

Coming World Crises

James Gunn

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Coming World Crises --Part 1

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Part 1

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Thu Future of the Ecumenical Movement.

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An Introduction to Prophecy

The twentieth century opened with an atmosphere of hope. It was taught, and generally believed in

Christendom, that through the preaching of the gospel conditions in the world would gradually improve until the majority would be converted, and a spiritual kingdom of God be universally established. It was also believed that at the end of time, the Lord Jesus would return in judgment to reward the righteous and condemn the wicked. There are still some who adhere to this optimistic but vain hope.

Two world wars and numerous other less extensive wars have shattered this unwarranted illusion. Today an atmosphere of crisis is almost universal; the fueling of impending disaster permeates the whole social structure of the Western World. It produces fear in the individual, doubt within the nation, suspicion among the nations and casts a sense of gloom and finality over the whole world.

These conditions should not surprise the Christian for they were predicted long ago by the prophets and apostles.

The Study of Prophecy

Bible students agree that approximately one half of the Bible is prophecy, part of it fulfilled prophecy and the remainder predictive prophecy. It is in this second aspect that we are here concerned. In the study of predictive prophecy there are certain terms which should be understood, especially in their relationship the one to the other.

The Terms

For the present let us consider four of these important terms: "Times," "The latter times," "The last days," and "The last time."

Times (1 Pet. 1:20): The N.T. renders this verse, "Christ ... has been manifested at the end of time for your sakes." Christ came in bodily form at the end of the various periods of time. "When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). These times may be considered as the different periods during which God dealt with man under diverse methods of administration: innocence, conscience, self-government, promises and law. During this present time, the last before "the great and terrible Day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5), He administers the affairs of man in grace. This is the day of grace, the day of salvation; it is the day in which God has given the full revelation of Himself in Christ.

The latter times: (1 Tim. 4:1): "The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." The idea conveyed by the expression "latter times" is a time much later in the period in which the prediction was made. If this is a reference to the prediction of the Lord concerning the false Christ which will attempt to deceive even the very elect (Matt. 24:24), then these are the latter times to the time in which Christ became incarnate, this very day of grace and salvation.

The last days (2 Tim. 3:1): "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." Paul here is looking into the future, and is describing conditions that will prevail at the close of the present period. The implication seems to be that during a period briefer than the one suggested by the former term, at the close of the dispensation of the grace of God, matters will be more perilous.

The last time (1 John 2:18): “Little children, it is the last hour.” The word “time” used here by the translators is the ordinary word for hour.

In the Gospel according to John, Martha speaks of the “last day:” as the day of resurrection (John 11:24), and the Lord Jesus uses the same expression as the time of judgment (John 12:48). See also John 6:39, 40, 44.

Without doubt the end of this period of grace is suggested by the figure, “the last day.”

In his Epistle John uses a more intense word with a similar eschatological meaning, “the last hour.” He also mentions some of the characteristics of this last hour: The anti-Christ shall come, but in the hour preceding his manifestation there are to be many anti-Christes, many who are against Christ, and yet demand a rival place in the hearts of men. How characteristically true this description is of conditions today! Within the professing Church liberal theology spreads and the influence of neo-orthodoxy becomes more dominant. Outside the professing Church many heretical cults increase in size and power. Errors within and without have become a common denominator of all Christendom.

A Summary

Within “the last time” of full revelation, the day of salvation, there are “latter times” when some defect from the Christian faith, when spiritism will increase, when men acting in hypocrisy will profess celibacy and practise certain dietary restrictions. Within these “latter times” there will be “last days,” a briefer period of time, in which by a comparison of 2 Timothy 3:1-8 and Romans 1:21-32, it will be seen that at its close Christendom will be morally and spiritually no better

than paganism. Within these “last days” there will be a still shorter period figuratively called “the last hour,” and this hour is characterized by an anti-Christian attitude and doctrine throughout Christendom.

A Survey of Predictive Prophecy

This outline of prophetic events is based upon the doctrine of the premillennial-pretribulational rapture of the Church:

The rapture of the Church and related events.

The judgment seat of Christ.

The marriage of the Lamb.

The rise of “the beast,” the political leader of Europe.

The seventieth week of Daniel.

The manifestation of the Anti-Christ.

The great tribulation.

The second advent of Christ to earth.

The millennial kingdom.

The revolt of a satanic-human confederacy.

The dissolution of the present earth system.

The eternal state.

The Value of Predictive Prophecy

The value of prophecy to the present individual student does not entirely rest upon an understanding of the consummation of God’s future purposes alone, but also upon its present influence upon his mind, character and conduct. The Spirit of God in the New Testament applies

predictive prophecy in various ways to the practical life of the Christian.

It provides comfort in perplexity (John 13:31; 14:3): The disciples were puzzled by the Lord's statement in regard to His leaving them. They thought only of a geographic change. Peter, consequently, was willing to follow the Lord to any other location. They did not understand that the Lord meant that He was going to the cross to make preparation for their eternal joy and comfort. To allay their fears, He predicted His return for them: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." The prophecy of His return was to provide comfort for them in their trouble and bereavement. This it has done for multitudes of God's people throughout the centuries. This same prophetic objective is seen in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

It promotes stability amidst inconsistencies (Phil. 3:20; 4:3): The exhortation to be firm and resolute with which chapter four begins is a link between the hope and glory of Christ's return and the inconsistencies in the lives of two sisters in the church at Philippi. The adverbial conjunction "therefore" with which the exhortation begins implies that in view of the expectancy of Christ's coming and our being glorified, we should stand firm irrespective of what others may do.

The hope that we have in Christ should promote a stability that will maintain the Christian in spite of the changing conditions in the Church and in the world.

It furnishes light in darkness (2 Pet. 1:19): The Apostle Peter in this passage pictures the Christian as in a dark place (a waste, probably a desert), and the prophetic word is as a lamp shining in the loneliness and darkness

of the area. This lamp will continue to shine until the Morning Star arises to announce the dawn of day.

The Christian relies by faith upon the prophecy of Scripture, and to him it is a light that will remain until the Day of Christ dawns through the coming of Christ the Morning Star, the Bright One (Rev. 22:16). As conditions in the world become more gloomy, the illumination of the Word of God upon current and future events cheers the Christian and enables him to steadfastly pursue his course with the understanding that God is Sovereign, and that He rules over all.

It adjusts character and conduct (2 Pet. 3:10-12): The material earth is already being dissolved, so the Greek text implies. The means of its destruction are within the earth itself. Inasmuch as the Christian understands that an eschatological cataclysm will bring an end to the world as he knows it, he ought to adjust his life in accord with true piety. The two nouns, "conversation" and "godliness," are plural in the Greek. This denotes that the Christian should urgently anticipate the future by engaging in every form of Christian living and by manifesting every aspect of genuine holiness.

It supplies peace in panic (2 Pet. 3:14): The feeling of an impending crisis may plunge some into panic. The very suggestion of a possible atomic destruction of the world terrifies many, and it might well. Peter here suggests that among future events is the return of the Lord; he, therefore, exhorts that God's people be found on that occasion in peace, without spot and blameless.

While the Christian cannot be sinless, he should behave so that he is beyond blame. Peter said of our Lord Jesus that He was "a lamb without blemish and without

spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). There was nothing about our Lord's character or conduct to mar His perfect life. The nearest the Christian can attain to this high and holy standard is to be without spot and blameless.

It incites purity in the pretence of corruption (1 John 3:1-3): The Lord Jesus is the very personification of purity. In this passage He is set before the believer as an example. Christ is absolutely pure; the Christian can be only relatively pure. The purity of Christ was a contrast to the sinful, wicked environment in which He lived. The life of the Christian, by the grace of God, should also be a contrast in this world of violence and moral degeneracy. The believer is responsible to purify himself, and this he may do by paying strict attention to the precepts and admonitions of the Word of God (Psa. 119:9; John 17:17).

Predictive prophecy not only gives information regarding future events, for it is actually prewritten history, but it also gives instruction in connection with present-day Christian behaviour. This aspect of prophecy is not only intellectually enlightening; it is also morally sanctifying.

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Ecumenicity is a word that has come into great prominence in recent years, especially in religious circles. A clear understanding of its basic meaning as

well as its modern application is necessary to follow this subject.

The Biblical Meaning

The Greek word from which the English is derived occurs fifteen times in the New Testament. Once it is translated earth, and fourteen times, world (Luke 21:26; Matt. 24:14; Luke 2:4-5; Acts 11:28; 17:6 and 31; 19:27; 24:5; Rom. 10:18; Heb. 1:6; 2:5; Rev. 3:10; 12:9; 16:14). In all these references the meaning is purely geographic and refers to the whole world. It bears a universal significance.

The Modern Application

The modern significance and emphasis given to ecumenicity have developed slowly throughout many centuries. In Church history one reads about ecumenical theologians, ecumenical synods, and ecumenical creeds, and understands that all of these are supposed to be world-wide in their extent and importance.

In more modern times a second meaning has been attached to the word; namely, unity. Today a religious ecumenical movement purports to be universal in its scope, and has for its objective unity with every similar movement throughout the entire world. The World Council of Churches is a modern expression of ecumenicity.

It is regrettable that some great evangelicals have become so obsessed with the modern ecumenical movement that they practise a policy of co-existence with men who are enemies of the cross of Christ. The Word of God delineates a path of separation from that which is anti-Christian and unbiblical.

An Ancient Ecumenical Movement

In the study of methods of biblical interpretation one has to take into consideration The Law of First Mention.

This simple principle states that the first mention of a subject in the Bible presents the matter in germ form; from that point throughout the Scriptures the details develop and increase.

The first ecumenical movement in the biblical records was religious, and was characterized by the ideas of universality and unity, but it was ended under a stroke of divine displeasure.

Let us consider the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9).

To assert that the Tower of Babel was an attempt by man in defiance of God to build a structure higher than the mountains is an over simplification of the whole project. Without doubt man hoped to escape any other deluge, but this was not his purpose in this great project.

Furthermore, to believe that Babel was built as a very high rallying place, a beacon to be seen by all in order that men as they increased not be scattered abroad, is again an over simplification of this effort of the ancients.

The words, "to reach unto heaven," may mean to represent the heavens. The ruins of a similar tower quite near to where the Tower of Babel probably stood may be seen even today. It is called Bir-Nimrud. It gives an idea of what the Tower of Babel must have been in structure and purpose. Bir-Nimrud is 153 feet high and is built in seven receding stages surmounted by a room on the walls of which are the signs of the Zodiac and other astronomical figures. The receding stages are coloured to represent the different planets. It may have been used

as an observation tower in the study of astronomy and astrology. The signs of the Zodiac were made to represent the Babylonian mysteries, and the tower was used for idolatrous worship. The Tower of Babel, as it would seem, was likewise used for idolatrous religious practices.

The overtones in the Genesis narrative are those of, first, universality (v. 1), for all the inhabitants were involved; second, unity, for men feared lest they be scattered (v. 4).

The building of this exceedingly high temple tower was a great ecumenical movement, but God in His displeasure terminated the project by confounding the one known language. His intervention ended the aspirations of the post-deluvians. Is there any indication in God's dealings with Babel, the first Babylon, of what His treatment will be of the last Babylon? We shall eventually see. Indubitably when the ambitions of the Ecumenical Councils of today are finally realized, God will again manifest His disapproval and destroy united Christendom.

The Church and Ecumenicity

Ecumenicity has as its objective universal religious unity. This is a satanic imitation of the divine oneness of the Body of Christ. All believers in the Lord Jesus are united to Him and through Him to one another. The Apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians deals at length with this subject, and adds this exhortation, "That there should be no schism in the Body" (1 Cor. 12:25). The primitive Church in her testimony did express this divine oneness, but her history, subsequent

to the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine, is full of schisms, parties and divisions.

The history of the professing Church: The Lord has given in Revelation 2 and 3 an illustration of the Church in her testimony. In the seven letters to the churches of Asia, there is a panoramic view of the professing Church from apostolic times until the rapture.

In the first place, it must be understood that these seven churches in Proconsular Asia were actual, historical, local churches. Furthermore, it must also be accepted that these historical churches were in the spiritual conditions described in the letters addressed to them. Notwithstanding their historicity, there is ample evidence that the Lord chose these seven churches in these seven varying conditions to illustrate the Church in testimony throughout this era.

