

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.

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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).

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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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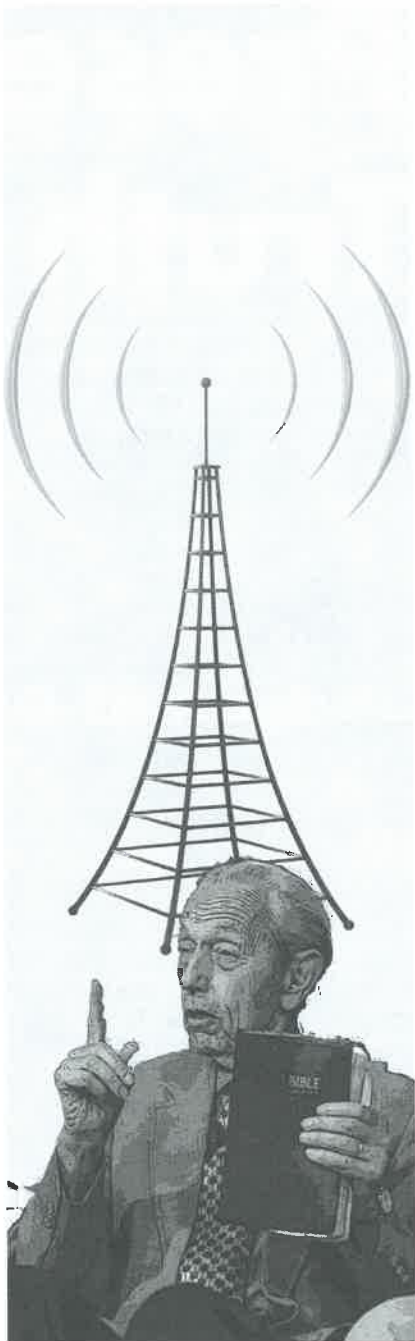
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Editorial Introduction:

Judgement Day - 2011

Harold Camping of Family Stations, Incorporated predicted that God's final judgment day would come on May 21, 2011. This was not some passing fad but rather the result of years of personal Bible study. With conviction he broadcast this idea over the airwaves and supported massive tract distribution and billboards heralding the end of the world as we know it.

He foresaw a great earthquake beginning in the southern Pacific and encircling the globe as God's people would be raptured from this earth and taken to be with Christ in heaven. May 21 came and went with no visible change. Returning to his microphone Mr. Camping concluded that Judgment Day indeed had come but he had been mistaken as to its nature. He concluded that it must be spiritual and that the next prophetic period of five months (ending October 21, 2011) would bring us to the end of the world.

Mr. Camping comes to these conclusions after making a similar prediction in 1994 (which he now refers to as the end of the church age and the beginning of the tribulation). He uses a method of Bible interpretation known as the allegorical method. This approach to Scripture was popular among church leaders living in Alexandria during the early centuries of the Christian era. It interprets as allegories the stories of the Bible making it possible to teach a variety of conflicting ideas from a single passage. Using this method it is not difficult to come up with conclusions that vary widely from those of people who give priority to the words and context of a passage. This latter approach is called the grammatical-historical method of Bible study. In it the historical context and grammar take precedence over any allegorical meaning.

While Mr. Camping has many followers who agree with his conclusions few if any of them can explain the chronology that leads to May 21 and October 21, 2011. In fact when early in 2011 he was asked on his Open Forum, radio Q & A program, to briefly explain how he arrived at these dates Mr. Camping himself sputtered around about his years of study and the intricate nature of the calculations but gave no broad, nor brief, nor detailed method of arriving at his conclusion.

Little wonder then that many Evangelicals are unimpressed by his warning cry and openly miffed by his call for all true believers to leave their organized churches.

In this issue the editor of Present Truth examines what judgment means, when the rapture of the church will occur, and why the world will not end in 2011.

Let's search the Scriptures together.

RAM



Letters

You write in the July-September *Present Truth* [Vol. 10 #3], which I just received: "In his *An American Translation* Lutheran Bible translator William F. Beck translates the Greek word, *dikaion* (to justify), as 'make righteous' rather than as 'declare righteous.'"

Have you read either the third or fourth editions of Beck's *An American Translation of the Bible* published by *Christian News*? Note: "declared righteous" in Romans 3:20, 26, and 28. The footnote in the AAT for Romans 3:20 says: "Righteous" ["Justify"] is a court term. God who gives us the righteousness of Christ (3:23-24, 28; 4:5; Phil. 3:9), as a judge declares us righteous and by His verdict makes us righteous in His sight."

Does *Present Truth* find this objectionable?

Christian News has reviewed scores of Bible translations during the last 50 years. There is no more doctrinally and textually accurate translation of the Bible than Beck's AAT. It's too bad that most of the critics never even read it. Read it for yourself. I have yet to find a pastor or layman who has actually read the AAT who says the RSV, ESV, NIV, KJV, etc. reads better and is more accurate.

Herman Otten, Editor, *Christian News*
Missouri, USA

Dear Pastor Otten: Thank you for bringing us up to date. We do not find these revised statements objectionable but rather appreciate their clarity. The phrase "in His sight" pinpoints the location of that righteousness by which we are justified. As John Bunyan said: "This is one of the greatest mysteries in the world, that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me, a sinner, on earth!"

RAM Editor

Your *Present Truth* article entitled "Wresting the Word" dated July-Sept. 2010, Volume 10, number 3, point 3, on Regeneration, page 8 states the word "Regeneration" and then asks, "Is the new birth possible apart from faith in Jesus?" Then you quote from my book *God's Awesome Grace* as if to say that I believe it is possible to have the new birth apart from faith in Jesus. This is misleading. I never said that it is possible to have the new birth apart from faith but the way you quote me made it look like I did. I believe faith is the evidence and result of regeneration just as the movement and sound of the tree leaves is the evidence of the wind blowing on them (John 3:8)...

You quoted me as saying, "Rebirth takes place before the sinner desires to make a conscious decision to receive Jesus..." and "...a person's regeneration does not depend on his decision to believe." If you had quoted me correctly from

page 32 of *God's Awesome Grace*, you would have quoted my entire sentence. I said, "So, rebirth takes place before the sinner desires to make a conscious decision to receive Christ and [rebirth] enables him to receive Christ." This is *monergism*. I went on to say in the next paragraph (which you did not quote), "Jesus taught Nicodemus that rebirth or regeneration is something only God can do for him and in him... Once this is done the sinner's regenerated will is irresistibly drawn to seek God through his Son, Jesus." p. 32-33. God's Effectual Calling is the irresistible desire to make a **conscious** decision to receive Christ but, you must have life (regeneration) first and faith in Jesus accompanying it to be effectually called by God.

