give way to faith. The inclusion of Gentiles in God's Theocratic Kingdom should have come as no surprise as even Malachi stated that this was God's intention all along:

My Name shall be great among the Gentiles (Mal. 1:11).

It is a matter of Israel's history that frequently she had been "diminished" to a subordinate role and Gentile powers thrust to the dominant position. More often than not, Israel was classified by God as "not My people." This was spoken of her in her national character; individually, men could walk with God apart from their national part in God's providence among nations. Christ, as The Messiah, has always been a Stone of Stumbling for the Jew. As Paul points out in Romans 9:30-33, few Israelites embraced the justification that "is realized in one's experience "by faith," rather than "legalism" or "law-works."

Once the structure for the coming of The Lord in His first advent had fulfilled its purpose, the structure (Israel) could be taken down, changed, or a substitution or addition made to it or for it. During the book of Acts period, of which Romans is a part, a change was made in the structure. Only a few true spiritual Israelites were left in the structure. Old limits were effaced and new spiritual dimensions were added, administratively and governmentally. The movement was increasingly toward the nations and away from Israel as a nation (not individually, since individually there was no difference between Jew and Gentile).

As we look at a building, our perceptions will vary according to our disposition and training. One person thinks of the architect, another of the structural configuration, and yet another will ponder the purpose for which the building was erected. The purpose of the ages, "the eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:22, KJV), this enactment of events upon the stages of time, was pointing in one direction — the unfolding of the nature, character and being of God. On this stage has been seen the kaleidoscope of creation with its form of angels

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and of men; of The Redeemer and the drama of redemption; until at last all the variegated forms give way to One, The very Framer of the ages and cosmic systems introduced in human guise with wounded hands and a broken heart to harmonize the discordant parts and hearts into a wondrous whole. Israel was selected to be the medium to introduce Him to the world and in Him to reveal the glory of God. In her national life she was a parody of the ills that have beset the whole world. If she failed in being the vessel for the glory of the Lord, then our failure has been no less than hers. Initially, all the advantages were hers, but we no less than she have had The Scriptures of Truth, and The Heavenly Christ. Unlike her, we do not have the attending signs and wonders — our clothes wear out and our garments fail. These bodies enter no promised land in the full vigor of youth. But, spiritual blessings are only limited by The Fullness which is God's, and we have been given these without limit.

By necessity one is almost compelled to consider Romans 9:14-24 and the Old Testament quotations referred to therein. A great deal of controversy has raged about these texts in time past. They have been made to teach the arbitrary callings of God, i.e., that some individuals are called of God to salvation and others to damnation. This would, of course, include infants and children.

In examining some of these texts, consideration will be given to the historical Old Testament setting, and then to the most unusual application Paul makes of the quotations. The reader is asked to note how Rotherham translates these texts. The actual quotations from the Old Testament will be italicized and will be identified as to source.

For unto Moses He saith - *I will have mercy upon whomsoever I can have mercy, And, I will have compassion upon whomsoever I can have compassion* (Rom. 9:15, from Ex. 33:19).

Hence then, it is not of him that wisheth nor of him that runneth,

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But, of the mercy-shewing God (Rom. 9:16).

For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh – *Unto this end have I raised thee up, That I may thus shew in thee My power And that I may declare My Name in all the earth* (Rom. 9:17, from Ex. 9:16).

Hence then - On whom He pleaseth He hath mercy, and whom He pleaseth He doth harden (Rom. 8:18, a conclusion drawn from Ex. 7:3 and Ex. 9:12).

The balance of texts will follow, but of the foregoing the reader must again be reminded of Rotherham's translation both in the Old Testament and the New. "Whenever God can have compassion. He does."*

In Romans 9:15 we have a quotation from Exodus 33:19, the context of which is the promotion of Israel, the going up to possess the land and to be thus favored (engraced) and to have this special mercy shown to Moses and to the people. God had said, "Ye are a stiff-necked people; in one moment — if I should go up in thy midst should I make an end of thee" (Ex. 33:5). This followed the experience of the golden calf and Moses consequent entreating God on behalf of Israel. God could and did still have mercy. Later, that whole generation was destroyed, with the exception of two people.

Israel had failed to understand God's purpose in calling her out from among the nations; and that this calling in its out-working was contingent and conditional upon a corresponding fulfillment on her part. God even threatened to forfeit Israel and use instead the personal family of Moses, to accomplish His purposes. It is in this context that the use of "mercy" means "promotion" or "favor." When it is said that Joseph was shown "mercy" in prison (Gen. 39:21), it is with this meaning of preferential treatment and position

*The Hebrew verb is a Potential Imperfect, properly translated, as Rotherham does, with the auxiliary can.

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that the word is used. Psalm 75:6, 7 is applicable:

In this connection, For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another.

In Romans 9:15 Paul prepared his readers for the judicial pronouncement that Israel was to be demoted to the "tail," as prophesied in Deuteronomy 28. The ascendancy of the nations is boldly stated in Romans 11:25. The "fullness" of the nations there spoken of has no direct application to God's program today. In the dispensation of the grace of God, God is not dealing with nations as such in contrast to Israel; rather, He is dealing with individuals without any national distinctions whatever. All blessings are "in Christ"; all are spiritual, and that apart from Israel. It is unfortunate that we try to read ourselves back into the

Acts program, into God's national purposes for Israel, rather than into that which is oriented to all without distinction. God gave Israel every inducement to serve Him, along with sanctions to ward off disobedience. With promotion from God comes attending responsibilities; we fain would steal all their blessings and leave them their curses, but the package is one as is seen clearly by reading Deuteronomy 26:16 through 28:68. All blessings and cursings of Israel were conditional.

Now, as to the conclusion drawn from the history of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, it is written concerning him:

Then arose a new king over Egypt who had not known Joseph (Ex. 1:8a).

Joseph personally had been dead for centuries, so the text must refer to Joseph's people, the sons of Jacob who had sojourned out of their homeland for 430 years. They had been welcomed in Egypt, but a new dynasty had arisen through conquest. Of this ruler we read that he had enslaved the people and ordered all male children to be executed. The attitude of his heart is reflected in the statement of Exodus 5:2.

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Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice? (Ex. 5:2)

This was the primary cause of Pharaoh's hardening his own heart. The occasion was the then impending Exodus of the Israelites from his reign of slavery and death. Psalm 18:26 is very apt in this context:

With the pure Thou didst show Thyself pure. But with the perverse Thou didst shew Thyself ready to contend.

This is similar to Ephraim's being left alone because he was mated to his idols (Hos. 4:17); of men's being left to their own desires {Rom. 1:24, 26}. Strangely enough, frequently God's method of judgment was just to let men go their own way without a "staying" hand to keep them from their own folly. There is nothing said about one's not enjoying his "folly."

The *Companion Bible* gives these notes at Exodus 4:21 concerning the words "I will harden":

I will harden = I will embolden. By Heb. idiom active verbs of doing are used of suffering or permitting a thing to be done. Cp. Gen. 31:7: e.g. Heb. "God did not give him to do me evil." Cp. A.V. Ex. 5:22. Psa. 16:10 (give = suffer); Jer. 4:10 (deceived = suffered to be deceived). So Eze. 14:9; 20:25; Matt. 6:13; 11:25 (hid = not revealed); 13:11. Acts 13:29 (took him down = permitted). Rom. 9:18 (hardeneth = suffered to be). Used six times by *Jehovah* (Ex. 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8), but not till Pharaoh had done it seven times. (See complete note in *Companion Bible*).

Ten times Pharaoh is warned and ten times restrained. Pharaoh repented but it lasted only as long as the judgment was imposed.

Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible* has a lengthy note on this verse, placed between the Old and New Testaments. The following

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is suggested of his thoughts on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

1. An external occasion is used as though it were the primary or true cause of action. The real reason or motivation might be hidden.

2. Positive commands are often accepted in the Old Testament language as "permission" to do a thing. In each of the incidents following the Hebrew is much more flexible than the English, although the English has caught the sense intended.

Permit: "Noah sent forth" (Gen. 8:7, 8). Actually, Noah merely had to release the birds and their own disposition would cause them to fly.

"Send me away," literally, "let me go, do not hinder me" (Gen. 24:54). The servant wanted to leave.

"Saved the children alive" (Ex. 1:17), i.e., let them live, did not slay them.

Do we "cause" a book to fall; or will it fall, because of gravity, if no restraint is placed upon it? Rotherham gives several instances of direct commands being in reality permission to do a thing:

"Run" commanded only after permission to run had been requested (2 Sam. 18:23).

"Send" (2 Kings 2:16-18); note, however, "Did I not say, Do not go?"

God is not unjust, nor is God the author of sin. Christ attributed the evil that men do to themselves, their own hearts (Matt. 15:18, 19), as did James (James 1:33 ff.).

The point Paul is making is that God can promote whom He will for cause. When Israel hardened their heart in the past, they were denied entry into the land (Heb. 3:8-11). If they continued to

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harden their hearts during the book of Acts period, the forty years of probation following the crucifixion, they would be refused the promised "rest" allotted them as a nation. The "faithful" were called outside the camp of religious Jerusalem, as it was to be destroyed. There remained a small company of Circumcision believers awaiting the Kingdom of God when Paul revealed the truths of the Mystery Epistles, Ephesians and Colossians (see Col. 4:11).

Romans 9:19-24 remains to be briefly considered. The background of the texts is the Potter's House of Jeremiah 18:3, 4. We must remember that Paul is trading on the principle involved with this illustration, i.e., that God is free in His promotion of one nation or people as over against another. Pharaoh and Egypt had been demoted and Israel made God's Firstborn among the nations. The fact that God was reversing that procedure with the nations instead of with Israel was no reflection on God's character. Again, individually and aside from God's national purpose for Israel, anyone could enter into a personal relationship with God. The thrust of the letter to the Romans was a personal relationship with God based upon God's forensic provision of justification for all, and the redemption in Christ Jesus. What a message this would have been for the whole nation of Israel to bring to the world rather than through just the Apostle Paul!

The Potter's House

In the homes of that day would be found a bench about four feet high with three holes for vessels in it. This was the water-jar stand. These jars were smaller than the bathing vessels found provided for the guests of the wedding at Cana (John 2). This "holder of jars" provided for two jars of four or five gallons capacity, and one small drinking vessel. The first vessel in line was called "the vessel of

honor." It was purchased usually as a wedding gift; it had two handles and was beautifully shaped and publicly carried on the head or right shoulder to and from the fountain. 2 Timothy 2:20, 21 plays upon this figure. It was the vessel from which was poured pure water for anyone who might ask that their thirst be quenched. Genesis 24:12-26 gives a beautiful account of the use of this type of vessel. Aside from its figurative use of giving God's free gift of life, it occupied an honorable place in the homes and hearts of these people.

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Next to the vessel of honor on the bench was a vessel known as the vessel of dishonor. This was never carried out in public but stayed in the home and received the stale water left at the end of the day. The water might still be used, but it was not fresh. Jeremiah 22:28 spoke of this as a vessel empty of pleasure; this would-be true, as the container became slimy and the water "abominable," as mentioned in Isaiah 65:4.

The vessel of mercy mentioned in the text had reference to a small vessel convenient for travelers to refresh themselves with, to wash away the stain and wear of travel.

The vessel of wrath (Rom. 9:22) was a vessel that had cracked upon firing. Such vessels were carefully mended with a mixture of powdered pottery and the blood of the *fasuka* insect. The potter would again fire the vessel, and maybe yet again (the longsuffering mentioned in the text). The vessel could never be used as a vessel of honor or mercy but it could still be used for waste water or a wash pot (Psalm 60:8).

In Scripture there is reference to a "chosen vessel" (Paul, Acts 9:15). This was a vessel made by the potter for a special purpose. It was fired again and a-gain to give it depth and beauty. It was the showpiece of the potter to denote his artistry and craftsmanship or workmanship. It was tortured in the glazing and the kiln until it was ready for the master's approval.

With the foregoing, one can realize Paul's meaning in using the figure of the Potter's House and the vessels created at his wheel. God wanted vessels that would be always "giving forth"; then those that would ease the toil and burden of the day; those that would share the little cup of refreshment for those that thirst after God; the chosen vessels that give depth and meaning to all of life, especially as they give forth of the life of Christ and the life in Christ.

The Jew thought the cup of mercy was only for them, but God granted it to all (Ran. 9:23, 24). All were to see the riches of His glory -- not merely those who beheld the cloud and pillar of fire.

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Dishonor — how it shames a nation and a person! How was the beautiful David soiled by uncontrollable desires! Yet, in his heart he longed to please God. How fortunate all of us are that man looks at the outward appearance while God looks upon the heart. Our flesh, too, would make us into vessels of dishonor not fit for the master's use. God is not unjust in making choice of certain men or nations to accomplish His purposes.

The natural sequence of events in the book of Acts should have been the history of the men and women who had been with our Lord throughout His earthly ministry. Instead of this, a man by the name of Paul is introduced, and the first apostles are phased out.

Looking back over the varied histories in The Scriptures, we see that God frequently has substituted one for another, for cause. Pharaoh, a vessel of wrath, a cracked pot whom God tried to mend and with whom, as the Potter, he suffered long. God could have released Israel with one blow; but no, the tyrant must be given every opportunity to repent. How different was this man from another ruler in Babylon who financed the return of Israel and opened his treasures that Israel might be restored in her land and have her temple rebuilt! Truly, judgment is God's strange work.

How fortunate we are to live in the time when God is in a complete state of grace-amnesty to the world! He is not imputing the sin of the world against it. He has a real and vital basis on which He proceeds to deal with all in terms of the perfect Savior who has accomplished a complete redemption satisfactory to God, and which should be satisfactory to us. One does not tell the Potter the nature or quality of his produce. The Potter knows that. He knows the end for which creation is made. Even the shards were still used of those ancient potters. They were the writing tablets of that day. The "holy vessels" mentioned in Scripture were those used alone in the sacred service of God. Only our Lord fulfilled this figure. He was the Vessel "poured out" to give His life for the world.

25

There is an unending series of contrasts in the writers of the New Testament in their use of the Old Testament. Paul seems to look for a principle, others for an

event of like nature, others for a literal and precise fulfillment of the Old. Some references in the Old Testament that speak directly to The Messiahship of Christ are used of Him, while others with the same import are used of Israel; and others of Israel in their original are used of Christ in the New Testament. Is this implying a certain unity?

The writer of Hebrews uses the *Codex Alexandrinus* of the *LXX* while others use the *Codex Vaticanus* of the *LXX*. In it all, our Lord is honored, and the man of the street had within his hands The Word of Life.

The Hebrew Scriptures may yield treasures almost unknown to the Greek language, awareness of such treasures may be limited to the scholar and the schoolman. New Testament Greek is largely the Greek of the tradesman, the vendor, the store clerk. Out of that language have come the translations of The Sacred Text for all men, in all languages, everywhere.

The *Companion Bible*, Appendix #107, deals at length with this subject. It lists five different usages of the O.T. quotations in the N.T. with ample illustrations.

The United Bible Societies, 1865 Broadway, N.Y. 10023, publish a booklet, *Old Testament Quotations in the N.T.* This gives listings of where N.T. quotations are to be found in the O.T.

Crawford H. Toy 's, *Quotations in the N.T.* at once identifies whether the N.T. quotations are taken from the Hebrew, the *Vat.* or *Alex. Sept.*, or the *Aramaic*.

H.R. Swete's, *Introduction To The Old Testament in Greek* (part of a 3-Vol. set) treats extensively of the *LXX*.

