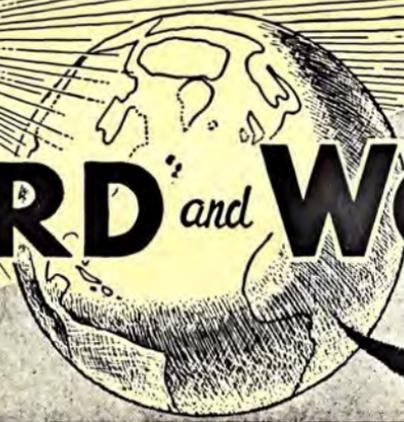


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"Holding forth the Word of life."

MAY, 1980

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Holy Land Pilgrimage

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Dr. David Reagan, writer and lecturer on Bible prophecy, will lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land this coming summer (August 6 - 16).

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For detailed information, write:

Dr. David Reagan
Vice President
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Enid, Oklahoma 73701

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(Psalms 122:6)

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"A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God"

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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Robert Held is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky.



God's Family

W. R. H.

WHEN THE "GOOD" SUPERSEDES THE "BETTER"

To the Pharisees, Jesus once said; . . . "these things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Again to Martha, He said ; "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her." In Christian life there are things that are good, and other things that are better. There are attitudes that are commendable, while others are yet more commendable. To the Colossians, Paul said, "Set your mind on things that are above."

We are living in a rash of tragedies, catastrophes, calamities—the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, the riot at Miami, refugees drowning en route to Key West, the military fiasco in Iran, the collapse of Sunshine Bridge at Tampa, Collapse of the oil rig off shore at Houston—to name a few.

All such news burdens our hearts and commands attention, prayer, and reflection as we consider that many of the victims were likely un-prepared to meet their Maker. Through the eyes of our Lord, we can see many who are like sheep without a shepherd, and we ought to pray and toil and give in order to alleviate such suffering wherever we can help. If the "grievous times" are breaking upon this world, then Christians ought to be spending themselves as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our "savor" and "light" have never been needed so much as they are today. If I find myself in a "prayer rut" in days like these, I had better plead to God for compassion to be poured into my heart.

However, the cares of this world can combine to choke the word, inasmuch that it will become unfruitful. We can be so deeply pre-occupied with the flood of troubles, that we find ourselves out of tune to Worship God. We may become so impressed with the injustices of men toward each other, that we forget what really is the main problem in this world, and Who is the One Cure for all the woes of mankind.

The numbers who face "sudden death" are but a small percentage of the number who are going into a Christless eternity. Every earthquake, tornado, hurricane or holocaust ought to remind us that our Lord said, "unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Satan will divert our attention in whatever way possible. If we get so busy in picking up the pieces that we cease teaching, preaching, studying the Word, or praying for a sincere and personal revival, then

we are letting good works for the unfortunate crowd out our communion with the Lord and our sacrifice of prayer and praise that God will use to stay the plague. These we ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.

Carl Kitzmiller is minister of the Oakdale, Louisiana Church of Christ and writes the Sunday school lessons for Word and Work Lesson Quarterly.



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Our young people are asking questions related to evolution. What about the days of creation? Can you give some help?

Most of our young people are exposed repeatedly to evolutionary teaching. Science courses in public schools, reference works, magazine articles, T V programs and many other sources may often be controlled by a strong evolutionary bias. Some courses of study can be expected to be saturated with material based on this theory. In the hands of a faithful Christian teacher who is alert and informed evolutionary materials may not pose a terribly great threat, but there are relatively few of these. Too often the teacher may not have any objections to the material, and even Christians may not be faithful and/or informed.

Moreover, the evolutionary theory has been so widely accepted that those who oppose it are made to seem to be old fashioned, uninformed, lacking in brilliance, etc. We find ourselves opposing not only a false theory but also a propaganda campaign that equates it with education, sophistication, and mental stature. In terms of numbers, popularity, and the mass of material affected by evolution, we face a giant Goliath set on the destruction of the faith of the Bible believer. A sermon now and then or a Sunday school lesson, even in the hands of competent people, has a great psychological barrier to overcome with many young people. They have been sold the idea that the opponents of evolution are just not "up" on things. Such preaching or teaching must usually be very general and thus leaves a lot of unanswered questions, which may be mistakenly seen as an inability to answer the questions.

Evolutionary teaching is often quite subtle. Even a relatively inexperienced young person can recognize a blatant "man is descended from the monkey" (or horse, or something else) as evolutionary teaching. But in a variety of ways the whole theory has been woven into the fabric of our learning, so that even the pre-schooler is taught tainted things. So subtle is this that over the years principles based on evolution may be accepted by the person who supposes that he does not ac-

cept the theory. School children (and many others) do not have the wisdom, the means, nor the ability of proving for themselves all they are taught. They accept things presented as facts. Learning cannot stop to question everything. Material presented authoritatively tends to receive acceptance. Perhaps the single most deceptive thing about evolution is that it is treated as fact, not theory. Yet it is theory. There are some very vital gaps in the theory that have never been bridged. It has not, and we venture to assert cannot, be established as fact. Still the theory with all its implications is generally presented as fact.

The amount of material involved and the specialized nature of some of the related knowledge is so great that the average person probably feels incompetent to sort out truth from falsehood. There are, however, many good books and materials available to those who can delve into the various issues. It is probably important for Christians to learn as much about the basics as they can. Even so, we are not left to a "blind faith" in rejecting the theory. It is not true that all scientists, all brilliant people, all informed people accept evolution. There is a growing number of high ranking scientists who reject evolution. There are many brilliant and informed people who are not evolutionists. Some of these have formed organizations for promoting creationism over evolution. There are answers which satisfy those who are able to look at these issues critically. From the standpoint of scholarship, evolution is not a one-sided issue.

Sooner or later, however, we must come to the Bible testimony and what we will do with it. Though there have been attempts to harmonize the Bible and the evolutionary theory, it is a futile task. The "days" of creation are seen as long eras, and the creation of man is seen as a process instead of an outright act of creation. The truth is that the Bible and the theory of evolution stand opposed. This is true even if we accept the Genesis account of creation as primarily figurative. God, not chance, is seen by the Bible as the Creator and Giver of life. We really do have to make a choice which we will believe.

Now the Bible-believer is not without foundation for his faith, but in the final sense his acceptance of the Bible is an act of faith. We cannot go back and watch the world created or see man given life, thus knowing by sight just how it happened. We can check the Bible testimony about a lot of things, however, and in those things we can establish its reliability. The Bible record for reliability is unsurpassed. Theories and notions have arisen and have failed, but the Bible record has always been vindicated. We believe therefore that its account of creation is true. Now evolution is also a system of faith. That's right! Not faith in God or the Bible, to be sure, but faith in man's ability to read the signs. You see, the evolutionist was not present at creation either. He depends for his ideas on what he can observe about present and past conditions. And there are some points where his faith has to leap a considerable span. The evidence is missing, even assuming he is reading it right. In short, his viewpoint is a theory—a guess. It is based to some extent on what he sees as evidence, but it also calls for a lot of credulity. A point too often missed in these matters is that

it takes no more faith to believe in God and the Bible than it does to believe in evolution, and the foundation is a lot firmer for the Bible-believer.

For many of us the answer to evolution lies in establishing the trustworthiness of the Bible. It is understood that there is a place for challenging the various major and minor points of evolution and for showing that creation by God is intellectually respectable. We owe a debt of gratitude to those whose scholarship is such as to challenge successfully the false ideas proposed by the evolutionist. But if we cannot do this, we need not surrender or go through life fearing that the next great discovery will prove us wrong. An assurance of the reliability of the Bible is important not only to opposing evolution but also for a lot of other issues. And while young people may not have had the depth of experience at seeing the Bible vindicated, they are as capable as any others of receiving the truth of its reliability. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching..." (John 7:17).

The Bible-believer needs to be careful to distinguish between the record given in the Bible, which is inspired, and his own interpretation of that record, which is not. We should not adopt an interpretation of the Bible which unnecessarily opposes apparent facts. As discoveries are made it may be found that the Biblical accounts allow for such, and that there is a harmony possible.

Concerning the days of creation, one "problem" has been that much of the evidence seems to point to an earth much older than the Bible account suggests. This age "problem" is not a reason to surrender to evolution at all, however. There are several possibilities. (1) There is a possibility that there was life of various sorts on the earth before the six days of creation. This may have ended in judgment, leaving the earth waste and void. In other words, the earth was renovated in preparation for man and the animal life of the six days of creation. Sometimes called the gap theory (filling a supposed gap between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1; cf. Isa. 45:18 Am. Std.), this can neither be affirmed nor denied, as I see it. (2) Some have proposed that the days were long eras. Certainly they cannot be established as 24-hour days (the sun was not put in order until the fourth day), but there are some serious problems with this view. The presumption seems to be that they were days. God speaks and it is done. His creation does not require long time. (3) A very real possibility is that in creating God created age into the earth, etc.—i.e., He created the oil, coal, even fossils, and they were not necessarily formed over long ages. He certainly created age in Adam in that he appears fully grown. (4) Some believe that the flood of Noah's day may account for many upheavels of the earth, rearranging the strata, creating fossils, etc. Many of the supposed signs of great age could have been created by this great display of God's power. (5) There is a very good possibility that man is mistaken in his dating of the various rocks, etc. A lot of circular reasoning takes place. Moreover, the dating procedures are based on present conditions and knowledge and do not allow for changing conditions. Unknown factors no longer present many have greatly altered the readings.