Your second quote from my book, "...a person's regeneration does not depend on his decision to believe," I assume you are referring back to your question, "Is the new birth possible apart from faith in Jesus?" All I was saying was that a person does not believe in order to be regenerated. It is the other way around. He must be regenerated in order to believe. In the "Ordo Salutis" i.e., in the order of salvation, I believe **regeneration immediately precedes faith**. Regeneration must occur just before faith occurs... "...The Holy Spirit regenerates us and then converts us by working saving faith in our hearts in order that we may be justified (i.e., be brought into right standing with God). p. 64....

I would appreciate a written retraction from you in the next edition of the **Present Truth** magazine...

Bennett Broadway
El Cajon, California, USA

Dear Brother Bennett:

Thank you for your rapid response to our issue concerning "Great Words of Scripture." You once again state your position that regeneration precedes faith. That is not our position. We believe that the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:13-14 states clearly the order of salvation: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance..." First comes hearing the Gospel, then comes faith, then comes regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is the power of God that stimulates faith. Faith credits us with all the righteousness of Christ. Only then are we given God's Spirit to regenerate us. Justification always precedes sanctification.

Maybe I should have worded the question "Is it possible to be born again before one believes in Jesus?" I understand that your answer would be, "Yes." We believe that attempting to place the new birth before faith in Jesus is wresting the Scriptures. Rather, Scripture teaches that Christ's perfect righteousness must first be imputed to us in order that God may then give us his regenerating Spirit (Acts 5:32). Jesus taught Nicodemus that what is impossible for man God does for all who look to the cross in faith. John 3:16 was not an afterthought – it was the key to receiving the regenerating Spirit. Received ye the Spirit by preselection of God or by the hearing of faith? (See also our PT V. 9 #3 which demonstrates the inconsistency of the idea of "irresistible grace.")

RAMEditor

I read with interest Present Truth [Vol. 9 #4]... I'm glad to read that you believe that in Daniel 9:24-27 it is the promised Messiah who confirms the covenant, rather than the antichrist as is commonly taught. Does that mean that you believe, as I do, that Daniel 9:24-27 was fulfilled in the incarnation and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem in AD 67-70 – and, therefore, there is no gap in the 70 [weeks of] years?

While I agree on most of your points of pre-millennial agreement I must question... [some] things relative to the return of Christ..

Your statement on page 25 is confusing: "Upon being raised and translated to heaven the righteous begin their millennial reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4-6)." That statement seems to say that the millennial reign will be in heaven, not on earth... Nowhere does the Bible say that the raptured believers are taken into heaven... So I am left unsure about what you believe. Do you believe or not that the millennial reign is an earthly reign? Second, do you believe in a one or two trip second coming?

Robert L Kramer, Author of an article published in PT V. 10, #2 and editor of *Second Thoughts*.

Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania, USA

Dear Pastor Kramer:

In our Present Truth Vol. 8, #4 you will find a more extensive statement on Daniel 9:24-27. There we point out that the Messiah stepped in to Israel's place and fulfilled what God asked her to accomplish in the 70 weeks of years (490 years). Jesus made atonement for sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, and anointed heaven's Most Holy Place before the conclusion of that time prophecy. We believe there is no gap in the prophecy, so that by the time Stephen was stoned and the gospel went to the Gentiles the six items required in verse 24 were complete.

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 fulfills the words: "the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." In Matthew 22:7, Jesus foretold that his troops would do this.

When verse 26 says "and unto the end of the war desolations are determined," we understand that to mean that Jerusalem and its temple will never again have prophetic significance after AD 70.

In verse 27 the 70th week of the prophecy is divided in the middle by the cross of Christ. Three and one half years of Jesus' personal ministry for Israel preceded the cross and three and one half years of apostolic ministry for Israel followed the cross. It was then that the Sanhedrin officially sealed their doom with the stoning of Stephen.

As to our understanding of the millennium you have grasped our thought correctly. We believe the millennial reign will be in heaven, not on earth. As this current issue explains, we believe that being "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air is followed by translation to heavenly places. Like Enoch, Elijah, and Moses we will be taken to live and reign with Christ in heaven. We remain there in the New Jerusalem with the tree of life until the holy city descends to earth at the end of the millennium. In John 17:24 Jesus prayed that after his disciples were sanctified they would then be brought to be with him in heaven. It is there in Paradise where our Father, our hope and our inheritance are (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7; Col. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:4). In heaven we have "a better and an enduring substance." Heb.10:34.

RAM, Editor

Letters Continued on page 28



The Judgment of God

In the Bible “judgment” primarily refers to an examination or trial before a judge: After the conclusion of every human life there comes a judgment that determines destiny. Consider with us what “judgment” means, that God’s judgment day is now and that that is a good thing for those who believe in Jesus. As Judge of all the earth God will do what is right.

In Genesis 18, Abraham was concerned for his nephew Lot and family. The Lord had just told the patriarch that he was on his way to see if the reports that had come to him about Sodom were true. Knowing the wickedness of Lot’s city Abraham began interceding for it with God: “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?... Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” he asked. Gen. 18:23-25.

If we have an intercessor when our name comes up in judgment and our case is good then we may pray with David: “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation.” Psa. 43:1.

Judgment Means Examination

In most Evangelical circles today the word “judgment” has come to mean punishment rather than examination. The Bible uses this word in both ways. But primarily the word is used to refer to an examination or trial before a presiding judge:

“Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.” Deut. 1:17.

“If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.” Duet. 25:1.

“And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” Judges 4:5.

“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.” Isa. 30:18.

“Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering:” 2 Thes. 1:4-5 NASB.

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” John 7:24.

When the word “judgment” in the Bible refers to punishment it generally includes the word “execute.” This shows that an examination and decision have been made and the result of that judgment is then acted upon:

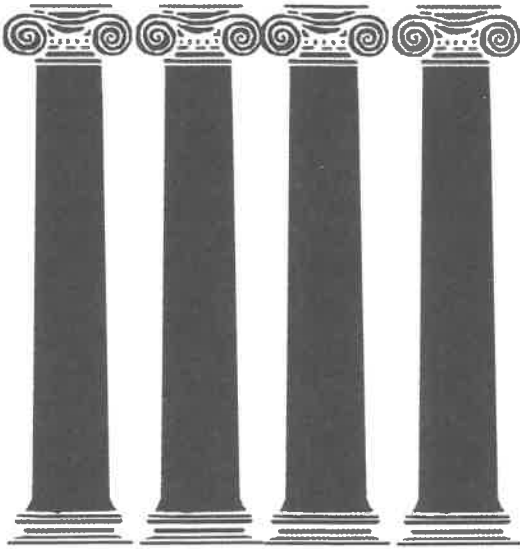
“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.” Ex. 12:12.

