

Present Truth

The *Bible alone* as the only rule of faith and practice; *faith alone* as the only means of acceptance with God; and *Christ alone* as the only mediator between God and men.

Oct. - Dec. 2009

Volume 9, Number 4

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Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is especially committed to upholding the truth of justification by faith in this time when it is being threatened by humanism, emotionalism, and ecumenism. Our publication is based on the principle of *sola Scriptura* – the Bible and the Bible only as a rule of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17). We desire to give the gospel trumpet a certain sound (1 Cor. 14:7-9), that through words easy to be understood (Hab. 2:2) people may “be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12) and like Noah be proclaimers of the righteousness of Christ (2 Pet. 2:5).

Editor: Richard Marin

Sponsors: All those who share our goals. This magazine has no denominational sponsorship. It is supported solely by freewill offerings from those who see in **Present Truth** a hope and safeguard for this generation.

Contributors: Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome articles from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone.

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Editorial Introduction:

Mining for Truth

Truth especially relevant for our time is called “present truth.” The apostle Peter wrote to those “established in the present truth” 2 Pet. 1:12. There are truths that have stood for centuries and there are truths that are on the cutting edge of current history. As Columbus ventured west at the turn of the fifteenth century the secular world was confronted with the truth that the earth was round. Today that truth is an established fact. Around the same time Martin Luther took his stand on “the Bible and the Bible only” as the basis for faith and practice. Today that truth is established in Protestantism.

The message of present truth does not deny the truths so diligently mined from God’s Word in past ages. Rather it builds on them. Like a miner that continues digging beyond where those before him mined we hope to sink the shaft a little deeper. As we near “the promised land” we not only need to remember our past but we also need to be directed and encouraged with new gems dug from the quarry of truth.

There are four foundation stones on which we build this issue. Before digging deeper we wish to remind ourselves of these established beliefs:

1. We believe that justification (acceptance into God’s family) is by faith alone without any obedience on our part; not even obedience to the commands for baptism, being born again, or keeping the Commandments (Gal. 2:16).

2. We believe that those accepted into God's family will live in obedience to the Ten Commandments while confessing their sins to God (1 John 2:1-2).

3. We believe that God has appointed a day in which he will judge everyone according to what they have done on this earth (Acts 17:31).

4. We believe that Jesus Christ will soon, personally return to earth to take his family to be with him (John 14:1-3).

Our recent publications on justification by faith, eschatology, and aberrations in Calvinism are catching the attention of our subscribers. If we are established on the truths already laid down we can with anticipation build on them material recently quarried.

The "Letters" section tries to deal with some rejected stones from our past as well as turning over some new eschatological stones. We truly appreciate the rocks and chisels you bring in the form of questions, challenges, articles, and new input. Scripture says that "as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Prov, 27:17 NIV.

The major portion of this issue returns to the subject of "the last days." In Volume 8, #4 we reopened the subject of eschatology. Now we'll build on that foundation. There we said that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rightly understood, is the key to Bible prophecy. It is our conviction that in his life, death, and resurrection Jesus "made an end of sins," "made reconciliation for iniquity," and "brought in everlasting righteous" (Dan. 9:24). This he did as the federal head of his people – the Prince of the Covenant (Rom. 5:17-19). Now we who believe anticipate the final results of that great victory.

We realize that any mention of pre-millennialism is offensive to some of our a-millennial brethren. We hope that their prejudice doesn't keep them from examining the building blocks we quarry in this issue.

Let's search the Scriptures together.

RAM

LETTERS



“I really enjoyed your current issue on prophecy [Vol. 8 #4]. I agree with you on this subject.”

Z. G., Tennessee, USA

“As a full preterist, your publication makes lots of mistakes in eisegesis. I no longer wish to receive your publications.”

O. M., Alabama, USA

I do agree for the most part about Daniel 9:24. I think a mistake you might be making is you’re adding the word “place” [Vol. 8 #4, p. 23]. Don’t get me wrong, I know the Most Holy Place does exist in heaven and Jesus did ascend to there. What I’m saying is that Jesus **was** the Most Holy during the 70th week. He healed many and made them “holy” because he was the Most Holy. My thoughts aren’t together much on this subject but I think you see my point with the word “place.”

K. S. Minnesota, USA

You are justified in questioning our addition of the word “place” to the phrase “Most Holy” as quoted in Daniel 9:24. But permit me to point out five reasons why we did this:

1. The Most Holy One is referred to as the Messiah (meaning “the anointed one”) in this passage.

2. The word translated “Most Holy” is qôdesh which Young’s Concordance says is a “separate or set apart object,” and Strong’s Concordance calls it “a sacred place or thing.”

3. Previously in chapter 9, Daniel used the word *qôdesh* three times and each of them refers to a place (v. 16 = “holy mountain;” v. 20 = “holy mountain;” v. 24 = “holy city”).

4. When Daniel mentioned holy **ones** in chapter 4 (vs. 13, 17, & 23) he used the word *qaddiysh* which means “holy one or saint” according to Strong’s and “one separate or set apart” according to Young’s.

