

# UPLOOK

DECEMBER 1997

*Is The Rapture Imminent?*

*Future Events Cast Shadows*

*The Timing of The Lord's Return*

*And He Will*



# And He Will

J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

**T**here are now more fortune tellers in France than there are medical doctors. Their evening TV offers news, weather, sports...and your horoscope reading.

Wicca is one hot item (if you will excuse the word association) and almost every bookstore has its ample supply of New Age books.

To the student of the Bible, none of this is surprising. Paul warned that in the last days there would be an increase in such activity. But what *is* surprising is the lack of interest in the coming of the Lord among His family members. I do not say a lack of interest in prophetic themes, for there is always interest, sometimes degenerating into a morbid curiosity, about the unknown future. As Peter Pell used to observe, you could pack a building far sooner speaking about Antichrist than you could about Christ.

When I was a boy, the subject of the return of the Lord somehow crept into almost every message I heard. It was one of the strong appeals in the gospel, and I was one of a multitude of Christians' children who listened at night for the creaking of our parents' bed, because we knew they would go at the Rapture, leaving us behind. Eventually we fled "from the wrath to come."

But much of that preaching is passé now. It was not thought to be a healthy thing by the next generation to terrorize children with such thoughts. Yet it is not only in our gospel preaching that the truth of the Lord's return is absent. At a time when our civilization is becoming increasingly "spiritual" (in the wrong way, of course) with even the President's wife and the late Princess of Wales joining King Saul in the witch's lair, thoughts of heaven and its lovely Man seem far from the minds of God's people. Why is this? Let me suggest a few reasons:

1) We in the West are quite comfy, thank you. The old Negro spirituals about golden slippers in the "Promised Lan'" were sung by those who had no shoes. Does such footwear interest those who sport the latest hi-tech high-tops? Why look for a sweet chariot to swing low when our 290 horse-powered, 32 valve, aluminum alloy V8 is sitting in the driveway? Samuel Johnston ob-

*The world is already anticipating the dawning of a new millennium. And with the mounting interest, there is also a rise in spirit activity of the darker kind—fortune telling, witchcraft, and the like. But what are the saints thinking?*



served, after visiting a lavish estate, "These are the things that make it hard to die."

2) Careless speculation has added to the incredulity of the saints. Of course there are indicators everywhere that the world is having its last hurrah. But date-setting is warned against in the Word of God. I think today is a great day for the Rapture! This world is a has-been. There is nothing down here for the hearts of God's people. As strangers, we're away from Home—we *don't* belong here; as pilgrims, we're going Home—we *do* belong there. Let's not drive our tent pegs in too far.

3) Confusion on the subject hasn't helped. Because a few brethren hold to views other than the commonly held (and I believe biblically consistent) pre-tribulation rapture view, many feel the subject should not be broached for fear of offending someone or causing disunity. Yet "one hope" is listed as one of seven ingredients in the unity of saints (Eph. 4). This hope is commonly held by every Christian. It is two-fold: we shall be *with* Him; we shall be *like* Him. Leave the specific timetable out if you must, but do not rob believers of the stimulating influence of such a purifying, encouraging, motivating truth.

4) Guilt might be lending a hand in the problem, as well. If we all, teachers included, are too busy being too busy, it is hard to preach with conviction about something that rarely crosses our minds. Does the echo of David's ancient cry reach our ears still? "Why is there no word concerning bringing the king back?" As the articles in this issue show, prophecy is not merely pre-history. There is a moral dimension to it with present implications in our lives. You can see if my eschatology is right by my lifestyle.

The Lord promised He would come the first time, promised He would provide answers to our deepest needs. He promised He would die for us and promised He would rise the Victor. He promised He would go and prepare a place for us and promised He would come again to receive us to Himself that we might be with Him forever.

He did. And He did. And He did. And He did. And He did. And He will. Count on it.