THE COMINGS OF THE LORD

by Russell H. Schaefer

In general parlance, "The Coming of The Lord" is taken to mean the so-called "Second Coming," as if only two comings were mentioned in Scripture. That there are many and varied "comings" seems incredible to some and the one making the suggestion is anathematized. (1 Corinthians 15:23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15 are the usual proof texts cited for this event. However, 1

Corinthians 1:7 identifies this eagerly awaited coming as being the apocalyptic coming (Greek text, *ten apokalypsin*, the apocalypse], the one associated with the last trumpet of the book of Revelation.)

The First Advent

What is known as the First Advent is the most memorable coming of our Lord, even if it was not the first in time. In that coming, the manhood of our Lord was embraced into The Godhood to accomplish redemption. That Christ was indeed the unique Son (*ho monogenes huios*) of God and Man. In Him, in the perfections of His person and completeness of His work, is mirrored all that God is to us and all that we are to God. Amid a spectrum of purposes involved in that coming, one touches us all:

... that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners
(1 Tim. 1:15).

The whole judicial, relationship of God to man and man to God was resolved by that event. While the historical moment of redemption was capsulated in the public spectacle of Calvary its inception was before the foundation of the world, and its processes will continue until sin is no longer a marring factor in God's creation.

The following beautiful verses from the tenth chapter of Hebrews epitomize the manner in which this coming abolished the Mosaic-Levitical economy in order to establish another without specifying places of worship, priests, rituals, sacrifices, and offerings.

27

Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, But, a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, "LO, I COME . . . to do Thy WILL, O God." ... He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which WILL we are sanctified through the Offering of The Body of Jesus Christ, once for all.

Some Old Testament Comings

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, The LORD appeared to Abram, ... And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him (Gen. 17:1, 3).

And The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Manure ... Lo, three men stood by him ... (Gen. 18:1, 2).

And the men rose up from thence ... and Abraham went with them ... and The Lord said ... And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before The Lord (Gen. 18:16-22).

And there came two angels to Sodom ... And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot (Gen. 19:1, 15).

Observe that these three beings are called men. In verse 22, one is called "The LORD," and later the two are called "angels."

The LORD's coming and appearing to Abram was in a man-like form whose feet could be washed, and who could partake of food. Thus it was a true "coming."

28

The expression of Genesis 18:21 ("I [Jehovah] will go down now") frequently marks a coming of The Lord in respect to impending judgment. Note the following usage:

And The LORD came down to see the city and the tower (Gen. 11:5). I will go down now (Gen. 18:21, regarding Sodom and Gomorrah). And I will come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Ex. 3:8). So The LORD of Hosts came down to fight for Mount Zion (Isa. 31:4).

A visible presence, the Captain of the Hosts of The Lord, led Joshua's assault against Jericho (Josh. 5:13-15). Joshua worshiped Him and called Him, "Lord."

In Israel's history, God many times brought the armies of the aliens to destroy her. Thus, He came in judgment with respect to His people, also.*

The Cloud-Comer of the Old Testament

Clouds have been associated with the comings of The Lord in both the Old and New Testaments. One should also compare the manifestations of God in conjunction with clouds at Sinai, the pillar of cloud, the *Shekinah*, the transfiguration and the coming spoken of in Revelation 1:7. These cloud comings all have to do with the people of Israel, including the transfiguration with the appearance of Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:1-4).

It is worthy of note that Israel's cloud involvement (Ex. 13:21) was that of *Jehovah* visibly leading His people. In Exodus 14:19, 20 the cloud is identified with The Angel of God, i.e., *Jehovah* of the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:2), God (Ex. 3:4), and *Jehovah* (Ex. 3:7). The Angel is distinguished from the cloud, and is represented as antedating its movements and directing it.

*Christ said that the faithless husbandmen were to be destroyed (Lk. 10:16). The offended Stone (Christ) was to grind to powder (Lk. 20:18). Did our Lord, as The Son of Man, come in a judgmental way to guide the army of Titus in its destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? As The Son of Man, He would execute judgment (John 5:27).

29

The meaning of "clouds" in Scripture varies with its usage. In Hebrews 12:1 the writer speaks of a "great cloud" of witnesses. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 it is stated that all the fathers were under the cloud and that "all" had passed through the Sea. This was not factual, as many of the fathers of Israel had died in the previous 430 years of exile from their homeland. Many of Israel's forebears had seen The Divine Visitant with the signs or credentials, the miracles of inducement, and the wonders of judgment so that in the Corinthian passage Paul could use them as a warning to those living in his day (during the Acts period), since they, too, would perish if they did not "heed."

The Cloud-Comer of Exodus 19 and 34

And The LORD (*Jehovah*) said unto Moses, "Lo, I come into thee in a thick cloud ... The LORD (*Jehovah*) will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai ... The LORD descended upon it in fire ... And The LORD came down upon Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9, 11, 18, 19). And The LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there (Ex. 34:5).

In the above verses two different descents are mentioned. If one were to take the time to count all the descents of God in the Old Testament visitations and manifestations, one would be surprised to learn that these were frequent, sometimes in great majesty, sometimes with attending phenomena and at other times without. In the above occurrences the coming of The LORD (capital letters denote *Jehovah*) was with a cloud. The context shows it was with an appearance of "fire," much like the burning bush, except for the magnitude, or what Israel had experienced at the Exodus from Egypt. Exodus 40:38 speaks of this attending presence through the journeys of Israel. Compare Numbers 9:16 and 10:34. The uniqueness of the Sinai coming was its personal aspect, of Moses speaking "face to face" with God.

Other References

In Daniel 7:13 we read the following strange account of a vision:

30

Behold, one like The Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and brought Him near before Him (Dan. 7:13).

The clouds could obscure as well as reveal Him (Ps. 97:2). Clouds are His chariot (rather than a mere vaporous substance) and speak of His glory (Ps. 104:-1-3). His angels are spoken of as a "flaming fire" in Psalm 104:4. They are spoken of as "the dust of His feet" in Nahum 1:3. So, the whole question involved with "clouds" is an open one. A whole gamut of meanings is open to us. In Revelation 1:7 it is with (*meta*) clouds; in Mathew 24:30 it is upon (*epe*) clouds; and in Mark 13:26 it is in, or among (*en*) clouds. Neither the nature of the cloud is defined", nor why it is called into account. Is this poetic imagery, or are these literal clouds? Do they represent an energy field outside of our present understanding? Are they vapors of fire? Or, as in Hebrews 12:1, are they clouds of witnesses? If so, are they earthly or heavenly?

Revelation 1:7 states that every eye shall see Him. Does this mean every eye without exception from the dawn of time and through out all time; or, as the context seems to imply, the eyes of those living at that time, the generation that pierced Him? Even Paul, a part of that generation, expected to live until the return of Christ. Yet, he died, as did others who shared that expectation, without experiencing a literal return of Christ in the clouds.

John's Gospel reveals a multifarious coming of The Lord.

He (The Father) shall give you another Comforter ... I (Christ) will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you ... and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him ... and The Father will love him, and We (the Father and Christ) will come unto him ... But The Comforter ... Whom The Father will send .. I go away, and come unto you ... I (Christ) will send Him (The Comforter) unto you (John 14:16, 18, 21, 23, 26, 28; 16:7).

31

The Holy Spirit is to come from The Father.

Christ was to come to them.

Both Christ and The Father were to come to them.

Christ was to manifest Himself and thus, them.

Christ was to send The Holy Spirit.

After His ascension Christ is called that Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), and a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). After His resurrection but prior to His ascension Christ denied being "a spirit" (Lk. 24:37, 39), here used of an apparition or specter. As one should know, the Greek word *pneuma*, frequently translated "spirit," carries several meanings, including blowing, breathing, wind, the breathing out of air, breath, spiritual state of mind, disposition, spirit being, the nature of man as a breathing being.

Unless one is completely enamored with the so-called second coming, it should be obvious that the coming of the Comforter was a real coming, albeit different in kind from that given to the world in His incarnation.

Let the reader determine what bearing John 20:22, 23 has upon the question of the coming.

**He (Christ) breathed strongly and said unto them,
Receive ye the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*, no articles).**

Whosoever sins ye shall remit, they are remitted unto them.

Whosoever (sins) ye shall retain, they are retained.

These words were spoken to all the disciples, not, as in Matthew 16:18, just to Peter. This event was before His ascension and certainly before Pentecost. The delegation of authority to remit and to retain was in full keeping with other prophets of Israel and certainly the opening chapters of the book of Acts deal only with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, i.e., the ten and two tribes of Israel. This close-in ministry was not altered until seven years later with Peter protesting his commission to go to Cornelius (Acts 10).

32

And Lo: I am with you all the days, until the conclusion of the age (Matt. 28:20).

Could these words have meaning of a spiritual presence, the Comforter of John 14? These words hardly fit into the concept of a Christ absent for several thousand years as we are prone to interpret them. The words do not seem to refer to a far, distant presence. The authority mentioned in Matthew 28:18, "All authority in heaven and on earth hath been given to me," seems to refer to an immediate assumption of authority to empower the Apostles to bring into effect the repentance of Israel that they as the representative theocratic kingdom might be instrumental in disciplining all nations in accord with the intent of Matthew 28:18. This immediacy would call for The Spirit's unique presence and power, as recorded in the second and third chapters of Acts. The role of the apostles would be authenticated, and through their ministry and miracles every inducement would be given to all Israelites everywhere to grasp the divine amnesty and become a ministering nation to the nations.

The forty year period of the book of Acts was indeed a last chance for that generation of Israelites. The seed of the theocratic kingdom was then inherent in the faithful remnant of that people, but the harvest never came to the rest of the nation. How tragic that the mainstream of that people were bypassed and that God's message of redemption, justification, and reconciliation was carried out by an apostle outside the ranks of the Twelve! Some physical blessings were offered in accompaniment with spiritual blessings during "Acts" but not on the scale promised in Deuteronomy 26-28. What a boon this would have been to the needy of the world, but they were tied in and were a measurement of Israel's spiritual state.

Actual and legitimate offers of restoration were made to all Israel in Acts. The Old Testament passages quoted by the apostles had this premise in mind, not a fallacious religious system of Christianity. Acts 3:24 mentions that all the

prophets from Samuel onward had foretold the events then transpiring. Joel's prophecy related directly to that issue, not a pseudo-pentecostalism. There was an out-pouring of God's Spirit in power upon all (kinds of) flesh,

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sons and daughters did prophesy in Acts (cf. Acts 21:9), and there were those who had visions; some great, some small. Some protest that the signs spoken of as transpiring in heaven and on earth (Acts 2:19, 20) never took place, neither in Acts or afterwards in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Historically, A.D. 67-72 were times of vast and extensive earthquake and volcanic activity in that part of the world, which is the most anyone can make of these texts, if a literal interpretation is called for. To assume for even a moment that the sun was literally extinguished is farfetched, as it is to assume that the moon became literal "blood." At best (aside from eclipses) the passages refer to earthquakes and volcanic fire with an attending loss of life on earth and a discoloration of the atmosphere from volcanic ash, an apt-description of the aftermath of St. Helens' eruption in 1980. It must also be remembered, if one lets The Bible explain itself, that similar language was used in the Old Testament to depict the fall of empires, for which see Isaiah 13:10 (Babylon), 24:23 (Tyre), 34:4 (Bozrah and Idumea). See also Isaiah 50:3; 60:19, 20; and Ezekiel 32:7.

The whole House of Israel is seen in Acts (Acts 2:14. and 2:36). The supposed "Lost Tribes" of Israel were not lost during the forty years of Acts. The Twelve-tribed Nation was referred to by Paul (Acts 26:7) James (James 1:1) and Peter (1 Peter 1:1). All tribal records were destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70.

Certainly, as prophesied by Zechariah (Zech. 12:10), a spirit of grace and supplication is seen in the early chapters of Acts as many of the families of Israel were saved. Israel did look upon Him Whom they had pierced, as prophesied by Zechariah (Zech. 12:10), and this is said to be fulfilled at the crucifixion (John 19:3. There was a Fountain (Christ) opened for sin and cleanness to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zech.) 13:1). The "wounding" of Zechariah 13:6, 7 was at His betrayal, and the attending "scat-tering" following mentioned as taking place in Matthew 26:31. Upon resurrection and ascension Christ is declared to "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). The "seating" The ascended Christ is said to be upon the throne of David (Acts 2:30), giving us an insight that David's throne portended God's throne in the heavens, ruling over

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all while a mediatorial kingdom was needed. The statements of the second Psalm find a fulfillment in Acts 4:24-27.

Thus, the promised Comforter came. Power from on high came. Christ, as That Spirit, came. The We of John 14:23 came. Truly, John 14:21b was fulfilled: "... and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." "This was the coming of The Father and Son for the purpose of making station (Greek monen) with them" (Edersheim).

The Son of Man

The Son of Man title was the one used most frequently by The Lord of Himself. It is a title used by The Creator of Himself in relationship to His creation. It speaks of the conceptual image of The Perfect Man residing in the consciousness of God before the advent of man in creation, and before the advent of our Lord's incarnation.

The title was a familiar one to the readers of Daniel's prophecy. Its usage in Daniel 7:13, 14 has to do with a Cloud-Comer, dominion, glory, and a kingdom. These same concepts apply to its New Testament usage.

To have meaning, the title must mean more than the mere humanity of our Lord. Matthew 8:20 is contrasting the estate of the Highest and the lowly; the fox forager having a den, while The Creator asserting His role as Son of Man in and with humanity, is homeless. This prior station of The Son of Man in heaven is mentioned in John 3:13:

As no one hath ascended into heaven, Save He that out
of heaven descended The Son of Man.

The climactic act of Israel's rejection was The Son of Man's being "lifted up" (John 3:14) as Israel had aforesaid rejected God's provision as symbolized by the serpent "lifted up" in the wilderness. That Stephen should testify in his dying moments of seeing in vision

The Son of Man in heaven so infuriated his accusers that having stopped their ears, they then killed him.

The inception of The Son of Man was not as The Divine Son of Mary, but antedating this, the place of His origin (heaven) and the place of His ascension were the same:

What then if ye should view The Son of Man ascending where He was before? (John 6:62)

The "body" prepared for Him for the purposes of redemption was that of a slave's form, but antedating this was another, the original *ikon*, that master pattern from whence man was to be imaged, an the measurement toward which man is recreated "in Christ." This bypasses the intermediate image we inherited in our ancestry from Adam. Our restoration is not to a state bequeathed by Adam, but rather to one we have never known, that state of The Man at God's right hand. This is indeed a "glory" once possessed by Christ, and that to which He refers as having had with The Father before the world began (John 17:5). This glory He repossesses in His ascension and seating. The servant's form, possessed of flesh and blood, gives way to that original concept, that divine original of all things. The prototype, the grand concept, was called The Son of Man. The eighteenth Psalm well describes One who for a moment was made "lower than the angels" but who was destined to have dominion over the works of God's hands.

As The Son of Man The Lord was to "seek and save" that which was lost. As The Son of Man He was to give His life a ransom, but it was only fitting that He was the one given the right to exercise the essential prerogative of Deity, the right to forgive sins (Luke 5:21, 24).