The seven letters seem to fall into two groups. In the first group is seen the letters to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos. These three letters correspond to three different conditions which ran consecutively in the early history of the Church. The second group contains the remaining four letters. Apparently the conditions described in these run concurrently, starting at different times, to the return of the Lord. The conditions begin at different times but continue until the end.

The evidence: It is proper that some evidence be produced to substantiate this contention. Let the evidence be examined.

First, the number seven is important in Scripture; it is the number that denotes completeness and perfection. There were other churches in the area, but the Lord chose these because they are not only seven pictures,

but they form one complete picture of the whole Church. Second, the word “mystery” (1:20) intimates that in these letters God had a secret. It was not a secret that there were these seven local churches in Proconsular Asia, nor did the Lord consider their spiritual condition any secret. The secret lay in the fact that the Lord had something in these letters that was not obvious. Could the secret not be that the Lord was delineating in these letters the history of the Church in testimony in seven progressive stages? Third: the letters were not intended for only the respective local churches addressed, for each closes with these words, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” May we not assume that the Spirit meant all the churches of this era?

Fourth: if these letters were not for a very important divine purpose, why would the Lord have chosen seven more or less obscure churches (Six of them were very obscure.), and revealed such a variety of spiritual conditions? Surely these conditions lend themselves to the revelation of the different stages of spirituality in the professing Church. Fifth: in chapter 2:19 the Book of the Revelation is divided into three: the things which John had seen, the things that were then in existence and would continue for a while, and things that would be in the future. These church conditions come in between what was in John’s day and what will be in the future. It seems obvious that they are used illustratively.

The picture: The truth that has been stated becomes more evident as one studies Church history. Let us look briefly at the historical picture.

The state of the church at Ephesus corresponds with the condition of the Church at the close of the apostolic days, orthodox but cold. Smyrna refers to the martyr period under the emperors of pagan Rome, Smyrna in Greek is the same as myrrah in Hebrew. It is a resinous gum used in perfumery, medicine, incense. It was used extensively in the art of embalming. It is maintained that there were ten distinct persecutions before the Emperor Diocletian under whose rule this period ended, A.D. 313. Pergamos means marriage, and accords with the popularization of Christianity by Constantine; the time when by him the Church became married to the world, A.D. 313 to 590. Thyatira denotes the rise and development of Romanism. This is pictured by an impure woman who is also a hypocrite. She is idolatrous in her religious practices. This period began in A.D. 590 and continues today. Sardis is related to the Protestant Reformation which began about October 1517 A.D. and continues as the persuasion of very many. The Philadelphia stage of Church history may be dated from the beginning of the 19th century. It was characterized by an acknowledgement of Christ as Lord, a revival of love among Christians, and a definite evangelistic zeal. This state in like manner remains in the present. Laodicea comes last. Her condition was one of pride, materialistic wealth, self-complacency, spiritual luke-warmness and a forsaking of the Lord. From this condition, Christ withdraws Himself and appeals only to the individual, the spiritual among God's people. Many of God's people today realize that this is the state of things in which they live.

These seven letters cover the history of the professing Church from about A.D. 65 to the return of the Lord

Jesus. Throughout these many centuries there has been a constant serious spiritual deterioration, and until recent years a disintegration. The disunity which developed within the professing Church has left it badly splintered. One great division occurred in 1054 A.D. Previously there had been many schisms, but in that year the bishops of Constantinople (Istanbul) refused to recognize the supremacies of the bishops of Rome. There thus came into existence as two separate bodies, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church; from that date onward Christendom was divided. These two large factions remain unto the present.

With the Reformation Christendom lost any appearance of unity. At that time there came into existence several national Churches and various other denominational Churches. Some of these are known by the names of their founders; others, by the form of Church government practised.

At Pentecost the Church of the Living God came into being as the Body of Christ. Paul says of her: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is (the) Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Soon her doctrine was perverted, her purity soiled, her fellowship broken, her distinctiveness lost, her power annulled, and her testimony marred. Since the day she became married to the world through the Roman Emperor Constantine, she has gradually become more like a mangled corpse than the one Body of Christ.

The present of the professing Church: Early in the twentieth century, churchmen of sagacity and diplomacy,

men little concerned with doctrinal and creedal differences, could see the disadvantage of the splintered state of Christendom; therefore, they advocated unity among the denominations. More recently ecumenical councils have been convened in order to heal the old ruptures, and to establish a state of co-existence and practical unity throughout Christendom.

From such endeavours has arisen the World Council of Churches, and in a more limited sphere, the United Church of Canada. There is at present considerable agitation to bring about more similar unions; in fact, there are some Protestant leaders who are advocating a return to Rome, and there are indications that Rome would readily receive them, not as formerly, heretics, but as only prodigal children.

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Ecumenicity (Continued from last number)

The future of the professing Church: At the rapture of the Church, the salt of the earth and the illuminaries in this darkness will be removed. This, of course, does not

mean that religious activities will cease; 2 Thessalonians chapter two provides ample evidence that there will be a continuance of religion, even although this may revert to idolatry. It should be remembered that the Lord Jesus came through the Hebrew race (Rom. 9:5), and that so also will the anti-Christ. The Bible, the Word of Truth, was produced mostly by the Hebrews, and so also will be the lie (2 Thess. 2:11). There will be much religion in Jerusalem, the Jewish centre (2 Thess. 2:4); there also will be much religion at Rome, the centre of the Western Nations (Rev. 17).

In the Book of the Revelation two women are mentioned. Throughout the New Testament the Church usually is considered in the feminine. The true Church was won by Christ in His love and to secure her for Himself, He gave His life (Eph. 5:25). She is viewed as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). In her glory she appears as a Bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2); every feature is characterized by purity and beauty.

The false church is likewise pictured as a woman, a fallen woman. In Revelation 17 this false church is described as proud, wealthy, corrupt, defiled, murderous and abominable. That chapter deals with her future activities, her judgment and end.

In ancient Babylon there was a real ecumenical movement, but God ended that movement by the confusion of tongues. Eventually, according to the Prophetic Word, there will be a more extensive ecumenical movement. In Revelation 17 the false church, the woman, and the beast upon which she is seated, the civil powers, are one. The woman is seen to be in the saddle on the beast's back, but while he carries

and supports her she has him under her control. Here is ecumenical Christendom. All denominational distinctions have disappeared and only one great ecclesiastical system remains, and that system headed up by the Papacy.

The characteristics of the future ecumenical movement:

1. It belongs to and functions upon the earth (Rev. 17:1 and 5). She sits upon many waters, a symbol of the troubled nations. The true Church is heavenly in her origin and destiny.
2. She is the mother, therefore the parent source, of all spiritual harlotry and abomination (V. 5). The bride of Christ in contrast is a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2).
3. Spiritual Babylon seeks world supremacy; she sits upon the waters (V. 1). This suggests her international sphere of operations. She also is pictured as sitting upon the beast (V. 3), and this suggests her confederate influence; she rules over the individual kings of the earth (V. 18). Here we see her national power. How contrary all this is to the position of the true Church of Christ! "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands" (Eph. 5:24).
4. This anti-church of the future is idolatrous. The word "abomination" used here of apostate Christendom (17:4-5) is the word used frequently in the Old Testament to indicate God's abhorance of idolatry and immorality of all kinds. "And there were sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:24). "But he (Ahaz) walked in the

ways of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abomination of the heathen, ... he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills, and under every green tree" (2 Kings 16:3-4). Maryolatry is but one aspect of this great wickedness.

5. The Roman church was, and again will be, intolerant of all who refuse to bow before her. She is drunk with the blood of the martyrs (Rev. 17:6).

The description of Babylon, the harlot in Revelation 18-19, corresponds to the Roman Catholic Church geographically, religiously and materialistically.

Indubitably, the ecumenical aspirations of the present day church leaders will be successful in the unification of all Christendom.

The end of the false ecumenical church: The destruction of Babylon, the great ecumenical monstrosity, is recorded twice in the Book of the Revelation; the first time, in chapter 17; the second time, in chapter 18. A comparison of these two records shows that chapter 17 gives the fall of Babylon from the divine perspective. In chapter 17 she is destroyed by the Western Nations represented by the beast (Vs. 8-15). God puts into their hearts a revulsion toward the religious system which has dominated them, and which they had supported.

In chapter 18 these same nations lament the fall of Babylon and bemoan their loss. The kings of the earth lament her destruction (Rev. 18:9-10) for she had been a diplomatic aid to them. The men of commerce mourn her end (Rev. 18:11-13) for the world markets are affected. Finally, those engaged in transportation and shipping join in the general languishing (Rev. 18:17-19).

From a comparison of these two records, it becomes clear that eventually the nations which have profited most through the ecumenical apostate church, against their own wishes destroy her; they carry out the divine intention in spite of their own wills. Just as men had to end the first great ecumenical effort at Babel for God influenced their minds, even so that great ecumenical religious system, the pride of man, will be destroyed by man because God will influence his mind to execute that which is loathsome to God.

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The Judgment Seat of Christ

—continued from last number

The Return of Christ

Mention has been made of the beginning and the ending of the Day of Christ; the former takes place when Christ comes to the air; the latter, when He comes back again to the Mount of Olives. He is coming to the air as the Resurrection and the Life. As the Resurrection He will raise the blessed dead, and as the Life He will transform the members of the Church then living.

From this knowledge it will be seen that Christ's return to earth is in the two stages already mentioned; first, He comes to the air; second, He continues His descent to earth. In the first of these stages, He comes to meet the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18); in the second, He comes to the earth with the Church. He comes to the air as the Bridegroom for His Bride, the Church, He continues to earth as King. He appears in the air as the Morning Star; He comes to earth as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. He comes to the air as the Lamb to be married; He appears in relation to matters on earth as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah in all His majesty.

That some time must elapse between these two stages is obvious. Events take place in both the air and on earth between them. Let us consider the one event in the Day of Christ that is very prominent in the Pauline epistles; namely, the Judgment Seat of Christ. Before doing so there are two or three important matters related to the return of the Lord Jesus which we ought to examine, albeit rather briefly, because they are pertinent to coming world crises.

The Imminence of Christ's Return

It is frequently asserted that there are no signs given to the Church relative to Christ's return, and that consequently Christians should not be looking for signs. This statement is not so meaningful when we understand that His coming for the Church His Bride is but one stage of the complete act, and that the signs of Christ's return involve the whole act. Furthermore, while there are signs for Israel, there are also many indications of the "latter times" given to all believers, a number of them in Paul's Church epistles.

Let us consider some of the many indications that prove we are in the days just previous to the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

I. The prevalence of travel: Michael said to Daniel, "Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4).

The statement, "Many shall run to and fro," may be taken to indicate that the restlessness of the end times will manifest itself in extensive, speedy, frequent travel. The jet airliner has made the world small. Intercontinental travel is a daily occurrence now.

II. "Knowledge shall increase," denotes that in the end times there shall be extensive acquisition of knowledge with a corresponding dissemination of learning. Never in all of his history has man possessed so much knowledge; science has opened up large areas heretofore unknown. The dissemination of knowledge today is unprecedented. It is quickly divulged by means heretofore unavailable to the general public. It is spread

rapidly by the news media: the press, radio and television.

III. Perilous times: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (1 Tim. 3:1). The word "perilous" is certainly descriptive of our times. In spite of the efforts of the United Nations Organization, political animosity abounds.

Instead of the nations being brought closer together, the strong spirit of nationalism has fragmented even empires and powers of long standing. Social and domestic infidelity has ruined family and community life in many places. Segregationalism and anti-segregationalism have developed to such an extent that racial wars are thought by some to be very imminent. On good authority we are informed that the number of earthquakes has increased, as have also the fury of hurricanes. These have penetrated into parts heretofore considered safe. What signs of the times!

IV. Apostasy: The extent of this evil leaves no doubt as to our being in the end times. "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day (the day of the Lord) shall not come except there come a falling away, (an apostasy) first" (2 Thess. 2:3).

Today there is a general defection from the truth of God. Theology questions the inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, a physical resurrection, and the efficacy of Christ's atonement. The general defection from the facts of the Christian faith is exemplified in the developments of the many modern cults.