5. Hebrews 9 says that “Moses... sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry... It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Heb. 9:19-24.

This is why we believe that during the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy Christ anointed heaven’s Most Holy PLACE thus fulfilling the phrase “and to anoint the most holy.”

Editor

“Yesterday I read through the first 20 pages of *Present Truth* [‘The Last Days and the Gospel’ Vol.8 #4]. I was so blessed I wrote a check for \$50.00.

“When I read the 7 points of Pre-mil Agreement I had one of the biggest let-downs I’ve ever had – I have been A-mil for 50 years and would love to know where you get your millennialism from? Please give Scripture proof and not proof from the Talmud....

“In the light of John 14 – I would like to know how the new earth would be our eternal home.”

J. L. H., Virginia, USA

The church is the bride of Christ, also called the New Jerusalem (2 Cor. 11:2; Gal. 4:26; Eph. 5:25; Rev. 21:2, 9, 10). In John 14, Jesus tells us that he is going to prepare a place for his bride in his Father’s house. He will come again to receive his people. Then the church will live in God’s house as his family. The newlyweds dwell together in heaven for the first 1000 years of their marriage (Rev.

20:4). The book of Revelation goes on to tell us that at the end of the millennium the holy pair will descend to earth (Rev. 21:2, 10). The apostles and prophets assure us that we “look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;” that the meek “shall inherit the earth;” and that New Jerusalem’s inhabitants “shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them” (2 Pet. 3:13; Matt. 5:5; Isa. 65:17-23). So we conclude that the saints’ eternal home will be on the earth made new with Christ. When the everlasting covenant is complete “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Rev. 21:3. (See also our expanded answer in the last article of this issue.)

Editor

“I agree with most of what’s in *Present Truth* (Vol. 8, #4). When it comes to ‘Sola Scriptura’ (page 2), I would like to bring up the Pre-millennial issue...

“I hope you will answer my questions directly... [True or False?]

1. [] Revelation 20 does not actually say that Jesus will reign for 1000 years.
2. [] Revelation 20 does not actually say that Jesus will reign on this earth.
3. [] The Bible teaches that Jesus will reign forever and not just 1000 years.
4. [] Revelation 20 says the souls reign for 1000 years.
- 5a. [] Revelation 20 says those who reign are resurrected souls.
- 5b. [] These souls are not resurrected bodies.
- 6a. [] 2 Peter 3 agrees with Revelation 20. They both end the 1000 years with destruction by fire, the judgment day, and new heavens and earth.
- 6b. [] Peter’s version is the time before Jesus comes.
7. [] Paul teaches that at the last trump death will be swallowed up and destroyed (1 Cor. 15).
8. [] Paul teaches that on the day when our bodies are redeemed the creation will be free from the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:19-23).

9. [] The book of Revelation does not contradict the rest of the New Testament.

10.[] The last day in John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 rules out 1000 years after the last day.”

K. S. Minnesota, **USA**

Here are my answers:1. F (v. 4, 6); 2. T; 3. T (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 11:15); 4. T (v. 4 “living souls”); 5a. T; 5b. F (living souls have nostrils Gen. 2:7); 6a. T (making some assumptions in 2 Pet. 3); 6b. F (Peter includes the 1000 years in “the day of the Lord”); 7. F (death is destroyed after all enemies are put under Christ’s feet [v. 25-26] – the last trump is at the second coming of Christ and death is conquered in the saints then [v. 52-57]); 8. F (v. 21 says the creature also shall be delivered, but it doesn’t say when); 9. T; 10. F (2 Peter includes the 1000 years in the last day and Revelation 20 has a resurrection at the beginning [for the righteous] and at the end of the 1000 years [for the wicked] – there are two resurrections [John 5:25-29]).

Editor

Many thanks for the packet of back issues of *Present Truth*.

When you first began, *Christian News* commended your emphasis on justification by faith alone.

Then suddenly you changed. See the enclosed pages (3168-3169) from our *Christian News Encyclopedia*: “Verdict Attacks Vicarious Satisfaction and Resurrection of Christ” in the September 19, 1988 *Christian News* commenting on your Essay 35 - 1988.

Has *Verdict - Present Truth* repudiated or retracted the essays mentioned in the *Christian News Encyclopedia*. I pray you have. And that once again you become a champion of justification by faith alone, the inerrancy of the Bible and historical Christianity.

God’s blessings,

Pastor Herman Otten, Gal 6:4

Editor *Christian News*

Missouri, **USA**

Enclosed excerpts from *CN Encyclopedia* page 3168:

Verdict's Sad Decline (CN, December 5, 1983)

Verdict, formerly *Present Truth*, continues its sad decline away from historic Christianity.

CN formerly had many words of praise for *Present Truth*. We said that *Present Truth* was doing a better job of emphasizing the importance of the scriptural doctrine of justification than most Lutheran publications. We commended *Present Truth* for exposing the errors and subjectivism of the charismatic movement, Roman Catholicism and liberal Protestantism.