In short, the age of the earth demanded by the evolutionist may be very greatly in error, but it is not impossible to harmonize true discoveries with the Bible account. Personally, I refuse to set aside the word of God in favor of the guesses of men, however learned. One of the greatest helps we can give our young people is to help them understand that much that is set forth in support of evolution is little better than guesses, and to help them recognize the reliability of the word of God.

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THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

God's Judgment: According to the Gospel

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:12, 16).

By omitting the parenthetic verses 13-16 of Romans 2 we here get a more accurate picture of the judgment of God than we would get if we never read it this way. This way we see that both those without law and those under law need to consider three points about the judgment that God will surely bring one day: (1) He will judge the secret things as well as the things openly known; that is the subject-matter of His judgment. (2) He will use as the standard of His judgment the gospel Paul preached. (3) The minister of that judgment will be Jesus Christ.

During this life men are able to hide a great many things from even those nearest and dearest to them. Many thoughts never get expressed, many actions never get seen, and many emotions are hidden by an expressionless face. But God sees all of these and He will not forget. If you appear before Him without the righteousness that comes only through the gospel of Christ, then you will be in for a terrible occasion. Actions, thoughts, motives, and other things that even you have forgotten will be clearly seen in that day and they will be judged. There is only one hope for you: turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who took all these things on Himself and had them nailed to His cross so you might be able to stand before God in His righteousness and not need to stand before Him in that awful day when all the lost must appear before the great white throne as pictured in Revelation

21. He died to keep you from having to go through that, dying the awful death of a sinner though He knew no sin, suffering the full wrath of God without being mixed with mercy so you could be saved. Do not turn His wonderful gift down, or you will regret it through all eternity.

To emphasize what I have been saying, Paul then gives the standard of God's judgment, "according to my gospel." Paul does not mean to say that the gospel is his invention in any way, but He preached it wherever He went. He was busy going about the world telling the good news that Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised from the dead on the third day and then appeared to witnesses who had not expected to see Him resurrected and then sent them out to tell this good news to the world. That gospel is good news to all who will believe it, for by it they can have for all eternity every worthwhile thing, all centered around that wonderful term "eternal life." A never ending life of perfection in the presence of the Lord and His saints. What a wonderful thought. And how horrible to reject good news and lose all that!

Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world. He came to save us. But when men reject that salvation they reject Him. Those that rejected Him when He was here then crucified Him and appeared to have victory. When He comes again they will find that the One they rejected is the Judge of all their actions, and all their thoughts, and everything in their lives. The book of Revelation paints a horrible picture for us in these words—"the wrath of the lamb." A lamb is the mildest kind of animal, one that takes all kinds of ill-treatment without protest. When the wildest of animals is roused to the point of wrath then watch out! A mild-mannered man can become a great danger if roused to the point of passing out of his usual character, much more than the one who angers quickly and then calms down quickly. The "wrath of the lamb" is then a picture of the wrath of the One Who loved you and died for you, the One Who is not willing that any should perish and so does not bring quick judgment. But the time will come when He must judge those who have rejected Him, spurned His love, His sacrifice, His righteousness. They (may it not be *you*) will be horrified to see their awful actions, even secret ones being judged and themselves cast into the outer darkness of the lake of fire. Flee to the One Who can save you but must judge you then!

Before leaving this terrible paragraph, let us look back again at verse 2 and see that God's judgment is according to truth and men will treasure up wrath when they despise God's goodness (vv. 4, 5); that it will be according to your works if you are in that awful judgment (v. 6); that there will be no respect of persons then (v. 11); that it will be according to the light given (v. 12), and finally it will be according to the gospel—the gospel that you have rejected if you have not come to Christ. When Jesus Christ sits on His judgment throne judging even the secrets of men you can be with Him, having passed out of death into life through faith. Do that now, I beg, if you have not done so already.

Jack Blaes preaches at the Antioch Church, Frankfort, Ky. and teaches at the Portland Christian School in Louisville.



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

COLUMNIST ALAN ABELSON WRITES: Let's hasten to acknowledge that Khomeini is truly a miracle man. Who, else, after all, could make Idi Amin look good?

"YOU BRAVE PEOPLE OF IRAN," says Ayatollah Khomeini, "have decided to rub America's nose in the dirt."

A LETTER TO RICHARD WURMBRAND FROM RUSSIA: "I was a doubter. Then I began to listen to your radio programs. As a result, I repented of my unbelief and accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. Recently I was baptized and am now a child of God." Wurmbbrand says, "We get many such letters from various countries."

ACCORDING TO WURMBRAND'S NEWSLETTER, Nazareth, Rome, and Geneva, three cities rich in Christian tradition, all have communist mayors.

"YOU HAVE IT IN YOUR POWER TO SAVE CHRYSLER," so said Congressman Richard Kelly (R.-Florida) to United Auto Workers president Douglas Fraser at hearings of the Economic Stabilization Subcommittee. By taking a 25 percent pay cut they would have saved \$1 billion to just hand over to the company. With a 25 percent cut, Auto work would still be far ahead of the average worker, according to the congressman about 50 percent ahead. Kelly says that the Chrysler question is of overriding importance because the answer will decide whether the United States maintains a Free Enterprise economy in the 1980's or moves into a socialized or nationalized economy.

SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO

HEAR THE Kentucky Supreme Court's decision which struck down the State Department of Education's extension of its standards on curriculum, teaching, and textbooks for private elementary and secondary schools. This came as a great relief to many Christian Educators in the state, but especially to five ministers of churches who, along with the parents of children enrolled in these church schools, were charged with truancy or contributing to the truancy of a child. They could have been fined up to \$500 and/or sentenced to a year in jail if found guilty of breaking such a law. As it turned out the courts have held that the bureaucracy was out of the bounds of the Constitution, both of Kentucky and the Federal Government. These ministers and their faithful members are to be commended. Their stand gives us heart to believe that there are some heroes with us yet. But above all, may God be praised.

SOME REACTIONS TO THE DECISION ABOVE: Bob Brown, vice-chairman of the state board says, "... it (the decision) regresses the obligation of the state and places all options in the hands of parents." (Happy regression.) Lonnie Mattingly, a Baptist superintendent of the Northside Christian School (Louisville) said, "... This shouldn't affect the quality of education in reputable Christian Schools. Parents are the real accrediting agency of the Christian schools. They won't pay for what they don't get." Doesn't that sound like the "open market" system? You just can't get much more American than that. Robert Chenoweth, assistant attorney general said, "The question of what a school is must still be resolved. Can a family declare itself a religious body

and restrict education of its children to the home?" I remember Mark Hopkin's remark about what a school is. Something about a boy on one end of a log, and a teacher on the other. And this idea of the family being a religious body is Biblical enough for me. Former Governor Bert Combs, the state board's attorney in this case, said he believes tests alone are not an adequate measure of a school's quality." He just may be right, but who is to say exactly what is that adequate measure? And that is getting to the nub of the question. Earl Mullins, Sr., Administrator of Portland Christian Schools, (Louisville) said, "We're very pleased. It's what we kind of expected. I'd have been shocked and surprised if it had gone the other way." Brother Mullins, speaking for the Kentucky Association of Christian Schools, said that they had been working on educational standards for their own schools before this case ever came up. He said, "We're wanting to work toward quality standards rather than quantity."

THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION will have to determine whether the Communists of Cuba are making in-kind contributions by providing mailing lists to the Kennedy campaign. Granma, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, is sent by airmail from Havana, free of charge, to a list of selected Marxists in the U. S. This month that list was used to send a "Priority Message" from Senator George McGovern seeking donations for Teddy Kennedy.

NICARAGUAN Sandinist leaders have made a three-week tour of Moscow and the Warsaw Pact capitals seeking a mutual defense pact between Cuba and Nicaragua. Our State Department is trying to suppress news of this action

until after the Congress approves a \$75 million loan package for the Sandinista Communists.

ANOTHER THING THE STATE DEPARTMENT isn't discussing is the fact that while monitoring the Ayatollah Khomeini's entourage in France the French Security authorities found that three of Khomeini's closest advisors were working with the Soviet K.G.B. through the Libyan secret police. One of these was Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, now Iran's foreign minister.

WILLIAM J. MURRAY, son of atheist militant Madalyn Murray O'Hair rejects his mother's atheism. He publicly apologizes to God and to the American people for his part in building his mother's "personal empire" and in promoting the "hateful and anti-moral way of life" he learned from her. In a letter to the **Austin American-Statesman**, Murray, 33, says that "I pray that I may be able to correct some of the wrong I have created." He says that the part "I have played as a teenager in removing prayer from public schools was criminal. I removed from our future generations that short time each day which should rightly be reserved for God. Inasmuch as the suit to destroy the tradition of prayer in school was brought in my name, I feel gravely responsible for the resulting destruction of the moral fiber of our youth that it has caused."

SHAME! SHAME! SHAME! The three Representatives from Pennsylvania who were implicated in the so-called Abscam scandal were Democrats Michael Myers, Richard Lederer, and John Murtha. In last Month's primary, Myers defeated 16 opponents; Lederer outpolled 7 challengers; and Murtha was unopposed.

Definition: **SACRIFICE** —the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim.