Philosophy disposes of God and elevates man, making him the master of himself and of his future. Biology

replaces when possible, the Genesis record of the creation of man by a modified form of Darwinism.

The apostasy penetrates into every discipline on the college curriculum.

V. Spiritualism: This satanic delusion is a definite sign of the last times. "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1). The affairs at spiritualistic seances are not all trickery and deception. There are demons which possess human personalities. The witch of Endore is a concrete example, not to mention the many demon possessed persons of whom we read in the four Gospels. There are mediums, wizards, who peep and mutter and speak to the living as from the dead (Isa. 8:19).

The practice of eastern occultism by some of the western cults is evidence that many are giving heed to the doctrines of the devils, and are seduced by evil spirits.

VI. The conflict between management and labour: James says of the wealthy, "Ye have heaped together treasure for (in) the last days" (Jas. 5:1-6), and this apparently at the expense of the poor. James pictures the conflict between affluence and poverty, between materialism and want, between employer and employee, in the last days.

This conflict was never so evident as it is today. The unrelenting struggle to socialize the nations continues. Plans are made, white papers are studied to purposely deprive the wealthy of their excessive riches in order to equalize all.

The Christian caught in this confusion is exhorted to be patient unto the coming of the Lord.

VI. Israel: Israel has been called God's sun-dial; through her He indicates to man His times and seasons in the schedule of His prophetic plan.

At the first Church council in Jerusalem, James said, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins there, and I will set it up" (Acts 15:14-16). What a statement! God has purposefully designed the ages. He has predetermined in this age to gather out from among the Gentiles principally a people. When this has been accomplished, He will restore the Hebrew nation under a descendant of David. To this the prophets agree. "I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them;.. and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:14-15).

The restoration of Israel to nationhood is an indication of the closing of the Church age.

The manner of Christ's return: He will return in person (John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Thess. 4:16). Inasmuch as we shall consider later other details of the Lord's second advent, we shall now focus our attention upon one of the events in the day of Christ, an event given much prominence in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

Christ's Judgment Seat

There are four judgments which have to do with God's prophetic program: The judgment of sin at the cross (Rom. 8:3), the Judgment of the Living Nations just before the Millennium (Matt. 25:31-46), and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Judgment is God's strange work, nevertheless, His righteous character requires it; righteousness demands equity, holiness and purity.

In the study of the doctrine covering the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not adverse to holiness to ask when, where, why and how this judgment will be.

The time: Since it is to take place in the Day of Christ, for such are the implications in a number of Scriptures (2 Cor. 1:14, Phil. 1:6; 2:16), it must take place after the rapture and before, one would assume, the marriage of the Lamb.

The Greek word *parousia* that is used in regard to the coming of Christ means the presence of Christ. It does not intimate an event only, but the condition resulting from that event. Christ's return for His Church will be an event that will place her in His presence, His *parousia*.

The Judge: The Lord Himself will be the judge. "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living" (Rom. 14:9). His lordship, therefore, His judgeship, over men does not end with death (Rom. 7:1); His lordship over His own is not limited to this life only.

Attention has been called to the difference between the marginal reading of Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians

5:10. In the first we read of the Judgment Seat of God; in the second, the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is of God in its character; it is of Christ because God has committed all judgment into the hands of His Son (John 5:22).

The judged: This is the judgment of Christians. Each believer must appear before the Judgment Seat (Rom. 14:10). Each one must give account of himself (Rom. 14:12). "We must all be manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ" (1 Cor. 5:10, J.N.D.).

It should ever be remembered that before the saints appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they will have been made perfect, completely transformed at the rapture of the Church (Phil. 3:20-21).

The place: That there will be an appraisal of the life of each Christian is clear. This appraisal will be made before the Judgment Seat or the Bema of Christ. The Greek word Bema used in this connection is a raised platform, a tribune, for an officiating judge (Acts 18:12-17), or for an army commander when instructing or addressing his troops. It was used at the Grecian games for the president or umpire when he was awarding the contestants. It seems that this Judgment Seat of Christ will be set up in the air.

The Reasons. Several considerations require attention at this point, first, the Judgment Seat of Christ is not a place of penalty (Rom. 8:1-3). There is no judgment for them who are in Christ Jesus. God judged sin in the abstract when He laid sin upon His sinless Son. The full penalty of sin has been endured for all who are in Christ Jesus.

Second, it is not a place of imperfection. Since at the rapture and the resurrection the saints are immortal and

incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:52-53), it is obvious that before the Judgment Seat all will be perfect. Perfection will enable all to be in complete accord with the Lord's appraisal of their lives.

Third, it will be a place of manifestation. The verb to appear in 2 Corinthians 5:10 might better be rendered to be made manifest. There will be a manifestation of the good (praiseworthy) and bad (worthless). The Greek word for bad does not mean that which is evil, but that which is of no worth, that which is unacceptable.

Coming World Crises --Part 5

Coming World Crises

Part 5

James Gunn

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The Judgment Seat

Of Christ

—continued from last number

Fourth, it is a place for the judgment of the individual. We are not to be judged en masse but personally and individually, each for himself according to Romans 14:12.

THE MANNER: There are three major passages which deal with the Judgment Seat of Christ, each with a particular point of emphasis. First, the attitude (Rom. 14:4-13, 1 Cor. 4:3-5). The introductory question and the final conclusion of this passage crystalizes its content; the Lord will make manifest the attitude of one brother toward another.

Second, the service (1 Cor. 3:12-15). In the early part of First Corinthians, Paul deals with the matter of ministry in the local church. First, with the ministry of the gospel (1:17 - 2:5); second, with a ministry of teaching (2:6-16); now in chapter three he speaks of the minister, for it is he who gains or loses a reward at the examination of his ministry. His ministry may be worthy or worthless, indestructible or destructible. According to his ministry in the Church so will be his reward.

Third, the behaviour (2 Cor. 5:9-11). The things done in the body are all to be examined by the Lord; our behaviour, pleasing or wrong, will be exposed.

The results: The results of Christ's examination of the believer's attitude, service and conduct are given in I Corinthians 3:14-15. First, irrespective of the outcome, the believer is saved (v. 15); second, he may gain a reward or suffer a loss.

In the New Testament five rewards are offered, and these cover the areas suggested by the three major passages: attitudes, service or ministry, and conduct.

For mastery over the Adamic nature, the spiritual athlete if successful will receive an incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25). For the soul winner there will be a crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19). For the patient in trial there will be a crown of life (Jas. 1:12). For those who love the appearing of our Lord there will be a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), and for the diligent elder there will be a crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4).

These are all laurel crowns, crowns of victory. In the ancient world these were called stephanus crowns and were made as a wreath of evergreen, and were given only as a public honour for distinguished service.

In Revelation 4:10, the four and twenty elders cast their laurel crowns at the Lord's feet saying, "Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power." Rewards won in Christian life and service are not for the honour of the recipient only, but for the honour and praise of the Lord Jesus.

The Future of Nations

To really appreciate prophecy one should have some understanding of history. Prophecy might be defined as pre-written history. The future must be considered in the light of the past because it is merely the consummation of the past and present plans of God. This consideration must be applied as one studies the nations, particularly the Gentiles in their past, present and future.

Their Commencement

Sacred and secular history both alike are of families, races, nations and empires; the one arising out of the other. Consequently, we reason from empires to nations, from nations to races, from races to families, and from

families to Noah and his immediate family composed of his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

From these three sons sprang the great races of mankind. In Genesis 10, we read of the descendants of each son that they were divided, everyone after their families, after their tongues, in their countries and in their nations (Vs. 5, 20, 31).

Through them mankind was divided; first, linguistically; second, geographically; and third, nationally. God intends that the nations remain apart, and this He accomplishes by the difficulty of communication, the distance of transportation, and the differences of administration.

Shem: This, the eldest son of Noah, is the ancestor of the Semitic peoples which moved into Babylon, Assyria, Phoenicea, Arabia and Palestine. In time they settled the greater part of southwest Asia. The best known Semetic races today are the Arabs, the Jews, and the Syrians.

Ham: the second son of Noah, is considered the ancestor of the African peoples. They are called Hamitic.

Japheth: The youngest of Noah's sons is presented in the Bible as the ancestor of the peoples of Asia Minor and Europe.

Their Constitution

National pride causes the patriot to rejoice in his independence, and to rely upon the constitution of his country. He looks back to the date of the one and points to the document of the other. These facts seem so historically real that one is apt to forget that God has something to do with the constitution of every nation.

God predetermines the times and boundaries of all the nations. We read, "God... hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

What a comfort to know that the times of each nation are by divine arrangement; their rise and fall are fully known to God! What a relief to know that He sets their boundaries and decides the limits of their expansion.

All this is clearly seen in the case of Egypt which in the days of Jeremiah had passed the crest of her power. "Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed" (Jer. 46:17).

Daniel emphasized other related facts before Nebuchadnezzar: "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17).

Three facts of importance apply to all nations: their duration, their boundaries, and their government. These are all by divine appointment.

Their Corruption

A study of the corruption of the nations results in an examination of their culture, their civilization, and their religion.

Culture may be defined as the refinement to which a people attains by the application of the arts, a refinement that expresses itself in literature, crafts and music. The cultural attainments of life are those pleasurable enrichments which lie beyond the mere necessities of livelihood.

Civilization may be defined as the sum total of a people's cultural, sociological, technological and governmental success. From earliest times nations have had their own culture and their own civilization.

Culture and civilization indicate the heights to which a nation may ascend; religion, the depths of corruption to which it may descend. No matter how ostentatious the culture and civilization, as in the cases of Egypt, Assyria and Rome, when spiritual corruption develops, these proud structures collapse. Corruption in the nations, both spiritual and moral, results from man's conception of and his attitude toward God.

Human history begins with a revelation of God in His trinitarian distinction of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:20). "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not... and their foolish heart was darkened." This darkness is seen in idolatry. In this man gave over God, and made for himself other gods; consequently God gave over man.

Man, according to Romans one, became a polytheist, a believer in many gods and in their mythology. Stooping still farther down, man became a pantheist, a believer that the Universe is God. Man thus became a worshipper of the creature rather than of the Creator.

With man's fall into idolatry came his fall into gross immorality. So debase did he become that he ritualized prostitution and made acts of moral impurity sacred.

Because of these sins in the antideluvian period, God wiped out all civilization with a flood, and to Noah, revealed Himself as at the first, the only true and living God.

Alas, history repeated itself and the nations turned from that clear monotheistic revelation of God to fall once more into polytheism and pantheism.

Centuries passed and eventually God called a man, Abraham, out of the darknes of idolatry (Jos. 24:2-3), and through him raised up a nation, Israel, to be His witness. Israel is a testimony to the fact "There is one God," "God only wise." This testimony to the one and only true God is now shared by the Church.

History again repeated itself and man fell, yes, and is still falling, but this time into agnosticism and atheism. With this spirit of unbelief has come a defiance of all that is spiritual, moral and divine. Consequently, today because of the resulting corruption, our civilization is on the verge of ruin. Morals decline, crime increases and lawlessness grips the masses.

Their Control

The struggle for the control of the nations goes on age after age. In fact, it has been called the "Conflict of the Ages." This conflict for control proceeds on three levels: the satanic, the human and the divine.

The Word of God teaches that there are visible principalities and powers, both good and evil. Of those that are evil it is stated, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12). Over these principalities and powers, the world rulers of this darkness, there is one called "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:16). He is also called the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), Satan, to whom these

titles are given, aspires to be both the political and religious ruler of the world.

Daniel pictures the struggle in national life between these evil powers and the good ones (Dan. 10:10-21.) One of these invisible evil powers is called "the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia," while one of the good powers is Michael, "The great Prince that standeth for the children of thy people," that is, Daniel's people (Dan. 12:1-4). From these references it would appear that there are invisible powers assigned to the nations by both God and Satan.

The conflict between these two powers is interesting. A message had been sent to Daniel by a wonderful man clothed in linen, but this messenger was hindered in the performance of his duty for 21 days by the evil prince of Persia. The message was not delivered until Michael, the prince of Israel, prevailed and removed the hindrance. Indubitably, similar invisible conflicts are constantly in process.