The unique impact of this title is readily seen in the pronouncement of Christ before His accusers:

.. .If Thou art The Christ Art thou The Christ, The (*Messiah*) tell us! ... If I Son of The Blessed? And should tell you, in no wise Jesus said, I AM; and ye would ye believe, and if I shall see The Son of Man should put questions, in no sitting on The Right Hand

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wise would ye answer; but, of Power, and coming with henceforth shall The Son of the clouds of heaven ... Man be seated on the Right and they all condemned Him Hand of the Power of God. To be worthy of death. They all said, Thou Then (Mk. 14:61-64) art The Son of God? And He unto them said, Ye say it, because I AM (Lk. 22:66-70).

There certainly is an interweaving of the Messianic, The Son of God, and The Son of the Blessed titles in all that they imply combined with The Son of Man title. The accusers of Christ understood the connection, hence their violent reaction. When Christ made use of The Son of Man title, the council condemned Him to death. In a grim parallel the title becomes the warrant used by Christ to implement judgment upon this same nation.

For neither doth The Father judge anyone, But all judging hath given unto The Son: And authority hath He given Him to be executing judgment, because The Son of Man is He! (John 5:22, 27)

That there is a coming of The Son of Man to Israel in judgment is clear in Scripture. The time and manner of that coming are open to question. However, whatever the varied interpretations of the texts involved, there is no suggestion that the passage of several thousand years of human history are projected prior to their fulfillment. In the following passage note how soon this coming was to be.

But be going rather unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And when they persecute you in this city flee into another. For verily I say unto you, In no wise shall ye finish the cities of Israel till The Son of Man come (Matt. 10:6, 23).

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The death of Christ did not set this commission aside. The apostles did engage in a ministry to the whole House of Israel before and after the crucifixion of Christ. The ministry was attended with signs and wonders, and this was to be followed by tribulation — the end of which they were to see, to endure, and from whose dire final stroke they were to find a way of escape. This last was to be measured by their public ministry in the cities of Israel. Is it any wonder then that the apostles stayed so close to Jerusalem during the first seven years of the book of Acts? They did not go to all the cities of Israel, much less the world.

After The Lord had informed His disciples that He would suffer and be slain in Jerusalem He again bracketed His coming as The Son of Man within the lifetime of some of those who heard His words. Matthew 16:27, 28 will be quoted, but the same context is found in Mark 8:38 and 9:1, and Luke 9:26, 27.

**For The Son of Man is destined to be coming In the
glory of His Father, With His messengers, And then will
He give back unto each one according to his practice.
Verily I say unto you there are some of those here
standing who indeed shall in no wise taste of death until**

they see The Son of Man coming in His Kingdom (Matt. 16:27, 28).

The coming was balanced between the time elements that would see the death of some of His hearers and yet within the lifetime of others. A round figure would be within the century when these words were spoken. Some point out that in all the passages related, the scenes of the Mount of Transfiguration follow, and that these passages are fulfilled in the Mount. 2 Peter 1:16-18 does mention that this scene was indeed a display of The Majesty of our Lord, and that it betokened His inherent Divinity.

There is a "form of God" (Phil. 2:6) in which Christ continually subsists. Although this "form" was hidden by the fashion of a man in which He found Himself accomplish redemption,

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nonetheless a glimpse of that "form" may have been shown here. Only Matthew's account of the Transfiguration mentions the face of Christ, "shining as the sun." In Paul's encounter with the heavenly Christ (Acts 26:13-15) this same luminescence is mentioned. As to whether the Transfiguration was "the coming in His Kingdom" as some suppose, or even a foretaste of the Kingdom, or if it was but a glimpse of spiritual realities alone, it is difficult to surmise with finality. Luke's account (Luke 9:31) alone mentions that our Lord's soon decease was a subject under discussion. This generally would not be thought of as being in the context of the Kingdom. However, if a legitimate offer of the Kingdom and King was to be made to Israel, then the medium to take away Israel's sins (and ours), i.e., His death, the discussion is altogether fitting and proper. Peter sees it as a "glimpse" of His coming (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

In respect to Matthew 16:27, 28 E.W. Bullinger in the *Companion Bible* has some interesting notes. On verse 28 he writes the following:

some = some of those.

till = The particle *an*, with the Subjunctive mood, gives this hypothetical force. Cp. the four "tills" (10:23; 16:28; 23:39; 24:34; 26:29).

see = may have seen.

coming, etc. The premise of this coming was definitely repeated later, in Acts 3:19-26, and was conditional on the repentance of the nation. Hence the particle

an, which (though untranslatable) expresses the condition or hypothesis implied. Their continuing to live until Acts 28:25, 26 was certain; but the fulfillment of the condition was uncertain,

The question arises, was the coming of The Son of Man in judgment upon Israel identical with the "sending of Jesus Christ" in times of refreshing as mentioned in Acts 3? If Israel had repented in the period of the Acts, then Acts 3:21 mentions "the times of restitution of all things"; but what would happen if she did not repent; as she did not? Would a judgmental-coming fall upon Israel? More in tune with the Acts passage is Matthew 19:27, 28.

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Then, making answer, Peter said unto Him, Lo! we have left all and followed Thee, What then shall there be for us?

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, As for you who followed me in the regeneration when The Son of Man shall take His seat on His throne of glory, Ye also shall be seated upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Here, as in Acts 3, there is a mention of a restoration, a throne of glory and thrones for accomplishing the restoration by the twelve apostles of Israel. The Twelve made the same mistake that is so frequently made today as to the nature of their task, then present or future. In Matthew 20:20-28 we have an account of how a mother sought by special pleading to have her sons enthroned upon the left and right hands of Christ in His kingdom. Christ pointed out very vividly that greatness is measured by service, ministry by giving! all of one's self in behalf of others. The only purpose of the twelve circumcision apostles ministry to the Twelve Tribes as "Judges" is vague, how one ruled over another was not. The admonition of Matthew 20:26, "Not so is it among you," might well be heeded as a principle for those inclined, disposed or feeling that they are given a mandate to rule over others. Christ embodied this servant "to all" role. Never was He more kingly than when He died for our sins!!

Not only is the coming spoken of in Acts 3:19-26 conditional, as E.W. Bullinger states, but an implicit pronouncement of judgment is made upon whoever will not hear Christ, an utter destruction (Acts 3:23). Once again, Israel stood at the line of demarcation, the prophecies of the ages were on the threshold of fulfillment (Acts 3:24) and Israel could be the instrument of God's peace, glory

and blessings to all the nations of the earth Acts 3:25), in keeping with God's ancient covenant. To great privilege are added great responsibilities. No nation on earth was given the inducements to serve God as was Israel (Deut. 26:16-19; 28:1-13); nor was any nation given greater warnings if they should disobey (Deut. 27:14-26; 28:14-68).

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Both blessing and cursing were conditional. One need but read these Deuteronomy passages to be assured of that God's ultimate purposes will be accomplished. One goal may be long deferred, one means may have to give way to another, one man in place of many, the last apostle instead of the first — but the goal will be reached.

Not only is the coming of Acts 3 conditional, as mentioned above, but also the fact of Israel's "seeing" The Lord in a favorable light:

For I say unto you In no wise may ye see me henceforth Until ye say, Blessed is He that cometh in The Name of The Lord (Matt. 23:39).

In respect to the "seeing" of Christ by Israel, it is placed or positioned only after the heartfelt conversion of the nation, not before it, as some are affirming. One "seeing" by the tribes of the land mentioned in Revelation 1:7 is a seeing of judgment, not conversion. As mentioned in another context, Israel did indeed "look upon Him whom they had pierced" when they crucified Him (John 19:37), but this did not confirm their faith then; rather, it deepened their rejection and unbelief.

That Generation

In a peculiar way, the generation that lived, partook of, and witnessed the earthly ministry of Christ, was one of which the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians:

... to whom the ends (*telos*, limit, conclusion, termination) of the ages has arrived (1 Cor. 10:11, Nestle text).

Rotherham interestingly translates this passage as follows:

... unto Whom the ends of the ages have reached along.

The Son of Man was a sign unto that generation just as Jonah was to another (Luke 11:30-32). Like Christ, Jonah had been entombed for three days and three nights. The Ninevites believed although given forty days to repent; Israel was given forty years and her unbelief determined her destruction. That generation was uniquely guilty and of it The Lord uttered the following grim words:

That the blood of all the prophets which hath been shed from the foundation of the world may be sought out from this generation (Luke 11:50).

In Israel's rejection of The Lord the measuring cup of the wrath of God was being filled to the full: "And ye fill up (WH: will fill up) the measure of your fathers!" (Matt. 23:32). Truly, Christ's words in Matthew 23:36, "Verily I say unto you, all these things will come fulfilled upon this generation," were literally fulfilled.

Matthew 24

Any consideration of the comings of The Lord must take into account the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. Any comings of The Lord mentioned in this chapter are not "pre-tribulation" by the remotest stretch of the imagination. The thought that certain "select ones" are to be raised or resurrected from the dead prior to the "Last Days" is not found in any of the Gospel accounts.

Christ avows the "first resurrection" to be the "Last Day" of the prophetic period then spoken of in the context. Of those given to Christ of The Father, none were to be lost, but to be raised up "at the Last Day." In the Gospel of John The Lord repeatedly stressed that the resurrection was to be at the Last Day.

And this is the will of Him that sent me That of all that which He hath given me, I should lose nothing, But should raise it up at the Last Day (John 6:39).

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For this is the will of My Father that everyone that vieweth The Son and believeth on Him should have age-abiding life, and I should raise him up at the Last Day (John 6:40).

No man can come unto Me except The Father who sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last Day (John 6:44).

He that feedeth upon My flesh and drinketh My blood hath life age-abiding, and I will raise him up at the Last Day (John 6:54).

This whole issue has been obscured by the invention of an unscriptural term known as "the rapture." It is found nowhere in The Word of God. If "resurrection" is meant then this term was already in use and within its varied contexts it is satisfactory. However, the proof texts used for the sudden rapture theory have the "resurrection" as their theme and that is bound by the context of the Last day. Christ did not correct Martha in defining the common hope of her day when she said Lazarus should rise again in the resurrection in the Last Day (John 11:24). Those to whom the words of comfort were addressed in the Gospels were still living during the book of Acts period and figured in the then prophetic events depicted for that time and deeply associated with the "last days."

In respect to Matthew 24, the Gospels of Mark and Luke also report the events concerning the destruction of the Temple, the desolation of Jerusalem, the coming of The Son of Man, and the end of the "age." The A.V. translates "age" as "world" and, unfortunately, doomsday prophets have been talking of the "end of the world" ever since. It should read "end of the age," meaning the age then spoken of in the context. It is not speaking of this "unprophetic time" in which we are living,* nor of the current events happening about us.

***It is amazing that some should hold that the "last days" spoken of in 2 Timothy 3:1 should be thought of as the "last days" of the Dispensation of Grace, not seeing that these are a direct contradiction of terms. Paul's Acts ministry among the Gentiles was**

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That was a specific age having to do with a specific! people, Israel as a nation. It did not have to do with "Jews" as individuals, for as such they could heed the warnings and escape the impending judgments. The words of Luke 21:22 are graphic in their import:

For days of avenging are these for all the things written to be fulfilled.

These were the words addressed to the personal disciples of our Lord, not to those living a thousand or more years in the future. It was some of these who were to live to see these events transpire. Forty years after the Olivet discourse the sign of the surrounding legions of Rome appeared. At the time the words

were spoken such an event would seem impossible as the empire of Rome, and Israel's part in it, were at peace. The day of avenging had come for Israel, and it was time that their debt of rebellion to Rome and to God be exacted by many stripes. They hardly supposed that the brutal cross wherewith Christ was crucified was to be the mode whereby the land would be stripped of wood to impale the living after the siege; that the very words "level thee with the ground" were literally fulfilled except for the three bowers left standing as a testimonial to the vastness of the temple area's fortification and the greatness of the army of Titus. Israel did not want to follow in the train of the Savior, but said, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), yet they were to follow in Titus' Train of Triumph, 42,000 wasted prisoners, while all under 17 years of age were sent into the mines from whence there was no return to the land of the living. Millions were at Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover when they were trapped in the siege. The words of Matthew 27:25 were grimly prophetic: "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

to bring them within the "blessing of Abraham" by bringing them to Christ. Paul was a prisoner in Acts as well as after. That he was released from the charges and was "delivered from the mouth of the lion" seems to fit the internal evidence that he had another missionary journey after Acts.

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Their blood and that of their children was to flow like a river until even the hardened legionnaires were sickened by so much death, fire and destruction.

There is no intimation in Matthew 24, as Christ directed His remarks to His personal disciples, that the events foretold were beyond their personal involvement. They and others believed the signs they saw about them and fled to Pella beyond Jordan to escape the days of vengeance such as no nation had known before this time. Those reading Matthew 24 lose the meaning of the passages if they try to read them into the present unprophesied program of God, which, in contradistinction to the judgmental program of Matthew 24, is one of grace without judgment, the untraceable riches of Christ as over against the prophesied kingdom in Matthew, the Gentiles and Jews without distinction as to race or covenant, no "Israel of God" in effect now as over against the judgments effected upon Israel then. The "Jew" now is one only in religion, not of race, since no proof can be found to substantiate a lineal descent from the "fathers," and anyone can lay claim to being a "Jew."

Again, there is no Israel of God, i.e., a nation called to be God's Theocratic Kingdom on earth, a nation that would live up to the meaning of "Israel," that is, "to rule as God," or "to rule as a prince with God." The nation now laying claim to that title, occupying the land by force of arms, is without credentials, physically, morally or spiritually.

Those who see a foreshadowing of coming events may well be right, but it will have no bearing on Biblical prophecy. Already, those who wrote so vividly as to what would happen to the rest of the world after the 1967 war only proved how inept they were as students of The Word of God. Fortunately, their blunders did not approach those writers of the 1940s who saw the antichrist in every public political figure. The dispensationalist, those knowing the divine dispensation of the grace of God, should have known better, but even now tempt themselves with trying to fit their theology into the Never-never Land of prophecy that has nothing in common with God's present unprophesied program.

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Even without the last Mastery Epistles of Paul, the book of Romans envisioned grace at least as extensive as the effects of Man's sin ... sin indeed flowed, but grace overflowed. God's forensic justification and reconciliation of all is in effect, and is the basis of His redemption and forgiveness, and the "not imputing their trespasses unto them." If that was true during Acts, how much more so after the great revelation to the apostle Paul of God's grace as God's rule instead of Israel's law-works economy. One would suppose that prophecy preachers would have learned that something was drastically wrong when year after year the same pap is fed to people with the same resulting failure to "deliver" the goods promised so glibly.

Many outlines and studies have been made of Matt 24. The major portion of the chapter is Christ's direct response to the question of His disciples, presented by them in a three-fold way:

Tell us, when these things shall be, - and, what the sign of Thy Presence, - and, the conclusion of the Age?

The question rephrased in Mark's Gospel presents events as a single package: Tell us, when these things shall be, - and, what the sign when all these things shall be about to be concluded?

In asking the question, it is doubtful that the disciples had in mind the complex arrangement of texts relating to the prophetic program of the centuries. More

than likely they were simply asking when Jerusalem would be destroyed along with any outward signs would attest demonstratively that these events were being directed and caused by The Son of Man; and how that period of judgment would be concluded. At that point in time in which the question was asked none of the disciples believed that Christ would allow Himself be delivered over into the hands of His enemies to slain, to be slain, to be buried — certainly they did not believe His rising from the dead. Scripture is absolutely clear upon this point. The events took them by surprise even though Christ had sought to instruct

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them as to the sequence (Luke 18:34). And, when He had been slain, they did not believe in His resurrection. Hence, not believing in an abrupt end to Christ's Incarnation Advent they were not looking for a Second Advent in our sense of the term. They accepted the fact that He was going somewhere but would soon reappear to establish a political kingdom molded on that of the empires that had gone before in history, but with Israel as dominant over the nations and themselves serving as "Judges" to Israel proper. "Judging" used in this concept (Matt. 19:28) could variously mean the Twelve Apostles¹ ordaining, directing, or guiding Israel.