Now the editors accept the destructive historical critical approach to the Bible and reject the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible. They seem all of a sudden to have discovered the “insights” of unbelieving Bible scholars. Their new liberal approach to the Bible has led them to attack the scriptural doctrine of justification and the vicarious satisfaction of Christ which they formerly championed.

A recent *Verdict* (Essay 8, 1983) rejects the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, at times referred to as the “Latin theory”. *Verdict* says that “The best twentieth-century biblical scholarships seems to be reaching the consensus that all theories of the atonement, including the Latin theory, go beyond the New Testament revelation...”

CN is not alone in observing that *Verdict* has changed its theological position. Bruce E. Whaite from Maryland writes to *Verdict*:

“The idolatry of the historical-critical method laces **Verdict's** articles in recent years so that I find it very difficult to sift much good from them, whether the topic is Christian nomism or anything else. When Robert D. Brinsmead writes about the **inadequacy** of old thought patterns (not their invalidity), he betrays an idolatrous bent. He is hardly trembling at the Bible's sacred text. Apparently, to him everything depends upon one's approach to scripture, and that chosen approach must satisfy – else ditch it!

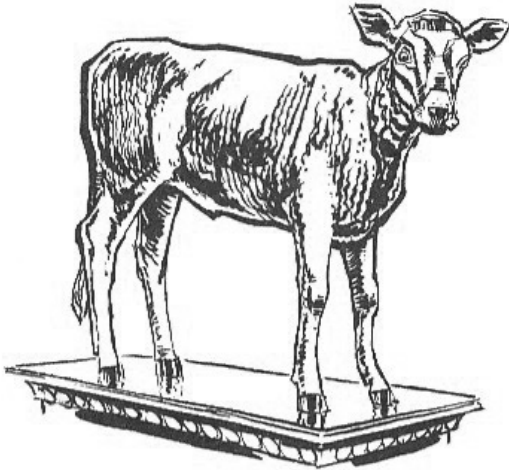
“A mark of the Christian must be ‘Thus saith the Lord’ or ‘It is written.’ Mr. Brinsmead instead prefaces his remarks, ‘Scholars have recently found’.”

Commenting on *Verdict's* Essay 8 from which we quoted, Walther W. Means from Arkansas comments:

“I find Essay 8, ‘The Scandal of God's Justice – Part 3,’ well below the traditional scholarship of your publication. It's low point is the author's

shock over the strong preaching of certain ideas about ‘blood atonement and hellfire,’ which he characterizes as a ‘savage religion’ (pp. 6, 7).

“This, however, is not a savage religion. On the contrary, Christ’s blood atonement on our behalf stands between us and the wages of sin. Only because of this is it possible for God to supplant law with his justice of grace in his dealings with us. As with hell, this is not a pretty picture. It was not intended to be. But it is God’s solution to man’s most serious problem – sin.”...



Ron Carleton writes to *Verdict* from France:

“While I have at times received considerable instruction and blessing from certain issues of **Verdict**, I find myself more and more troubled by your apparent direction during the past two years or so. With Special Issue 1, ‘Justification by Faith Re-Examined,’ you seem to have made your obeisance before the golden calf of the ‘historical method’ of biblical interpretation, and I will remain silent no longer...”

“If there is no objective, propositional revelation, even though mediated by history, Christianity has no more authority than any other religion.”...

Of course, there are plenty of clergymen receiving *Verdict* who wholeheartedly support *Verdict*’s recent acceptance of the historical critical approach to the Bible and denial of the scriptural doctrine of justification and the vicarious satisfaction of Christ.

Sidney Reiners (Minnesota) writes to *Verdict*:

“I used to read your publication with relish. In it I learned the gospel – and the law. Now I find subjective mush and intellectual obscurantism. Really, this has to be a bad joke!”

Dear Pastor Otten: I count it an honor to correspond with you and pray that by this means we all come into the unity of the faith



for which our Lord prayed. Your questions and assessments are direct and I will attempt to be direct in my reply.

*In your letter you question our stand on issues raised by Robert D. Brinsmead, the former editor. These theological aberrations began in the 1980s when the publication was called *Verdict*. I was not part of that theological shift but rather vigorously opposed it at the time. I pray that RDB return to the faith he once so vigorously defended. Maybe God will shake him out of his erroneous course. He, like Solomon of old has been constructing heathen temples. After King Solomon spent years foolishly building those temples for his many pagan wives God awakened him with a jolt and he wrote inspired reflections on his life experiences. There are no indications to date that RDB has turned back to Biblical Christianity. Recent correspondence from his*



keyboard indicates that he still considers attachment to the Bible as a sign of immaturity.