“And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.” 2 Ezra. 7:26.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” 2 Pet. 2:9.

So there are phases of judgment. Before a decision is made, there must be an examination of the evidence. Before evidence is examined it must be gathered. When the evidence is presented to the judge he examines it and makes a decision. This decision is followed by sentencing and the execution of the sentence.

The book of Daniel includes all these elements in its description of a heavenly judgment in the 7th chapter. Thrones are put in place; the Ancient of Days enters the courtroom; his attendants are present; the Judge enters; the recorded testimony is presented; a decision is made; and the result is that Jesus and his people are given dominion and a kingdom (Dan. 7:9-14, 26, 27).



Judgment Decides Destiny

In our popular tract titled "*Four Great Certainties*" we show from Hebrews 9:27-28 that after the conclusion of every human life there comes a judgment. This judgment is not a self assessment; nor is it the decision of one's peers. Rather it is God's examination of a person's life record, a final review. Hebrews 9:27 says, "it

is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment." The New English Bible refers to this judgment in these words: "It is surely just that God should balance the account..." 2 Thes. 1:5 NEB.

In 2 Corinthians Paul put it this way:

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present [alive] or absent [dead], we may be accepted of him. 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. 5:9-10.

Contrary to popular opinion this judgment involves more than the assignment of rewards for deeds well done. It also includes the possibility of God saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" or "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25:34, 41. "Giving account in judgment" means our case comes up before our Maker to receive his verdict upon our life. This reckoning is not just for deciding our position in God's kingdom it also decides whether we will be in God's eternal kingdom or not.

The passage in 2 Corinthians is clearly speaking of *divine acceptance* – whether you'll be with God for eternity or not. It says "we labour that... we may be accepted of him." This refers to our *persons* not just our deeds. According to Christ's decision the re-

sult for us could be “good or bad.” Paul emphasizes the same concept in Romans. There he also shows that this accounting is about **us**, not just about our deeds: “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... So then every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God.” Rom. 14:13-14 (emphasis ours). Note also how Jesus places our final justification (acceptance) or condemnation (rejection) at this judgment:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matt. 12:36-37.

2011 is Judgment Day

While it is true that judgment comes at the end of life there will be a generation who never experience death. Their destiny will be determined while still living. As the final crisis gathers around us we know that the hour of God’s judgment has come. Judgment begins with “the house of God” and is not complete until everyone who has ever named the name of Christ is given their chance at vindication before God’s throne (Rev. 14:6-7; 1 Pet. 4:17). When



Christ comes his reward is with him for the decree has already gone forth: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still." Rev. 22:11-12. We are living in the day of God's judgment.

Our Judge Is Also Our Advocate

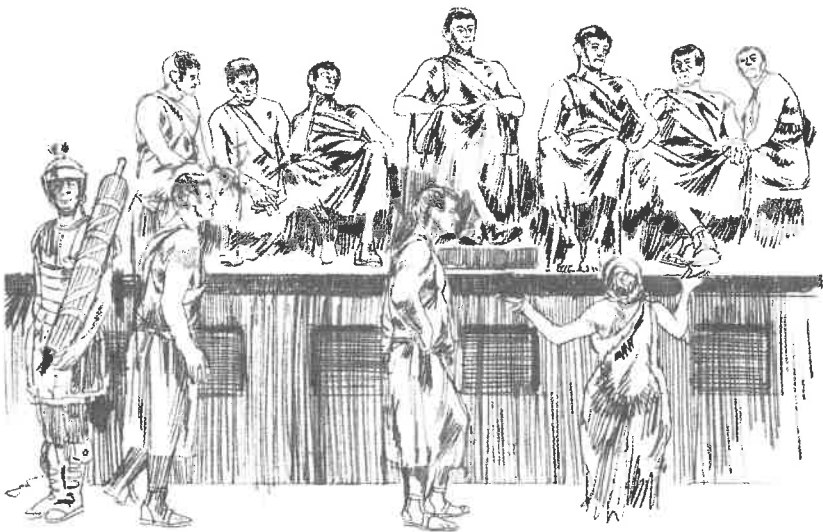
In Israel's economy the judge was also the advocate. It was his duty if possible to gain a positive verdict for the person whose case was being considered. Unlike our judicial system the defense lawyer was the judge himself. God's people understood that their judges were not only to decide their case but were also to plead for them – to defend them. In attempting to correct his sons, Eli the priest told them: "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?" 1 Sam. 2:25. When being pursued in the wilderness, David said to King Saul: "The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee... The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand." 1 Sam. 24:12-15. In Psalm 7:10-11 he wrote: "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous." And in the 43rd Psalm David pled: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation." Psa. 43:1. Wise king Solomon wrote: "Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. Prov. 31:9. Our Judge is also our Advocate.

Judgment is a Good Thing

The entire book of Judges records the acts of mighty men of God who delivered his people when they cried to him for help. These "saviors" of the nation are called judges because they judged righteously and acted in defense of God's people.

Jesus told the story of an unjust judge who would not grant the righteous plea of a poor widow:

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Luke 18:2-8.



The widow had an adversary who sought to do her harm. Christians also have an adversary who would rob them of their inheritance. Satan is our great adversary. He is the “accuser of our brethren,” who accuses “them before God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). Our only hope is in God’s mercy. Like the widow we come to our Judge pleading in prayer. But unlike the unjust judge, our Judge is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Ex. 34:6. God will avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him!

When Zechariah was shown God’s judgment scene he saw the Lord speaking in defense of God’s distressed people. “And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Zech. 3:2.

We recognize that we are sinners before a righteous Judge. We are unable to repel the accusations Satan makes against us. Our only hope is in our divine Advocate. Jesus presents his perfect life and atoning blood in our behalf and the command is given: “Take away the filthy garments from him.” Zech. 3:4. Our sins are blotted out and we are eternally clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In judgment God vindicates the righteous and condemns the wicked. The final vindication of his people is accompanied by the condemnation of those that are not his people. Satan’s domin-

ion will be taken from him and returned to God's people (Dan. 7:26-27). When the Lord passed by before Moses he described himself as: "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Ex. 34:7. In 2 Chronicles 6:23 Solomon prayed: "Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness." And at the end of his life he wrote: "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." Eccl. 3:17.