Television is a device by which you are entertained in your living room by people you wouldn't invite into your house.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace Wood

The Russian Bear Casts Its Shadow

Marvin J. Rosenthal

HIS "GAZE" IS FIXED ON ISRAEL
HIS TEETH ARE PREPARED TO DEVOUR
HIS CLAWS ARE BARED TO RAVISH

Six hundred years before Christ, the Bible predicted that a nation to the far north of Israel would launch an invasion into the Middle East (Ezek. 38:14-16; 39:1-2).

This battle is expressly stated to be in the latter days (Ezek. 38:16) and in the latter years (Ezek. 38:8).

On November 25, 1940 Russia, then allied with Nazi Germany and Japan, described its territorial aspirations as "the area south of Baku and Batum in the general direction of the Persian Gulf."

The prophet said Russia would come, "To take a spoil, and to take a prey . . ." (Ezek. 38:12). Oil, agriculture, warm water ports, Dead Sea mineral wealth and strategic military geographic benefits may be among the "spoil".

The identification of Russia as this major antagonist is based upon: (1) Geography—the nation will come from the far north of Israel (Ezek. 38:15). (2) The names "Magog", "Meshech" and "Tubal" (Ezek. 38:2) are names of grandsons of Noah (Gen. 10:2). Noah disembarked from the ark in modern day Turkey (between Israel and Russia) and from there his sons and grandsons went forth to establish their own tribes. According to the first-century historian Josephus, Magog settled in what is today south-central Russia with the Caucasus mountain range as his southern border; and present day Moscow in the west and Tobolsk in the east may be modern derivations of biblical Meshech and Tubal. Many cities in eastern Russia have an "sk" suffix, so that Tubal easily becomes Tobolsk. (3) The term "chief prince" (Ezek. 38:3) would be better translated as a proper noun, "prince of Rosh". The late Wilbur Smith, in his article on the significance of Russia, traces the name from the fourth century A.D., when the region was referred to as Rosh. Later the same region was called Rus or Ros by the Byzantines, who were under attack. Rus in turn became Rucin in the Greek language in the ninth century, which became Russia when carried over to the Russian language. In the seventeenth century, by analogy with the word "ruskie", Russia began to be written with two s's, and thus Russia.

Allied with Russia will be Persia (Ezek. 38:5), whose name was changed in 1935 to Iran. When the prophet wrote, the Persian Empire included present day Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and part of Pakistan. The identification of "Cush and Put" (Ezek. 38:5) is debated but probably refers to modern day Libya and Ethiopia in North Africa. *Time* magazine, August 22, 1977, identified these two nations as being under strong Russian influence. "Gomer" is clearly Germany; ". . . and

all its hordes..." (Ezek. 38:6) would be Communist East Europe. Finally, "Togar-mah" (Ezek. 38:6) is, according to some scholars, to be identified as Turkey, presently a weak link in the NATO alliance and identified to the north of Israel.

Russia and these nations as allies will launch an attack against Israel (Ezek. 38:9). They will not succeed. Russia has said she will bury the West—God has said He will bury Russia (Ezek. 38:21-23). It will take Israel seven months to bury the dead of the invading armies (Ezek. 39:12).

The question of when this battle occurs is widely debated. This author leans toward placing it after the Rapture of the Church and before the middle of the Tribulation Period.

NOT WITHOUT DESIGN is an exciting new book by Marvin Rosenthal, editor of *ISRAEL MY GLORY*. Its content is both timely and crucial. His introduction begins with characteristic forthrightness:

"Let me say it right up front and without apology—the world is in a mess, and it's a big one! If planet Earth were a volcano, an eruption would be imminent. If the Earth were a giant meteor, it would be plummeting at break-neck speed toward collision. If the Earth were the sun, it would be setting, not to prepare for a new day, but to end an age whose foundations have been eroded. If the Earth were Humpty Dumpty it would be ready to fall, and all the king's horses and all the king's men wouldn't be able to put the planet Earth back together again (only God's Son will be capable of that feat).

"The insanity of the present hour has reached epidemic proportions. Not only does twentieth-century man not have the right answers to pressing, critical problems; he's so far off center that he doesn't even have the right questions.

"Mankind has traded God's eternal principles for temporal, secular humanism with disastrous consequences.

"These are not, I think, the words of a pessimist but of a biblical realist. Nor does what is happening in today's world surprise the student of God's Word. The cause, course and consummation of human history is clearly revealed in the Bible—God has given to man a blueprint. History is *NOT WITHOUT DESIGN*...."



STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you, said Samuel to Israel (I Sam. 12:23).

And Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife . . . (Gen. 20:17).

And God turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10).

These were prayers of Intercession, for Intercession means praying for others.

An outstanding case of Intercession is found in Exodus 32, where the Lord became so angry with Israel, that He said to Moses: "Let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: And I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses cried out so fervently, interceding for the people that God turned and refused to destroy them.

In Psalm 106 David mentions this event. In verse 23, he says, "Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy them."

In a strange and wonderful way God is looking for "Intercessors". If He cannot find them, His wrath—His anger against sin must fall!

In Ezek. 22:30, 31 He said, "And I sought for a man among them—that would stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I brought upon their heads, saith the Lord Jehovah."

Paul put intercessions in a high "Priority-list of prayer-items" in I Timothy 2:1-6. Such intercessions (including supplications, prayers, & thanksgivings) were to be made "for all men, for kings, and all that are in high place." In vs. 3 Paul wrote, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." In vs. 5, he says, "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, himself Man, Christ Jesus. . ."

Christ, indeed is our "Intercessor," our Mediator, our Advocate" (see I John 2:1, 2) "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34).

Remember that day in which the Lord Jesus had to call Peter's name twice to get his attention? Then He broke the news to impetuous Simon that Satan had asked permission to "shake him up a bit" like he had done with Job. But although that request was granted, (for Satan led Simon to deny His Lord three times) yet because Our Precious Lord Jesus will not allow Satan to go too far in his vicious attempts to steal our affections from our Redeemer—our Advocate—our Intercessor, Peter did "turn again" (as the Lord had reassured him) and took a firm, positive stand for His Lord. (Luke 22:31-62)

Indeed, we are not left alone, on our own—to "sink or swim" without Him! For He will never leave nor forsake us, for, remember, "He ever lives to make intercession for us!"

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When Will the Rapture Occur?

Dr. David R. Reagan

Last month in the first article in this series, we saw that the term "Rapture" is a Biblical word, taken from the Latin Vulgate translation of the New Testament. We saw too that the Rapture is a Biblical concept that is described in detail in I Thessalonians 4:17. Briefly stated, the concept is that at some time in the future Jesus will appear in the sky, and the saints, both living and dead, will be caught up to meet Him in the air.

Another crucial point that was made in last month's article is that the Rapture is a central concept in all four of the major schemes of end time events. In other words, the Rapture is an integral part of the Historic Pre-Millennial, A-Millennial, Post-Millennial, and Dispensational Pre-Millennial viewpoints. We therefore concluded last month's study with the observation that the real question regarding the Rapture is not *if* it will occur but *when* it will occur. Will it happen before or after the Tribulation? Will it mark the beginning of the Tribulation (the Dispensational view), the beginning of the Millennium (the Historic Pre-Mill view), or the end of time (the A-Mill and Post-Mill views)?

THE PRE-TRIBULATION VIEW

The most popular viewpoint today among Pre-Millennialists is the one developed by the Dispensationalist school of thought. It is called the "Pre-Tribulation Rapture," meaning that the Rapture will occur *before* the beginning of the Tribulation, as illustrated in figure 1.

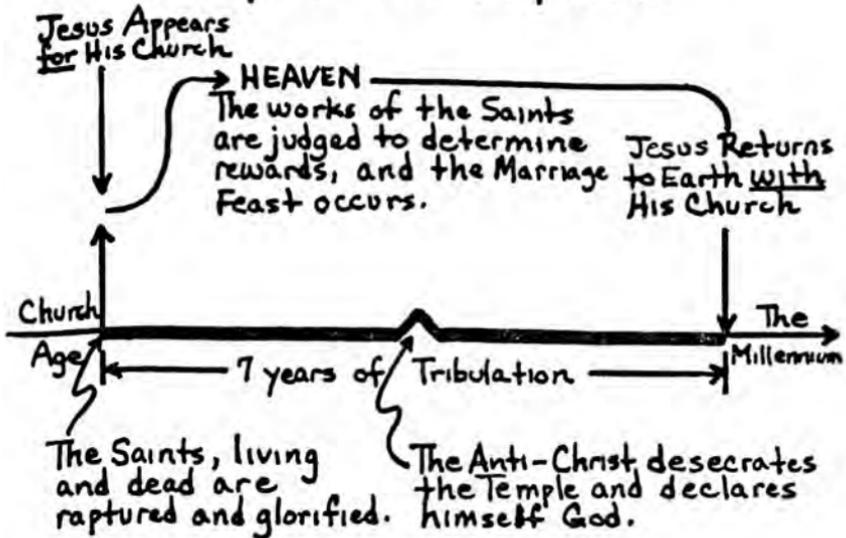
According to this scheme of prophetic interpretation, the Tribulation is a period of seven years designed primarily to bring the Jew to an attitude of repentance so that when Jesus returns to reign upon the earth, the Jews will "look upon him whom they have pierced" and will believe. This viewpoint sees no purpose for the church being on the earth during the Tribulation, and thus the Rapture is pictured as an event that will occur before the Tribulation begins.