*God's holy Word tells us "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. 4:2. Apparently this is what has happened to the former editor of **Present Truth** magazine. Revelation uses "stars" as a symbol of divinely sent messengers (Rev. 1:20; Heb 1:14) and speaks of some falling from heaven (Rev. 6:13). We believe that in the 1970s Mr. Brinsmead brilliantly proclaimed the great truths heralded by the apostle Paul and the Protestant Reformers and was used by God to focus these truths on our generation. We have no explanation for his fall other than what Paul wrote to Timothy.*

As noted in the quotations included in your Christian

News Encyclopedia enclosures, his decent was rapidly progressive from 1980 forward. First he shied away from “a future judgment according to works.” Then he wavered on his former high view of the Ten Commandments. The Protestant doctrine of “justification by faith alone” next became irrelevant. This led to annoyance concerning “the blood atonement” on Calvary. Soon “the Bible” slipped to the position of only a secondary source of revelation. The rest is history.

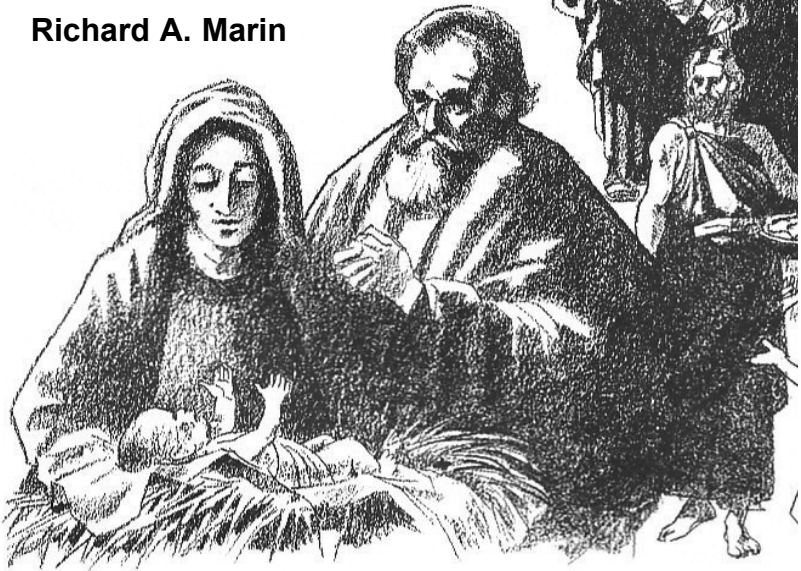
*In the 1970s it was my privilege to work as business and circulation manager of **Present Truth** magazine. I was also responsible for its Spanish language counterpart. Due to my immaturity or to Divine providence my responsibilities with the English language publications were discontinued in 1975 and I continued only with the Spanish language publications. It was in 1980, because of the ideas you mention in your letter and enclosures, that I severed all ties with Mr. Brinsmead and his publication. By that time the name had been changed from **Present Truth** to *Verdict* (1978). While some excellent material was published in early issues of *Verdict* the trend toward historical criticism and process theology was already set in motion.*

*It was 24 years later, in 2004, that some of us former supporters revived **Present Truth** magazine, believing that the name had not been tarnished by the sad theological decline taken by *Verdict*. Our desire was, and is, to build upon the truths so clearly taught in the 1970s issues of **Present Truth**: We believe those include “the Bible and the Bible ONLY as our rule of faith and practice” and “justification by faith ALONE” as so clearly taught by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulric Zwingli.*

Editor

Pre-millennial Agreement

Richard A. Marin



What Jesus Christ accomplished in his life and death on earth is the Gospel that shapes our understanding of end time events. He was the promised Seed of the woman that would bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14). He was the Descendant of Noah in whom deliverance from the wrath of God would be found (Gen. 9:8-17; Lk. 3:36; 17:27; 2 Pet. 2:5). He was the Seed of Abraham that would inherit the earth (Gen. 13:14-15, Gal. 3:7-18). He was the promised Child of Isaac who would become the true Israel, obedient to all the commandments of God (Gen. 26:3-6, Ex. 19:8; Rom.10:4). He was the promised Son of David to whom the everlasting kingdom would be established (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Lk. 1:32). He was the promised Messiah, the prince that would confirm the covenant with many (Dan. 9:24-27; Heb. 8:6-13). He was the

promised Seed of Israel that would become the husband of his people (Jer. 31:31-37, 2 Cor. 11:2). Believing that Jesus Christ is all this, shapes our understanding of the last days.

Popular Eschatology

Many popular views about the second coming of Christ originate by jumping over the New Testament. They start by quoting Old Testament prophets then pass right over the New Testament imagining that everything in the book of Revelation can be understood without reading Jesus or Paul. Such an approach to understanding the last days overlooks the Gospel and leaves those who hold it in darkness.

The full light of the Gospel has come and we must see that real circumcision is of the heart (Rom. 2:29), the real Jerusalem is “above” (Gal. 4:26), the real Mount Zion is heavenly (Heb. 12:22), the real tabernacle is in heaven (Heb. 8:1-5), the real country promised to Abraham is not “this present evil world” (Heb. 11:10-



16), and the real children of Abraham (Jews) are those who believe in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 2:28).