Not only does God seek the control of national life for the wellbeing of all through His invisible emissaries, but through human leadership; consequently, the powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1-5). Rulers are for the repression of evil, and for the protection of the good. That God uses rulers to execute His plans has been frequently illustrated; as for example, the decree of Caesar Augustus at the time of the birth of Christ (Luke 2:1-4), and by the birth and accession to the throne of Cyprus of Persia (Isa. 44:28-45:4).

The Scriptures assert that God, in the final analysis of things, controls "whomsoever" He wishes (Dan. 4:25), turns them "whithersoever" He wishes (Pov. 21:1), and

uses them to accomplish “whatsoever” His counsel determines (Acts 4:27-28).

Without doubt, Satan likewise influences rulers to perform his evil designs. This may be illustrated by the action of Pharoah of Egypt (Ex. 1-15), Balak of Moab (Num. 21-23), and Herod (Matt. 2:1-23).

If ever the struggles for the control of the nations by good and evil principalities and powers was felt among men, it would appear to be more so today. Satan seems to understand that he has but a little season, so he is intensifying his wicked efforts to bring all under his sway.

Coming World Crises --Part 12

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Part 12

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Will The Church Go Through The Tribulation

When the Hebrew nation reached its zenith during the reign of David God promised, saying to David through Nathan, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be

established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:16). In his worship and gratitude which followed this promise, David indicates how he understood the promise; he says, "For Thou hast confirmed to thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever: and Thou, Lord, art become their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou has said. And let Thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of Hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee" (2 Sam. 7:24-26).

Although through their sin the Hebrew people lost their national status in A.D. 70, James at the first Church council reveals how the revival of that nation will be accomplished. Making reference to what will follow the Church era, James says, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down" (Acts 15:16).

The origin and hopes of the Jewish people are national and earthly. Even the disciples of the Lord entertained thoughts of only an earthly kingdom; they asked the Lord, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). When Messiah does return to earth, the promise to Mary will be literally fulfilled, "Thou ...shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

The promises to Abraham, David and Mary must eventually be literally fulfilled: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:17-18).

It becomes exceedingly clear that Israel in contradistinction to the Church is an earthly people.

The Nations: Inasmuch as time has already been spent in an examination of the nations, it is not necessary to repeat what was discovered of their course, corruption and consummation. Their full power will finally be broken at the Armageddon, and they all will appear at the Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt. 25:31-46) where their future will be decided.

From these references, and many others in the Word of God, it is obvious that the Church is destined for Heaven; Israel to experience a regal and important place on earth, and all the nations to be ultimately chastised and judged by the Lord.

What deeply interests the student of prophesy is the sequence of these and other future events.

The pre-millennial interpretation of prophecy teaches that, first the Church is removed from earth by Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom; second, that the nations are punished under the wrath and judgment of the Lord; third, that converted and exalted Israel shall be the head and not the tail of the nations.

This interpretation of eschatological events indicates that the Church will not suffer the penalty due to apostate Israel for her rejection and crucifixion of her Messiah. Furthermore, it indicates that Christ will remove His Church by means of the rapture before what is called the Great Tribulation.

Israel in History and Prophecy

Israel's historical departure from the course of excellency that God had planned for her is readily followed by noting her rejection of God in His Triunity.

First, Her rejection of God: Chronologically speaking the history of the Old Testament closes with Nehemiah, but the Old Testament itself ends with 2 Chronicles. In this the last book of the Hebrew Canon there is a very serious indictment against Israel: "Manasseh...built again the high places...and he reared up altars and Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of Heaven, and served them... He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnon: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger" (2 Chron. 33:16).

Second, Her rejection of Christ: The rejection of Christ and His subsequent crucifixion were charged against the entire nation of Israel by the Apostle Peter when he addressed himself to the leaders of the nation: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted

unto you; And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses' (Acts 3:13-15).

Third, Her rejection of the Holy Spirit: Stephen charged against Israel that they always resisted the Holy Ghost. He summarized his lengthy defence in these words: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

In the martyrdom of Stephen we have Israel's final and full rejection of the God of their fathers.

In regard to Israel's prophetic restoration, we have numerous divine predictions in both the Old and New Testaments. Isaiah records the promise of God to His chosen people, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel" (Isa. 27:12). The Lord Himself likewise prophesied of the national restoration; He said, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:30-31). There are many other passages which might be taken into consideration (Jer. 12:15; 24:6. Ezek. 20:42; 28:25-26. Zeph. 3:20. Zech. 10:10 and Rom. 11-12-27). It is in connection with the recovery of Israel that we read of the "goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22).

Obviously God has dealt in severity with Israel and He will continue so to do until Israel is corrected and purified. The Great Tribulation is God's means of chastening, correcting and purifying His people as He restores them to Himself.

The Great Tribulation and Israel

There are in the Bible at least five different descriptive ideas of the Great Tribulation. An examination of these reveals the true character of that period and who will actually be involved.

First, the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7): This indicates its objective. This period of grave adversity lies in the future for Israel, the nation that descended from Jacob.

Second, the indignation (Dan. 8:19; 11:36): Its source: God is indignant with His chosen people, the Hebrews, because of their apostasy and because of their rejection of His Son. He is also indignant with all the nations because of their iniquity and idolatry. In His indignation He will punish His people, and this suffering will also involve the world (Rev. 3:10).

Third, a time of unparalleled suffering (Dan. 12:1): Its uniqueness: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." The Lord Jesus added to this description; He said, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

Fourth, the Great Tribulation (Rev. 17:14): Its character: While there are numerous features belonging to the period called the Great Tribulation, it is evident from the whole tenor of Scripture that it is very extensive, and

that it is the result of hostility among men, convulsions in nature and calamities on a vast national and international scale.

Fifth, the consumption (Isa. 10:22- 23): Its purpose: The final divine purpose is to consume the national dross of Israel in righteousness. This, of course, will result in the survival of only a remnant.

The Great Tribulation and the Church

It is clear from how the Word of God describes the Great Tribulation that it has a direct bearing upon Israel.

Israel is an earthly nation, and she will experience this unique time of suffering here on earth. Without doubt other nations will be indirectly involved; they also will suffer, but there is no intimation whatever in the Word of God that the Church will be subjected to this trial. See Revelation 3:10.

While this argument of omission is not convincing in itself, there are passages of Scripture which state that the Church will not be on earth at that time. Her deliverance from this ordeal is assured; first, in the gospel, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9). Second, it is intimated in the expectancy of the early Christians, Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, our Deliverer from the coming wrath" (1 Thess. 1:10, N.T.). Third, it is also included in a statement of prophecy, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9). Fourth, it is contained in a divine promise,

“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

The Purpose of the Great Tribulation

The purpose of the Great Tribulation apparently is multiple. First, to purge the nation of Israel from its large element of apostasy (Deut. 4:29-30. Isa. 10:22-23; 28:16-22). Second, to prepare the surviving remnant to receive Christ the Messiah (Isa. 53). Third, to chastise all the world for its iniquity and sin (Isa. 6:21). Fourth, to demonstrate the character of divine righteousness (Isa. 10:22). Fifth, to prepare Israel and the world for a reign of absolute righteousness and glory (Mal. 3:1-3).

The Time of the Great Tribulation

Daniel was instructed by Gabriel that seventy weeks (weeks of years) were determined upon his people (Dan. 9:24-27). These seventy weeks form a prophetical schedule of Israel's future; that is her future from Daniel's day. When completed, Israel will experience the result of Christ's atonement. He for her at Calvary “finished the transgression,” her failure to recognize her Messiah. “Make an end of sins,” and “make reconciliation.” The work of atonement before God will be appropriated by the remnant nation. Furthermore, her Messiah, at first rejected but now received, will “bring in everlasting righteousness.” He will seal up as a finished deed the vision and prophesy of national restoration. He will anoint the Most Holy place in the Millennial temple.

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Will The Church Go Through The Tribulation (continued)

Before that glorious consummation for Israel other events must transpire. The seventy weeks are divided into three: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week.

The seven weeks of 49 years measures the time that it took to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. That period began with the command of the king Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (Neh. 2). The sixty-two weeks, or 434 years span the time from the completion of Jerusalem to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ. He came to His own, but His own received Him not (John 1:11).

The last week has not yet been fulfilled. Sixty-nine weeks are now history; the remaining week is prophecy. This final week begins with a covenant being made by the Head of the Revived Roman Empire with many of Daniel's people, not all. In the middle of that week of years, he apparently changes the terms of the covenant and thus breaks the peace pact that he had formulated. He stops Jewish sacrifices, desecrates their holy place, and introduces idolatrous self-worship through an image of himself set up in the temple by the Anti-Christ. Both of these wicked persons will be the objects of veneration and worship by a deluded nation. For three and a half years this miserable abomination will be perpetrated.

The few who refused to enter into a covenant with the beast will certainly suffer. He, the seven-headed monster and the Anti-Christ the beast with a lamb-like appearance, will demonstrate fiendish cruelty towards God's few faithful witnesses. Through the invasion of the nation by the King of the North, they will also suffer. He is the desolator who will inflict destruction and death upon the Holy Land. This he will do until what God has predetermined against him is accomplished.

In Matthew 24, in His sermon on the Mount of Olives, our Lord indentified the second half of Daniel's

seventieth week as the time of great and unparalleled tribulation (v. 21). The siege and destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman General Titus is only an illustration of a worse time to come upon poor Israel.

The Great Tribulation therefore comes in the last half of Daniel's final week. The Church is not mentioned in the prophetic schedule at all; it was never revealed to Daniel. From the whole tenor of New Testament revelation, it occurs between the 69th and 70th of Daniel's weeks.

Students of prophecy call this the great parenthesis. The whole of Church history from Pentecost to its close was a mystery involving other mysteries, not referred to in God's plans for Israel.

From this study there is only one conclusion; the Church will not be affected by the Great Tribulation. She will be raptured by Christ to Heaven before the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy upon apostate Israel. The Great Tribulation is God's punishment upon apostate Israel, and in this He involves the whole world because of its apostasy and atheism.

* * *

The Armageddon

Frequently during World War I parallel was drawn between that global conflict and the Armageddon. Because of the many nations involved and the belief that the first world war would end all wars, many who did not understand the prophetic word thought that probably the biblical Armageddon had come. When World War II was being fought, there were a few who spoke of it as the Armageddon, but not many. The

horrors of the first global war and the complete collapse of the League of Nations so disillusioned the public that few considered this second most extensive war as the last.

The general concept of the Armageddon is that of a war involving the whole world, a war that will stop wars for centuries, if not forever. In this idea there is considerable truth. In such thinking there is one error that must be corrected; the Armageddon is not a war, but a single battle in the whole “battle (campaign) of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14).

Inasmuch as there are two different words translated into English by the word battle in Revelation 16:14,16, we must understand two different ideas. In verse 14 the word “battle” should be rendered “campaign;” in verse 16 the word implies, as translated, a battle or a single combat.

In studying the details of this final battle, three stages of the satanic-human struggle against God and His chosen people must be taken into account: the campaign, the battle and the glorious victory.

The Campaign

The campaign of the great day of God Almighty extends probably through Daniel’s 70th week, and involves four world powers along with other smaller nations. In this campaign there are apparently several single battles. While one should not dogmatize in regard to the sequence of these battles, suggestions may be offered in the light of numerous passages of Scripture.

The Day of the Lord which is related to events upon earth begins when “the acceptable year of the Lord

ends" (Isa. 61:1-2), and when the Man of Sin is manifested (2 Thess. 2:3-12). Notwithstanding, the full fury of the wrath of God will not be experienced until the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

It should be understood that this campaign by God is divine punishment upon Israel and upon all the nations, God using one nation to punish another.

In the language of military men, the preliminary phase of the campaign seems to be a softening process for the Lord uses many different means to punish the wickedness of man. He uses wars, famines, plagues, natural convulsions, unpresided catastrophes and direct divine interventions, all of which are symbolized for us in the Book of the Revelation (6-19). The dreadful intensity of that wrath of God may be seen in the breaking of the seven seals, the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath.