The length of time that has elapsed since these words of Matthew 24 were spoken has caused most commentaries to seek one solution or another to counter the urgency and immediacy found in the chapter. Matthew 24, with Mark 13 and Luke 21:1-36, binds together the signs, the times and the events. Indeed, that very generation was not to pass away in death until all the things spoken of were fulfilled (Mark 13:30). The O.T. considered a generation to be about 40 years. Of course, the dilemma of centuries passing by with each current generation trying to interpret these verses of themselves made the prophecy teachers change "generation" into "race," i.e., that the Jewish race would not pass away until all this had been fulfilled. It would be sheer folly to read "race" into the series of "generations" in Matthew 1:17, and just as foolish here.

While Christ did give general data concerning these events, He did not specify the absolute day or hour (Mark 13:32). To overcome the local atmosphere of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, some explain the prophecy of Matthew 24 (and kindred prophecies) as being two-fold, having a local and immediate fulfillment, and then a distant fulfillment thousands of years in the future. The distant fulfillment is alleged to coincide with whatever is happening around the world at the moment or whenever nations rise and fall or the earth moves. Others look at prophecy and ignore the Jewish factor of the first century completely, thrusting it all within the context of the twentieth century of our time and society. This

does sell books, and the Christian is made to feel guilty if he is not riding on the prophecy bandwagon.

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This does not change the fact that Christ was ministering to His own immediate disciples and to those living in the same time zone and structure with them, warnings and admonitions are for them in their generation and within the scope of their life-time. There is no attempt by Christ to extend the fulfillment of events far into our century. The prophetic import bounded by a people living under the Law of Moses as such "keeping Sabbath," to those in Judea (not other lands or nations) who were told to "flee into mountains." Christ was not asking those in other cultural settings to scale their steep-roofed homes, to escape over their rooftops. The flat roofs of land were a real part of their living area.

Again, the immediacy of the fulfillment of those prophecies at that time and within that generation meets us on every hand. The "must shortly (with speed) to pass" of Revelation 1:1 is not "speedy" at all thousands of years are involved; nor could the historical churches of Revelation living in the same time bracket! of the prophecies of Matthew 24 have any comfort several thousand years were to intervene ere fulfillment of the prophecies. There was a historic fulfillment of the prophecies of Matthew 24 in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state in A.D. 70. There were some prophecies unfulfilled as well. How is this to be accounted for?

It has been pointed out earlier in this study that the blessings of God's Covenant with Israel were conditional as well as was Israel's role as God's Theocratic Kingdom people. If one still doubts this fact, if one is unwilling to accept this fact, one should at least take the time to read Deuteronomy 26:16 through Deuteronomy 29:15, if this has not been done. Unfortunately, space will not allow the verses to be presented here in full. Chapters 30 and 31 mention Israel's "breaking My Covenant." If the covenant could be so easily broken with such disastrous consequences, it was not meant to be eternal but temporal and conditional. If the conditions were not met, then the rest of the prophecy would be a dead issue. God is free in Himself to accomplish His purposes in whichever way He chooses. He chose to tie in the blessings of Israel (and they were earned under those circumstances) with corresponding judgments if they were disobedient to the heavenly charter. They could "break the

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covenant" with corresponding loss.

It is difficult to face up to this truth in The Word as there is abroad a distorted view of God's sovereignty — a view that so binds God that He is not free to deal differently under varied or changing circumstances even though in Scripture this is boldly demonstrated. The Darby-Schofield system of Biblical interpretation holds the front and center stage and has done so since early in the eighteenth century with its "Instant and Imminent Return of Christ" theories tied into a "Pre-tribulation Rapture" concept of which The Scriptures are silent unless a few texts are tortured out of context. The last is not found in Matthew 24 as is commonly taught, nor in the context of the "Last Trump" of 1 Corinthians 15:52, which in honesty must be identified with the "Last Trumpet" of Revelation 11.

Charles Welch aptly wrote of the conditional nature of Israel's in-gathering:

The gathering of scattered Israel will be contingent upon their repentance. If Israel and Judah return to the land in unbelief that will not be the gathering of The Lord, but a human attempt to bring about the restoration by evil means, which will end in disaster, and such an abortive movement has taken place, with disastrous consequences in our own time (*The Eastern Question*, p. 11).

This well describes the Israeli government now occupying the land by virtue of arms, but no merit can be attached to anyone claiming to be Israel (the Ten Tribes) or Judah (the Two Tribes). Even after the Exile in Babylon, the full complement of the Ten Tribes was obscure, and during the time of Christ a representative number from these so-called "lost tribes" counted for the whole. As a matter of history, the last that is known of the House of Israel and Judah as such ends with the first century. The forty years of the Acts was their grace-period to become "God's People" not only in a personal sense as we tend to think of it, but as an instrument of God to lead the nations in righteousness, love and truth. The present

Zionist movement in Palestine has opportunist birds many hues within its roost and is a far cry from even David Ben Gurion envisioned for that land, does it have anything to do with Bible prophecy, roust be repeated, those claiming to be Jews can do only on the basis of religion or a culture based upon that religion, not upon a physical lineage from Biblical parentage. Just as there is no Israel of

today so there is not a corresponding spiritual Israel nor a "Judah" representing the Two Tribes or an Israel representing the Ten Tribes mentioned in The Bible.

There are those who very devoutly and honestly look for the *Messiah* of Isaiah 53 and do not see Him in Christ of Christianity. Unfortunately, Christianity if it is to be judged by its history and its churches and religion, has very little to do with The Word of God. At least in the USA, and elsewhere the world where a "Hollywood" showpiece type of Christianity is found, all this is distinct from the "worshipping The Father in spirit and in Truth" that Lord enjoined. It is distant, too, from the Perfect Christ and the complete work, redemption-wise, that He accomplished, and has nothing in common with the simple faith with which we are to enter into it and through which it is to mature in our lives.

If Israel did not repent during the Book of Act period the following texts spell out the fate of people:

Every soul whatsoever which shall not hearken unto that Prophet (Christ) shall be utterly destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23b);

How shall we escape, if so great a salvation as this we have neglected? (Heb. 2:3a)

So I swear in mine anger — They shall not enter into my rest ! And we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief (Heb. 3:11, 19).

Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be accounted worthy who hath trampled underfoot The Son of God, and the blood of the covenant hath

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esteemed a profane thing ... a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of a living God (Heb. 10:29a, 31).

If the blood of the New Covenant that which would have made Israel distinct from all other people was despised, then they were trampling underfoot The Son of God. If under the terms of the Old Covenant they were judged and scattered how much more under the New upon trampling under foot The Son of God? In Acts a remnant of that people did repent; truly a fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness and they heeded the meaning implied in the wounded hands of

Christ and did look upon Him who was pierced according to Zechariah 13:1, 6, and did mourn for Him, according to Zechariah 12:10-11, but the national leaders "looked upon Him" as well, and rejected Him according to the statement of John 19:37:

They shall look on Him whom they pierced.

They looked ... and treated him with scorn. They looked and hardened their hearts and the die was cast that would spell out their destruction.

The sad lament of Matthew 23:37-39 spoken through tears has echoed down through the corridors of time:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem ...

Jerusalem means "Possession of Peace." Yet, instead of being a harbinger of peace to the world its soil has been literally bathed in blood. The Lord's "Ye would not — though I would" is a reflection of their sad history. So our Lord passed from the Temple area and His public ministry was stilled on this tragic note.

Matthew Twenty-four

Comments

And Jesus coming forth from the Temple was taking His departure, when His disciples came forward to point out to Him the buildings of the Temple.

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While Matthew generalizes on the varied buildings that made up the Temple* complex, Mark particularizes and speaks of stones of which the Temple proper constructed. Some of the stones of the eastern side were 70 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 8 feet high. Temple was still in the process of being constructed (John 2:20). (Incidentally, this helps to date Gospel of John.) Terentius Rufus, an officer Titus, plowed over the city and Temple site, except three towers that were left as a memorial to show vast were the fortifications that Titus overcame, which is now known as the wailing wall was part of subterranean sub-foundation structure. No doubt it vaults for treasure as well as secret Christ's response to the assertion of the disciples respecting the stones and Temple structure was that one stone should be left upon stone, but all should thrown down (Matt. 24:20).

The details of this utter destruction under Titus are found in Flavius Josephus *Jewish Wars*, Book 6, Chapter 4, 5-7. Within five years of the Temple's completion it was destroyed. To words recorded by Matthew an addition is given by Luke:

Thine enemies will throw a rampart against thee, and enclose thee, and hem thee in from every side, and will level thee with the ground, and thy children within thee; and will not leave stone on stone within thee: because thou didst not get to know the season of thy visitation (19:43-44).

* It is very unusual that the writer of Hebrews uses the Wilderness Tabernacle rather than Herod's Temple (Herod was an Edomite) to illustrate truths of that book. Herod's Temple was void of the *Shekinah*, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Sacred Fire on the Altar. The wilderness Tabernacle, rather than the Temple, was a type and shadow of the body of The Lord. In crucifying Him, the whole typical system was made void because it was fulfilled in Him. An instance of this is mentioned in Hebrews 10:20 where the veil or curtain through which the High Priest entered the Holiest of all — a double curtain between which the High Priest entered and exited from the Holy Place — was betokening His flesh, which when pierced opened a living access to the very presence of God.

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From the Mount of Olives a broad view of the Temple was to be had, including its inner cloisters. It was from this same Mount that the attack was launched that finally destroyed it. Luke 21:20 mentions the encompassing armies, and Matthew 24:27 mentions the lightning coming out of the east as analogous to the presence of The Son of Man. The destruction of Jerusalem was indeed the closing act in God's visitation of wrath upon that place and upon that people — and as in earlier days God led Israel's enemies to accomplish His work upon this wayward people, so our Lord said:

And the King was provoked to anger, And, sending His armies, Destroyed those murderers, And their city set on fire (Matt. 22:7).

So the four disciples (see Mark 13:3) here asked the question "When?" And, "What the sign of His Presence, and the conclusion of that age?" (Matt. 24:3).

Because the different gospel accounts are selective as to what each writer wished to present of the discourse, it has been supposed by some authors that there were different discourses. The general presentation in prophetic teaching or instruction has been for the subject matter to move from the immediate to the distant, from the present to the future. Yet, in Matthew 24 and in the kindred passages in Mark and Luke, some would have Christ prophesying of events thousands of years into the future, and then with the very same texts be speaking of the local and soon to be fulfilled events terminating in the destruction of the Jewish state and Jerusalem, and then swinging into the far future and back again to that particular Jewish age.

Matthew 24:15-22 and Luke 21:20-24 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. As pointed out earlier, Matthew 24:15 speaks of Daniel's abomination that makes desolate, while Luke at that point in his discourse substitutes an explanation, i.e., the encompassing armies of Rome (Luke 21:20). The "Holy Place" of Matthew 24:15 was not the word for the Holy of Holies, but that of the area surrounding Jerusalem, which was considered holy. On one occasion, thousands of Jews allowed themselves to be a living wall to

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keep the (these were objects of worship for the soldiers) outside of the walls, and thousands were trampled to death. Josephus writes, "And now the Romans ... brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them." Therefore, it is only fair to context to assume that Matthew 24:4-14, 23ff. refer the same time frame.

One cannot interpret prophecy in the light of since A.D. 70. The world is not now, and has not since that event, living in the time frame of prophecy. We are privileged to be living in the unprophesied, undated, mystery grace ministry revealed to the apostle Paul upon the anticipated destruction of Jewish economy. The world, while not directly addressed in the mystery epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, nonetheless receives a direct spinoff as a result of it, and has been given directly unparalleled grace inasmuch as God through the redemptive work Christ has reconciled the world to Himself, is not holding its sin against it, and has a forensic basis in the death of Christ for its justification and forgiveness. The temptation and tendency is to read prophecy into God's present nonprophecied program and vice versa. Prophecy, if it is to be understood, must be allowed to follow through in its own sequence of events.

Christ, in Matthew 24, was truly speaking to His disciples and those of that generation. For them the message had a real and vital meaning. But, does this

leave a prophetic "blank" after the destruction the Jewish state? Absolutely! This is exactly where the mystery epistles of Ephesians and Colossians come into their own—even to mentioning the overlap wherein the "sons of disobedience" (rebellious Israel) were to experience wrath (Eph. 5:5-6). Also, the law of commandments in decrees (that so separated Israel from the rest of the nations) was abolished (Eph. 2:15), and out of the twain a new humanity was to arise without the former distinctions (Eph. 2:15b). This formerly secret grace laden program could not be revealed or come into its own fully while Israel still had the status of special privilege attending their role as God's theocratic hierarchy; nor would Israel have an excuse for rejecting their *Messiah*, i.e., "a

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greater good would come of it."

The disciples asked in their three-fold question, "What the sign of Thy Presence? (Matt. 24:3), and Christ responded by giving them various way-signs that were to culminate in the sign of The Son of Man in heaven (Matt. 24:30). Was the sign something confirming that Christ was living and in heaven? Or, some mere physical phenomenon in the skies? Whatever it is, the time element is "after the tribulation of those days" (Matt. 24:29). The "mourning and seeing, and smiting of their breasts" in Matthew 24:30 is interpreted by Luke 21:26 as "men's hearts failing them for fear," not, as some suppose, a "seeing and mourning" betokening a repentance on the part of Israel.

The first way-sign has to do with imposters:

Be taking heed lest anyone deceive you; for many will come upon My Name, saying, I am The Christ, and will deceive many (Matt. 24:4b, 5).

The history book is sketchy on this score but these antichrists are mentioned in 1 John 2:18:

Little children! It is the last hour; and just as you have heard that an antichrist is coming, even now antichrists have become many.

Christ had come in The Father's Name but He was not received. Others would come in their own name and they would be received (John 5:43). It was not so much one saying, "I am The Christ" as, rather, the one setting himself forth as a savior, *messiah*, or liberator in the place of The Christ of God. Theudas and

Judas are mentioned in Acts 5:36, 37 and others such as Simon Magus in Acts 8:9, 10 and the Egyptian of Acts 22:38. Closer to the end of Acts was another Egyptian who led 30,000 up to the Mount of Olives. It was this revolt and unrest among the people that brought forth the military response of Rome. The temper of messianic expectation was fueled by revolution and so it was almost inevitable that the

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warning about substitute Christs followed by warnings of war.

Moreover ye will be sure to be hearing of wars and rumors of war: Mind be not alarmed, for it must needs happen, but not yet is the end; for there will arise nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in places (Matt. 24:6, 7).

Luke 21:9 adds "commotions," i.e., confusion, to the "wars." This had to do not only with Jewish elements against the Syrians, as Josephus mentions, Jew against Jew, and struggles within the empire the kingdom. It does not refer to wars in general that has been a part of human history since Cain killed Abel. It must refer to specific wars, within the confines of Palestine in particular, and not beyond extent of the Roman Empire in general. These wars and tumults would have meaning to one living at that time and place.