When Christ finally came, the blood of animals, ceremonial feast days, the Jewish temple, Jerusalem, and the “holy land” had fulfilled their function, and any return to those things now is a denial of the reality brought to us by Jesus Christ. It is a denial of the Gospel.

Seven points of pre-millennial agreement

In Present Truth Volume 8, Number 4 we listed seven points on which we agree with pre-millennialism. One reader responded by writing:

“I recently received a copy of Present Truth, Vol. 8, No. 4. In the first part, the author presents, and seemingly proves his point, that the promises to Israel are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that all true believers are children of Abraham. So far, so good.

“However, in the second part, at the end of the booklet, I see “Seven points of [pre-millennial] agreement” listed and asserted, but with none of the lengthy proofs that accompany the first part of the booklet. Indeed, some of the points *seem* to contradict the statements on p. 28 ff. Am I to expect further explanation in a later volume? I hope so, because, as we know, assertion is not proof. I eagerly await further dissertation on the Eschaton.” R. H., Michigan, USA

Here are the seven points we listed in that issue

1. We believe that the new earth will be the eternal home of the saved.
2. We believe in a second resurrection of the wicked and final judgment at the end of the millennium.
3. We believe in a real thousand-year millennium.

4. We believe in the literal second advent of Jesus to the earth prior to the beginning of the millennium.

5. We believe that the second advent of Christ will be preceded by a short period of catastrophic stress and persecution.

6. We believe that there will be some sort of separation of the righteous and wicked just before this great trouble.

7. We believe that the judgment of (for) the church will take place before God's throne prior to the second advent.

We understand that Scripture supports some aspects, but not all, of what is popularly taught by "pre-millennialism" (the idea that the church will be taken to heaven before the terrors of the last days [a pre-tribulation rapture] and that Christ's second coming is a separate, later event that *precedes the thousand years* spoken of in Revelation 20). While these areas of agreement are general in nature they should, at least, serve as a basis for dialog and further study.

The order of these seven points works backwards from the last judgement. Here is some Bible evidence supporting each of these points:

1. The eternal home of the saved

The eternal home of the blessed will be this earth made new. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were promised a "land." That land is the recreated earth. "For the promise, that he [Abraham] should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4:13.

David emphasizes this same idea in Psalm 37 where he writes: "Those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth." v. 9. "Such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth."

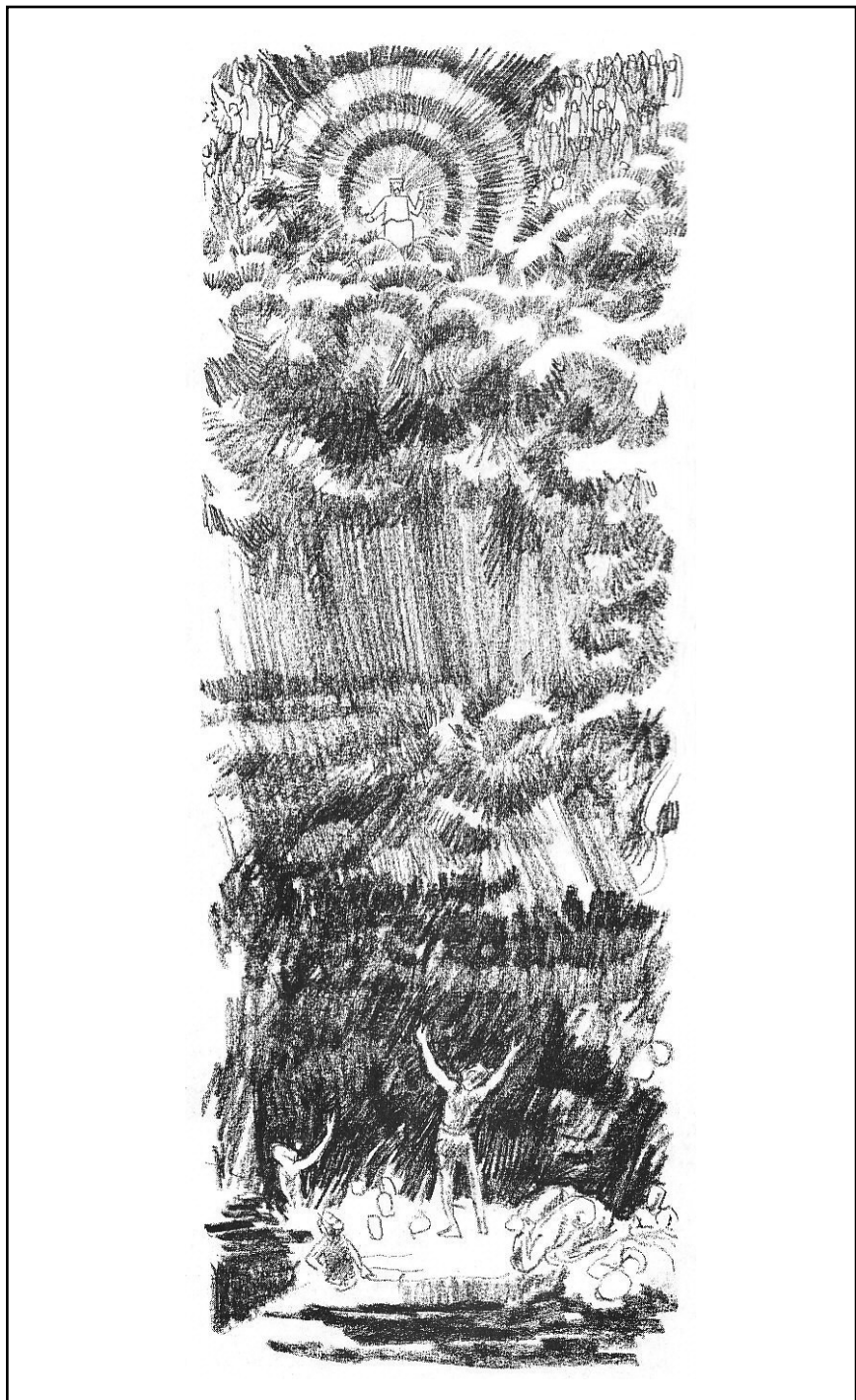
v. 22. “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.” v. 29. This is the *eternal* home of the saved. And if those verses weren’t enough the Psalmist goes on to tell us exactly when this is to take place: “Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.” v. 34. Jesus himself clearly stood with David because he restated the 11th verse in the beatitudes: “The meek shall inherit the earth.” Matt. 5:5.