The Order of the Campaign

As already stated there is considerable difference of opinion among students of prophecy in regard to the actual sequence of events during the campaign. Four great future military forces of the world will be deployed: the King of the South, Egypt; the King of the North, Syria, supported by Gog, the Prince of Rosh, Russia; the beast with seven heads, Rome; and the Kings of the east an Asiatic confederacy. It will be necessary to investigate all four of these, and to study carefully their movements.

Probably the earliest military manoeuvre of the campaign of the great day of God Almighty will be one

by the King of the South, and by means of this movement God will punish both Israel and Egypt.

The King of the South (Dan. 11:40): We must identify this ruling power and determine his attitude toward Israel. When the great horn of the he goat was broken (Dan. 8:8), four other horns came up in its place. These symbol-horns represent the history of Greece under Alexander the Great, and the division of his kingdom after his early death. His kingdom was divided into four sections and distributed among his four generals, men who had served under him in his campaigns. To the north of Palestine, Syrian territory was given to General Seleucus; and to the south, Egyptian territory was given to General Ptolemy. These two and the kings which succeeded them in their dynasties were respectively the King of the North and the King of the South. Ancient history of that period describes the frequent wars which were waged between these two powers. In prophecy the King of the North therefore symbolizes the ruling power of Syria, and the King of the South, the ruling power of Egypt.

In second place, we must also examine his attitude toward Israel. The early Pharaohs enslaved the descendants of Jacob (Ex. 1-12). In the years following the reigns of David and Solomon, Egypt penetrated twice into Palestine. In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak King of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and carried away the treasures of the house of the Lord (1 Kings 14:25-26). Some years later Pharaoh-Nechol fought on Palestine soil, and he killed Josiah King of Judah on the battle field of Armageddon (2 Kings 23:29-30).

The hatred of Egypt toward the re-established nation of Israeli has been well publicized in recent years. It is difficult to forget the boast of Egypt's former President Nasser before the six day war with Israeli; he purposed to completely destroy Israeli.

In third place: When the Anti-Christ as the wilful king will be ruling in Jerusalem in the times of the end, this ancient enemy of the Hebrew peoples will push at him (Dan. 11:36-40). The then King of the South stirred, even as Egypt is today, by the arrogance, wealth and prosperity of Israel, will attack the Holy Land, but his penetration will be limited and his success very small.

In last place: There is another who will have his eyes upon Israel's importance at the end times, the King of the North, the Assyrian, and like a whirlwind he will descend upon Palestine, and penetrate also into Egypt. Palestine will suffer under his attack, but Egypt will also suffer, and suffer great losses. The King of the North will be successful, and the outcome of the clash between these two antagonists appears to be not only a military defeat for Egypt but also an economical tragedy. With its army overthrown, and its monetary reserves controlled by a foreign power, Egypt will not again rise to be a formidable enemy of Israel.

The King of the North (Dan. 11:40-45): This future individual has been identified earlier in these studies; he is the little horn to come forth from one of the four horns on the head of the post-Grecian goat (Dan. 8:24); he is the king of fierce countenance who will be supported by a power not his own (Dan. 8:24), probably Russia.

In second place: This anti-type of Antiochus Epiphanes, the future King of the North a cruel and wicked man, shall destroy the holy people, and as a desolator amaze many. He will also be a diplomat; "through his policy also shall cause craft to prosper." He shall even stand up against the Prince of Princes. His arrogance and his defiance against God and His Anointed reaches in this act the climax of his evil plans.

In third place: A description of his treatment of Israel is given in Isaiah 10:5-8, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few."

In the former part of this study we reviewed his defeat of Egypt and the imposition of his power and authority upon that defeated rival.

(To be continued)

Coming World Crises --Part 14

Coming World Crises

Part 14

James Gunn

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In fourth place: Tidings from the east and from the north shall trouble him. What he hears infuriates him. He therefore withdraws his army from Egypt and pitches

his camp, both military and administrative, between the seas, between the Mediterranean and the Dead seas. There, "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan. 11:45). These closing words of Daniel 11 imply one of three things: first, that the sudden end of the Assyrian, the King of the North, will be by direct divine intervention and under such circumstances, of course, none could help him, no one could deliver him out of the hand of God. Second, that the power that had supported him as the King of the North (Dan. 8:24), forsakes him; that is, withdraws all support in the way of war effort, and leaves him to defeat and destruction.

Third, that the supporting power, Russia, is itself destroyed, the entire northern confederacy being crushed upon the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:1-7). This is probably what will happen.

This we are sure of, the King of the North and his supporter, the Prince of Rosh, with their armies and allies will be defeated in such a manner that as the Lord says, "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One of Israel" (Ezek. 39:7).

In this, another battle in the campaign of the great day of God Almighty, the Lord severely punishes the Syrians, the Russians and those aligned with them.

Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38-39): Another phase of this mighty campaign of God against the nations is seen in the movements of the Prince of Rosh. In other studies we have identified him as the ruling power of Russia.

It seems obvious that Russia is the political and diplomatic leader of a northern confederacy of nations which invades Palestine either immediately after the King of the North or simultaneously with him. There are

a number of salient points here to consider: First, it would seem that Russia will ignore the military purpose of Syria (Isa. 10:7), and will enter the Holy Land “to take a prey, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take great spoil” (Ezek. 38:13). It will be the determination of Russia in the future to enrich herself with the natural resources of Israel rather than to help anyone else. This may be the news out of the north that troubles the King of the North, and makes him withdraw from Egypt into Palestine.

Second: Russia’s invasion of the Holy Land will probably be toward the close of the first half of Daniel’s seventieth week. Through a covenant with the European nations under the leadership of the beast (Dan. 9:27), Israel will have a sense of safety and security. She will live in unwallled cities which have neither gates nor bars (Ezek. 38:11).

It should be remembered that the 70th week is divided into two periods of 3 ½ years. In the first part, as suggested, Israel under the terms of the covenant of peace, which will turn out to be a refuge of lies, lives at ease. The first half of Daniel’s week is called by our Lord, “The beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:8). Many in Israel will be deceived by a false Christ (Matt. 24:4-5, John 5:42-43), and there will be wars and rumours of wars among the nations, but Israel’s reliance upon the beast, the Revived Roman Empire, will give this false feeling of security.

Third: If Russia and Syria, the Prince of Rosh and the King of the North, simultaneously attack Israel, then we can expect that their defeat and destruction will also be simultaneous. So complete will be their destruction and

so supernatural, God says, "All the heathen shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God" (Ezek. 39:21-22).

Once more we see God's chastening hand upon Israel for their rejection of Christ, and also His punishment of those very nations which He uses as instruments of His indignation. Of the King of the North, He says, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger" (Isa. 10:5), and then to that statement He adds, "O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction. And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian" (Isa. 10:24-26). Truly this is the campaign of the great day of God Almighty.

The Revived Roman Empire: Scripture does not directly state that the Roman Empire will fulfil its security pact with Israel, yet it does imply this.

The people of "the prince that shall come" (Dan. 9:26) destroyed the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; they were Romans, consequently through the prince to come the Romans will make a covenant with Israel; it later shall be broken by the changing of its terms. Let us notice several salient points here:

First: It has been suggested that when Syria and Russia penetrate into Israel's territory, that in compliance with the covenant Rome will go to the defence of Israel. Notwithstanding, Rome does not contribute much to the defeat of the northern enemies. The defeat of these

invaders is supernatural, and this is made so evident that both Israel and the heathen will know it is by God's intervention (Ezek. 38:16).

Second: A strict honouring of the security pact would require a withdrawal of Roman forces and authority after the defeat of the invaders, but obviously this will not occur. In fact, Roman power is imposed upon Palestine, and under the Anti-Christ Israel becomes willingly subservient to Confederate Rome.

Furthermore, Israel will indulge in the idolatrous worship of the head of the Empire. His image will be set up in the temple at Jerusalem (Rev. 13:14-15). How sad! The future idolatrous state of Israel will be more than at any former time in her history (Matt. 12:43-45).

Third: It appears that this imposition of imperial and idolatrous power upon Israel will precipitate the Great Tribulation. At that point the words of Christ for His own will be that they should flee (Matt. 24:15-28). This godly remnant will be pursued by Satan through his own chosen means, but they will be helped by the earth that swallows up the flood of malignity and hatred (Rev. 12:14-17).

The Battle of Armageddon

It is now time to consider what appears to be the last battle in the campaign of the great day of God. There have been a number of historical battles fought on the plains of Armageddon, but in this prophetic one there is an element of finality. Some have thought of battles being fought after the Armageddon, and some even of battles being fought during the Millennium, but this does not seem probable. If Rome after the defeat of Russia becomes the principle world power, and if she

eventually is also defeated and destroyed, and if her head, the beast along with the Anti-Christ is cast into the Lake of Fire, further battles at this time seem impossible. Let us consider the preparations for this awful battle.

First: The mutual enemies: In a survey of the nations which are antagonists the one against the other, it becomes necessary that we attempt to identify “the Kings of the East” (Rev. 16:12).

While references to the Orient are few in the Bible, there are three which do have some significance. Let us ponder these. The first is found in Isaiah 49:12. In this context the Lord is speaking of the regathering of Israel, and He says, “Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the Land of Sinim.” It seems most interesting to find in the Oxford Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names that Sinim is Chinese. It seems as if God were saying that so surely and thoroughly would He regather poor scattered Israel that from even so far away as unfriendly China He would bring back His people to Himself and to the land He promised to them in Abraham.

The second passage is in Revelation 9:13-21. It pictures a vast army of 200 million coming from east of the Euphrates. The numbers in this army are overwhelming and their description terrifying. It is not too difficult from the description to imagine this army being equipped with atomic weapons. We read, “Out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.”

It was reported within recent years in an American magazine that China also had 200 million of young men and young women engaged in military training. This

figure does not take into consideration the other Asiatic powers.

The last passage we shall examine is in Revelation 16:12. Here we read of a miraculous drying up of the river Euphrates to allow this vast Asiatic army easy access to Palestine and Jerusalem. No wonder that the King of the North shows concern over tidings from the east (Dan. 11:44).

Second, demon power: God in His permissive will permits three spirits of demons to go forth from the trinity of evil: the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, to gather all the kings of the earth together into the Holy Land and particularly around Jerusalem.

The horrors of a conflict between the European nations and the remnant armies from the north and the south against the millions from the Orient cannot be imagined. We read, "By these three (fire, smoke and brimstone) the third part of men were killed." This is what John saw in vision (Rev. 9:18).

What happens in Jerusalem itself is described by Zechariah, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go forth in captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zech. 4:2). Notwithstanding, Jerusalem shall be supernaturally defended by God: "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people on the earth be gathered together against it ... In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall

devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:3-6).

Coming World Crises --Part 15

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James Gunn

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The Armageddon (continued from last issue)

The Final Victory

As the nations of the earth struggle the one against the other for the possession of Palestine and Jerusalem, something makes them aware of the fact that God is at war with them; they therefore forget their mutual differences and join forces in order to fight against the Son of Man. John says, "I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war ... And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean ... Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God...

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army ... And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:11-20).

Thus ends "the times of the Gentiles," and it ends exactly as Daniel had predicted in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's colossus. Never again will Jerusalem be trodden down of the Gentiles.

The final outcome of this glorious victory is recorded by John, he says, "And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound

him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled” (Rev. 20:1-3).

The Millennial Reign of Christ

The Millennium may be defined as a future period of 1000 years during which Christ shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. During this period sin will be suppressed, righteousness and equity will prevail, and wars will cease. During this same period, the curse imposed upon the earth because of the entrance of sin into the human family will be lifted; the deserts of sand and of ice will bloom as the rose, and the rapacious brutes will be tamed and domesticated.

The name Millennium which simply means one thousand is derived from Revelation 20:1-10 where “1000 years” is mentioned six times, and these “1000 years” are marked off by epochs at their beginning and at their close.

Conflicting Views

Inasmuch as there are conflicting views among Bible students relative to the Millennium, a brief survey of some of these might be appropriate here.

First: premillennialism: Premillennialism contends that there will be in the future 1000 years of peace, prosperity and justice, and that this will commence with the personal return of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory. Those who adhere to this view may hold certain diverse opinions in regards to details and events; notwithstanding, all believe in the Millennium and the glorious reign of the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13, 14).