The Church will therefore be in heaven during the seven year Tribulation period when the people on earth will suffer the terror of the Anti-Christ and the outpouring of God's wrath. Most Dispensationalists believe that this seven year period will be used by Jesus in Heaven to judge the works of the raptured saints in order to determine their degrees of reward. The marriage feast of Jesus with His bride, the church, is usually pictured as occurring in Heaven at the end of this seven year period, immediately before the return of Christ to the

earth in glory as the Conquering Lion who will defeat the forces of Satan and institute the millennial reign.

Figure 1

The Dispensational Pre-Tribulation Concept of the Rapture



It is easy to see why this concept of the Rapture has become so popular, for it promises Christians an avenue of escape from the horrible events that will take place on the earth during the Tribulation. The crucial question is whether this relatively new concept of the Rapture, developed by the Plymouth Brethren in England in the 1830's, is representative of the Biblical view or whether it is simply an exercise in wishful thinking. The point we need to keep in mind is that although the *event* of the Rapture is clearly taught by the Bible, the *timing* of the Rapture is purely inferential. The Bible does not anywhere state *when* the Rapture will occur. It only provides hints.

A PLEA FOR PATIENCE

I intend to approach this question by analyzing in detail all the major arguments that have been presented by Dispensationalists in behalf of their pre-tribulation concept. I will then take a look at the major counter arguments. This will have to be done in several installments, so I call upon the reader to exercise patience and not to jump to any premature conclusions before all the arguments, both pro and con, have been presented and carefully evaluated.

THE CONFLICTING IMAGE ARGUMENT

The first argument that is usually offered in behalf of the Pre-

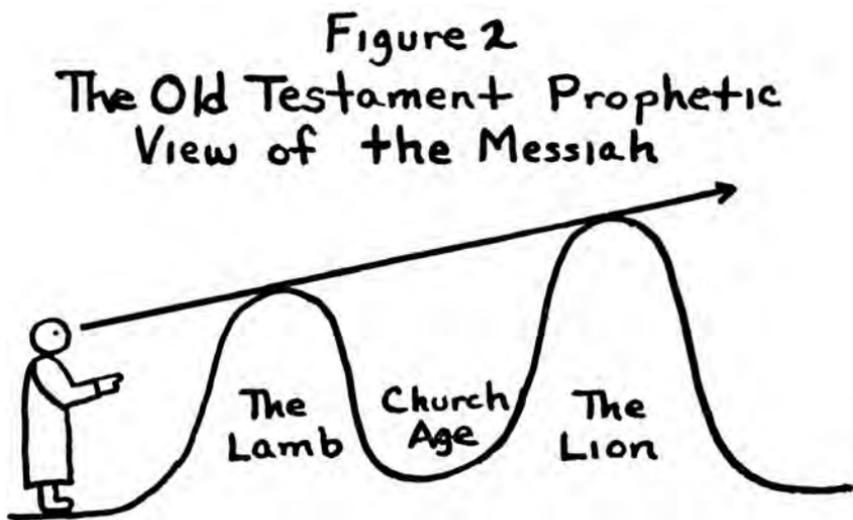
Tribulation Rapture concept is that it is the only concept of the Rapture which accommodates and harmonizes the two seemingly conflicting pictures of the return of Christ which are contained in the New Testament.

The point here is that some of the passages in the New Testament picture Jesus as returning *for* His saints (I Thess. 4:13-17, II Thess. 2:1, & I Cor. 15:23), whereas other passages envision Him returning *with* His saints (I Thess. 3:13, Jude 14, & Rev. 19:11-14).

Thus, it is argued, there must be two comings of Christ that are yet future—one *for* the church (The Rapture) and one *with* the church (The Second Advent). When Jesus comes *for* the church, the saints will meet Him in the sky (I Thess. 4:13-17). When He returns *with* the church, the saints will descend with Him to the earth and will witness His triumph over Satan at the Battle of Armageddon. The saints will then participate in the reign of Christ over His millennial kingdom upon the earth (II Tim. 2:12 & Rev. 2:26 & 27).

AN OLD TESTAMENT PARALLEL

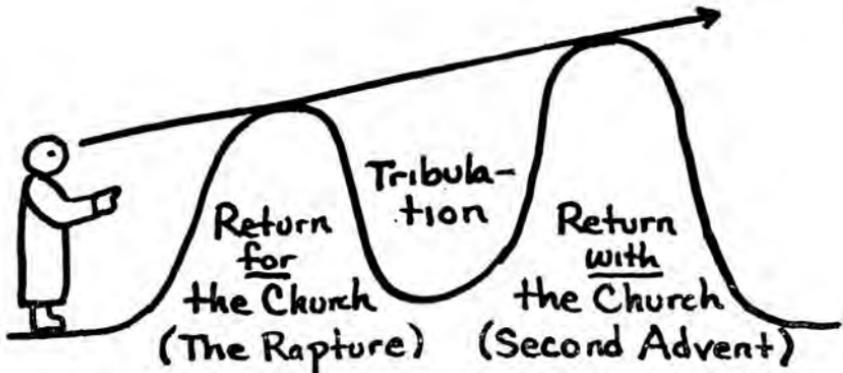
These two different pictures of the return of Christ in the New Testament are reminiscent of the two radically different visions of the Messiah contained in the Old Testament. The Hebrew prophets saw a Messiah who was both a Suffering Lamb (Isa. 53) and a Conquering Lion (Isa. 31: 4 & 5, Zeph. 1:14-18, & Zech. 14:1-9). Since these visions of the Messiah seemed so contradictory, many Jewish interpreters of the Scriptures concluded that there would be two Messiahs. They failed to understand that the two roles were separated in time and would be fulfilled by the same person. Their prophetic view, like that of a man viewing two distant mountain peaks, is illustrated in figure 2.



The Dispensationalists argue that the New Testament writers present a similar situation with their two views of the returning Lord, that is, the returns are separated by a period of time as illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3

The New Testament Prophetic View of Christ's Return



THE COUNTER ARGUMENT

Although this particular argument in behalf of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is a Biblical one, it is an easy one to counter by those who hold the Historic Pre-Millennial viewpoint. For the fact of the matter is that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is *not* the only concept of the Rapture which accommodates and harmonizes the two New Testament pictures of the Lord's return. The Historic Pre-Millennial view incorporates both pictures by contending that the Lord's return *for* His church will occur simultaneously *with* His church.

According to the Historic Pre-Mill view, the Lord will appear in the heavens at the end of the Tribulation, the saints (living and dead) will meet him in the sky and be glorified, and the Lord will then immediately proceed to the earth with His saints to defeat the forces of Satan and begin His reign. All of this will occur in the twinkling of an eye, with no significant time lapse between the Rapture and the Second Advent.

The A-Mill and Post-Mill schools of thought have a much more difficult time trying to reconcile the two different types of returns of the Lord depicted in the New Testament. They do not deny that the Lord will appear for his saints, but they steadfastly deny that He will proceed to the earth with them. Instead, they argue that the Lord will take His glorified saints back to Heaven with Him. Of course, the only way the A-Mills and Post-Mills can harmonize the scriptures concerning the return of Christ is for them to interpret the Rapture passages literally while at the same time spiritualizing all the passages regarding the Second Advent. In other words, they hold that the Rapture passages mean what they say, but the Second Advent passages mean something other than what they say. However, the New Testa-

ment does not provide any basis for literalizing one image and spiritualizing the other. To do so is about as ridiculous as spiritualizing the First Resurrection in Revelation 20 and then literalizing the Second Resurrection in the same chapter—something that both A-Mills and Post-Mills are guilty of doing. We need to accept the fact that God is able to say what He means. And when the plain sense makes sense, we need to stop looking for any other sense, lest we end up with nonsense.

SUMMARIZING THE FIRST ARGUMENT

To summarize, the conflicting image argument in behalf of the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is a good one, but it is not conclusive or decisive, because the two images can also be harmonized in the Historical Pre-Mill concept of the Rapture. The evidence of these two images does, however, seem to rule out the A-Mill and Post-Mill concepts of a literal Rapture and a spiritualized Second Advent.

Our question, "When will the Rapture occur?" remains unanswered. This first argument in behalf of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture rules out only the A-Mill and Post-Mill concepts. It does not invalidate the Historical Pre-Mill view. Our search for a conclusive answer about the timing of the Rapture must continue.

THE WRATH OF GOD ARGUMENT

The second major argument in behalf of the Pre-Tribulation concept of the Rapture is usually stated as follows: "The Bible clearly teaches that God has always protected His people from the outpouring of His wrath and that He will continue to do so in the future."