Within eighteen months, four emperors—Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellus — had died violently. Jewish factions took advantage of the popular unrest to advance their own causes by tumult and revolution. But the of the Jewish economy was "not yet": it was to survive until the "acceptable time" spoken of by The Lord, the offer to "enter into His rest" had run its course. Delitsch, *Hebrews*, p. 171, writes:

There were forty years from the first proclamation of salvation, by The Lord Himself (Heb. 2:3), that is from the commencement of His public ministry, to the destruction of Jerusalem, the forty *Messianic* years; to which even the synagogue bears unwilling testimony, when it is stated in the *Talmud*, *Pesikta*, *Tanchuma*, and *Sonar*, that "the days of the *Messiah* shall last forty years: for it is said (Psa. 95:10), Forty years was I angry with this generation; and (Psa. 90:15), Make us glad

according to the days wherein Thou hast humbled us,
and the years wherein we have seen evil. These forty
years must have almost

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elapsed when our author wrote *Hebrews*. What awful
and earnest import is contained in the comparison
implied between these forty years and the forty years of
the exodus under Moses.

If Christ was born earlier, as William M. Ramsay, George Milligan and James Moulton conclude from their studies of ancient documents (*Here and There Among the Papyri*, George Milligan, and *From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps*, James Moulton) that Christ was born 6-8 B.C. (8 B.C. the favored date), then the forty years of opportunity extended to Israel would be inclusive of the Book of Acts period. This would give meaning to these precursor events as not being divine acts of judgment upon Israel but rather pointing up the steps that would lead to the moments of destiny in A.D. 70. Hence, the "not yet" hour of judgment.

To the "famines and earthquakes" mentioned in Matthew 24:7 Luke adds "pestilences" (Luke 21:11). Under Claudius, famines took place in Palestine, Greece, and Rome. See also Acts 11:27-30. A later famine is implied in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 wherein Paul brings relief to the Judean assemblies. As for earthquakes, these preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. Tacitus, Annales, 15.22, mentions those in the reign of Claudius at Rome, and during the reign of Nero the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae were overthrown, and Pompeii was almost destroyed by an earthquake, this same city was later covered by volcanic ash in A.D. 79. Other earthquakes are mentioned as happening at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and Samos. Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, Book 6, IX, 3, tells of the prodigious signs and omens in the heavens and, earth as if they were calling Israel to account for her sins.

The sons of disobedience spoken of in Ephesians 2:2, 5:6, and Colossians 3:6 was an apt title for those Jews rejecting the offer of the New Covenant provided for in their *Messiah's* death, and those opposing Paul throughout his Acts ministry when he sought to carry the message of God's reconciliation everywhere. "Sons (not "children" as in the A.V.) of Disobedience" implies a settled and vicious state of disobedience to God's revealed truth, whether from the lips of Christ, Peter, or others. As to pestilences, in A.D. 66 in

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Rome 30,000 died, and another pestilence raged in Babylon in A.D. 40 in which 50,000 died. One can gather the temper of the times as Josephus relates an incident in which a Roman soldier offered an indignity to the Jews within the precincts of the Temple, "upon which a tumult arose ... more than 10,000 were trodden under foot and perished." Josephus relates how at Scythopolis 13,000 were slain and 50,000 at Alexandria.

In respect to the events that were to follow, these fore-shadowings were called "birthpangs" (Matt. 24:8). The sequence would be more local and personal until the one "enduring to the end (*telos*) of this portion, and before the final overthrow, would be delivered (Matt. 24:13). The deliverance is detailed and described in Matthew 24:16-20. It is not the supposed rapture but a flight into the mountains, and this was local in its application, not universal. It is limited to the confines of that locality and that religious culture. The attendant falling away (Matt. 24:9-12) was to be a prelude to persecution. The epistle to the Hebrews contains exhortations against this falling away and warns of the dire consequences if they should so fall. Second Timothy 3:1-13, 4:1-5 echoes this warning as well.

The "last days" spoken of in 2 Timothy are the last days of Israel's economy and the judgments in connection with it. It is a vast contradiction in terms to suppose that Timothy is speaking of the last days of the dispensation of grace, as the context is in direct opposition. It would be the height of folly for Paul to announce a dispensation of grace for the nations (Eph. 3:2) and immediately announce its end in speaking of its last days. The Ephesian/Colossian letters give no sense of their program ending, but rather speak of the oncoming ages as a medium of God's continual showing of His grace (Eph. 2:7) and The Father receiving glory in the church (the Body of Christ), and in Christ Jesus unto all the generation of the age of the ages (Eph. 3:21). The Body of Christ is to be The Fullness of Him that fills all things with Himself (Eph. 1:23). Instead of making known to us the last days of this program, it is God's good pleasure to make known to us the secret of His heart's desire, the household wherein the fullness of opportunity is given so that Christ

is seen as the summation of that which is in the heavens and that upon the earth. Christ is seen in the whole and the whole is seen in Christ (Eph. 1:9, 10). What a difference between this as a goal toward which all moves in this dispensation and the movement depicted in Matthew 24, or 2 Timothy 3 or 4. The false prophets of Matthew 24:11 are spoken of in 2 Peter 2:1-3, and Peter says that their destruction will speedily come to pass.

What of Matthew 24:14?

And this glad message of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the inhabited earth, for a witness unto all the nations, and then will have come the end.

It is supposed that the text is speaking of the modern world, to individual persons in all places and times. The *Companion Bible*, p. 1365, draws attention that the word for "world" here is distinct from that used in verse 3 and 21, and that here the reference is to the civilized as distinct from barbarian world (*barbarian* = a person of a confused type of speech). It is unfortunate that this verse is used as an incentive for missionary work teaching, as some do, that the verse is saying that the witness is for the salvation of the nations, rather than as Mark well supplies, that it is a witness against all nations (Mark 13:9). It is not addressed to The Lord's return but to the impending judgment as the verses that follow explain.

Unquestionably, the apostles and the disciples first hearing these words from the lips of Christ would suppose that He was talking about the sphere of the Roman Empire about them. This (to us) limited aspect of the "world" is a common one in Scripture.

There went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus for all the inhabited earth to be enrolled; and all were journeying to be enrolled, each one unto his own city (Luke 2:1, 3).

Now there were in Jerusalem sojourning Jews, reverent men from every nation who were under

Heaven (Acts 2:5).

Acts 2:8-11 delineates the nations from which these Jews came and they were all from within the realm of Rome.

... because your faith is being announced throughout the whole world (Rom. 1:8b).

Paul spoke as we so frequently speak; he had no thought that those in China or the Americas were acquainted with the small band of believers at Rome when he wrote:

... in order that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the nations might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of a lion (2 Tim. 4:17b).

Paul speaks of being delivered. How much is to be read into this, we have no way of knowing. It could mean he was delivered from his Roman imprisonment to continue his ministry. If so, then the letters to Timothy and Titus should be switched around, thus giving us the record of his continued ministry to the nations in keeping with this verse. The use of "lion" as denoting a demise by spears or swords is found in Psalm 22:21. The *Companion Bible* carries the reference to Psalm 22:16, "they pierced = as a lion (they break up) my hands and my feet: and for this the Hebrew text is cited, which points out the agreement with John 19:37.

But I say: Have they not heard? Yea, indeed — into all the earth hath gone forth their sound, and unto the ends of the inhabited world their declarations (Rom. 10:18).

Paul is here quoting from Psalm 19:4, the message of God in His handiwork of creation, or the "spelling out" of the story of redemption recorded in the ancient names of the grouping of constellations. Or, he could be using this as a reference point in saying how extensive and well known was the message of The *Messiah* and His kingdom at that time.

... the gospel — coming to you, as also in all the world it is bearing fruit (Col. 1:5b, 6a).

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... which hath been proclaimed in all creation which is under heaven (Col. 1:23b).

The text is saying that the glad tidings have already been proclaimed. Just what this means in relation to the text in Matthew 24:14 is for the moment beside the point. What can be said on the basis of these verses is the "preaching in all the world" of Matthew 24:14 has already taken place, and that prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. One can say that The Lord had come in judgment at that time. One cannot read more than this in the text.

As the various ministries in connection with the kingdom were brought to a close by the apostles they were to see another sign within the immediate area of the

capital city and within sight of the Temple. This was the warning of Matthew 24:15 ff.

Whensoever therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation that was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a Holy Place (he that readeth, let him think) then they who are in Judea, let them flee into the mountains.

So much has been surmised on the meaning of verse 15! Some leave the verse within its immediate context and in this connection Mark sheds a little light:

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not (he that readeth let him think), then they who are in Judaea, let them flee into the mountains (Mark 13:14).

Luke gives the interpretation of the text rather than quoting the text itself. This has been spoken of earlier, but it is worthy of repetition. Luke's account follows the sequence both of Matthew and Mark but paraphrases the prophecy:

But whensoever ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed by armies, then know that her desolation hath drawn near. Then they who are in Judaea, let them flee into the mountains (Luke 21:20, 21a).

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Luke, in contrast to many interpreters of the text, definitely linked the passage with the encompassing armies of Rome rather than some future antichrist desecrating a rebuilt temple. Scofield interestingly isolates Matthew 24:15 from the verses that follow and identifies verse 15 with a future event and then the verses that come after it are again brought into line with the destruction of the Jewish economy in A.D. 70, To the Jew, the whole land was considered holy, the Temple area more so, and the inner shrine alone was called the "Holy of Holies." It was this army of Vespasian (Titus) that started to entrench about Jerusalem being "where it ought not to be" with its pagan ensign bearing the titles or emblems denoting their gods, frequently that of the ruling emperor, these likewise being objects of worship. When the decision was made to encompass and entrench the whole city and starve it into submission and the first troop movements were made to do so, then the command of Christ was very explicit, "Flee!" Something of the tragic horror of those days was caught by Josephus:

**And now the Romans upon the flight of the seditious
from the city, and upon burning the holy house itself,
and of all the buildings round it, brought their ensigns
to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate;
and there did they offer sacrifices to them.**

By the time these events took place, the Christians had undertaken their flight. The verses that follow express a sense of dire urgency and Christ impresses the need to flee "just as you are and from where you are."

According to history, "not one of the despised sect of the Nazarenes" perished in the siege. Those living in the hills escaped with ease while those in Judea were to flee toward the mountains. History and archaeology testify to their refuge city, Pella. Those living in the immediate area of Jerusalem would be in dire straits, hence they were admonished to escape over their flat-roofed homes with such haste as not to even descend for any possessions. The field worker, clad only in his breechcloth, was not to seek his robe-like

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outer garment. A pregnant woman and a nursing child would be at a distinct disadvantage and winter weather would impede flight, as would "Sabbath-keeping" should a flight be called for at that time. This is the substance of Matthew 24:16-20.

Christ then adds the portentous words that have haunted so many people:

**For there will be then Great Tribulation such as hath
not happened before from the beginning of the world
until the time present, neither in any wise shall happen
(Matt. 24:21).**

The siege of Jerusalem was unique in the annals of warfare. The word tribulation means pressure or compression. The Siege was an increasing compression of that city's defenses until one million were slain, 97,000 were taken captive, 42,000 graced Titus' Triumph at Rome, those under seventeen years of age were sent to the mines of Egypt and the rest were used up in the arena. There were 600,000 bodies hurled over the walls since no more room remained within the fortified city for bodies or for burial. Those seeking to escape were crucified until "bodies were wanting for crosses and crosses for bodies." Those who would have surrendered were discovered to have swallowed gold, and so they were slain, and cut open in search of treasure. While there seemed to be no shortage of

water, famine, disease, cannibalism, torture, interfaction warfare within, and the assault from without, all added up to a flow of blood at the end that even wearied the hardened Roman general, and the brooks were awash with blood as with a river. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 tells the story as vividly as did Josephus.

The subjection of the whole country took approximately three years while that of Jerusalem lasted 134 days. The Temple is said to have been destroyed on the same day as the Temple of Solomon. According to the notes in the *Companion Bible*, Appendix 50, p. 61, Dr. Bullinger places the destruction of the Temple 40 years after the crucifixion, making the book of Acts and Israel's opportunity to become "Ammi" extend into a 40 year period, ending

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in the downfall of their nation and Temple in A.D. 70. Surely, the words of Matthew 24:22 were literally fulfilled:

And except those days had been shortened no flesh had been saved.

It had been Titus' intention to cast up a trench about Jerusalem and literally starve the city into submission without recourse to arms, but he felt this was unbefitting a Roman soldier and commander and so took the city by direct assault. The ensuing struggle fulfilled literally Matthew 24:28:

Wherever be the corpse, there shall be gathered the eagles.

Instead of "eagles" as in the A.V., Rotherham translates "vultures" without intimating whether eagles, ravens, griffon vultures, or other birds of prey were intended in the passage. All these followed the carnage of battle and fed upon the carrion bodies of the slain. The Roman sword followed their eagle standards into the siege and Jerusalem became the corpse that fed the beaked-blade of the conquerors. Luke's gospel (Lk. 17:28) adds the interesting note that when Lot left Sodom judgment immediately followed. Again, Revelation 11:8 identifies Jerusalem with Sodom in the words, "... where their Lord was crucified." The Lord seemed to be saying that as soon as certain ones exited Jerusalem judgment would follow. They were told "not to look back" and to "remember Lot's wife." This was the woman who died upon looking back and along with everything else in those salt marshes, turned to, or was encrusted with salt. This would also explain the strange phrase, "one shall be taken and another left," i.e., the death-captive ratio as against those remaining alive after the Roman conquest. In

keeping with the passages in Deuteronomy 28:64 and Luke 21:24, those not slain would be led away captive into all nations. The ratio would be very high, and those used up in the arenas for public sport and others sent to the mines could well have wished that they had been slain initially. In Luke the Apostles ask the blunt question, "Where?" and this text of the birds of prey feasting on the dead is given. It must be

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concluded that the siege of Jerusalem was meant in this answer (see Luke 17: 37). It is noteworthy also that Luke mentioned that the same type of coming would fall upon Jerusalem as fell upon Sodom, one of judgment. Luke mentions one other facet that is not spoken of by Matthew, mainly:

... and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be carried away captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the nations until the seasons of the nations be fulfilled (and shall be) (Luke 21:24).

The same thought is expressed in Micah 3:13 who prophesied concerning Judah and the soon judgment upon that nation. It is also expressed in Isaiah 63:18 who prophesied of the great Babylonian servitude. It is also spoken of in Daniel 8:10, "... stamped upon them (A.V.)." — "trampled them under foot." This would be the people symbolized by the falling stars (see *Companion Bible*). The word translated "trodden down" has the thought of the conqueror's foot upon the neck of the vanquished.

The nations mentioned in Luke would be the various parts or peoples that made up the Roman Empire. The word "Gentiles" in the A.V. is not objectionable as such since it comes through the Latin *gens*, *gentilis*, i.e., race. It is the usual rendering of the Gr. *ta ethne* and the Heb. *goyim*, the nations or those of a distinct race and culture or a different race and culture. As it is used in this passage, it would exclude the Jewish race by the very nature of the case. Rome sought to govern its varied races by appointing rulers having something in common with the governed, usually that of race.