Second: postmillennialism: Those who hold the postmillennial conviction contend in like manner for the Millennium, but their ideas of its commencement and character are altogether different from those of the premillennialists. They contend that through the preaching of the gospel and its final acceptance, the Millennium will be brought about. They seem convinced that such will be the moral and social improvements among men through the gospel that peace and justice will eventually succeed, and man will inaugurate a glorious age of human unity and peace.

Few such idealists are now in evidence. Two world wars with all their horrors, along with the futility of the United Nation Organization, have disillusioned the majority.

Third: amillennialism: Amillennialism is a system of thought that rejects completely the idea of a future 1000 years of peace and justice under the reign of Christ as Son of Man. Those who subscribe to amillennialism do not believe in the future fulfilment of the 70th week of Daniel, nor do they believe in the Great Tribulation. Instead of interpreting the Word of God literally, they interpret it in an allegorical manner. They deny any future to Israel and spiritualize all the blessings predicted for that people and apply them to the Church.

Amillennialism teaches that there is now a spiritual millennium, and that Christ's kingdom is now, that He is Sovereign only over His redeemed people.

The Basis of a Literal Millennium

The basis of a future Millennium rests upon a literal interpretation of the Word of God. The student of

prophecy should remember, "The only safe and infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself." This requires the comparing of one Scripture with another.

A very important principle in the interpretation of prophecy is, prophecy that has been fulfilled provides the pattern by which unfulfilled prophecy should be interpreted. Dr. Charles Fienberg asserts, "The only way to know how God will fulfil prophecy in the future is to ascertain how He has done it in the past."

The Lord Jesus claimed that many prophecies made concerning Himself were fulfilled in His coming into the world: "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

It is impossible to understand the prophetic element of the Old Testament apart from its literal fulfilment in Christ.

The Old Testament Scriptures do not use the term Millennium; nevertheless, they are full of millennial, that is kingdom, predictions.

First of the King: In these Old Testament predictions there are several remarkable titles attributed to our Lord Jesus relative to His reign over the millennial kingdom (a) "A Rod" (Isa. 11:1-10). This title is also translated in different forms in other versions than the King James Version; for example "a root," "a shoot" The last is probably the easiest understood; it indicates the racial means by which our Lord came into the world. "He is of the seed of David (Jesse's illustrious son) according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3). (b) "A Branch" (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). While like the

appellation "Shoot," "the Branch" intimates origin in the root Jesse, but it goes far beyond this, for it suggests the eminence and fruitfulness, the prosperity of our Lord Jesus in connection with a restored Israel. (c) "My Servant." This title is found frequently in the second part of the Prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 42:1; 52:13; 53:11, etc.). It indicates the lowliness, meekness and obedience of the Lord to His Father God. This obedience resulted in His crucifixion. He could and did say, "Not My will, but Thine be done." (d) "His Anointed" (Psa. 2:2). The Hebrew name Messiah and its Greek equivalent, Christ, suggest that our Lord Jesus is God's Anointed Prophet, Priest and King. In Old Testament times those who entered into these offices were initiated into them by being anointed. (e) "An Ensign" (Isa. 11:10). This title of our Lord is akin to the composite title, Jehovah-Nissi (Ex. 17:16). The Lord is the standard to which His people rally, and He is the banner by which they acclaim victory. It was, so we are told, an ancient custom among the Hebrews to give to a defeated party a standard as a token of protection, and this was regarded as the surest pledge of fidelity. The application of this title to our Lord is not only in relationship to His own people but also to the Gentiles (Isa. 11:10). This is very significant. (f) "The Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). Christ will yet heal the nation that has been trodden down of the Gentiles for many centuries. He will come on wings and bring health and prosperity to His chastized people. (g) Of course, there is the title "King" (Psa. 2:6; Zech. 9:9). This title signifies supreme power and authority. Zechariah's prophecy concerning Christ the King was literally fulfilled in His first advent. On His return in power and great glory Christ will literally be King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). (h) "The Son of Man" (Dan. 7:13).

This title is more than just a distinction in contrast to the title the “Son of God.” It presents Christ as the Representative Man and designates Him as the “Last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). The Lord applied this title to Himself more than 80 times in the four Gospels. It indicates Christ’s universal dominion. The first man, Adam, was God’s representative and to him was entrusted complete dominion over the earth, but he failed; he sinned. The Son of Man shall come and to Him, the Last Adam, there shall be given “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and language, shall serve Him (Dan. 7:3-14). This is the logic of the Spirit of God in Hebrews 2:6-9.

Some of the predictions involving these titles of Christ had a partial fulfilment at His first advent, but they await His second advent for a full literal fulfilment.

Second, of the covenants: God has pledged Himself to keep literally His covenant with David His servant, with the nation of Israel. the descendants of Jacob, and with the religious life of that nation; He says, “If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, My ministers ... If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of Heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them” (Jer. 33:20-26). Furthermore, God also has pledged Himself to literally fulfil His promises to

Abraham: "When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself ... God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation" (Heb. 6:13-18).

There are four covenants made by God in regard to the people of Israel:

First, the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17): Three elements constitute this important covenant: (a) the promise of a homeland (Gen. 12:1). (b) the promise of a large progeny (Gen. 12:2). (c) the promise of being the source of universal blessing (Gen. 12:3).

Second, the Palestinian covenant (Gen. 12:7; 13:14; 15:18-21; 17:7-8): It has been said that the land once possessed by Israel was six times larger than what they now occupy, but the land God promised to Abraham, the territory involved in the Palestinian covenant, is more than eight times larger than any territory they ever possessed even in the days of David and Solomon. All this was promised by God to His ancient people through Abraham.

(To be continued)

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The Millennial Reign

Third, the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Psalms 89:34; Jeremiah 33:22-26): It has been pointed out that the three elements of God's covenant with David are concisely

stated in 2 Samuel 7:16: “thine house,” “thy kingdom,” “thy throne.” God promised that these three would be established forever. David accepted this promise in a most literal sense. In the Psalms he poetically records the promise saying, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me.”

Fourth, the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34): This covenant is also called the eternal covenant in Isaiah 24:5; 61:8. It is a covenant of grace, wholly dependent upon the faithfulness of God. The New Covenant in one respect is the extension of the Abrahamic covenant of blessing. This covenant deals with the matter of salvation, which is purely of grace. The New covenant, says Jeremiah, is not according to the terms of the covenant of the law made at Sinai. At Sinai God wrote His law upon stone that was broken; with the New covenant God will write His law upon the hearts of a restored Israel. This New covenant not only assures the recovery and salvation of Israel, but it also assures the world of blessing through Israel.

It is only upon the ground of the New covenant of grace that was sealed and ratified at Calvary that anyone is saved (Heb. 9:8-10:20).

The Apostle Paul reminded Titus that God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). In this all Christians concur; consequently, it must be maintained that God literally will fulfil these covenants which He made concerning His chosen people Israel.

Premillennial Preparation

During the premillennial struggle among the nations, God will not leave Himself without a witness, nor will this witness be unsuccessful. God will have a remnant among the tribes of Israel: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the Mighty God" (Isa. 10:20-21).

God has sealed a remnant for Himself out of all the tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8), and finally will regather them from the four winds of heaven (Matt. 24:31). He will gather them from the places to which they previously had fled during the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-19), the places where they undoubtedly will have spread the gospel of the kingdom.

Attention here should be drawn to the conclusions of many spiritually minded scholars. They suggest that some years, probably 40, that is two generations, will elapse between the rapture of the Church and the 70th week of Daniel. It is to men of a new generation that the gospel of the kingdom is preached. Man is lost (Luke 19:10); he is condemned already (John 3:18). Only by grace through faith can man be saved (Eph. 2:8). To neglect, not reject, the gospel results in eternal loss (Heb. 2:3).

The testimony of God's remnant will result in the conversion of many Gentiles. These Gentiles form an innumerable multitude and are pictured in Revelation 7:9-17. That verses 9-17 describe a scene in

time and on earth becomes clear from a contrast between the eternal state of the redeemed and the enjoyment of the Gentile multitude. In the eternal state of the Church there is no night, sun or moon (Rev. 21:22-26), and there is no temple. These Gentiles serve God day and night; therefore this must be a scene in time. Furthermore, they enjoy the sun, and serve God in the temple; consequently, this must be a scene on earth.

The Judgment of the Nations

The great Gentile multitude, the conversion of which caused the angels and the four and twenty elders to worship God, appears with all other Gentiles at the Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt. 25:31-46). There are some features of this Judgment of the Living Nations which must be considered: First, its time: this judgment takes place before the Millennium. It should not be confused with the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Great White Throne Judgment. Second, its purpose: The purpose is seen in the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13 where the genuine is separated from the false at the end of the age: "So shall it be at the end of the world (age); the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just" (Matt. 13:49-50). "He shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend" (Matt. 13:41). Third, the Judge: The Lord Jesus as Son of Man is the Judge, "Before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb will be the sheep (Rev. 7:9-17). Fourth, the outcome: "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand (the sheep), Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). These are saved and purified not to be a part of the Church in Heaven, but to enter into the kingdom of the Son of Man on earth.

To the goats on His left hand, He will say, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; prepared for the devil and his angels.”

There are some who find this passage in Matthew 25 difficult for they feel that it implies salvation by works. A consideration of the details in the light of Revelation 7 demonstrates that here we have works which accompany salvation. These Gentiles know the Lord and address Him as such. Their love to the persecuted Jewish remnant was a proof of their love to Him. In the attitude of these Gentiles we see how the godly of Israel will be helped when, figuratively speaking, “the serpent casts out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman (the nation through whom Christ, the man child, came), that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman... and swallowed up the flood” (Rev. 12:15-16).

Through the Judgment of the Living Nations the Millennium will commence with a population of Hebrew and Gentile believers, all faithful followers of the Lamb.

As God gave to humanity in Noah a new beginning after the flood, so He will give to those sealed and purified believers a beginning in a restored earth. Shall it likewise end in failure as did the Noahic beginning? Yes, sinful nature will manifest itself.

The Everlasting Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is eternal; the Kingdom of the Heavens is temporary. The Kingdom of God is genuine and pure; the Kingdom of the Heavens contains hypocrisy and sin. The Kingdom of God embraces all who have been born again (John 3:5-7); the Kingdom of the Heavens, both good and bad (Matt. 13:47-50).

The Kingdom of God is found throughout Scripture in three aspects: First, the spiritual aspect: The charge against Paul and his associates at Thessalonica was that they said, "There is another King, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7). Later, in writing to the persecuted believers in Thessalonica, Paul reminded them of "God who hath called you into His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Similarly, in writing to the Colossians, Paul exhorts them to give thanks unto God their Father "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

There is a spiritual aspect of the everlasting kingdom which stands in contrast to Satan's domain, and into this believers now enter.

Second, the kingdom in manifestation: In the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel told him, "In the days of the kings (while one of the four kingdoms was still in existence) shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). That kingdom would cover the whole earth.

In teaching His disciples to pray, the Lord instructed them to say, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The Pharisees thought only of the kingdom in manifestation (Luke

17:20-21), and yet they ignored the presence of the King. Just before our Lord's ascension, the disciples asked Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They too looked for the kingdom in its manifestation.

Third, the everlasting kingdom: The Kingdom of God will never end. To the Lord Jesus it was declared, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness in the sceptre of Thy kingdom (Heb. 1:8). His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom (2 Pet. 1:11. Of that kingdom it is stated, "His domain is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14).

The Character of the Millennium

Some of the major features of the Millennium will be: the restoration of Israel to the Lord and her prominence and glory among the nations, Christ ruling as Israel's king, as the Son of David sitting upon the throne of His Father David (Luke 1:32). Under Him there will be a prince of the house of David to help in the administration of the affairs of the nation (Ezek. 37:25; 44:3; 45:7; 46:2).

There will be numerous beneficial changes when Christ establishes His kingdom on earth. We shall group some of these changes under seven groups:

Geological changes (Zech. 14:3-9): Christ shall return personally to the Mount of Olives. When He does an earthquake will divide the mountain leaving a valley running east and west, a valley that will extend from the eastern sea to the western sea. Into this valley living or flowing waters will stream, going out from Jerusalem

toward the eastern sea, the Dead Sea, and toward the western sea, the Mediterranean. Some have concluded from this that Jerusalem during the Millennium will become a sea port. Be this as it may, these waters will never dry up; they will remain the same during summer and winter. They will irrigate the country imparting life where they flow.