This is certainly a very Biblical argument. The general principle is stated in Romans 5:9 where Paul wrote: "Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved from the wrath of God." Paul repeats this promise in I Thessalonians 1:10 when he states that "Jesus will deliver us from the wrath to come." Paul then applies this principle directly to the end time events in I Thessalonians 5 where he talks about the sudden destruction that will occur when the Lord comes like a thief in the night. He observes that there is no reason for the Christian to fear this event, because "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thess. 5:9)

In Luke's account of the Lord's Olivet Discourse, he quotes Jesus as saying that when the signs begin that will point toward His Second Advent, the saints should "look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28) The Lord then adds: "Watch at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36) Jesus seems to be talking about the same thing in Revelation 3:10 where He states: "Because you have kept my word of patience endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth." Again, no specific, clear-cut promise is made in any of these passages that the Rapture will precede the Tribulation, but it would be safe to say that the idea is certainly inferred.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

The idea is also inferred by example and type in the Old Testament. Dispensationalists point, for example, to the miraculous translation of Enoch before the flood, the protection of Noah and his family during the flood, the withdrawal of Lot and his family before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the redemption of the Jewish firstborn at the Passover, and the protection of Rahab during the destruction of Jericho. The Apostle Peter summed up the whole idea when he wrote:

... if God preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven other persons, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ... and if he rescued righteous Lot ... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment. (II Peter 2:5-9)

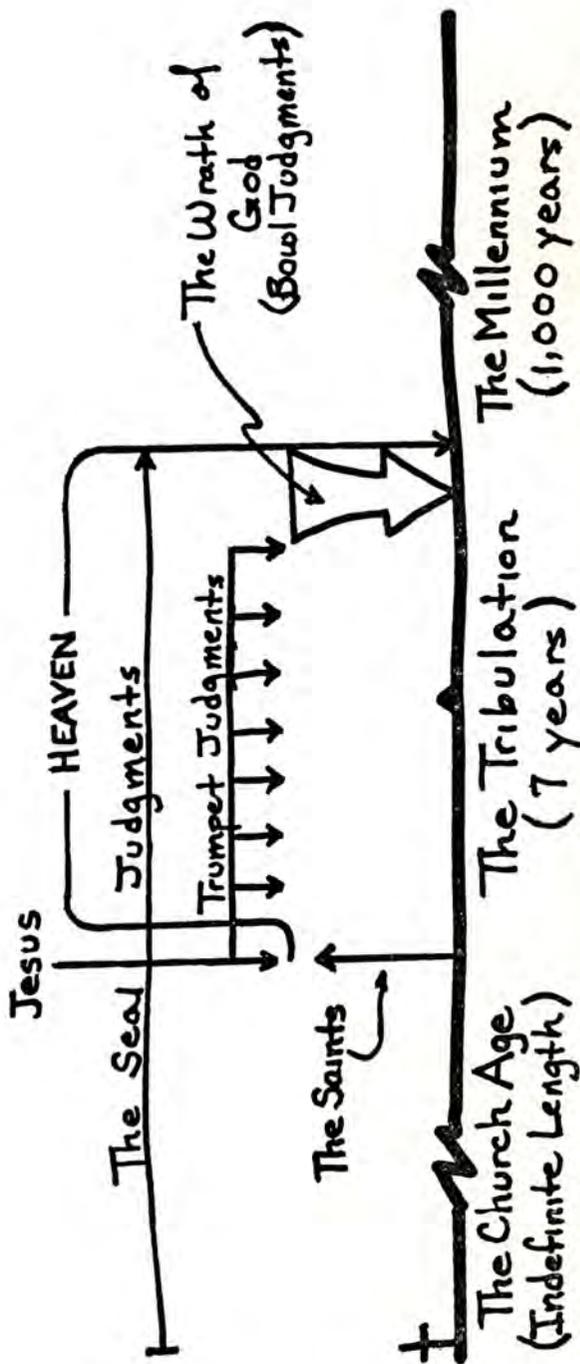
THE ARGUMENT'S WEAKNESS

The only problem with these impressive lists of scriptures and examples is that they do not prove that the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation. The only thing they prove is that Believers will be protected from the outpouring of God's wrath. But that protection could be supplied in many ways other than a rapture of the saints. After all, neither Noah nor Rahab nor the Jewish firstborn were raptured out of their life threatening situations. They were left in the midst of danger but were divinely protected.

Another problem is that the Book of Revelation clearly states that there will be Believers on the earth during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:3, 9:4, 13:7, and 14:12), and it says that these Believers will be divinely protected from some of the judgments which will bring such great destruction and suffering. Dispensationalists counter this point by saying that these saints on the earth during the Tribulation are people who have been converted to Christ *after* the Rapture. But this cannot be proved one way or the other, and the point still remains that these people are afforded divine protection without being raptured. Look, for example, at Revelation 9:1-8. Here we are told that the blowing of the Fifth Trumpet will result in the unleashing of a horrible demonic plague of locusts which will torture all of mankind for five months *except* those who have the seal of God upon their foreheads.

Still another problem with this wrath of God argument is that the Book of Revelation does not picture the wrath of God being poured out until chapter 16 when the bowl judgments begin. The seal judgments (chapter 6) and the trumpet judgments (chapters 8 & 9) are not portrayed as the wrath of God. They could very well be the consequence of Man's own evil—particularly the evil of the Anti-Christ. Thus, by the logic of the Dispensationalist's own argument, the Rapture would not have to occur until Revelation 16:1, because that is the point at which the wrath of God is poured out—and that could very well be during the final year or months of the Tribulation period, as illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4
 The Dispensational Pre-Millennial Scheme of
 End Time Events



Again, let's keep in mind that we are promised protection only from the wrath of God, and that protection can be supplied without a rapture. We are never promised physical protection from the consequences of Man's sin. That's why the Bible is full of reminders that we have been called to suffer with Christ so that we might also be glorified with Him. (Rom. 8:17, Phils. 1:29, & I Pet. 4:12-19)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I have neither proved nor disproved the concept of the Dispensational school of thought that the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation. I have simply analyzed two of the most common arguments offered in behalf of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture and have concluded that they do not prove the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation. Based on these two arguments alone, the Historic Pre-Mill view could still be correct—the view that the Rapture will occur *after* the Tribulation.

We will look at the pros and cons of other Pre-Tribulation Rapture arguments in future installments as we continue to pursue the question "When will the Rapture occur?"

(Dr. Reagan would appreciate responses to this article. His address is Lamb & Lion Ministries, 2706 Clear Springs, Plano, Texas 75075.)

The Reality of the Kingdom of God

Michael Hawley

The testimony that the world needs to see is "Christ in us, the Hope of Glory." The unbelieving will be provoked to respond to God (in faith or continued disbelief) if Christ is truly seen and heard in His people. There is a message with which we have been entrusted that is so powerful in changing lives, that in just the hearing of this message of the good news, and the response of repentance and faith will result in a brand new life. But... what if there is little evidence of this new life in the lives of those who speak of it? How much more effective is any word—in teaching, preaching, testimony, etc.—when it is accompanied by the living example or reality of that word? Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks to us very plainly:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them (all believers) also who shall believe on me through their word; that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Hallelujah! This is a wonderful passage of scripture—but more than just a passage, it is the prayer of our Lord, who is Lord of all. I know that this prayer not only reveals the will of God for His people, but reveals that in Christ the prayer is answered. Please take note that

the Lord Jesus is not talking about individuals here; he is speaking of "... these ... them ... their ... they, etc." What does this mean to us? It means that there is something which an individual Christian (even a faithful believer) by himself cannot do—testify to the love of God and the reality of a Risen Savior and King—through oneness, unity, and love (John 13:34, 35). The individual believer, of course, has a message of love and truth to share wherever he or she may be. The believer can share the word of truth, share about the power of God, and show God's love to those around him at home, work—anywhere he may be ... but it takes a plurality of *individuals* to testify of the love and unity and oneness which our Lord speaks of in this passage. A man just cannot show unity and oneness of himself to the end of impressing the world with the life-changing power of God. It is here where fellowship plays a key role in letting our light shine.

THE WITNESS OF FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (*koinonia*) may only be truly had among those who believe in Jesus Christ. And this fellowship is possible only because of Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 2 tells us that Jesus Christ is our peace—peace with God and with men. How dearly we all need the peace which Christ brings to us. Jesus, the lamb of God, died not only to restore our fellowship with God our Father, but with each other. This peace, which only Jesus Christ can bring to men, is what the world has to see the reality of, through our fellowship with each other. This fellowship is neither cheap nor superficial—we know that Christ died to bring us into it. It is not simply some display of friendship or enthusiastic oneness, or physical attraction, or even common interests and goals. (There is nothing bad about these aspects of human relationships; Jesus Christ does bring a quality to our lives in each of these areas, however, this can only be evidence for what our Lord has done in us individually, that is in making me a new creation, and what He has done among us, namely bringing peace—making us brothers. Brotherhood in Christ, being common members and participants in God's family is what really testifies to the reality of the peace found in Christ.) The fellowship Christ brings *us* into is divine; it is filled with love and grace; it is resultant of being a new creation and having the gift of the Holy Spirit—it is supernatural. Being supernatural does not mean that it involves mysticism (that form which is generally associated with Eastern Religions) or that it is far off and hard to attain, or that it is something for only the very "spiritual." Being supernatural as used here, means that it is from God; it means that it is not natural or of man. This fellowship is simply *our sharing in the life of Christ together*, and in this sense *we are partners*. We can truly share or be partners in Christ, and only in Christ, because this peace among men is a reality—Jesus Christ has *really* made possible relationships among men that could never have been possible without Him. Our sharing together in the Life of Christ begins when we come to Him, and has some very real and practical consequences in the remainder of our lives here in this world.

In the book of Acts we read of men and women giving their lives to God in Christ Jesus, and the consequences of their action. We

cannot read Acts without sensing the glory of God and the power of God in saving men. These early believers had a common share of the grace of God, and in many respects they must have seen themselves as partners. These people—the church—became knit together; they were not *just individuals* any longer, (they were definitely individually responsible for their own actions—read of Ananias and Sapphira, Simon, etc.) they were members of a heavenly body and therefore in need of one another. They could no longer do their own thing before God, because they were already placed together in the Body of Christ. They would have to care for one another—they would need to! The kind of testimony of which our Lord spoke, concerning the ones who believe in Him, would require that they share, and care for one another. What a tremendous life the church can display. It is a life full of power, power to make life new, to make relationships between people full of love and purpose. And this power is a present reality because Jesus Christ has redeemed us and dealt the death blow to sin!