The word translated "times" or "seasons" is from the Gr. *kairos*, denoting due measure, that which is fitting, the right proportion, a propitious opportunity to do something, a suitable time, when something ought to be done, as for instance, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). *Chronos* marks the quantity of time *kairos* its content or quality. Taking this into account the passage lends itself to the following interpretation:

1. Jerusalem and the Jewish economy would be completely destroyed.
2. This would be done in conjunction with the nations about them belonging to the Roman Empire. Before the siege was over Jerusalem and the Land had been confronted with the Fifth, the famous Tenth, and the Fifteenth Legions — all experienced veterans who had served under Vespasian (the Tenth had been in Europe, Britain and Egypt and was Germanic in origin). To these were joined the ill-timed Twelfth from Syria, the Third and Twenty-second from Alexandria, plus twenty cohorts of allies, and eight squadrons of horse or cavalry. Kings Agrippa and Sohemus joined the Prince Titus along with forces from Antiochus, and a large company of Arabs.
3. The dissolution would continue as long as necessary to accomplish the destruction of the Jewish state and Jerusalem, its center. The dissolution would take whatever time needful to accomplish this end without the text specifying how long that would be, or what would happen to the land, the people, or the city afterwards. It never was completely barren of its Jewish inhabitants and by A.D. 131 they were in great number there, and they again revolted and were again dispersed. Jerusalem was again partially rebuilt by the Emperor Adrian, and the temple site excavated but leakage from natural gas deposits caused explosions, set off by the picks and tools of the workmen — leading all to believe that the site was cursed by God, and the work of restoration was abandoned.

Because of the continual rebellion of the Jews, circumcision was abolished as a distinctive mark upon the Jew. This was an effort to absorb the Jews into the other races and dilute their unity, although this element of unity was lacking within their own ranks. The misinterpretation and misapplication of Luke 21:24 has led many into a mistaken prophetic program. At the time of the Balfour Declaration, November 1917, favoring the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, a great flood of prophetic literature was produced in which the "end time" and "coming" were the prominent features." Following the Balfour Declaration was the capture of Jerusalem from the "Turks by Gen. Sir Edmond Allenby, December 10 of the same year. These events raised the prophetic expectations of millions and these events were counted as the

prophetic pivot in time in which the silence of God was over in respect to that land and people. Some religious groups still equate the years of 1844 and 1918 with 1967, the year of the Israeli war; not seeing that all these dates cannot be

brought into a dateless and unprophecied grace program. Of course, these feel that the grace of God has run its course and God's last word of judgment is soon operational. This all supposes that the program of Ephesians and Colossians was a temporary arrangement meant to fill in a gap (hence the gap theory) in respect to Israel and Daniel's 70th week. Rather, the purposes set forth in Ephesians and Colossians embrace God's original intent and Israel was the needed parenthesis to bring into the world the Redeemer and, in the words of Daniel, "everlasting righteousness," i.e., forensic justification, which is the main thrust of the book of Romans. Whatever needs doing in the heavens and earth to bring to fulfillment the purposes of Ephesians and Colossians will be done but as far as even implying a limit on the purpose and dispensation involved, absolutely not.

Continuing with Matthew 24:29:

But straightway after the tribulation of those days The sun will be darkened And the moon will not give her brightness, And the stars will fall from heaven, And the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

It should help us to know that the above is a quotation from the Old Testament. It is there used of the fall of nations and kingdoms. Since this is The Scripture's own interpretation of this highly symbolical language in the Old Testament, it must also be the explanation here. Aside from lunar or solar eclipses, or atmospheric conditions, if the sun were to literally cease to give light from its solar furnace's being banked, then all life on this planet would cease abruptly. If the stars were to be literally moved from their places in our solar system the earth could not survive the cataclysm that would follow.

In November 1833 Leonid's meteoric shower was so magnificent that many people thought this was the stars falling and that the end of the world was at hand, and the passing of Halley's Comet in 1835 triggered a doomsday outlook; some believers dressed in

white ascension gowns and stood on the hillside expecting to be raptured. But if we remember that this is the language of calamity cast in the eastern mode of symbolism, being at variance with our western literalism, it is easily understood.

This was the language spoken by Isaiah depicting the downfall of Babylon (Isaiah 13). At the time Isaiah spoke these warning words the destruction of Babylon as a world power seemed Impossible but its star was to fall, its power shaken, and another kingdom was to take its place. Similar words were used to

depict the eclipse of Bozrah and Idumea (Isaiah 34:4) with the added symbolism that the heavens would be rolled together and its hosts dissolved. Highly symbolical language is used in regard to the Pharaoh of Egypt and his fall at the hands of the King of Babylon —with the added symbolism of the feeding of the beasts of the whole earth in addition to the stars being darkened and the moon not giving light (Ezekiel 32:1-11). The prophet Micah uses interesting language in respect to the discredited leaders of the twelve tribes when he says that it was:

Night to you — for lack of vision
And darkness to you — for lack of divination,
And the sun shall go down in over the prophets,
And the day shall be overcast
because of them (Micah 3:6, 7).

The next verse in Matthew's account (Matthew 24:30) has been the subject of a host of interpretations and hardly any two expositors agree on any or all points. It had to have a meaning to those initially addressed in the passage. The apostles had asked about the "end" of the age, and this verse would be the concluding remarks in a long passage that would give the apostles their answer. It would not be an answer if a long "gap" theory was introduced at this point. All the events were to follow in a logical sequence. The great truths of Ephesians/Colossians are not a "gap" theory with which to explain unfulfilled scheduled prophecies. Israel had been told very explicitly in Matthew 23:39, "... in no wise may ye see me henceforth until ye say, Blessed is He that cometh in The Name of The Lord." The "seeing" was to be after the confession, not before.

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The lord had many comings in the past, in varied forms and ways, as Micah aptly describes them:

... Whose comings forth have been from of old, from
the days of age-past times (Micah 5:2b).

Our Lord did come in a judgmental way in A.D. 70 just as He had in the past. His presence there was necessary to fulfill His own words to the generation then living upon whom He had placed the culpability and guilt worthiness for all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel to the time then present (Matt. 23:35, 36); for that generation was privileged, and hence enlightened, in a unique way as no other generation before it or since by The Son of God being in their midst for three and a half years. They did what no other generation could do, "... trampled underfoot The Son of God, and the blood of the (new) covenant hath esteemed a profane thing" (Heb. 10:29). A favorable "sending back again" of The Christ was conditioned upon the repentance of the nation (Acts 3:19, 20).

Some repented in Jerusalem as mentioned in Acts 2, and others among the dispersion, but the nation as a whole and the leaders in particular fulfilled the words of Hebrews 10:29b: "... unto the Spirit of favour (grace) hath offered wanton insult." Thus, at the end of the traditional forty-year grace period of Acts for Israel, the prophesied end came.

And then will be displayed

The sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then will smite their breast All the tribes of the Land; And they will see The Son of Man Coming upon the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory (Matt. 24:30).

The "sign" reference here spoken of to denote The Son of Man being in heaven is ambiguous to say the least. The Greek word used for "sign" here is *semeion*, and is used of a mark, a token, something confirmatory, indicative or evidential. The sign was to signify that The Son of Man was in heaven. Some suppose the sign

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a token was Christ Himself, making the text read, "... the sign, that is, The Son of Man in heaven." This makes little sense and it is un-likely that Christ would be a token of Himself. The moment-by-moment unfolding of the prophetic events foretold by Christ, these could well be the sign or token or proof that The Christ who had been slain, buried and rejected by that generation, was living and judging according to His own words as The Son of Man. The "tribes of the Land" is better as a translation rather than the tribes of the earth, as the diminutive Greek *ge* is used rather than *cosmos*, or earth in contrast to heaven.

Clouds and their usages in Scripture have been spoken of earlier in this study, but to refresh our memories, clouds are frequently used in the Bible as, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud" (Ex. 19:9), or "The Lord' descended in a cloud and stood with him there" (Ex. 34:5), or "Who maketh the clouds His chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. 104:3), or "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Ps. 97:2). Whether Matthew 26:64 has any application to this context, it is interesting inasmuch as it mentions The Lord being in heaven and yet coming.

Hereafter ye shall see The Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and caning upon the clouds of heaven.

To those hearing this comment, a natural association would have been made with the text of Daniel 7:13, 14 where in vision The Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven and was thereafter brought to the one called The Ancient of Days. Curiously, in Daniel a contrast is made between The Son of Man and The Ancient of Days while in Revelation 1:14 they are identical. The Ancient of Days being depicted as a venerable old man is in keeping with eastern tradition and the whole in keeping with the symbolism of the two books. What is to be made of the angels mentioned in Matthew 24:31?

And He will send forth His messengers with a great trumpet, And they will gather together His chosen out of the four winds, from the heavens' bounds unto their bounds.

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Rotherham, in the above translation has rightly translated the Greek *angelos* by "messenger(s)" rather than the more common word "angel" (A.V. angels). The word means messenger. As to what kind of messenger, this must be determined by the context. In the N.T. John the Baptist is spoken of three times as an *angelos*, "angel," or "messenger" (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27; cf. 7:24). No doubt the angels to the seven churches of Revelation have reference to the ones bringing the messages to the congregations; this would merely be following the usual practice in the Synagogue then and now. These messengers were human beings. In the Old Testament *mal'ach*, the Hebrew equivalent, is used 211 times and is translated in the A.V. 94 times as messenger, three times as ambassador, and angel(s) 114 times. Some of these messengers were godly and others ungodly, some human and some more than human. The messengers of Matthew 24:31 were men like the apostles and disciples sent to various areas and churches throughout the Acts period to warn of impending judgment and to point out to them a haven of safety when judgment would call upon Israel. They did their work well as no Christian perished in the siege, if that is what the text has in mind.

Trumpets were a part of Israel's religious life. They were used to call Israel to station, to war, and to worship. They also heralded judgments. The association with the messengers meant that these messengers were official accredited agents of the King and upon a royal mission.

The four winds would be a depiction of the varied directions such as is in general use today. This reminds one of the passage in Acts 2:5 where those gathering at Jerusalem were "out of every nation under heaven" and meant the then known nations as listed in the verses that follow.

"Heaven's bounds" would be our way of saying, "from horizon to horizon" or "sky to sky." This varies from the point of the observer and can be much or little.

Those spoken of as "His Chosen" would be those believers in the Acts Kingdom economy, not those of the broader Ephesians/Colossians ministry. In spite of certain well-intended groups preaching otherwise, the events of Matthew 24 have no

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relationship to the grace dispensation in which we are placed as the Body of Christ.

Before completing the studies oh the comings of The Lord it may be worthwhile to read the following excerpts from Dr. E.W. Bullinger's book, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, pages 28-30, as these statements tend to confirm the arguments in the foregoing pages, that certain "Comings" were conditional, and that these thoughts were set forth by the good doctor in these excerpts.

And when Peter made the proclamation in Acts 3:19-21 and called on the nation to repent: and gave God's promise that He would send Jesus Christ and times of refreshing should come from the presence of The Lord; the people were at another Kadesh-Barnea! They were again face to face with another command, the premise of The Lord. And a way was open over (as it were) "the hill-country of the Amorites." This was the *Parousia* or Coming of The Lord, made known first and earliest of all the Epistles of Paul, and made known by a special revelation in 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11.

This was something better than the hill country of the Amorites, and it was far, far better than crossing the Jordan. For, this would have been a going up indeed! It was entering the heavenly Canaan with-out going through Jordan, "the grave and gate of death" to resurrection This was the hope for those who were alive and remained.

This is why the Apostle could say: "We, which are alive and remain"; for how was he to know but what the

nation would repent; and that he would really be among those who were alive, and would go up over the hill-country, yea, in the clouds of heaven, without dying, or crossing Jordan?

In writing to the believers in Thessalonica in A.D. 52, while Peter's offer of the kingdom, made in Acts 3:19-21, was still before the nation, and before its formal, withdrawal, in Acts 28:23-28, nothing could be added to the revelation then made in 1 Thess. 4.

But after that withdrawal of the offer from Israel,

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and the sending of the Salvation of God to the Gentiles, the question is, was any further revelation to be made? Had God exhausted the riches of His grace and of His glory? Had He nothing more to make known to His children?

Was it not even so in the case of 1 Thess. 4? Had not certain events to take place before any fresh revelation of truth could be made known? Had not the formal withdrawal of Peter's offer to take place? and then, would not the way be open for further revelations to be made? ... and, if we do, we find that, when the Apostle was in prison in Rome, THOSE REVELATIONS WERE GIVEN to him; SECRETS HIDDEN FROM MEN FOR OPERATIONS, and "HID IN GOD" (Eph. 3:8, 9; Col. 1:25-28) were made known: The great mystery or secret concerning Christ and the Church.

In that Roman Prison precious secrets were revealed for the Apostle's, and for our comfort and faith and hope. And the question again arises: DO WE BELIEVE GOD?

Shall we be like Israel at Kadesh-Barnea? Shall we believe God speaking through Paul as He spoke through Caleb and Joshua? Or shall we believe the majority, as Israel believed the majority of the spies?

Shall we say that when Paul wrote 1 Thess. 4 God had nothing fresh to reveal, in the face of the fact that up to that time we have not a breath of the mystery? Not a word as to the revelation and teaching given to us in Ephesians?

End of excerpts.

The good Doctor, then goes on to state that in Phil. 3:10-15 Paul was reaching forth to something set before him, and forgetting the things behind him. He mentions that Paul had not laid hold of it; but he pressed toward the goal. He adds that the Philippian passage (Phil. 3) has always been more or less of a difficulty with all of us. He assumes Paul is speaking of an upward call. To me, the context is that of Paul breaking out of the chains of Judaism, that he is seeking an out-resurrection out from among the dead, that is, a **STANDING UP AND OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD, of the**

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dead hopes in connection with the old covenant, and the dead hopes of the new covenant, as Israel had rejected both. The New Covenant was a dead issue with the nation of Israel then as it is now. They had rejected its terms and its Christ and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and trodden underfoot The Son of God. (Heb. 10:26-31). If Paul could admonish believers to "stand up out of the dead ones," (Eph. 5:-14), the meaning would be the same in the kindred passage in Phil. 3:11 except the context of the Philippian passage is the breaking loose from the claims and chains of his former relationships with his nation's fleshly ties. If Paul was to have a part in a restored earthly kingdom then his lineage would count for something in the Land. All this he renounces with a classic vehemence, counting it all garbage or "dung," "excrement" of birth, position, place, religion, and honor. All cast down the drain in order to enthrone Christ alone. What a grim statement of Paul's to heed, especially if we are seeking "station" in an earthly kingdom by virtue of what we are, or what we may be doing.

This study would not serve the interest of truth without considering the usage and meaning of the word generally translated "coming," i.e., *parousia*.

It is from *pareimi*, to be present. It is used of persons as in John 11:28, "The Master is present"; or of evil, "... destruction, distress, and anguish cometh:

(Prov. 1:27, *LXX*). It is also used of possessions, "... be content with such things as ye have (A.V.)," literally "the things that are present" (Heb. 13:5). It is used of persons coming, as in 1 Corinthians 16:17 and Philippians 2:12, and of letters in 2 Corinthians 10:10. Thus, it was used of persons, possessions, and influences. Aside from the "coming" or "presence" of debts, income, troops, or legal documents, *parousia* was also used by the Greeks of the INVISIBLE presence or "coming" of the gods at the time of sacrifice, or in the ecstasy of the worshippers. The impression so frequently given that the word refers only to the visit of a dignitary is unfortunate. In the Old Testament God's presence is also varied in its application:

1. God's presence in certain places (Jud. 6:11-24; 1 Sam. 3:10).
2. God's presence in the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 4:5).
3. God's presence in *The Theophanies* (Gen. 18:1; Ex. 3:2; 24:10).