Zoological adjustments (Isa. 11:68): This remarkable messianic chapter pictures the ferocious and domesticated animals as living and eating together. It pictures the infant as perfectly safe among reptiles of the worst kind, and an immature child imposing his will upon animals of the yoke and of the forest. This poetical picture is to impress upon all the calm, peace and security which will prevail throughout creation during the kingdom reign of our blessed Lord Jesus. See Isaiah 65:25.

Horticultural conversion (Isa. 35:12): Isaiah personifies the wastelands (deserts of sand and of ice) and speaks of their being glad because of a heretofore unknown fertility. So great will be the change when Messiah reigns that it will seem as if the glory, the ornament of Lebanon, her mighty cedars, has been imparted to the deserts.

Coming World Crises --Part 17

Coming World Crises

Part 17

James Gunn

These are the notes of lectures given to the Men's Bible Class which meets every two weeks during the winter at Central Gospel Hall, 25 Charles St. E., Toronto, Canada.

"Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." As a light shining in a dark place, during these lectures prophecy illuminated areas which to the human mind seem quite obscure:

The Future of the Ecumenical Movement.

The Return and the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Future of the Nations.

Europe in Prophecy.

Who is Anti-Christ?

Russia Invades Israel!

Will the Church Go Through the Tribulation?

Armageddon.

The Millennial Reign of Christ.

Climax of the Ages.

The Millennial Reign

—continued from last number

Astronomical alteration (Isa. 30:26; Isa. 4:5; Zech. 2:5): Clarence Benson, a Christian and an Astronomer, in his book, *Earth the Theatre of the Universe*, states: "It is evident that the solar system was not originally what it is now. However, instead of being less orderly, as evolutionists claim, it was primarily perfect, and its present peculiarities are to be accounted for by some great catastrophe. Just as the track of a cyclone can be traced by the evidence of the havoc it leaves in its wake, so the course of this destructive agent in the heavens can be mapped out by telltale marks of devastation that it has left in its course through the solar system."

Isaiah apparently makes reference to such a catastrophe in our solar system, and informs us that during the kingdom age what is now wrong will then be made right: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound" (Isa. 3:28).

The Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul accounts for the catastrophes, deviations, and dislocations in our universe, but assured us that these shall be rectified when the Lord returns: "For the earnest expectation of the creation (K.J.V. margin) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:19-22).

Sociological transformations (Isa. 65:20-23): Isaiah, who might well be called the Prophet of the Kingdom, predicts that in the Millennium “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks ... neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

Children shall be born during the Millennium. “They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them” (Isa. 65:23). Those born in that time of peace and righteousness will nevertheless inherit Adam’s fallen nature and some may openly sin, but will immediately be judged and executed.

Life will be prolonged (Isa. 65:20). Men will be what God always wanted them to be, industrious. They will build homes for their families, and will maintain these with joy, cultivating their own properties.

Communication will be universal for the Lord will reverse the judgment of Babel, and will restore to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord” (Zeph. 3:9).

Territorial expansion for Israel (Ezek 47:13-23; 48:15-35): The territory given by God to Abraham will then be possessed and occupied by his descendants, and the boundaries will be those given to Moses by God in Numbers 34:1-15. While the boundary on the north is not known today, those east and west and on the south are readily recognized. On south is the Nile or a branch of it; on the east, the Euphrates, and on the west, the Mediterranean. This territory is eight times larger than the territories Israel occupied during the reigns of David and Solomon when national importance and influence was at its zenith.

The land will be divided into twelve apparently parallel portions, each fifty miles wide.

Spiritual restoration (Zech 13:1-6): Idolatry shall cease forever. The temple will be built (Ezek. 40:45); the priesthood, restored under a descendant of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15), and commemorative sacrifices offered to the Lord.

Theocratic government established (Ezek 47:1-12): The capital city will be called in that day, not so much Jerusalem but “Jehovah Shammah” for the Lord will be there (Ezek. 48:35). The Lord Jesus as Son of Man will be Sovereign (Dan. 7:13-14). “The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one” (Zech. 14:9).

Under the Lord who then shall be King, there will be a prince of the house of David (Ezek. 44:3; 45:7; 46:2) who will act for the people in administrative and spiritual matters.

A Holy Oblation, an offering of land to the Lord, is to be made (Ezek. 48:9-35). It is to be 25,000 reeds square (There are approximately 11 feet to a reed). This square is to be divided into three sections. The section on the north is of 10,000 reeds and is the portion of the Levites. The centre section, also of 10,000 reeds, is for the priests. The section on the south of the Holy Oblation is of 5,000 reeds (Ezek. 48:15-19); in this section will be the city of Jerusalem (Ezek. 48:30-35).

Now, the millennial temple will not be built in the city of Jerusalem, but in the very centre of the piece of land offered as the Holy Oblation to the Lord (Ezek. 48:10, 20-21). The millennial temple will be approximately one mile square.

The Church During the Millennium

The Church as the Lamb's wife will share the glory of her Lord and engage in His government (Rev. 5:10). There seems little doubt about the Church's reigning with Christ (1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:12). Notwithstanding, one feels that there is too much read into Revelation 5:10. In the first place the pronouns "us" and "we" are not found in several manuscripts covering this text. In fact, there is a textual possibility that "thy" and "them" should have been inserted in the translation. This would make the Church sing of Gods redemption for those who will be on earth in those eschatological times.

Then again, some see in the preposition "on," translated by some as "over," the Church in a aerial position ruling with Christ above the earth. In this connection there is an interesting millennial reference in Ezekiel 37:27, "My tabernacle also shall be with (over or above) them (God's recovered people Israel)."

The revelation of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will usher in the long anticipated visible Kingdom of the Son of Man on earth. That kingdom will be characterized by glory, righteousness, peace and prosperity. May our hearts respond to the illumination of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God so that we may devoutly pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

* * *

The Climax Of The Ages

There is a general belief that the Millennium is the climax of the ages; that after it God will hurriedly

dispose of any opposition to the theocratic government, that He will judge the impenitent and cast them into the Lake of Fire, and that then He will end time. A deeper study of the Word of God leads to the conclusion that many matters are to be accomplished after the Millennium, and that in all probability considerable time will elapse in the execution of all the purposes of God in a period we might well call the Climax of the Ages. It is to this period that the Word of God makes reference as The Dispensation of the Fulness of (the) Times (Eph. 1:10).

Frequently this designation is applied to the Millennium, but a closer examination of the details in Ephesians 1:10 indicates it is a description of post-millennial events, that it intimates a period which will be the summation, the culmination of all the times in the annals of human history. Definitely all things will not be headed up in Christ until all opposition is abolished.

The Fullness of Times

There are a number of the characteristics of this period which ought to be investigated:

First, its duration: This is an area of prophecy in which there has been much speculation. Some scholars believe that it will be a very brief period, others that it will be very long. Archbishop Trench who has provided valuable tools for the Bible student and Clarence Larkin who is considered a deep student of prophecy for he spent many years in the study of prophecy and producing charts to aid others in similar studies, both believe that it will be as long as the Millennium, if not longer. Furthermore, they both believe that it will provide, before it closes, a perfect state in the Kingdom of God.

While one finds it difficult to agree with their contention, it does appear that this period will probably be much longer than most expect.

“A little season:” Much emphasis has been placed upon the prediction that Satan is to be loosed out of the bottomless pit for “a little season” (Rev. 20:3). This statement, “a little season,” has resulted in the prevalent belief that the interval between the end of the Millennium and the close of time will be very short.

We need to remember that “a little season” in God’s reckoning is altogether different from that in ours. Moses said, “A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Psa. 90:4). Consequently, what is called “a little season” could be a matter of a century or two in human reckoning.

Second, post-millennium population: There are three salient points to be examined here: (a) The post-millennial population will be very numerous. There will be “nations from the four quarters of the earth ... the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:8). Isaiah speaks of those who will be born during the Millennium as “the seed of the blessed of the Lord” (Isa. 65:23), but alas, although they will be raised with a God-fearing background, they will still possess a depraved nature, and this evil nature will control them.

(b) This numerous population will be rebellious against God and at enmity with the people of God (Rev. 20:9). The foundation of this deep-seated rebellion may best be understood by noticing the millennial conditions under which they will have been born and raised.

They will not have the evil influence of Satan. During their lifetime, he will have been imprisoned in the abyss. This multitude will have remained for centuries untempted by diabolic evil.

All will have profited by the benign reign of the Lord Jesus. They will have experienced the direction of a God-given conscience, and will have had the Word of God.

Furthermore, they will have felt the sincere and loyal friendship of those who will then belong to the Lord and who will be serving Him with love and vigour (Isa. 56:3-8). The Lord says of His millennial people, "I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children" (Zech 10:9).

(c) All, moreover, will have felt the restraint of righteousness. They will have seen demonstrations of the penalty of sin. Isaiah predicts, "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20). In the sinner being accursed, there might be a reference to Deuteronomy 21:22-23, "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

The entire post-millennial multitude will have enjoyed the benefits of the Millennium and will also have experienced its restraints upon evil. Favourable as these conditions may appear, in the hearts and lives of tens of thousands, they will fail to produce any change of attitude toward God. After this prolonged probation of

absolute righteousness, man's depraved nature will not have improved. There are five crowns, seven cups, but only one cross spoken of in the Bible. The cross is central to the gospel. In one sense it cancels out all that went before; but in another, seemingly contrary sense, it is the great plus sign of life, the empirical affirmation. It is the catalyst that transforms dust to spirit, changes dark to light, breaks the rebel heart, the hater of God, and makes him a gentle servant of Christ.

There are two aspects of the cross, an earthly and a heavenly aspect. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." No middle ground is revealed in the Scriptures. To attempt to take up a middle ground position simply proves light is not in us. We have not understood the finality of what Christ did on the cross. He made an end of pretence once for all. There is no compromise, no cheap grace, no way we can have the best of this world and the best of the one to come. We either take up his cross and follow him —daily — or we turn away like the rich young ruler, "very sorrowful." For though Jesus loved him, yet he would not hold him.

The First Aspect of the Cross An Entrance to Heaven

"I am the door," said Jesus. "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Thus we have access to heaven and acceptance with God. The judgment for sin has already been rendered. We enter heaven without a single stain upon our souls. Jesus Christ put an end to all the sacrifices for sin, which never paid for them anyhow, but simply covered them, and has presented us without condemnation before God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, which in itself is a

foretaste of heaven. It is the tree of life for us but the tree of death for Him, “who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.”

The significant thing about the cross is that obedience to it always leads to death. “He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” If there had been any cure for the flesh, any conceivable manner in which the soul could have been preserved without the body dying, Christ would have provided it. But there was no way. The very basis of worship, the sinner’s peace, was through the blood of the cross, “reconciling all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Again, there is pointed out for us the twofold nature of God’s work in Christ, giving us an entrance to heaven, but providing a way on earth.

There is a four-fold guarantee, or assurance, that the work of the cross has been effective in our lives. First, we become citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). Our loyalties change. Though we behave ourselves with respect in this world, like any decent visitor would in a foreign country, yet we maintain our ties with another land. We keep our contact there. We are more interested in what happens in heaven than we are in what happens in the land of our exile. There is an eager looking-forward to our return home.

Second, we have an anchor of the soul, a hope, that reaches right into the Most Holy Place, within the veil itself (Heb. 6:19). The forerunner himself, even Jesus, has left a blood trail leading right into the presence of God, through the outer court, beyond the curtain with the fine needlework, into the fragrant anteroom of God,

through the Holy Place and the veil, to stand before the mercy seat, there offering himself to atone for us all. It is a guarantee that will stand as long as the word of God shall stand and as long as the word of His oath is valid.

Third, it is faith that justifies us, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). How could we enter heaven with the uncertainty of our sins weighing upon us? Even if we confessed them all as honestly as we could and had them covered, there might be one we had forgotten. What horror then to be turned back at the very threshold of heaven within sight of our goal and hope! What confidence could we have in this life? What joy would there be in it? It would be one long fearful torment of uncertainty and distress. But God has provided the evidences for our assurance and we embrace them by faith.