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper which we share should testify to the reality of fellowship we have with God our Father and His Son Christ Jesus, the lamb that was slain, and also with each other. We should be able to see ourselves as sinners brought into the presence of God because of what Christ alone has done for us; but we need to also see our brothers around us in the same way—sinners as I, forgiven and brought into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. This very fact should be a joy to us as a people, and should be the basis of our fellowship together, namely, *we* have been brought into each other's presence solely because of what Jesus has done for *us*. Knowing deep inside that Christ died for me and for him will help us to have concern and love for one another. We become a humbler people when we keep this fact before us. There is little room for arguments and differences that bring division when we really recognize the bread and cup and what they mean. It is not that problems and differences do not occur; but if the peace and love of God is real in our life, problems and misunderstandings and even disputes over doctrine can be overcome. Isn't this why Christ gave His life for us—to bring unity and oneness and love for one another—to bring peace to men. There is the power in Christ to overcome such problems. He is our peace and He is alive. He not only brought peace to groups of people—Jew and Greek, male and female, bond and free, etc., He brought peace to us—me and him. Often times we are too quick to exalt our understanding and knowledge (which sometimes are deeply rooted with pride) in letting quarreling and arguments and trifles take their toll. And when these things happen among brethren, the world does notice, and we are wounded parts of Christ's body and our Lord is grieved!

The world does not want us to show the reality of "Christ in us." Satan does not want the Church to show this reality. We live in a world which is constantly trying to mold us into anything that will not show forth the power and wisdom and glory and love of God. We live in a world (which lies in the evil one) where it is very easy to be independent, self-sufficient, uninformed, lazy, apathetic, etc. Will

we, members of the body of Christ, take these attitudes upon ourselves in our relationships to each other, or will we show forth God's love for men and His power to deliver men from this present evil age revealed through Jesus Christ, by our being one and by our love and care for one another?

AT BILL AND BETTY'S

DON'T DO TOO MUCH

I sat looking at the clock. The hands seemed to have stuck. The Church Council had started at 7:30. Monday Bill had gone to the Men's Club Meeting. Tuesday was my Young Wives night. On Wednesday Bill had taken the children to a Fact and Faith film and now it was Thursday. Saturday was the May Day Fete and most of tomorrow evening would be spent getting ready for it. I was fed up.

I picked up the newspaper. Terrible things were still happening in Rhodesia. I tried to put myself in the place of some of the missionaries out there. Did you feel differently when you were in fulltime service for God, or were you still irritated by little things and troubled by jealousy and bad temper? I heard Bill's key in the lock but I went on reading.

"Sorry I'm late," he said, "There was a lot of business."

"Oh!" I said, "You did come home then? I was beginning to wonder."

"Don't be silly Betty," Bill said, "I couldn't help it."

"I bet you stayed on talking," I said, "You always do."

"I came away right after the meeting," Bill said, "I knew you'd be mad."

"I'm not mad," I said coldly, "I just like to see my husband sometimes, that's all."

"Yes," Bill said wearily, sitting down and running his fingers through his hair, "We do seem to have been out a lot lately."

He sounded very tired, and suddenly I wasn't cross any more. "I'm sorry," I said, "I'll make you some coffee."

"I just get fed up being alone so much in the evenings," I explained as we sipped our drinks. "One or the other of us seems to be out every night now."

"Someone has got to do the work," Bill pointed out.

"Yes, but surely not the same people all the time," I said. "We belong to every club in the Church and sit on every committee. When we get home we're too tired to cope with our own Bible and Prayer times. I'm sure that's not right."

Bill went and had a talk with the minister later in the week and he was most understanding.

He said he hadn't realised that we were doing so much. We try and keep two nights a week free now. As Bill said, "God doesn't judge our worth as Christians by the number of meetings that we attend!"

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Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Africa

April 3rd

Rejoice for the Lord has saved another soul who has studied and learned the truth. Benson Kanene took the Bible Correspondence course and read many tracts and also used his Bible to hunt up the scriptures. When he got out of prison, he found the Makoli church and was baptized into Christ. We pray many more will learn and use what they know to become children of God. What a change comes into their lives. We just received another 100 sets of Bible Correspondence lessons and have begun enrolling more prisoners and some of the officers attending them. Pray God will open many more hearts to know Him and obey Him.

This has been a busy week with each afternoon a Bible lesson, singing and prayers with the women prisoners and officers, then to the T.B. hospital for a Bible lesson. Florence Nawa goes with me and she teaches the class in Lozi as all understand it. We will surely miss her when she leaves for Rhodesia in a few weeks time. However, praise the Lord He has sent two more wonderful Christian mothers who will go with me and teach the women prisoners in Lozi. Also they will try and begin a Bible lesson once a week at the T.B. hospital, Lord willing. God is so good to raise up someone who is faithful to go each Lord's day afternoon at 14.00 hours to the prison. Truly they are an answer to many prayers for God to find teachers for this class.

Next week from the 7th to 10th is the New Chitonga Bible committee meeting at Monze. Please pray much progress will be made on getting the various books ready for the printers.

We do enjoy the *Missionary Messenger* and the *Word and Work*. The messages inspire many to do more for the Lord.

J. R. Stewart - Brown

Cape Town, South Africa

April 14th

We are losing our preacher, Alan Fraser, to the United States where he is expected to stay for over two years. They are preparing to leave on the 24th of June, 1980.

We will miss them very much, and we ask for your prayers for a new minister, of God's choice, to take his place.

We have had more baptisms, and more visitors, for which we thank God. The work here is continually growing, especially among the younger generation, and the zeal they have for God, and His work—please pray that this will continue till Jesus comes.

Cancer has taken its toll: Maureen, the sister I asked you to pray for has passed on to be with her Lord—she served so faithfully.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Jacob Surprised, Sustained, and Satisfied by the God of Isaac

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

Introduction

Three of the greatest and most comforting themes of the Bible are before us in this section of the Book of Genesis. There is again an emphasis upon the purpose of God in the unfolding of the history of salvation in the Old Testament. Israel's future history is under the sovereign direction of the Lord God, and further steps in His plans for them are revealed here. Little did Jacob realize, apparently, that it was in Egypt that God would make of them a great nation (cf. Gen. 46:3). So far as we can tell, little did he realize that his stay and the stay of his family in Egypt would lengthen into several centuries. As Griffith Thomas says, "We clearly see from this the importance of taking large views of God's purpose."

In the interview that God conducts with His servant at Beersheba in the visions of the night there is a reiteration of the comforting promises of God, which sustained Jacob's fathers so often in the past. The blessedness of the consolation of God's presence with him into Egypt must have encouraged the aged patriarch. And the assurance that he would be brought up again out of the foreign land would have nourished his faith, too, while it is doubtful that he understood that the words, "and Joseph will close your eyes" meant that he would die in the land of Egypt (cf. 46:4).

And, finally, the reality of the guidance of God comes to the fore in this encounter, for it is evident that Yahweh is still leading His servant step by step. Occasionally it is by the circumstances of life, and occasionally it is by the unusual experiences, such as by dreams and visions. Thomas comments again, "As someone has well said, 'You can always tell the way by the fact that the path is smoothed.' 'I will guide thee with Mine eye' is the promise for every believer; and if he will abide closely with God, 'the meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will he teach His way.'"

All of the themes contribute to the overall theme of wisdom of Jacob's merciful God. It is manifested in His desire to preserve His people from the iniquity of the Amorites and others in the land which would eventually be theirs. So Jacob gave up his possessions in Canaan temporarily in order that he might receive them permanently a hundredfold in the distant future.

Further, God in wisdom brought His people into Egypt that they might in comparative isolation, the isolation of a shepherding people in the fertile land of Goshen, be preserved in a nation committed to a

measure of law and order. In other words, they were being prepared to possess their land by the training and discipline of the life in Egypt.

And, then, the capstone of the preparation of His people is to be provided by the experience of redemption by blood and by power. Forever afterward that experience, typical of the individual experience of every man saved by the grace of God, would be held up before the nation as a monument to the saving power of their God. Exhortations would be grounded in the revelation of grace seen in the great event of the exodus. "And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today" (Deut. 15:15), John Newton's favorite verse, would express a sentiment that always was designed to turn them to the fountain of the blessings of life, their redemption from Egyptian bondage. How good of God to remind us often of the source of our blessings, and exhort us to service out of the gratitude that ought to move all the truly redeemed!

The reconciliation of Joseph with his brethren has now been consummated amid many tears, and the loud lamentation, so characteristic of the orientals, has reached the court of Pharaoh. And it is at this point that the story is resumed in this message.

I PHARAOH'S SUMMONS OF JACOB

His command to the brothers (Gen. 45:16-20). The news of the reconciliation of the brethren of Joseph, or at least of their recognition of each other, affected the Egyptian ruler favorably. Obviously Joseph must have been a widely esteemed prime minister. It was now known to all that Joseph was more than simply a former slave. He came from an honorable family of free nomads, and that class was generally held in high regard in those days. Further, Joseph's plan is seconded by Pharaoh's command. This may have been a providential coincidence, or the ruler may have heard of Joseph's hopes for his father and brothers, but at any rate Pharaoh asked that the brothers get Jacob and come back to Egypt. He promised them the best of the land of Egypt, and that they would eat of the fat of the land (cf. v. 18).