In the Psalms David repeatedly asks God to judge him. "Judge me, O LORD," was his plea (Psa. 7:8; 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). Just like the widow he was calling for God to examine his case and render a verdict in his favor. Shouldn't our prayer in 2011 be "Judge me, O Lord?"

When Will The Rapture Occur?

The doctrine of the rapture of the church comes from 1 Thesalonians 4:13-18 where Paul writes: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as do others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For... we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The expression "caught up" refers to God's people being lifted from the earth to meet Christ in the air, never more to part. In the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible the phrase is translated with the word *rapturo* and it is from this word that the popular term "rapture" is derived.

In the above passage Paul is concerned that believers not grieve like unbelievers do when a loved one dies (falls asleep). He wants to emphasize that if we believe that Christ died and rose again then we should also believe that those who died believing in Jesus will be raised to life again. The New English Bible says: "...those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus." 1 Thes. 4:14 NEB. In a similar way to Christ's resurrection and ascension they will come out of their graves and ascend into heaven. Jesus told Martha that in him the first death was not final: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25.

If we emphasize the words "bring with Jesus," as generally translated in verse 14 then we must ask ourselves: "How is it that being dead they come with Jesus?" The Phillips translation puts it: "God will just as surely bring with Jesus all who are 'asleep' in him." 1 Thes. 4:14 Phillips. Remember that upon death the spirit of a person returns "unto God who gave it"(Eccl. 12:7). The record of all that a person was in life is brought back to earth in Christ their Representative. The personal identity, the character, of the dead is preserved in heaven.

(This is somewhat like Christ bringing a computer software file back that has all the physical, mental and moral characteristics of a person recorded for future rebooting – a sort of heavenly DNA record with which to remake those who have died.) “The hour is coming... when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” John 5:25. Jesus will call forth the dead, giving them the breath of life and they will live again. Like the kernel of corn planted in the field that first dies then to be reborn, so those who die in Christ will be remade according to the pattern preserved in heaven that Christ brings with him. Recreated as a resurrected, glorified beings they will rise to meet Christ in the air.

After the dead in Christ are resurrected then we who live to see him come in the clouds (Matt. 24:30-31) will be caught up with them to meet him in the air – this is the rapture of the church. We together with the saints of all ages meet Jesus in the air “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” These are truths that we are to use to comfort one another when a loved one dies. And Hebrews 11:40 makes clear that believers who have died in the past will not attain perfection apart from those of us who remain living on earth. In other words it is on rapture day that both the living saints and the dead saints are made perfect and join Christ in the air.

Is the Rapture Secret?

This blessed hope; this blessed reunion is believed by many to take place a few years before Christ’s second coming – a secret, silent “catching up” of God’s people while the rest of the world lives on. Here are some representative statements:

“The Rapture of the Church will be the most startling event to happen in all of human history. Millions will disappear in “the twinkling of an eye.” Great confusion and bewilderment will occupy the minds of those left behind. Many explanations for the disappearance of those missing will be entertained. In the meantime the Church will have been “caught up” in the air to appear before the Lord at the “judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). This will be a judgment of rewards based on the believer’s works. It will be a time of great joy for many as they hear the Savior’s “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:[21]41). For some it will be a time of shame and regret (1 John 2:28)...

“At the Rapture the Lord will descend bodily in the air for his saints, both for the dead and for the living (1 Thess. 4:16-17). This will be seven years prior to the Revelation or the second stage of His coming. In the first stage at the Rapture the Lord comes for His Church; whereas, at the end of the tribulation period He comes back with His Church. At this event “every eye shall see him” although at the Rapture He will come “as a thief” and only believers will see Him (1 John 3:1-3).” <http://www.prophecyforum.com/revelation/rapture.html>

Of primary importance to every view of the rapture is Daniel's prophecy of the "seventy weeks" (Dan. 9:24-27). The idea of "seven years" comes from the thought that the last week, or seven years, was cut off from the rest of that prophecy. As we pointed out in our issue titled "The Last Days and the Gospel" (Vol. 8 #4) it is this portion of Scripture that determines one's entire understanding of last day events. If Jesus, as the promised Prince of the Covenant, made atonement for sin and brought in everlasting righteousness then Daniel's seventy weeks ended in the first century. But if the covenant remains unfulfilled or partially fulfilled then conjectures may abound.

We believe Scripture is clear that in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension Jesus fulfilled every requirement made of God's people in Daniel 9:24. If this is so then Daniel's "seventy weeks" ended before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the Israel of God

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel 9:24-27

(as we pointed out in that previous issue) includes every true believer for whom Christ made the atonement on the cross.

Robert L. Kramer has clearly stated our understanding of Daniel 9:27 in these words:

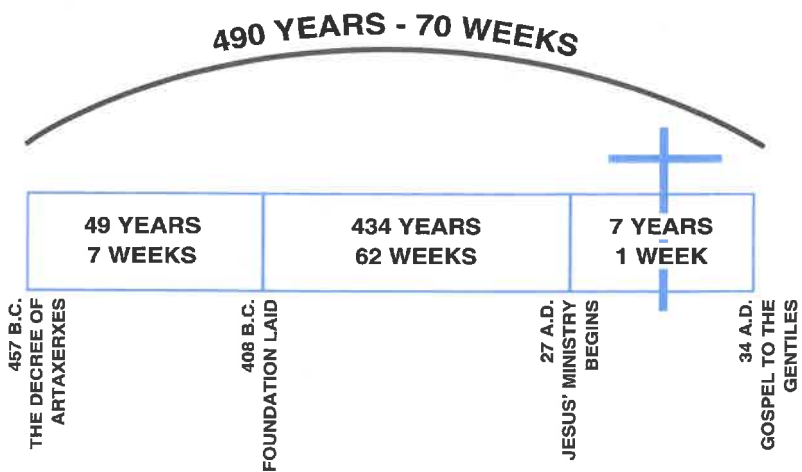
“Daniel 9:24-27 (the 70 weeks) was fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus and the AD 67-70 destruction of Jerusalem... God said verse 24 would be fulfilled in 70 weeks. The fulfillment would occur within the 490 years from a stated starting point. Why shouldn't I believe that God said and meant 490 years instead of an indefinite and unknowable number of years?