In his second epistle the apostle Peter outlines last day events. He says that “the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” 2 Pet. 3:7 NIV. “...the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” v. 10. He concludes by saying that in keeping with God’s promise “we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” v. 13 NIV.

John, the apostle, came right along side Jesus and Peter when he wrote: “I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away... And I John saw the holy city [of the redeemed], the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven [to earth], prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Then the dwelling of God will be with his people on the earth made new “for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev.21:1-4). In verse 10 John is shown a great mountain and the holy Jerusalem descending out from heaven. This same scene was shown to the prophets Isaiah and Joel centuries before:

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind... And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them... The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.” Isa. 65:17-25.





[For] it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Isa. 2:2.

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." Joel 3:17.

The eternal home of the saints will be with Christ on the earth made new – in Eden restored. (See also our answer to J. L. H. in the "Letters" section.)

2. Resurrection and judgment after the millennium

We believe in a second resurrection of the wicked and final judgment at the end of the millennium. The Bible speaks of two resurrections: one to eternal life and one to damnation:

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. 12:2.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29.

The first resurrection raises those who died "in Christ" and they live and reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 20:4). "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5.

During the millennium the words of Christ to his disciples in Matthew 19:28 are fulfilled: "...ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And Paul wrote: "...judge noth-

ing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts... Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 4:5; 6:2-3.

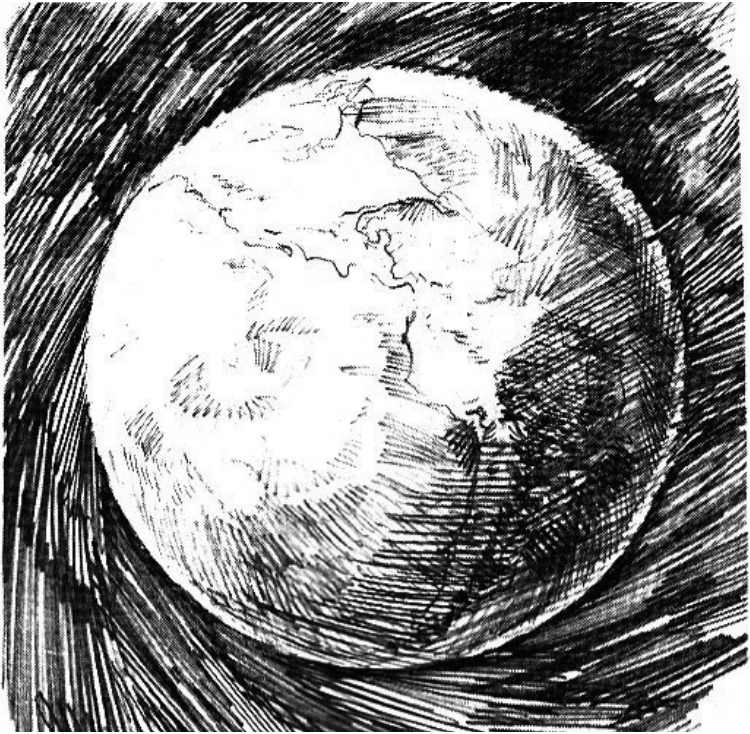
This looks forward to when "the books were opened... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. 20:12.

Then at the end of the millennium: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:14-15.

"Blessed and holy are those that have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them." Rev. 20:6 NIV. But cursed and unholy is everyone whose name is not found written in the book of the life of the Lamb (Rev. 20:11-15). This is the second death, the execution of judgment at the end of the millennium for those outside of Christ.