Kidner's comments here ought to be noted, "This royal invitation, for Joseph's sake, to an Israel near the end of hope, and to ten brothers burdened with guilt, can hardly fail to remind the Christian of the divine 'come . . . and I will give . . .' (cf. verse 18), couched in such terms of welcome and challenge. But historically this is a turning-point of a different kind, long foretold (15:13-16): the beginning of a phase of isolation (where the family, thoroughly alien, could multiply without losing its identity), and of eventual bondage and deliverance which would produce a people that for ever after knew itself redeemed as well as called"

Barnhouse comments, "A wagon from Egypt was more rare in Palestine than than an airplane in the African bush today. It was most generous of Pharaoh to give the wagons and invite Jacob's family to leave their old possessions behind and receive the bounty of Egypt." Later, when Jacob sees them, they help to convince him of the truthfulness of the news that Joseph is still alive (cf. v. 27).

Pharaoh tells Joseph and the brothers, "And do not concern your-

selves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours" (cf. v. 20). This has been called "the Old Testament equivalent of 'forgetting those things that are behind'" (cf. Phil. 3:13). Our material things are often things that are really impediments in the service of the Lord, and in our materialistic day it is wise to ask ourselves about the place they play in our lives. As Barnhouse points out, "Whatever stuff you cling to can be only an implement on your road to glory. This does not mean that you may not own a home, but the home must not own you. You may have money in the bank, but your true bank must be in heaven, not your heaven in a bank. How many Christians have impeded their spiritual progress by clinging to their stuff!"

The departure of the brothers (Gen. 45:21-24). Joseph gave them wagons, found only in Egypt at this time, and food for the journey. He also gave them clothing. Benjamin is given money and extra garments. And, in addition, a gift is sent to Jacob.

Since he knows human nature, Joseph concludes with a word of counsel, "Do not quarrel on the journey" (cf. v. 24). It is easy to see that, on a long journey when things become difficult, the brothers might fall into bickering over who was really at fault in the wrong done to Joseph so many years before. So his words are designed to prevent the fruitless anger and ill-will that might result. The advice apparently worked, for the next verse records the journey as if it were uneventful.

The arrival and announcement concerning Joseph (Gen. 45:25-28). When the brethren arrived in the land they said to Jacob, "Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." The two facts, that Joseph is still alive and that he is the ruler over Egypt, seem so far beyond the realm of the possible, that the words of the men stun the patriarch, and he does not believe them. After all, they were not paragons of honest frankness.

The brothers seem to understand Jacob's difficulty, so they go on talking about Joseph and the things that Joseph has spoken to them. Finally, when Jacob saw the wagons, he seemed to sense that their words were probably true ones, and so his spirit revived. "The old energy began to assert itself," Leupold comments. "The customary gloom of resignation vanished. Old 'Jacob' again became 'Israel,' as the significant change of name indicates, and aggressive combatant in the battle of life, ready to overcome obstacles in the power of his God. He needs no more argument or proof—'enough!' he says, 'Joseph my son is still alive.' We should not venture to measure the deep joy reflected in this word. Jacob has now just this one ambition before he dies: to go down to Egypt and to see Joseph. The soberness of old age is not deeply impressed with the glories of Joseph's position in Egypt."

Incidentally, it is a rather sad testimony to the past untruthfulness of the brethren that Jacob had to see the wagons before he would believe them.

Jacob is now ready to go down to Egypt. That is the human side of things. On the divine side, however, things are now ready for the centuries in Egypt by which the people of God would be prepared for the further important plans of Yahweh.

The fulfillment of the divine plan required much activity on the part of the Lord, including both the ordering of history and the control of nature itself in the matter of the famine. It involved the jealousy of the brethren, the providential passing of a caravan bound for Egypt, the many adversities by which Joseph was prepared for his future life, the changes of the rainfall, and probably many other things. After all, God does "work all things according to the counsel of His own will" (cf. Eph. 1:11). But this great sovereign God will bring His word to pass, and He will accomplish His purposes. How comforting it is to realize that we do not worship a frustrated deity!

II THE EMIGRATION OF JACOB TO EGYPT

The vision at Beersheba (Gen. 46:1-4). It was a very solemn step for the aged patriarch to take, for God's promises were directed toward the land of Canaan. All those promises, of course, still stand. The early entrance into the land, however, was never intended to be permanent, as Genesis fifteen indicates. Nevertheless, Jacob feels it necessary to seek specific direction concerning the step he is taking. That seems to be in his mind as he journeyed to Beersheba. Kinder comments, "The place and character of Jacob's worship indicate his frame of mind, for *Beersheba* had been Isaac's chief centre. In addressing God as *God of his father* he was acknowledging the family calling, and implicitly seeking leave to move out of Canaan. His attitude was very different from that of Abram in 12:10ff." Evidently, then, Jacob wanted some encouragement from his father's God that it was all right for him to go down to Egypt at this time. Cf. 26:25; 28:13. The prophetic word of 15:13-16 may have been in his mind, but he felt he needed divine sanction. The sacrifices were an acknowledgement of his humble place before the Lord God, and that He was to be approached only on the ground of such offerings.

The words of Moses in verse two are interesting. He writes, "And God spoke to ISRAEL in visions of the night and said, 'JACOB, JACOB.'" Is there some significance in the change of names?

The revelation that came to Jacob in the visions (the plural perhaps refers to the various steps in the continuing encounter) began with these words, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there" (cf. v. 3). The words represent His blessing upon Jacob's journey to Egypt, and that would have been reassuring to him.

An additional factor is added in verse three that goes beyond the promises given to Jacob earlier at Bethel. It is that God will make of Jacob a great nation "there," that is, in Egypt. Thus, the growing family of the patriarch is not to be made into a great nation in the land of Palestine, but in Egypt. There they would be protected and have all the advantages of the civilization of the greatest nation upon the earth. Law and order would enable them to grow into a great multitude of people, and then later the severity of servitude would prepare them for the glorious experience of redemption and deliverance. Kinder comments, "So little is God tied to one locality. But the promise of Canaan remained (cf. Rom. 11:19), and Egypt was in the long run a step towards it—foreshadowed to Abram in 15:13ff."

The guidance of the Lord is strengthened by the promise of His abiding presence in verse four. It is an illustration of the fact that believers should never move unless they are sure of the presence of the Lord. Before decisions are made, His will must be sought, for, if we walk alone, we shall walk in vain.

The last clause of verse four is probably an allusion to Joseph's closing of Jacob's eyes for him at death. On this Barnhouse has written touchingly, "Many of us have kissed the brow of a loved one who has departed, and have tenderly closed the eyelids. If the Lord does not return to take us without dying, we shall long to have loved ones with us at the time of our exodus. To Jacob was given the promise that he would not die alone—Joseph's hand would close his eyes. This was a comfort to the aged patriarch." The importance of the maintenance of family ties is certainly stressed here.

The journey to Egypt (Gen. 46:5-7). These three verses describe the trip of the patriarch and his family from the land to Egypt.

The family of Jacob (Gen. 46:8-27). The list of family members is arranged into its Leah and Rachel groups, and this gives a total of seventy. Adding Dinah (v. 15), but subtracting five other names (Er and Onan, buried in Canaan, v. 12; Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, already in Egypt, v. 20) brings us to the actual number of sixty-six (cf. v. 26) who came with Jacob to Egypt (v. 26). Verse twenty-seven adds Joseph's two sons to Joseph and Jacob, and this gives the total of all of Jacob's house who had come to Egypt sooner or later in the story.

Five other unnamed family members are mentioned in Acts 7:14, probably a reference to the grandsons of Joseph, born in Egypt and mentioned in the Septuagint, which Stephen cited in his message before the Sanhedrin.

III JACOB AND JOSEPH REUNITED

The mission of Judah (Gen. 46:28). This verse may mean that Joseph is to be escorted by Judah to the family in Goshen, or that Judah was sent to Joseph to learn from him where the family should settle in Goshen. Either sense is satisfactory.

The meeting of Jacob and Joseph (Gen. 46:29-30). The words of this section describe one of the truly beautiful moments of Scripture. Jacob is reunited with his beloved son, the firstborn of his beloved Rachel. The weeping continues for a long time, with no words spoken according to the text. None were needed. The feelings are too deep; lips cannot be controlled sufficiently to express them.

Finally, Jacob speaks, in what someone has called, "an Old Testament *Nunc Dimmittis*," and it is another of the patriarch's words on death, although this one has in it a note of satisfaction and hope (cf. 45:28). The Hebrew expression, rendered by "Now let me die" in the NASB, is rendered by some commentators by *now I can die*, the verb being taken in a potential sense. The sense is that Jacob can now die in peace.

One notes throughout this section the stress of Moses on the emotions of the biblical characters. It is not spiritual to be ashamed of the emotions, for they are as much a part of the human being as the

mind and the will. Given by God, they are just as necessary in our life and just as important as our laughter. Tears of joy or sorrow are not a sign of weakness, but of true and genuine humanity.

The counsel of Joseph (Gen. 46:31-34). Joseph wisely informs his brethren that he will tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds and have been such for their lifetimes. The Egyptians did not think well of shepherds, and so with delicacy Joseph counsels that the profession be admitted frankly, and that this is what they shall do in Goshen. In this way, their isolation in that land will prove acceptable to Pharaoh and to the Hebrews. It was a very discreet way to handle a delicate and difficult matter.