“Nowhere in the text is there mention or a suggestion of a gap or a discontinuation of the countdown within the 490 year period.

“Therefore, with the starting point of the countdown being the ‘issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem’ (Dan. 9:25), which was completed by Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:14 & 7:11f) around 459-458 BC, the 69th week or 483rd year brings one to the year of Jesus’ baptism, which was his introduction to Israel as their Messiah.

“During the 70th week, which obviously follows the 69th, He made a new covenant with Israel. The week of seven years covered 3 ½ years of His in-the-flesh ministry; then in the middle of the week of seven years He was cut off; that was followed by 3 ½ years of His in-the-Spirit ministry as He worked with and through His apostles who went exclusively to the Jews to offer them the new covenant (Mk. 16:20).” *Second Thoughts*, Issue 99, p. 2

There is no justification for splitting off Daniel’s 70th week (seven days or years). The “gap theory” has NO basis in Scripture. To look to the future for the “the Prince that shall come” is to miss the accomplishments of the Christ event. Jesus is the Prince of the Covenant. Those who are looking to the future for the covenant to be confirmed (Dan. 9:27) don’t understand Christ’s New Covenant pro-



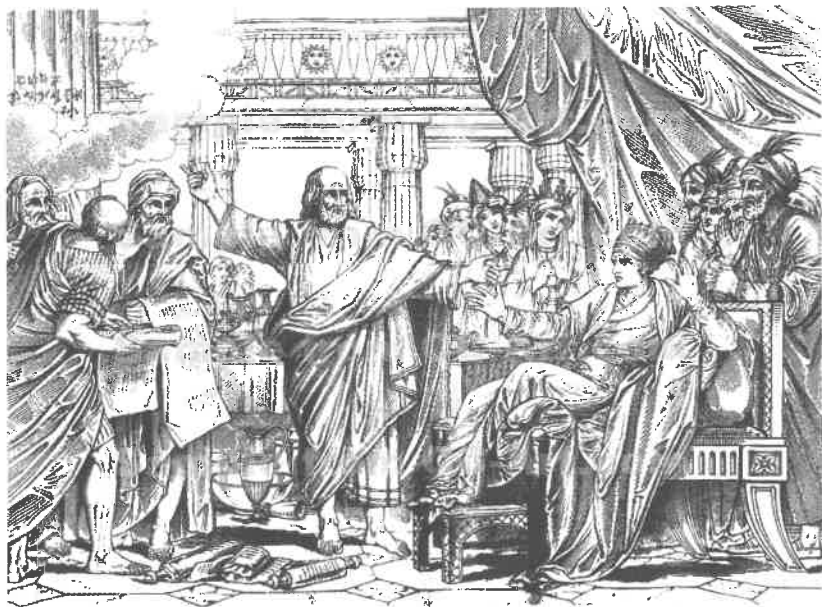
posal. By looking for the antichrist to be “the prince that shall come” they proclaim their unbelief in the finished work of Christ.

So all this looking for a two-part second coming has no Bible basis. Notice what the following quotation admits:

“Question: ‘What is the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming?’

“Answer: The rapture and the second coming of Christ are often confused. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a scripture verse is referring to the rapture or the second coming. However, in studying end-times Bible prophecy, it is very important to differentiate between the two...”
<http://www.gotquestions.org/difference-Rapture-Second-Coming.html>

The reason “it is difficult to determine whether a scripture verse is referring to the rapture or the second coming” is because they are the same event. No determination is necessary. Christ comes in a cloud of angels and with a trumpet blast and a shout calls those asleep in him to come forth from their graves. This is no silent, secret event. This will be visible to all living on the earth at that time. We cannot agree with the web site just quoted when it adds: “The rapture will be secret and instant (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). The second coming will be visible to all (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-30).”



We do agree, however, that a separation of the righteous and the wicked takes place before the second coming of Christ. That separation is spiritual and legal, not physical and moral. In our issue titled "Pre-Millennial Agreement" (Vol. 9 #4) we showed that our appearance before the judgment seat of Christ takes place in heaven while we are still living on earth. It is heavenly records that are examined at that time (Dan. 7:9-10) and Jesus said "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

When Christ comes the decree of "righteous" or "unjust" has already been issued and he comes with his reward to give everyone according as their works have been (Rev. 22:11-12).

God's method of dealing with mankind was written on the plaster of Belshazzar's palace: "*Mene, mene; Tekel; Upharsin* [Number, number; Weigh; Divide]." Dan. 5:25. Holy Ones and Watchers are daily recording our attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions (*Number, number*). There is coming a *Weigh* Day and then God will *divide* to every person according as their work has been (2 Cor. 5: 10). Weigh Day comes before Reward Day and Reward Day comes when Christ returns.

We conclude that the rapture of the church occurs at the Second Coming of Christ and is preceded by God's final accounting in heaven. When Christ comes his reward is with him. Every case has already been decided. At his coming all his people will be raptured. No second chance for salvation remains. That day is very near for almost all the signs that are to precede that coming have been fulfilled.

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. 15:51-52

Will Christ Return on October 21, 2011?

Jesus Christ will NOT return for his saints on October 21, 2011. It will NOT be the end of the world. Satan may impersonate a Second Coming. He may even carry some people away to another part of the planet, but the end is not yet.

Again we quote author Robert L. Kramer since he so briefly expresses the Bible's teaching regarding the Second Coming of Christ:

"His return will be like a thief to the unbelieving world, coming upon them unexpectedly (1 Thess. 5:2-3), but not to the Christian believers who will have been alerted and [will be] expecting his return by the signs and events outlined... (1 Thess. 5:1, 4-8 [Matt. 24:1-28])

"It is the clear and persistent teaching of the Bible that when Jesus returns He will be seen coming by the world as well as the church. Matthew 24:30 and Revelation 1:7 both affirm that 'every eye' will see him coming through the clouds..." *Second Thoughts*, Issue 101, p. 3.