3. A real thousand-year millennium

We believe in a real thousand-year millennium. Writing about the "last days" and "the day of judgment" Peter asks us not to forget "this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Pet. 3:8. He continues in verse 10 by saying: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." In Revelation 20 the apostle John elaborates on this day of the Lord. The entire chapter is given to events transpiring before, during, and at the end of a one-thousand-year period. These events include the binding and losing of Satan, the resurrection and enthronement of the righteous, the death and resurrection of the wicked, and the judgment and final punishment of



the lost. To deny a real thousand-year millennium runs against the words of Scripture itself. To affirm a real thousand-year millennium after six thousand years of sin flows with the nature of God's original creation. The millennium is the antitype of the sabbatical year celebrated among the people of Israel. Every seventh year the land was to rest:

“Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard... it is a year of rest unto the land.” Lev. 25:3-5.

For six millennia God has cultivated the earth. Then comes his great final wheat and grape harvest (Rev. 14:14-20) followed by a millennium of rest for the land. During this time the saints “live and reign with Christ a thousand years” (a



Biblical expression of literal time). Their tilling of the land is over and they spend the antitypical sabbatical year as priests in heaven with Jesus (Rev. 20:4, 6).

4. A literal, pre-millennial second advent

We believe in the literal second advent of Jesus to the earth prior to the beginning of the millennium. John the Revelator places the second coming of Christ just before the thousand-year millennium. In Revelation 19 he portrays one named “the Word of God” coming on a white horse. From his mouth comes a sharp sword which strikes down the nations. The apostle Paul says this will happen “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thes. 1:7-8.

It is at this same time that the “dead in Christ” are raised to life and given immortality (1 Cor. 15:21-23; 50-53). “We

shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Cor. 15:51). This change and the resurrection of the righteous take place at the second coming of Jesus:

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the arcangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” 1 Thes. 4:13-17 NIV.

Upon being raised and translated to heaven the righteous begin their millennial reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4-6). Never again will they be parted from their Lord.

5. Catastrophic stress and persecution before the second advent

We believe that the second advent of Christ will be preceded by a short period of catastrophic stress and persecution. Jesus said:

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” Mark 13:12-13 NIV.

When the prophet Joel sees a picture of the last days he is directed to call God’s people to the sanctuary where they will be hid during judgment. He warns that right at that time, “before the great and terrible day of the Lord,” “the Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; and the earth and sky will tremble.” Joel 2:31; 3:16 NIV. Jesus picks up this thought in



Luke 21 saying that at that time there will be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.” Lk. 21:25.

Speaking of this same time the prophet Daniel says:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Dan. 12:1.

This time of trouble comes right before the deliverance of God’s people and the resurrection of the righteous dead at the second coming of Christ (Dan.12:2). Like Abraham, who climbed the sanctuary mount with his only-begotten son, so the church is tested as her faith is fixed on things above, where Christ has gone to intercede in her behalf.

In that day “the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” Joel 3:16. “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge... You will not fear... the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.” Psa. 91:4-7. While God’s people dwell by faith

in the secret place of the most High (heavenly Zion) the seven last plagues will be falling all around them on those who have rejected God's last call of mercy (Rev. 16:15).

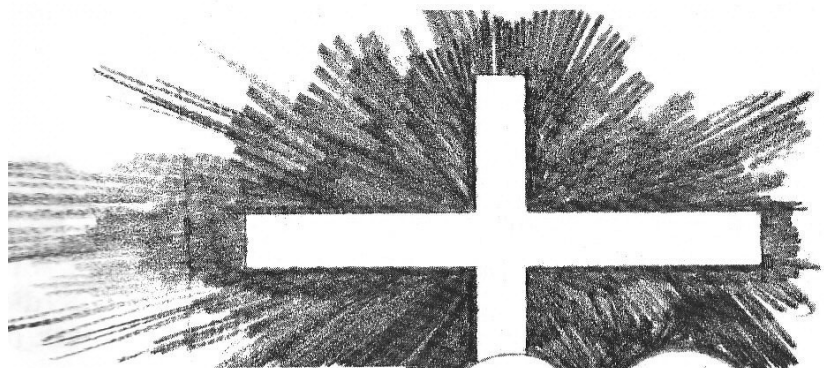
6. The righteous and wicked separated before these events

We believe that there will be some sort of separation of the righteous and wicked just before this great trouble. In his Olivet discourse our Lord spoke of the separation that would precede his coming:

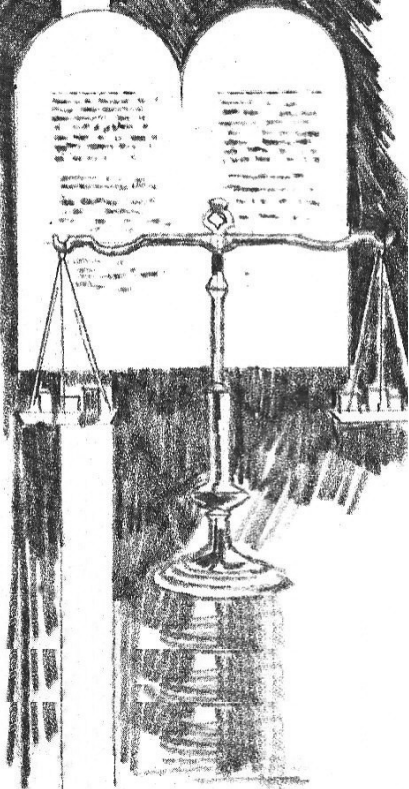
“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.” Matt. 24:37-41 NASB.