Fourth, there is a two-way acceptance. It is not solely left to us to sustain this confidence in an entrance to heaven. It has been verified by the son of God himself, for he has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." That day dawned, that night passed, and the tomb was empty! He had risen! He was not there! He had risen from the dead! Then it was true, even as he said, in that day ye shall know. There were a few moments of doubt, a bewildered unbelief, a hesitation to lean upon so fragile a promise. But the assurance persisted and grew stronger. "I believe God, that it shall be, even as it was told me." Then there burst upon the world such a clap of spiritual thunder, such a lightning burst of testimony, that the iron clad legions of Rome reeled and staggered. They were momentarily immobilized and stunned.

The Second Aspect of the Cross — an Exit from the World

The second aspect of the cross is that it is an exit from the world. If there is to be an entrance into heaven there must be an exit from the world. To enter the heavenlies there must be separation and severance. Jesus Christ is truly the door, but the same door that shuts me into himself also shuts me out from his enemies.

Make no mistake, the cross is an offense. It is not polished ebony wood, but a rough, splintery, crude instrument of torture and of death. It was never meant to please, neither the spectators, nor the victim. It was meant to impress and convince and terrorize evil doers. It was meant to inflict such punishment that the mere mention of the word would be like a cold sword to the throat. No man, no matter how desperate, no matter how wild and ignorant, would risk the penalty of the cross, not at any cost. It was an emblem of shame. Yet we see women without shame today wearing the golden image of a cross as though it were an adornment to their beauty, rather than as the Proverb says, "Like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout."

If we desire to enter that door, to enter the heavenlies, and to separate ourselves from the world, the path is obedience. As disciples we take up the cross daily and follow him. Discipleship is not a calling, it is not a gift, nor an alternative to disgust with the world, but it is the mark of one who has been born again. There is no use to argue that we can call Him Christ but we have not come to the place of calling Him Lord. The Scriptures make no such invidious distinctions. There are no pigmies in

Christ. Can we have two masters? "For one is your master, even Christ."

As there is a four-fold guarantee or assurance that we have entered heaven, so there is a four-fold guarantee that we have left the world. First, we become witnesses unto him, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." As we became citizens of heaven so we become witnesses on earth, by the power of the Holy Ghost. If we are ashamed of Christ on earth, He is ashamed of children that denied Him before others.

Second, while our hope is our position inside the veil of the Holy of Holies, our labour is with Him outside the camp (Heb. 13:13). There we go to meet Him, bearing His reproach. If there is anything that distinguishes the disciple it is that his service is underpaid with the world's coin, whether it be gold and silver, or honor and rewards. If we serve the risen Lord, our pay is yet to come, heaped up, pressed down, shaken together, running over. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. It is a city four-square. The value there of precious stones is measured in building blocks. For the value of things not seen on earth is here revealed in such splendor that these precious stones are not worthy to be compared to the glory before us.

Third, hostility of the world marks the separated man. "Know ye not the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." There is no middle ground. There is no middle marker, no high and low water mark. Do we honestly believe that Christ can be in us, and be in Christ, and that the world will treat us better than it did

the Saviour? By what right? On what grounds? "Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." As we testify of the world, that its works are evil, we, too, will be hated. But as he loved the world, so must we. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" No, he can't. It is not possible. Love reached its zenith when Christ died. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Fourth, as there is a two-way acceptance concerning heavenly things, so there is a two-way rejection concerning earthly things. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It is the final, true, and acid test. Close scrutiny of our lives would reveal that some glory clings to our works. We cannot seem to divorce ourselves from this glory. We do not claim honor for ourselves, we say, but for Him. But He does not need a public defender. He is His own best advocate. Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Put that matter under discussion upon the cross. Don't debate it, crucify it. Let it die before all the world.

These two aspects of the cross — the entrance to heaven and the exit from the world — are inseparable. There is no way to reconcile a difference except to deny the promise of the one and the power of the other. Conflicts in the Christian life arise from disobedience to the principle of separation — separation from the world, separated unto Christ.

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Climax of The Ages

Continued from last number

Post-Millennial Events

There are several important events in this post-millennial period. Some of these appear in more detail than others, but all are extremely interesting:

First, Satan is loosed (Rev. 20:3, 7-8): After his imprisonment of one thousand years, Satan will be loosed. Immediately he will revert to his old tactics to continue his conflict against God. What he did to Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3, 1 Tim. 2:14), he will again do. He who tempted the Lord in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) and failed, will be more successful among the future nations. "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations" (Rev. 20:7-8).

Second, the last battle (Rev. 20:8): During the Millennium men shall not be trained for war (Isa. 2:4, Mic 4:3); obviously, not because of a change in their nature, but because of restraining power and authority. After the Millennium men from every part of world will be mobilized and trained so that "they are gathered together to battle" and "they encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city."

Just how long it will take to mobilize, equip, train and move this vast global army from "the four quarters of the earth" would be difficult to predict. Even in this jet-atomic age a project of such magnitude would require considerable time.

Third, the complete defeat (Rev. 20:9): This battle will be a direct confrontation between Heaven and Earth. The defeat will be sudden, certain and complete. This defeat through the fire from Heaven will result in the most extensive destruction of human life ever known; the earth will practically be depopulated. Whole cities have

been destroyed by volcanic irruptions and by earthquakes. Tidal waves have destroyed thousands at one time, but the loss of human life by natural catastrophes and human wars will be insignificant in comparison to the destruction of the entire global army with its supporting personnel in a flashing stroke from Heaven. What devastation!

Not only will men be destroyed, but Satan will by that time have reached the end of his trail of arrogance and wickedness for we read, "The devil that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:10).

Fourth, the dissolution of the material universe (Rev. 20:11, 2 Pet. 3:7-11, Rev. 21:1): It is a scientific fact as well as a biblical assertion that there is within the earth itself the very elements which could release the energy to destroy the world. The atomic destructive fire is held in reservation deep in the earth. Today, man fears lest a chain reaction be started carelessly, and that the entire population of the world be overthrown. God has planned His eschatological schedule, nothing will be premature, nothing will be late. He who in the fulness of time sent His Son, in the fulness of time will dissolve the heavens and the earth.

Fifth, the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15): This might well be called the last assize. Five matters in connection with this trial of humanity should be understood: (a) It is obvious to those who have studied the details of predictive prophecy that by that time all the impenitent will be dead and confined temporarily in hell, therefore a resurrection is necessary. We read, "Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (Rev. 20:13). This implies the restoration of each

personality. Death releases the body, and hell, the soul and spirit; consequently each person appears completely integrated before the Great White Throne.

(b) Two books or records at least will be used in this judgment of the lost; the record of life, probably the names of all the redeemed, and the record of works. The first would decide who should be judged; the second, how he is to be judged. The person whose name does not appear in the Book of Life will be placed on trial, and he will be sentenced according to his works. Some will be punished with toleration, some without toleration (Matt. 11:20-24).

(c) All are cast, body, soul and spirit, into the Lake of Fire which is the second death. Thus the impenitent will suffer the same punishment as the devil (Rev. 20:10) and his cohorts, the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). The wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire in completely restored personalities.

In all probability fallen angels will be executed at this same time. We read, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

If the assumption be correct that the angels are to be executed at this same Great White Throne, then we must also assume that the Christians of this Church era will be present on that occasion. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3). In the future, so united will

the Church be to Christ that through her redemption and relationship to Him she will be so exalted as to become the judge of spirit beings.

Sixth, the disposition of all enemies (1 Cor. 15:25-26): "He (Christ) must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." By this time in the divine plan of prophecy, Christ will have subdued and destroyed the beast, the last great world political power; the false prophet, the Anti-Christ; all the impenitent; the devil and his angels; finally, He will destroy the last enemy, death. Death is the result and penalty of sin, we read, "Death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:14). Physical death is superseded by the second death, that is, eternal death.

Seventh, the consummation of the ages (1 Cor. 15:27-28): This final act in the annals of time should be examined with care: (a) The sovereignty of Christ: It was God's original intention that man have dominion over the earth: the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field and the fish of the sea (Gen. 1:27-28). This supreme authority began with the first Adam; it will end with the Second Adam. The first Adam failed with the result "we see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. 2:8-9). Instead, we see the Man Jesus Christ now crowned with glory and honour because He endured death for all the redemptive purposes of God. He who is now glorified in Heaven will eventually be crowned on Earth: "He hath put all things under His feet ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:27-28). Then in very truth the prophecy of Philippians chapter two will be fulfilled, "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a

name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Vs. 9-11). Nebuchadnezzar, and many since his time, have sought world dominion with all subject to them. Christ is the only Man who will attain universal rule.

The abdication of Christ: "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). The Son of Man after His full and glorious triumph, after the subjugation of all His enemies; yea, after all power and authority both friendly and hostile are made subject unto Him, will abdicate the throne that was His by mediatorial right, the throne from which He will have ruled in absolute and unsullied justice. He will lay down the crown and vacate the throne as Son of Man that God may be all in all. This act will end time; it will be the consummation of all the ages.

Divine revelation in the Bible records the beginning of this present creation in the majestically sublime words, "In the beginning God." God in His Holy "Triunity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, created the Heaven and the Earth. The same divine revelation predicts the end of this creation in similarly majestic and sublime language, "God... all in all." The reign of "Christ as Son of Man will cease that God in His Triunity may reign as Sovereign over the Eternal State. As at the beginning so it will be at the end, the Godhead will be absolutely supreme.

The Eternal State

Eternity penetrates beyond the borders of time. If man finds it difficult to understand time, how much more so Eternity. Eternity in the abstract sense is infinite, transcendent over all that is temporal; inexplorable and incomprehensible. To even think about Eternity, one has to reduce it to concrete examples' (a) Eternity and God: God is certainly related to Eternity. He is infinite and transcendent. Of Him we read, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity" (Isa. 57:15). God's dwelling is in accord with His very nature. (b) Eternity and man: "He (God) hath made everything beautiful in its time; also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Ecc. 3:11). The marginal alternative reading in the King James Version reads, "He hath set Eternity in their hearts." This setting of Eternity in the human heart could mean that man has received from God a sense of his own eternal existence. (c) Eternity and salvation The whole doctrine of salvation in order to be understood must be considered within the context of Eternity.

The Eternal State: For the symbolic description of the Eternal State it is necessary to turn to Revelation 21 and 22. One is aware that some excellent scholars consider chapter 21 as a picture of the Eternal State, but accept the early part of chapter 22 as a reverting to a description of the millennial reign of Christ. Without doubt there are problems in any approach to these chapters; nevertheless, there is a continuity of vision and thought from chapter 21:1 through chapter 22:5. It seems more logical to consider this entire passage as a symbolic vision of the Eternal State.

The Eternal State and Israel: The Eternal State constitutes a New Heaven and a New Earth in which righteousness permanently shall dwell (2 Pet. 3:13, Rev. 21:1, Isa. 65:17, 66:22). The reference to a New Heaven and Earth in Isaiah's Prophecy indicates that Israel like the Church will not lose her identity in Eternity. The blending in Isaiah of millennial blessings with eternal blessings, the earthly with the heavenly, proves that millennial conditions are introductory to the Eternal State. This proves that the Kingdom of our Lord in its manifestation and glory is the foreshadowing of His Eternal Kingdom, the Kingdom to which there shall be no end.

The Eternal State and the Church: Within the Eternal State of a New Heaven and a New Earth there is another sphere of perfect bliss, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City (Rev. 21:1-6). This is the Jerusalem that is from above, the free city that is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26), that is, the mother of all those who believe in Christ. Three times it is asserted that the origin of the Holy City is in Heaven (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).

Here, then, we have the dwelling place of the Church, if not the Church herself, a pure and bridal city. While this remarkable description is given in symbols, the place itself, nevertheless is literal. From the details of this description, we learn that the bridal city rests firmly upon the foundation of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, that is upon the ministry of the apostles (Eph. 2:20). Upon the beautiful gates of the city are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. These twelve tribes will have easy entrance to the New Jerusalem.