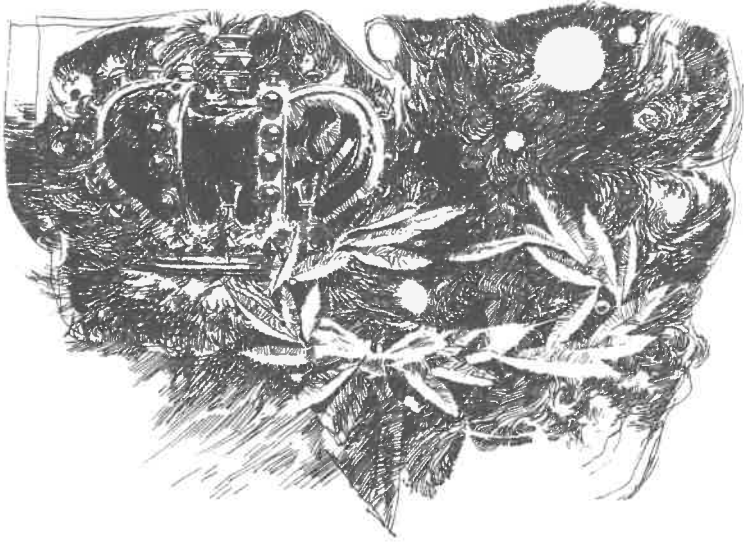
An Any-moment Coming?

While many Bible writers speak of the nearness of Christ's Second Coming they also give signs that are to precede that awesome day. The signs tell believers where they are at in the course of events foretold in Bible prophecy.

Paul understood that the last days were some time ahead and that he would die first. He told Timothy that in the last days perilous times would come. And seeing his own death imminent he wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." 2 Tim. 4:7-8.

All true Christians desire their Lord's soon return but they also need to recognize that certain things must happen before that day.

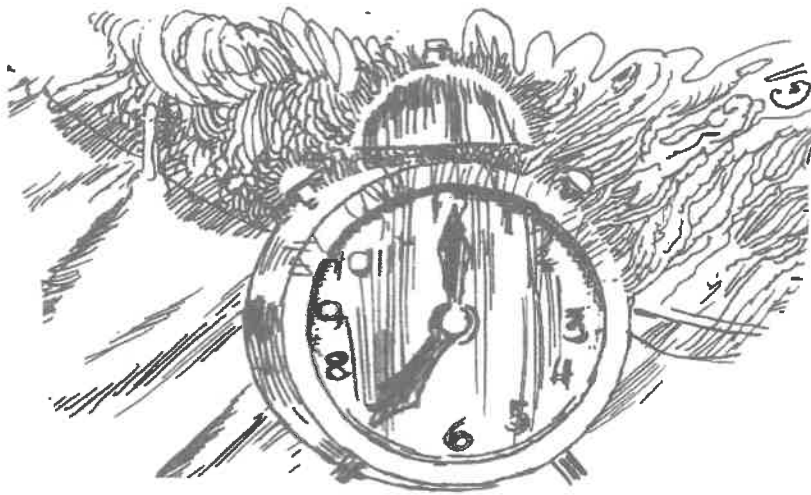
Many believers have already died in faith not having received the promise. Will we be the generation that realizes the fulfillment of Christ's words: "I will come again and receive you unto myself"?



Some suggest that the “rapture of the church” is the unknown, any-moment aspect of Christ’s return while his visible coming seven year later has signs preceding it. We reject such a perspective! Were all the signs given in the Bible of Christ’s Second Coming to occur in the last seven years before Christ’s return? Certainly not! Daniel outlines great world empires that were to rise and fall before God sets up his everlasting kingdom. Jesus himself warned that false Christs, wars, plagues, famines, and earthquakes were only the beginning of the signs of his coming (Matt. 24:5-8). Paul said there would come a “falling away” first (2 Thess. 2:3) and Peter adds that men would arise denying creation and the flood of Noah’s day (2 Pet. 3:3-7). John the revelator outlines seven phases of church history that were to precede the Second Coming (Rev. 2 & 3). These things didn’t all happen in the first century of the Christian era. But by our day they have all come to pass. We are nearer to the second coming than Christ’s first disciples were!

Stopping the Clock

God has a number – the number of those who will be saved from this earth. When that number is complete the end will come and will not tarry. It is a number known only to him for it was he that chose it “in Christ” before the foundation of the world. It is the number of those who will be eternally saved when God’s last decision on humanity is made.



Zechariah refers to this number as God's "third:"

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." Zech.13:8-9.

John, the revelator, in response to the cry for justice coming from martyred saints, records Heaven's response: "...they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers... was completed." Rev. 6:11 NIV.

God is waiting for his number. He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3:9. When that number is made up Christ will finish his work as Advocate/Judge. His bride will be complete and he will come to take her to his Father's house.

Christ's Wedding Day

The church has waited long for the day when she will be married to Christ, the Lamb of God. Now she is engaged, anxiously looking forward to her wedding day. Jesus said, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." Matt. 22:2. After repeated calls for the guests to come he had to send his servants into the highways, where they gathered together "both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

Before the marriage can be finalized the king must inspect the guests. In this examination all who don't have on the garment of Christ's righteousness will be cast into outer darkness. Those that remain make up God's everlasting kingdom, the bride of Christ (Heb. 12:26-28; Matt. 22:2-14).

Like the nobleman in Luke 19, Jesus "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." In the far country Jesus obtains the marriage certificate for his bride – the title deed of his kingdom. Jesus told this parable because many in his day "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Luke 19:11.

Just before the Bridegroom ascended to heaven his disciples asked: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts 1:6-7.

The Bridegroom is a long time in coming. While the bridegroom tarries, the waiting virgins fall asleep. It is at earth's midnight that the cry is made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The Bridegroom comes; and those that are ready go in with him to the marriage: and the door is shut. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matt. 25:5-13.

While we don't know the day or hour of our Lord's return we do know from the signs and prophecies when it is near. Whenever a definite time is set for the second coming Satan rejoices, for when the time passes he inspires his agents to mock all Bible prophecy. Those who continue making predictions for Christ's return will eventually preach a date too far in the future and many of their followers will be unprepared for Christ's second advent.

Rather, we are to be like "men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh," we may open unto him immediately. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he



cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Luke 12:36-37.

Unfulfilled prophecy

Although we are on the threshold of eternity there are still some signs to be fulfilled before Christ comes to take his people to be with him. The most crucial of these is found in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." This has not yet happened in our generation.

We preach the gospel so that God can judge. When everyone has heard the gospel God can examine their case in judgment and give his final decision. Then Christ can come to take with him those who pass God's judgment. Peter wrote that people "will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit." 1 Pet. 4:5-6 NIV.