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4. God's presence in "stillness" (1 Kings 19:12).
5. God's presence in His Word (2 Sam. 7:4).
6. God's presence In the Covenant-Altar (Ex. 20:24).
7. God's presence in dreams (Gen. 20:3).
8. God's presence in the prophet's call (Isa. 6:1; Jer 1:4; Ez. 1:4).
9. God's presence in His Spirit (Num. 24:2; Jud. 3:10; 11:29).
10. God's presence in battle (Isa. 19:1; Isa. 30:27; Mal. 3:5).

In the New Testament it is used in a personal sense, as "The Master is Come" (John 11:28) and of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:3 and 2 Corinthians 13:10. It is used of the "time" of Christ's death having "come" (John 7:6); of "chastening" in Hebrews 12:11; and "present" truth in 2 Peter 1:12. It is used of the hope "coming" to you in conjunction with the grace of God (Col. 1:16). Dr. E.W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible* p. 1364, comments on Matthew 24:3 and mentions the frequency of this word in the New Testament, of which he lists 24 occurrences. The conclusion drawn from all of the usages of this word and from the derivation of *para*, "with," and *ousia*, "being," is that the word should be

translated generally by the word "presence" rather than "coming." The context denoting the kind of presence. The "act" of coming or going is more in line with the Greek word *erchomai* with its varied compounds with prepositions

It is unfortunate, that so many Greek words are translated "coming" so as to leave the impression that the so-called Second Advent is the only thing in the future. The certainty of "grace" lies in the future, and that, unfortunately, has been lost sight of. This is found in the word *eperchomai* (*epi*, upon) used so beautifully in Ephesians;

In order that He might show forth in the Ages coming on the excelling riches of the grace of Him in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

This is set forth as the reason we have been made to be jointly raised and seated with the Christ in the supra-heavenlies in Christ Jesus (see Eph. 2:6). In the oncoming ages without qualification and without end, God The Father will still be revealing

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riches from the treasure hoard of His grace in Christ Jesus. This is a far cry from those who falsely suppose an "end" to this household and its rule of grace. It is a direct contradiction to the "last days" of 2 Timothy 3:1-13 that some affirm betokens the "end" of this grace. This dispensation will not end but it will broaden out until Ephesians 1:9, 10 becomes a reality in heaven and upon earth. There are no conditions imposed upon the continuance of The Mystery and the Dispensation of the Grace of God as a part of that Mystery. The secret desire of The Father as expressed in Ephesians 1:9, 10 will be accomplished and it will not be left to a rebellious Israel to bring it about.

All the identifying laws and customs that marked Israel as a distinct nation from other nations and as a theocracy have been done away completely in the great sacred Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. That which was truly an "Israel of God" during the book of Acts, that which was a "Remnant of Israel," and that which was made of the "Seed of Abraham" as in the book of Galatians, all these were made into a part of that "New Humanity" in Himself, of Ephesians 2:15. There are no "middle walls" existing any longer in God's plan of things that would erect barriers between "those without" and "those within." The "Law of Commandments" has been abolished; the ordinances of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant have been abolished (Eph. 2:15) so that one does not need to

approach God via covenants or through sacrificial-ritualist or priestly functions at a Jewish altar, in a Jewish Temple.

While it would seem that some do not want to believe the Mystery Epistle's statements in respect to the abolishing of the "Handwritten Ordinances" (see Col. 2:14-16, 20) one would suppose that the reading of the Hebrew epistle would more than settle this whole question as far as a "fleshly Israel" with an Aaronic priesthood with animal sacrifices, at an earthly temple ever again being recognized by God in virtue of this all having been abolished because it was fulfilled in Christ.

Every prophecy teacher seeking to insert prophecy into the events of today will be proved false by the events of tomorrow because we are living in an unprophecied dispensation, one having been "hid" in God. Eph.3:8, 9; Col. 1:25, 26.

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The Splendor of His Glory

If then, you were roused

In view of the fact, together with Christ, be therefore,

that you seeking that which is were co-raised (roused) above,

where Christ is sitting (with Christ, the above) at the right hand of God.

seek, where The Christ is, at the right of God

Be disposed to that which is sitting; the above set-

above, not on the ting your mind upon,

earth, for you died, and not upon the earth. For

your life has been hid to- you died, and your life

gether with Christ in God. Has been hidden (cf.

crypt, a burial place;

hence, kept secret)

with Christ in God.

Whenever Christ, OUR LIFE, Whenever The Christ is

should be manifested, then made visible, our life,

you also will be manifested then also you with Him

together with Him in Glory shall be manifested in

(Col. 3:1-4). glory (Col. 3:1-4).

Oh! that we could think God's thoughts! That we could see The Christ as God sees Him! As a young man recently wrote me, "Men do not reject Christ, what they reject is our (meager) concepts (and presentation) of Christ." Oh! that we could think God's thoughts as He sees us as having been awakened because of our encounter with His Christ. For seeing this our seeking would irresistibly be drawn to God's Christ and to the realm of His enthronement above. God has placed a "death" in our path by virtue of uniting us with our Savior in His death and with our Lord in His seating. The luster of this union pales all else besides. The most beautiful and attractive things on earth are but humble pointers of things above. The vast inner temple of life, that inner "secret hiding place" known to each of us and to God, is indeed "in spirit, His Temple" (Eph. 2:22), and has been kept inviolable and unprofaned as God's secret meeting place with us in Christ with Christ in Himself. All of God's purpose for Creation is summed up briefly in this, that it all be made Christlike, or as Ephesians 1:10 aptly expresses it, "totaled up in Him," "summed up in Him," "headed up in Him." Christ is the expression of what our life is

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meant to be, Christ is the expression of what our life will yet be, hence the Colossian passage boldly expresses it, "Christ OUR life."

In this paper we have spoken at length about the Comings of The Lord, or the "Presence(s) of The Lord," yet, in a larger sense, there are no "comings" or "goings" of The Lord except in a special sense. David wrote, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" (Psa. 139:7), for in the general sense there are no "absences" with God. Or, as Paul spoke in Acts 17:28, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being." So God is pleased to be everywhere and in all things

so there cannot be a separation from Him, but He has been present with certain individuals in a special way or in certain places, or through certain things. He was in the "Voice of Stillness" no less than in Balaam's ass speaking with the voice of a man. His presence was in dreams, judgments, the rains, or war or peace. His presence was with Israel as a nation, for redemptive purposes "that all the families of the earth might be blessed." Along with this "presence" at times there was a distinct "manifestation." This varied according to the ability of the recipients to bear it. At times it was evidenced by "signs" in the heavens as the "cloud" or "pillar of fire," or burning thorn-bush tree that was not consumed.

The "appearing," or better, "manifestation" of our Lord is not a synonym for the *parousia* or presence, or as the A.V. so frequently translates it, "coming." The Second Epistle of Peter stresses the *parousia* while the first mentions the "manifestation." The temper of the two is quite different, the latter being identified with the Day of The Lord and of God (3:4, 10, 12) and the earlier with blessings (1 Pet. 1:7, 13, 20; 5:4). When the Colossian passage speaks of "whenever Christ ... should be manifest" (Col. 3:4), of what is the text speaking? The A.V. translated "appear" rather than "manifest" but the latter is correct. The word used here (Greek *phanerothe* from *phaneroo*) means simply "to bring to light, to view clearly, to see one as he is." This could be a mental viewing, or an actual comprehension of another in the fullness of His being. It is interesting that Peter in his second epistle (1:16-18) declares that he had made known the power and presence (coming) of The Lord Jesus Christ, i.e., His incarnation presence, but then he goes on to speak of Mount of Transfiguration and the majesty seen there. Peter

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had been in the "presence" of Christ for a number of years prior to the transfiguration where Christ is seen for the first time in the fullness of His being, garmented with light and His face shone like the sun — this was the manifestation that Paul saw on the Damascus road. The hope of the Body of Christ collectively and personally is epitomized and summarized in this wondrous Colossian passage:

Whenever Christ, OUR LIFE, should be manifested...

whenever He is seen in the majesty and splendor of His being, what He really is in His Fullness, then we see ourselves as God intends us to be. Surely that is the meaning of the rest of that Colossian passage:

... Then you also will be manifested together with Him
...

First John 2:28 and 3:2 shed some light upon the meaning of this word "appear" or "manifest." The first is used in conjunction with *parousia*:

If He is MANIFESTED we may have confidence and not be shamed from Him in The PRESENCE of Him.

The second reference is self-explanatory as to the meaning of "appear" or "be manifest":

... and not yet was it MANIFESTED what we shall be, we know that if He (He? It?) is manifested like Him we shall be, BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

Subjectively, we are transformed only as we see Christ.

Now, in The Written Word that speaks of His person and work, hence, "that Christ might be completely at home in our hearts by faith (not by sight)."

Objectively, then we too are transformed:

... manifested TOGETHER with Him.

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Oh, to think God's thoughts with Him, to see as He sees, the whole and not merely the part!

Then the Colossian passage adds:

IN GLORY

This is truly the substance, the reality of the *Shekinah* (Heb. shekhinah, the dwelling place). It was out of this glory that the heavenly voice spake on the holy mount (2 Pet. 1:17) and it is uniquely "The Magnificent Glory." It was always God's plan that we bear the heavenly image; that was true in the very act of creation itself. God's ultimate purpose for Israel was that they make known to the nations the glory of God. "To awaken in His likeness" was the hope of ages past. But from now on forward whenever Christ OUR LIFE is manifested (Oh! so intimate is our oneness with Him!) that the manifestation will automatically be a mutual one. And, it will be IN GLORY, at one, at home in the splendor of His

glory, wherever that is and wherever it might yet be. Our destiny will be one with Him forever.

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

Daniel 9:24-27

Seventy weeks (Heb. *Shabua*, a seven or *heptah*) are set apart for thy people and for the holy city.

The People of Israel: 1. To reach an "end" act of rebellion, i.e., their apostasy as reflected in the rejection and death of their *Messiah*.

The *Messiah*:

1. To seal up sins, i.e. The final "sin-offering" (*LXX*) to take away a world's sin.
2. To make reconciliation (expiation) for iniquity, i.e., man's guilt. The thrust of the Epistle to the Romans.
3. To bring in age-enduring righteousness, i.e., "justification" as in the Roman Letter.

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4. To seal up, i.e., to bring an end to vision and prophecy.
5. To anoint The Most Holy. A place, however the Sanctuary, The Tabernacle, the Holiest of All, the Mercy-Seat and woven Veil -- all these spoke of Christ in His office, person and work. He is The Most Holy Place where God and man meet. In Him, the pictorial place with its furniture and overshadowing mercy-seat found fulfillment. The Heavenly attestation confirmed this John 1:29-36 & Lk.4:18. The Hebrew title, "*Messiah*", or the Greek "*Christos*", or the English, "Christ" all mean, The Anointed."
6. The Messiah shall be "cut off". Cut off in death. His cross was a finishing of the task assigned Him. He either did a perfect job of redemption or the question of sin and God has not been resolved.

7. Not for Himself. No, not for Himself He dies.

The Holy City:

1. Shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary. Titus did this after forty years of probation had been extended to Israel. The end came with a flood of blood. The brook *Kidron* was literally swollen with the blood and bodies of those slain.

2. Unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Israel's House was desolated (Matt.23:37, 38).

3. The sacrifice and the oblation was to cease. The Jewish war with Rome was occasioned when Israel's High Priest broke the covenant-contract made with Rome in respect to a daily sacrifice that was to be offered for the Roman Emperor. The. overspreading abomination, as the *Companion Bible* suggests is the wing, the battlement taking its place. This is also stated by Luke (21:20) wherein the encompassing armies are given as an explanation of the abomination that makes desolate in Matt. 24:15, which is quoted from Dan. 9:27.

The People of Israel:

1 . Until the full end, the desolation will be poured upon the desolate. The end was reached when the blood-guiltiness from the time of Abel to them then living in that generation was called into account (Matt.23:35, 36). Of all generations that have ever lived they were the most responsible because they had heard and seen in person The Lord Jesus Christ. He had spoken as no other living

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man had spoken, He had healed the sick and raised the dead, multiplied the loafs, fed the hungry, ruled over the physical elements. He alone of all men did not need to die but He gave His life in death for all. In His unique humanity we at last saw what we were meant to be -- and in His life-giving spirit, shall yet be.

Yes, 69 weeks are followed by a 70th . No hint is given that after 69 weeks of years that two or three or more thousands of years would intervene before the 70th would be fulfilled.

THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY

"Christ in you the hope of glory." This, says Paul, is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.

Whether the expression, as given above, "Christ in you" gives the correct meaning to this passage or "Christ among you", as some prefer, is correct, cannot, as we have seen, be decided by others. Only we can decide which is correct. Context, alone must decide the matter, for as we have seen, Biblical scholars have come down on both sides of the matter. Since it is context alone which must decide this matter great care must be exercised in searching out the purpose of the (Colossian) Letter and its general intent.

If we assume that the expression, "Christ among you" is the correct translation and meaning, we must pause to ask ourselves how it fits in with the near and more remote context.

First, the near or immediate context. Here we find that Paul states in verse 25 (Ch. 1) that he -- for the sake of the church, His Body -- has been made a minister of God to fulfill The Word of God in accordance with the stewardship that God had given to him on behalf of the Church. Paul goes on to state that it is The Mystery (The Secret) which has been hid from ages and generations that fills full The Word of God. He leaves no doubt that The Mystery that completes The Word of God is The very Mystery of which he has spoken and written of in Ephesians. It starts with God's secret desire of Eph, 1:9, 10 and takes in God's engraving of the Church to make it His own special inheritance, Eph. 1:14. And, reveals the

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oneness of relationship between the Head and His Body, and between each member -- and goes on to speak of many other things which were all kept hidden and secret from all past generations until revealed to and through Paul. To this Church, Paul goes on to state:

**God would make known what is the RICHES OF THE
GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY among the Gentiles;
which is Christ in/among (?) you, the Hope of Glory.**

**Is Paul saying that the "riches of the glory of this mystery" is Christ among you -
- the Gentiles?**

Christ being preached among the Gentiles apart from the hope of Abraham or Israel is certainly a part and parcel of what is involved in The Mystery, but The

Mystery involves much more than simply Christ being preached among the Gentiles apart from Israel and the covenants. If we insist that it must be translated, "Christ among you" then we have redundancy in Paul's words. He would then be stating:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES: which is ... CHRIST AMONG THE GENTILES.

The MYSTERY itself must be something less than the RICHES OF THE GLORY of The Mystery otherwise words have no meaning. If the RICHES OF THE GLORY is nothing more than The Mystery, what then is The Mystery?

What about the remote context of this passage? What is the purpose of Paul in writing the Epistle? Is it not to reveal to us how God in engraving His inheritance beyond what man ever dared to dream has made us complete in all the perfections of Christ? Note, the expression Riches Of The Glory follows after Paul has dealt with the perfections and superiority of Christ. In 1:15 (Col.) Christ is presented to us as The Image (*Ikon*) of The Invisible God, The Firstborn Of All Creation. He is presented as the reason for creation. He is The Preeminent One (Before all things), He is The Sustainer of all things, He is The Head of the Body, the Church, He

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is The Beginning, He is The Firstborn from the dead, in Him ALL FULLNESS DWELLS. What was Paul's point in laying before us his Christology at the time he does in this letter? Was it done so that we would find it convenient to build a systematic theology and base our Christology on these very points? Or, was it because the total argument of the Epistle required that he first establish the perfections and superiority of Christ as a basis for what was to follow? The riches of the glory of the mystery depends on the superiority and perfections of Christ. It was necessary that this be fully established before what was to follow could be understood and appreciated. It is this Christ, The One in Whom All Fullness dwells, Who indwells the believer and constitutes what is the "riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles."