Conclusion

We conclude, then, with a renewed sense of the greatness of the purposes of God. They are wise and merciful, and we are sure to see this, when we are willing to take the long view and look at them from the standpoint of the Lord God. The promises of God are marvellous supports for the saints in the experience of life. And His guidance is a continual aid in the daily walk. It all tends to lead us to the deep appreciation of the wisdom of our merciful God. May we have no fear in entrusting ourselves into His hands for all of the details of life, from redemption through the blood of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, to the completion of our salvation in the coming again of Him who loved us and loosed us from our sins (cf. Rev. 1:5-6).

NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

Youth Revival: Brother T.Y. Clark will be the evangelist for a Youth Revival at the Sellersburg Church of Christ, June 1-8. Services will begin each evening at 7:30, including Saturday. (There will be a 6:30 Bible study for high school and college age, Monday through Friday.) Everyone is welcome!

I see the time has come to renew the subscription and am enclosing my check for \$5.00; use the extra \$1.00 however you wish. I want to continue receiving the *Word and Work* as I enjoy it very much.

— Eva J. Meredith

Jacksonville, Fla. I have labored with the Rosspoint Church of Christ for 5½ years and am going to be the minister

at Southside in Jacksonville. I have been a reader of *Word & Work* for years and have most every copy for over 30 years still among my books I enjoy *Word & Work* very much. I enjoy very much the articles of David Reagan.

—Henry Harding

Rosspoint Church of Christ. The church here is in need of a minister. Henry Harding is leaving to be with a church in Jacksonville, Fla.

We have a parsonage and can pay enough to almost support a minister full time. We have about 50 on Sunday morning.

If interested, please call Paul Ellis—(606) 573-1564.

SPIRITUAL GEM

DEE A. MEREDITH

Brother Dee Ariel Meredith, beloved friend to many missionaries, of Linton, Indiana passed away at Linton, January 25, 1980. Born June 19, 1897, he was in his eighty-fourth year—member and worker of the Summerville Church of Christ. Dee Meredith started by praying first and then reading his Bible, but later found

that reading first helped him to shape his prayers. His love for the Lord, the Word and the church was manifested in his regular attendance at Worship. He was willing and capable of performing most any duty in the church. He was a SPIRITUAL GEM in the church and will be greatly missed by all.

We extend our love and sympathy to his beloved wife, Eva Meredith.

Eugene Pound, Minister

MEETING AT HIGHLAND

Leroy Garrett, editor and publisher of RESTORATION REVIEW will be at Highland for a meeting June 22-27, 10:50 and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday and 7:30 Monday through Friday.

The theme of the meeting: "Seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Sunday, June 22, a.m.—"Thy rod and thy staff comfort me" (Psa. 23:4)

Sunday, June 22, p.m.—"Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:2)

Monday, June 23—"Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa. 40:31)

Tuesday, June 24—"Holding the form of religion but denying the power of it" (2 Tim. 3:5)

Wednesday, June 25—"The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2)

Thursday, June 26—"The power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13)

Friday, June 27—"I took them up in my arms" (Hos. 11:3)

Leroy has devoted his life to the ministry of teaching and writing. He has served on the faculties of several colleges and universities; is a frequent lecturer on college campuses and in churches across the United States; has taken part in scores of unity conferences, especially on college campuses, including SCC and other Bible and church-related schools. While he is in Louisville he will be glad to meet with any special groups, such as youth and service clubs. Anyone interested in having him can contact him through calling Ernest E. Lyon, 451-5053 here in Louisville.



F. C. Yarbrough

ANNOUNCING A NEW PROPHETIC MINISTRY



David Reagan

Dr. David Reagan, regular writer of prophetic articles for Word & Work, has announced the formation of a new prophetic ministry which will be called "Lamb & Lion Ministries."

Mr. F. G. Yarbrough, an elder of the Piedmont Church of Christ in Dallas, will serve as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the ministry. The Board will be composed of Evangelical Christians who are concerned about the proclamation of God's Prophetic Word.

When asked about the name of the ministry, Dr. Reagan responded: "The name, 'Lamb & Lion,' has been selected because it expresses the message of the ministry. It incorporates the two great prophetic images of Jesus, pointing to God's gift of love in His suffering Lamb and His promise of wrath in His Conquering Lion. It also points to God's two ways of dealing with sin — grace and judgment."

The purposes of the ministry have been defined as follows: 1) To convert people to Jesus Christ; 2) To renew faith and commitment of Christians; 3) To enhance the hope of Christians; 4) To promote a greater spirit of love and unity between Christians; and 5) To promote research toward the unlocking of prophetic truths which have been sealed up until the end times.

Although the ministry will seek to accomplish its purposes primarily through the teaching and preaching of prophecy, Dr. Reagan emphasizes that it would not ignore other aspects of God's Word. "Prophecy will be emphasized," said Reagan, "because it has been ignored and abused and because of the nature of the times in which we live — namely, an age like 'the days of Noah,' where people are engulfed in secularism, humanism, and hedonism and are living their lives oblivious to the impending wrath of God."

The prospectus issued by the ministry points to a three-fold need for its efforts:

- 1) As a tool of evangelism among non-Christians. Specifically, the prospectus states: "The return of the Lord is imminent, and God desires that Mankind be warned, for God does not wish that any should perish."
- 2) As a tool of enlightenment and encouragement among Christians within the Campbell - Stone Restoration Heritage where prophecy has been sorely ignored and abused.
- 3) As a tool of renewal among other Christians who are caught up in denominations that are rife with unbelief and apathy.

Several methods of outreach will be used to spread the ministry's message. One will be personal appearances by the Evangelist through evangelistic meetings, renewal meetings, and prophetic meetings, workshops, and seminars.

Another method of outreach that will be utilized is the the publication of pamphlets, books, study guides, and journal articles. In this regard, Dr. Reagan intends to continue contributing one article each month to **Word & Work**.

The ministry also intends to produce tape cassette programs.

The ministry has been organized as a private, non-profit, charitable entity and may receive tax deductible contributions directly.

Some of the Board members who are well known to **Word & Work** readers include Julius Hovan and Ken Stockdell of Gallatin, Tennessee, Ken Istre of Jennings, Louisiana, Frank Mullins of Sulphur, Louisiana, Bill Spurlock of Garland, Texas, Bob Yarbrough of Bedford, Texas, and Robert Heid, the editor of **Word & Work**. Commenting on the Board, Dr. Reagan said, "I feel we are particularly fortunate to have a man of F. G. Yarbrough's spiritual stature as Chairman of our Board. Bro. Yarbrough will serve as the chief spiritual counselor to the ministry."

Dr. Reagan has announced that the first publication of the ministry will be a 32 page booklet entitled "The Second Coming of Christ In Prophecy: A Response to Guy N. Woods by David Reagan." This booklet will contain five articles previously published in **Word & Work** plus a concluding article especially written for the booklet. Dr. Reagan has also announced that the first cassette program to be produced by the ministry will be entitled "The Power of Prayer." It will feature ten lessons on prayer contained on five cassettes which will be attractively packaged in a vinyl binder.

Dr. Reagan has already started work on the production of a cassette tape overview of the Book of Revelation, and he has begun work on the first book which the ministry hopes to publish. It will be entitled "Thoughts on Prophecy for Churches of Christ and Christian Churches."

Dr. Reagan is available immediately for meetings, workshops and seminars. Congregations or individuals who are interested in the ministry may contact Dr. Reagan by writing him at 2706 Clear Springs, Plano, Texas 75075, or by calling him at (214) 596-6766.

The ministry will be publicly launched on June 14 with an all day prophecy conference at the Piedmont Church in Dallas. The theme of the conference will be "The Jew in Prophecy." The five presentations and featured speakers will be as follows:

- 1) "The Preservation of the Jew: Happenstance or Miracle?" by Ben Rake, Jr., minister of the Piedmont Church.

- 2) "The Church and Israel: Separate or Identical?" by Ken Istre, Evangelist from Jennings, Louisiana.
- 3) "A Jewish Perspective on the Jew in Prophecy" by a speaker from the American Board of Missions to the Jews.
- 4) "The Regathering of Israel: Coincidence or Providence?" by David Reagan.
- 5) "The Jew in Tribulation: Vengeance or Grace?" by Dan Cummins, prophetic conference speaker and teacher from Dallas.

When interviewed recently at the Word & Work offices, Dr. Reagan summed up the purpose of the new ministry by saying: "We must proclaim the imminency of the Lord's return with conviction and speed, for the signs are upon us and the season is at hand. The wrath of God is about to be poured out, and we must preach, as we have never preached before, the urgent message: 'Escape the wrath to come.'"

Reprint of "Lessons on Daniel" Planned

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Have events of recent times quickened your interest in the word of prophecy? Is the period of Gentile supremacy rapidly drawing to a close?

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It has been a number of years since certain excellent writings dealing with apocalyptic Scripture were offered by WORD and WORK. Notable examples are "Lessons on Daniel" and "The Revelation" by R. H. Boll.

Believing the above named publications (and others) would greatly benefit every serious Bible student, a local congregation has proposed to underwrite, initially, a reprint of "LESSONS ON DANIEL". This work of nearly 100 pages, bound with flexible leather-look cover, can be available soon at a cost of approximately \$1.50 per copy, plus postage. The decision to produce 1000 copies hinges upon reader response to this announcement. (Perhaps an elder or pulpit minister could reply for the members within a given "flock".)

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