In our day the hour of God's judgment has come. The same heavenly messenger that announced that message in Revelation 14:6-7 emphasized our need to worship the Creator at the time of the final crisis. He is followed by another messenger that announces the fall of man's religion. And a third messenger warns that worship of the beast and his image will result in eternal loss. A final crisis over worship is just before us.

Until that worship crisis matures and Revelation's "false prophet" creates an image to the Roman beast, Christ will not come (Rev. 13). John goes on to show that at the end of the worship crisis God's wrath in the form of seven last plagues is poured out upon those that worship the beast and his image. Daniel predicted a "time of trouble" just before the resurrection of God's people (Dan. 12:1-2). These two events – the worship crisis and the seven last plagues – have not happened yet.

Today, in 2011, the church is sleeping in Laodicean lethargy. The gospel will not be preached in all the world by sleeping saints. Today a false gospel is surrounding the globe. People are being taught to look within themselves for a righteousness God will accept in judgment. Until the true gospel is preached, the gospel that points to the righteous life Christ lived and the atoning death he died 2000 years ago, the end will not come.

Would to God that before October 21, 2011, God's people would hear the call : "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isa. 60:1-3.



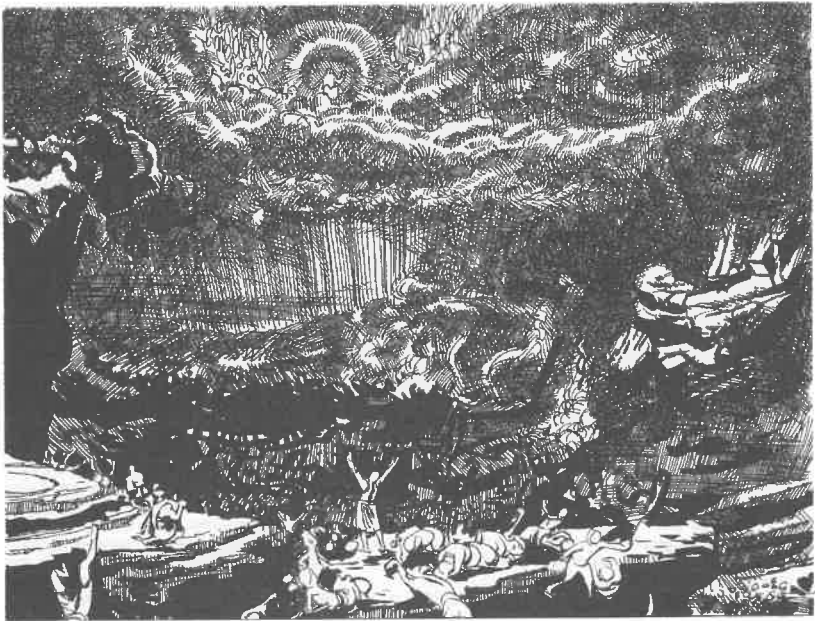
How to Help Family Radio Listeners

Believers in Harold Camping's predictions are sure to be disappointed again on October 21, 2011. Many of them sincerely desire their Lord's return. This is commendable. This is Christian.

Family Radio operates more than 50 stations across the United States and also broadcasts on short wave and some international stations. Their explanation of the May 21, 2011, event is that the door of mercy closed to the world – that God's predicted judgment was a spiritual earthquake rather than a physical rapture from earth. This is the way their web site explains it:

“Thus we have learned that except for a somewhat different understanding of the words “earthquake” and “rapture” or “catching up” no other past teachings of Judgment Day or the end of the world have been changed. The time line, the certainty of it, the proofs, and the signs are all precisely the same. No other past teachings have been changed or modified. Indeed, on May 21 Christ did come spiritually to put all of the unsaved throughout the world into judgment. But that universal judgment will not be physically seen until the last day of the five month judgment period, on October 21, 2011.

“Thus we can be sure that the whole world, with the exception of those who are presently saved (the elect), are under the judgment of God, and will be annihilated together with the whole physical world on October 21, 2011, on the last day of the present five months period. On that day the true believers (the elect) will be raptured. We must remember that only God knows who His elect are that He saved prior to May 21.” “What Happened on May 21?” <http://www.familyradio.com/x/whathappened.html>



They believe that the “tribulation” predicted by Jesus took place from May 21, 1988 until May 21, 2011 (23 years taken from Daniel 8:14); that the five months mentioned in Revelation 9 go from May 21 to October 21, 2011 (153 days according to the number of fish caught in John 21); and that October 21, 2011, will be the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world.

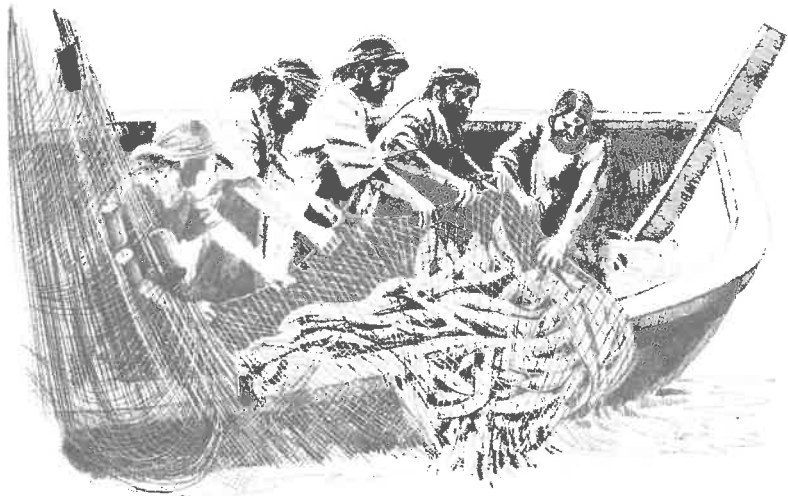
When that day passes, rather than point out their errors, point out the truths they have been forced to embrace:

1. The rapture of the church does not take place prior to Christ’s Second Coming.
2. God will decide the cases of all humanity in a heavenly judgment prior to Christ’s Second Coming.
3. The door of salvation mercy has not yet closed (like that of Noah’s ark) although it will close a short time prior to Christ’s Second Coming.

Tell them to fix their eyes on Christ as he ministers for them now in heaven’s Most Holy Place (Heb. 8:1-2; 12:2). Tell them that Jesus is there judging “the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5). Tell them that “yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb. 10:37. And encourage them that

Bible prophecy gives a *sign* rather than a *time* for the Second Coming of Christ. Tell them that that sign is given by Christ in Matthew 24:14:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”



Letters

(Continued)

I recently came across some old copies of your magazine from the 1970s which I am so enjoying reading. Your articles on the law, justification, sin and the gospel have really given me greater understanding on these subjects... I want to ask you if you would permit me to copy some of the articles to give out to others who too would gain greater understanding from them.