Paul goes on in the second chapter of the letter to deal with the practical outworking of this inworked reality. He deals there with what it means to be "Complete in Christ" based upon the reality of the indwelling Christ.

The expression, "Christ among the Gentiles", tells us nothing more than we had already learned from Ephesians. Worse, however, is the fact that it ignores the context of Colossians and denies the thrust of Paul's argument. "CHRIST IN YOU" not only follows the natural progression of Paul's thought but makes the words:

RICHES OF THE GLORY

meaningful.

THE HOPE OF GLORY Col. 1:27.

Have you seen the Christ of God in all His personal splendor and glory? What He is? He is The Fullness of God. He portrays the nature and being of God. He is The Glory of God, The *Shekinah*. The Body of Christ is to be The Fullness of God. It is to convey the nature and being of God, with Christ, in all the on-coming ages:

To Him be all the glory in the Assembly

And, in Christ Jesus –

Unto all the generations of the *aeon*

that comprehends the ages! Amen. Eph.3:21.

The life of Christ and ours have become entwined and intermingled so that as The Fullness of God is shared and manifested in Christ it is also manifested in His Body. This is far beyond the promptings of the spirit in our lives, rather it is the essence and full realization of what is spoken of in Eph. 4:13:

Until we all advance -

Into the oneness of The Faith and the

personal knowledge of The Son of God,

Into a humanity of full maturity,

Into the measure of the stature

of The Fullness of The Christ.

THE *PLEROMA***(The Fullness)****by Douglas Falk**

Our hope is generally looked upon in respect to the prophetic program of Scripture, the seeker wanting an answer as to is "how" and "when" rather than "what" it is.

The following deals in part with what is the believer's hope. The concept suggested is aside from the traditional heaven, and embraces more than the Judaic kingdom.

The two following salient observations are made to summarize the relationship between God, Christ and the believer.

- 1. Christ is the embodiment now and always will be of all that God is to us (Col. 2:9).**
- 2. Christ is the embodiment now and always will be of that which we are to God (Col. 2:10).**

The need for The Perfect Christ to be such an embodimental surety is Inherent in the movement of the Infinite to the finite and of the finite to the Infinite. Redemption and God's self-revelation were once in the embryonic state. Now that redemption has been perfectly brought to pass, God's self-revelation can enter into the continuing process of His Secret Desire (Eph. 1:9), making known what He has in mind for all creation (Eph. 1:10). This will be historical in its accomplishment, yet unending in its development. In The Perfect Christ alone dwells at home all The Fullness of The Godhood substantially; i.e., really, truly, not seeming or imaginary; and in Christ alone is found All Fullness and our fullness. God has indefeasibly united and identified us with This perfect Christ. In contrast to our nothingness in ourselves, this union lifts us up above all else.

What is implied and meant in Scripture when it sets forth Christ as our pattern in life and hope, when it states we are to bear His likeness, and that He is the sum total of what is in store for His body of believers? What is meant when Scriptures state that Christ

partakes of God's Fullness, and that we in turn partake of Christ's Fullness (Eph. 1:23)? To what purpose is this to be used? The analogy of Israel representing God among the nations, and Israel representing the nations before God (even if this was carried out in a very limited way in fact) is illustrative of the function of the Body of Christ, but with the following exceptions;

1. God's purpose in its unfolding is not limited to the "nations" but embraces all creation, even unto the principalities and powers, whatever their realm.
2. This purpose of God is not conditionally covenanted with an attending "blessing or cursing" as with Israel, but through God's grace entirely. It is raised above and rests on another basis than our striving, merit, and reward, either individually or corporately. Because it is of grace, because it is spiritual, because it is in the highest realms, and because it is bound up with a perfect Christ, it cannot possibly fail. It is truly and fully all of God.
3. Our representation (in Christ) to and for creation is not done by shadow or symbol, but is accomplished by the most real and substantial way possible, in fact as real and substantial as Christ represents God to us and us to God. No less a representation than this in us would qualify us as The Fullness of Christ as Christ qualifies as The Fullness of God.

To summarize. Everything that God can be to us, Christ is or will be; everything that God in Christ can be to creation, we will be, both individually and corporately, as His Body; everything creation needs to be to God in Christ, we will be both individually and corporately as His Body.

Once this Divine union and relationship to God in Christ is comprehended, then God's goal, and purpose become meaningful because there is substance to them. Each facet of the believer's oneness with Christ is fraught with meaning:

>Christ The Pattern, His likeness, all that He is in essence and function,

>His Fullness and our fullness, our being the complement of The One completing,

>Our growing into a Holy Shrine in The Lord, being built jointly together into a divine habitat of God,

>Filled into all The Fullness of God so that we advance into the very measure of the stature of The Fullness of

The Christ,

>That we may be growing up into Him in all things, in Him The Head of the Body and creation,

>That we are to Christ as Christ is to God.

Thus the divine union with Christ, Christ The Wisdom of God is being made known. No wonder the glorious words of the anthem (Eph. 3:21),

Unto Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus!

Is it any wonder then that we are called upon to become "imitators" of God (Eph. 5:1) and to walk so that our conduct commends our wondrous calling, and that our spiritual growth is the growth of God reflecting always The perfect Christ! The Fullness of God is being fulfilled in us as a Christlikeness worthy of all creation's interest.

When one states that Christ is The Fullness of God, this is absolute when viewed from our finite vantage point, -- as viewed from God's side His Fullness must be accommodated to the vessel used to contain it or through which it would flow to others to receive it. The Body of Christ is indeed The Fullness of God (Eph. 1:23) but it will not become "God" as "God" is "God" but it is His Fullness in a relative sense, as when viewed from the standpoint of creation.

Being "in Christ" makes The Perfect Christ The Perfect Surety for His Body and its function to all creation. The Prototype

or Archetype, Christ, is matrixed in His Body so that it in turn becomes God's Surety in grace for all creation. With this type of patterning all creation comes within the scope of the *pleroma* of God. In such a Fullness there is no lack anywhere, since this completeness is to fill all in all, not in an abstract way, but a personal demonstrative way. All that any creature needs with respect to God's self-revelation is supplied, and all that any creature needs in respect to reconciliation is provided. There will always be this "two-way" thoroughfare throughout all creation. All relationships are enacted in pure grace, therefore no merit is involved, and therefore all will point to God. Just as we now require and

will always require the unfolding of God's character and riches in Christ, so Christ's continued office will always be appropriate; and just as creation will require a continual revelation so our office will ever be appropriate. It is in this scope of things as The Fullness of God relates to Christ and to His Body that one can truly say these blessings are "in the heavenlies," in nature, in essence, character, time, function, and only lastly place.

Could the very nature of This Fullness in its outworking be the cause of the warfare (Eph. 6) in respect to these heavenly things? That as Christ's struggle was with Satan in respect to the position He held, so our struggle is with the principalities and powers, not as to a place particularly as "in the heavenlies," but rather to the position, office, and function granted us in union with Christ "in the heavenlies," the stress being not on place but on the high and lofty character of the position that we are to occupy in respect to all creation as the Body of Christ, individually and corporately.

May not the warfare of Ephesians 6:1-10 be indeed a "pushing back" of darkness in all realms so that the character of God as embodied in Christ and us might be fully known? So that the engraven words of Ephesians 1:23 might be realized?

... The Fullness of Him, The One all things with all things filling.

Is it not for this that Christ The Lord is made Head over all things (Eph. 1:22), that the hope for creation is our tope, our function, our office our task in union with Christ? Is it to this end we are His body? For this we are to "stand"? It would be a shame if we were to enter into these things only when Colossians 3:4 is

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realized, i.e., appear (= shine forth) when the full and true character of Christ is seen. Certainly then, but why not now also?

Usually The Mystery is seen in the context of Israel, the barriers, doing away with rites, and so forth. Then a forward step was made to include Christ and the part He has in it. Perhaps now consideration should be given to the part Christ's Body has in it, not only in its relationship to God (wonderful as that is), but to creation, that is, the meaning of those things that are given us in Christ and for what use. Then we can begin to glimpse the unlimited, boundless extent of The Mystery. This, indeed, should be called,

The household and its rule in respect to the Fullness of the Seasons (Eph. 1:10).

Notes From A Letter

How natural is God's purpose, Eph. 1:9, 10. That which is spoken of in Eph./Col. is what we are designed for in Christ. It is the best thing for us and we for it. It satisfies and expands our spiritual needs and wants. It alone is what we truly desire and what we would choose if given a clear choice. It is unfortunate that we have lost contact with our initial feelings and thoughts so that we do not really know what we are searching for. Sometimes the so-called explanations do more harm than good. It is all really quite simple and basic if we would be humble enough to set aside our preconceived ideas and dogmas. We need have no fear of an honest search, of The Scriptures, nor an honest search of ourselves. All this is in contrast to ... "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us (Col .2:14)." God's purpose, purposed in Himself, will succeed.

The Scriptures embody a progressive revelation of God, His purposes, persons, and programs. The latest revealed truth takes priority over the earlier in time, place and rank. It would become operative only after it is revealed.

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Dethroned Principalities and Powers

by Russell H. Schaefer

He cancelled the hand-graven Law that barred our access to Him, that confronted us with its decrees. He took it out of our path, and nailed it to the cross. He stripped away from Himself all trammels of 'Principalities and Powers': He paraded them unsparingly, as He haled them in the Triumph Of The Cross.*

Paul illustrates how a bond was cancelled, i.e., a nail-piercing it to a pole. The Roman 'Triumphs' of parading captives shamefully treated followed by death in the arena illustrates what happened to certain Principalities and Powers.

Col. 2:10-14 depicts our oneness in and with Christ. This union frees us from all claims against us. We have been made "Complete" in Christ and our sphere of blessings are in the heavenlies, thus we are shut up to the Headship of Christ alone -- therefore any religious systems whether past or present have no claims upon us nor can anyone pass judgment against us.

Who are the 'Principalities and Powers' referred to in Col.2:15? Usually 'usages' of words elsewhere are the safest indicators of meanings, however in this case four difference realms are indicated, by a common usage of these titles. 1 . Roman, 2. Demonic, 3. Rulers and Authorities of Israel, 4. Super-natural Dignitaries.

Under the Greek word '*Exousia*', A.V. 'Powers' we have the following as suggestive:

Roman Authority (delegated authority) is seen in the Centurion of Matt.8:9; the Governor's authority in Lk. 20:20, and Pilate's in John 19:10, and Ruler's authority in general in Titus 3:1.

Demonic and Satan's authority is seen readily in Lk. 4:6 where Christ is offered a delegated authority under Satan. Eph.2:2 speaks of the Prince of the Power of the Air (i.e., the sort of spiritual atmosphere in which our lives are lived). Col. 1:13 pointedly mentions that we were rescued from the tyranny, the authority, of Dark-ness.

Israel's Religious Leaders is well illustrated with the Synagogue authorities before whom the Apostles would be brought. Lk. 12:11.

Super-natural Dignitaries is seen in the heavenly authorities being subject to Christ. Under this listing would fall those texts that refer to the authority of Christ, i.e., Matt.7:29; 21:23; and Lk.4:36. Heavenly beings, 1 Pet.3:22.

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***Bengal and Alfred have the "it" refer back to verses 12-14 .**

(On inside of back cover)

Under the Greek word '*Arche*', A.V., Principalities, etc. the following is suggestive:

Roman Authority (invested Rule) is seen in the Governor's rule in Lk-20:20, or the Principalities of Titus 3:1.

Demonic and Satan's Rule the passage of Eph. 6:12 that sets forth the conflict against, 'The Rulers of Darkness of this world', i.e., Cosmic-Rulers aptly illustrates this point.

Israel's Religious Rulers the Synagogue Rulers of Lk. 12: 11 aptly illustrate this.

Super-natural Dignitaries and their Rule. Eph.3:10 mentions those 'in the heavenlies' to whom the Body of Christ is a witness. Col. 2:10 those over whom Christ is Head, hence not evil rulers. Of those mentioned in Eph. 1:21, Christ is .. far above them. How to list those mentioned in Rom. 8:38 and 1 Cor. 15:24 is open to question.

as one can readily see the usage of "*Exousia*" and "*Arche*" in Scripture is varied . The context of Col. 2:15 would more than warrant this verse to be listed under **Israel's Religious Rulers.** This is not placing a strain upon the context or forcing it in any way. The only "open shame" that is plainly seen in Scripture as relating to Rulers and Authorities being brought to infamy are those leaders and authorities. The shame of the cross is uniquely that generation's crucible, crisis, curse, and final cause of judgment. To paraphrase their own words to Pilate:

... His blood (blood-guiltiness) be on us, i.e., let it be required of us, and on our children. Matt. 27:25

It was so required, it was so fulfilled, not at the time, the very moment Christ was crucified, but because of it, and the final historical moment was in A.D. 70 under the siege of Titus. This was the last judgmental act of God before the Dispensation of the Grace of God became fully operative. There has been no judgmental act of God upon Israel or other nations since that gracious revelation and pronouncement. Truly, instead of extending judgments over the earth and racking it from pole to pole, God has published GRACE to ALL.

(On outside of back cover)

TO COMPLETE THE WORD OF GOD

by Russell H. Schaefer

There is a Dispensation ministered through the Apostle Paul that "completes or fulfills" The Word of God (Col. 1:15).

Does this Secret or Mystery Dispensation complete the Canon of Scripture? Or, does this ministry fulfill all of The Word of God, i.e., does it bring all God's purposes to pass? Or, is this Dispensation the cap-stone of all God's revealed Word and by this means God's Word is "filled full" because this is the most sublime of all God's revelations? Or, is The Mystery-Secret Dispensation a combination of all of these?

The Secret of The Father's heart's desire is to Head-up, sum-up, to comprehend under one Head, to gather together in One all things in the heavens and earth, Eph. 1:9. As an adjunct to this purpose the Dispensation of the Grace of God, Eph. 3:2, leads into The Mystery of Christ, which is developed at length in the Colossian Letter. In this role Christ is to fill full the Body of Christ with Himself, Col. 1:27 & Eph. 1:23. There is a revealing and a releasing of the Unsearchable or untrackable Riches of Christ as part of The Mystery "hid" in God, Eph. 3:9. Other aspects of this Mystery have been "hidden from ages (time) and from generations", Col. 1:26. Certainly then this Sacred Secret is some thing very different than truths being obscurely revealed in parable or prophecy.

The "placing" of The Mystery truths in relationship to other portions of The Word of God raises some questions:

1. Were the Eph./Col. truths a "high-lighting" of the Book of Acts ministries?

2. Were these truths an "appendage" to the Book of Acts ministries?

3. Are these Eph./Col. dispensational truths merely a

"parenthesis" in Israel's Theocratic Kingdom ministries? An "insertion" of Pre-millennialism to explain how the "at hand" of prophecy seems to have become "distant" and how all of Israel's programs will continue on after this "fill in" of grace is over. That Temple, priest, altar and sacrifice is to be brought back, that all this had been merely side-tracked by The Mystery?

4. Is The Mystery-Secret Dispensation a revelation of God's

Original purpose? And, as a side-light revealing that all

barriers between God and man are down, and that the words of

Col. 3:11 should be realized now in our hearts as it is in the

heart of God?

**Christ unites in Himself ALL, and in ALL He
DWELLS. (Way's Trans.)**