Noah's entrance into the ark brought irreconcilable separation between the righteous and the wicked. Seven days later when the flood began the wicked met their doom. So at the end of time unbelievers will be separated from the people of God a short time prior to Christ's awesome second coming (Rev. 22:11-12). At his coming the unbelieving will be left behind – slain by the breath of his mouth (1 Thes. 4:15-17; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; 2:8; Rev. 19:15).

Before that time the cases of all will be decided. Some receive the final seal of God, some the mark of the beast. Only then can the seven last plagues be poured out (Rev. 13-18). When Jesus returns for his own his reward is with him (Rev. 22:12). His final decision concerning those who have claimed him as Lord has already been made while at his Father's right hand (Dan. 7:9-14; John 14:1-3).



The separation of the righteous and the wicked is secret – but not physical. It is a *legal* separation that takes place in heaven while both the righteous and the wicked are still living on earth. It is like Noah's separation from the rest of the antediluvians. The door of mercy closes as the first phase of the final judgment is complete (1 Pet. 4:17-18). The Bible often symbolizes this separation as a shaking earthquake (Isa. 13:13; 24:13-23; Joel 3:16; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:26; Rev. 6:13). In Hebrews 12 this heavenly judgment is



said to take place in heaven's Mount Zion where Christ's voice shakes "not the earth only, but also heaven." This pre-advent separation settles who make up the kingdom of God (Heb. 12:22-29).

7. A judgment for the church prior to the second advent

We believe that the judgment of (for) the church will take place before God's throne prior to the second advent. While we acknowledge that before Pontius Pilate God's Elect has already been judged innocent, yet Jesus, Peter, and Paul promise a future judgment for God's people according to their works (Matt. 12:36-37; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2:23). The word "judgment" here doesn't mean *punishment* but rather it refers to a time of decision that determines destiny and rewards for an individual. The writer of Hebrews says that this assessment of one's life takes place after one's death and prior to Jesus' second coming:

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." Heb. 9:27-28 NIV (see also our tract titled *Four Great Certainties*).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. In this judgment believers can rejoice in "the LORD our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5-6). "We may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world." 1 John 4:17 NASB. Though still on this earth our hope is in the Mediator at the right hand of the Father and we know that we "have passed from death unto life." Those trusting in

Christ will not be condemned in this separation (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14).

This judgment takes place while Christ still intercedes in heaven's sanctuary (Heb. 12:22-24). Unlike the judgment during the millennium, in this judgment "mercy" is still available. James, our Lord's brother, wrote to believers: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." James 2:12-13.

Commenting on this verse in his *Study Bible* John MacArthur says: "The person whose life is characterized by mercy is ready for the day of judgment, and will escape all the charges that strict justice might bring against him because by showing mercy to others he gives genuine evidence of having received God's mercy." p. 1898. Our works give evidence of our faith in Christ's saving righteousness.

"Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1 Pet. 4:17. During the millennium mercy is no longer available. Christ has removed his mediatorial robes and put on his kingly vesture (Rev. 19). No Advocate then intercedes for sinners. The wheat has already been separated from the tares and Christ has come to receive his purchased possession. All that remains to be done in heaven's court is the sentencing of the lost. When they rise at the end of the 1000 years they receive their final reward.

We, however, who believe rejoice that "Christ has for sin atonement made. What a wonderful Savior!" His sacrifice is accepted in place of our unworthiness in the final judgment. Christ presents his sinless life for our salvation and we are eternally secure (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 2:12).

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution

of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19-21.

The hour of this final judgment, the marriage of the Lamb, is now. The Father beckons, “All things are ready: come unto the marriage.” The Spirit and the bride say “Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.”

We invite our readers (whether a-mil, pre-mil, or post-mil) to join us in searching the Scriptures to see whether these areas in which we agree with “pre-millennialism” don’t help round out one’s understanding of Bible eschatology. It may be that by this means we all come into the unity of the faith while looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.

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Seven Points of Agreement

1. We believe that the new earth will be the eternal home of the saved.

2. We believe in a second resurrection of the wicked and final judgment at the end of the millennium.

3. We believe in a real thousand-year millennium.

4. We believe in the literal second advent of Jesus to the earth prior to the beginning of the millennium.

5. We believe that the second advent of Christ will be preceded by a short period of catastrophic stress and persecution.

6. We believe that there will be some sort of separation of the righteous and wicked just before this great trouble.

7. We believe that the judgment of (for) the church will take place before God's throne prior to the second advent.