Mrs. H. M.,
ZIMBABWE

I understand now why you send your propaganda out free so that you may deceive and distract. The Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient that all men might be SAVED. For that is God's will. 1 Tim. 2:3-6. The word all means ALL!

T. H., Community Church pastor,
Pennsylvania, USA

We have greatly enjoyed and profited from your publication. We believe it is much needed in our day. The issue on immortality was superb. Please send us 5 copies of this issue.

P. & L. H.,
Washington, USA

This morning I was discussing eternal torment and the immortality of the soul with a neighbor... When I stopped at my mail box on the way home there was your mailing [PT v. 10 #2]. I think that was Yahweh's doing since I was discouraged with his reaction...

I have wondered for over fifty years where orthodox "Christianity" came up with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul when the Scriptures clearly state that only the Almighty has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16) and the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Genesis 3:22, 24 states: "The Lord God said, 'Since man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out and also take from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.' He drove man out, and east of Eden He stationed cherubim with a flaming, whirling sword to guard the way to the tree of life." Also, how could eternal life be a gift (Romans 6:23) if a person already has it?

...“Christianity” developed the most horrible doctrine of eternal torment. If the lost soul is immortal then obviously it would have to suffer for eternity. When I have asked pastors if they believe in eternal torment some of them have answered affirmatively with glee in their voices and as I tried to convince them otherwise they have gotten angry. This is almost incomprehensible to me when the Almighty Himself says that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).

Awhile ago a church I was attending was having a series on cults and one of the “proofs” they gave that a certain group was not “Christian” was that they didn’t believe in “eternal torment.” The concept of eternal torment is diametrically opposed to what is probably the most well known text in the Scriptures: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not **perish**, but have everlasting life.”* How can anyone believe that Elohim is love (1 John 4:7-16) and at the same time believe that hideous doctrine?...

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) was not a discussion of the after-life. The Saviour was using the common false concept of hell to get across the point that if people didn’t listen to Moses and the prophets they wouldn’t be persuaded even if a person rose from the dead to tell them. To believe that this parable was an actual description of the afterlife would be ludicrous – as if there could be communication between people in “hell” and heaven.

...Matthew 3:12 mentions unquenchable fire. All that means is that it can’t be put out until whatever is burning is burned up. Hebrews 12:29 states that *“our Elohim is a consuming fire”* which means to burn up completely; to annihilate. Sinners are annihilated by Elohim’s presence. It is the righteous, not the wicked, that live with the everlasting fire. See Isaiah 33:12-16,... Jude 7 says that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the punishment of eternal fire. Are they still burning? Of course not.

[In] Revelation 20... The lake of fire is called the second **death** (verse 14 and 21:18).

A great number of people [are] followers of the “Saviour” because they don’t want to burn forever in “hell” when the true motive a person becomes a follower of the Saviour should be that they have seen a revelation of Elohim’s love. Elohim does not want people to fellowship with who are scared of Him. That is a form of force and true love cannot be forced...

“A stupid person does not know, a fool does not understand this: though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be eternally destroyed”. Psalm 92:6, 7.

Because of the doctrine of eternal torment Satan has been very successful in instilling in people a negative concept of the Heavenly Father.

W. K. B.,
New York, USA

I have received your magazine, *Pregonero de Justicia* [PT in Spanish], that I appreciate very much and for which I am thankful. I noticed that there is still such a thing in the world as *real literature*! I refer specifically to the issue that deals with the doctrine of John Henry Newman [PT v. 10 #1].

As an Anglican pastor I would like to use the content of that issue... in the exposition of Anglican papers we are writing for blogs and for our church's web site...

I'm ashamed to admit it but I was unacquainted with the doctrine of "effective justification." Now in studying and exposing it, I'm forced to understand it and teach others.

T. R. B., Pastor, Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church
Pontevedra, SPAIN

It is with great interest that we learned through your magazine how the pope is trying to recapture England to return to its roots of Catholic origin.

E. M., English teacher
Mbeya, TANZANIA

The article on John Henry Newman [Vol 10, # 1] caught my attention. How can a Protestant who knows the uselessness and prohibition in the Word of God to worship idols become a Catholic? Your article explains that to declare a Catholic a "Saint" one must go through three stages: Venerable, Blessed and then "Saint."

Here in my country most people worship the "Virgen de Cobre," and this belief has been mixed with Santeria. You go through the streets of my country and see people dressed in white. These are called "saints," people who in order to reach this condition pay a lot of money. If you walk through the streets of my country you will also observe newsstands that sell necklaces for witches, all sorts of idols, in short, everything a *santero* needs. But you will not find a Christian bookstore. In order to obtain a Bible it must be through a gift from the churches. If you walk down the street with a Bible in hand, people regard you as an extraterrestrial and they call us "religious fanatics." These people say we do not venerate the "dear virgin" as "the mother of God."

Here in my country many see as betrayal of the country to profess the Christian faith. This is a legacy of the former socialist bloc; however, they see it as normal to go with the saint to "unwind" or participate in so-called "Bemba" where the people involved are possessed by "spirits of ancestor divination."

E. R. M.,
Santiago, CUBA

I wish to continue receiving *Pregonero de Justicia* [PT in Spanish] because its contents provides very interesting Bible orientation which makes clear the truths that aid in spiritual development making more understandable the message that God wants his children to learn.

I have read Revelation and am comparing chapter 20 with your instructive material and with the Bible references given.

M. D. V.,
Holguín, CUBA

Beginning this new year we have promised God to consecrate our lives to Him and take up again ministries which we had abandoned by being tied up in worldly business. For this reason we are forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before in order to fulfil the call to preach the gospel and seeking to be perfected by his Word in order to be useful to the Lord among his people and a light to the world.

We live in the last days and the coming of the Lord is very near; and so we should with greater energy follow the path that lies before us. For this reason I request that I may continue receiving your help with supplying Christian material for the edification of God's people and for reaching the lost with the gospel.

M. A. O. L., Evangelical pastor
Falcón, VENEZUELA

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___ V10 #3 Great Words of Scripture

Judge me, O God

“This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O LORD, be not far from me. Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt.” Psalm 35:22-28.

“Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.” Psalm 43:1-3.