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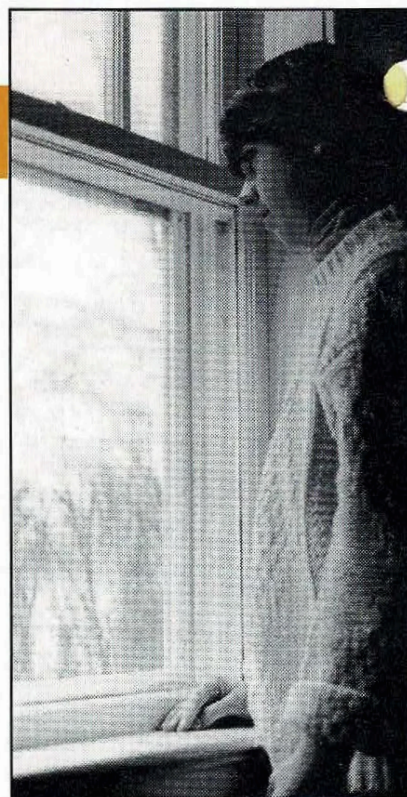


# *Is the Rapture Imminent?*

WILLIAM MacDONALD

*Everywhere we look we see indicators that we're at the eleventh hour...or later.*

*Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, nearer than it has ever been in history.*



**D**o we really have reason to believe that the coming of the Lord Jesus is near? Yes, more reasons than any generation in the history of the church has ever had. Let me list a few.

The nation of Israel says that His coming is near (Mt. 24:32-33; Ezek. 36:24-25). What we saw in 1948 was not the final regathering of Israel. It was a remnant of Israel returning in unbelief (Ezek. 36:24-25). The prophesied return will take place when the King comes to reign. But it was and is an unprecedented straw in the wind.

Jerusalem says that the Lord is coming. Jesus said that this city would be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Lk. 21:24). Israel now controls all of the city except a small parcel of land known as the Temple Mount. Militarily it would not be difficult for Israel to seize it.

Speaking through Zechariah, God said, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples...a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it" (Zech. 12:2-3). He did not say this about London or Moscow or Beijing. Only about Jerusalem. And what city is such a cup of trembling for the nations today? Revered by Jews, Muslims, and Christians, it is the despair of international diplomats. They cannot agree to recognize it as the capital of Israel. And it is the scene of terrorism and continued unrest.

The rise of nationalism says so (Lk. 21:29). Jesus said, "Look at the fig tree (Israel) and all the trees (other nations)." When they bud, we know that the kingdom of God (the Millennium) is near. If the kingdom is near, the Rapture is at least seven years nearer. In the 1940's there were 58 members of the United Nations. By July 1993, there were 184. The nations are budding.

Preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple say

so. Vessels for the Temple and clothing for the priests are now being prepared in anticipation of the time that the Temple will be rebuilt. No previous generation has seen anything like this.

The European Economic Community, founded on the Treaty of Rome, says so (Dan. 2:40-44; 7:7-8, 23-25; Rev 13:1-10; 17:8-14). This is a foreshadowing of the revived Roman Empire. I have a coin of the EEC (called an ECU) on which the logo is a woman riding a two-horned beast over waters. This is remarkably similar to what we read in Revelation 17:3, 15-16. It is the difference between two horns and seven. Of all the logos that could have been chosen, why did they choose this one?

I also have a poster of the Council of Europe, unmistakably showing the tower of Babel being rebuilt. The caption says: *Europe: Many Tongues, One Voice.*

Helmut Kohl, Germany's Chancellor, said, "The United States of Europe will form the core of a peaceful order...the age prophesied of old, when all shall dwell secure and none shall make them afraid." Grand words, Mr. Kohl, but unfortunately not true.

The apostasy of Christendom says that the Lord's coming is near (Lk. 18:7-8; 2 Thess. 2:2; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-13). Never before has there been such a turning away from the Christian faith. Prominent theologians try to outdo one another with blasphemous and heretical pronouncements concerning the basic truths of Christianity. The honor of Christ means nothing to them.

The ecumenical movement says so (Rev. 17 and 18). We have been shocked to see prominent evangeli-



## Is the Rapture Imminent?

cal leaders praising the Pope, sending converts back to the Catholic church and the Jewish synagogue, and urging greater cooperation with the Catholic Church. A prominent evangelist said, "I have no quarrel with the Catholic Church...we'll send [inquirers] to their own churches, Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish." Another said, "Preach the gospel, but don't be so negative as to refuse to endorse or work with those who belong to a group that proclaims a different gospel." A respected writer and frequent speaker at InterVarsity conferences said, "The visible union of all professing Christians should be our goal...and evangelicals should join others...in working toward full communion with the Roman Catholic Church."

The rise of false messiahs says so (Mt. 24:5, 23-24, 26). David Karesh said, "If the Bible is true, then I am Christ." Prior to his death, the 92-year-old Rabbi Schneerson was hailed as the Messiah. Reverend Moon claims to be the new world Messiah. Speaking of the need for a strong man to rule, Paul Henri-Spaak, one of the organizers of the European Common Market, said, "Send us such a man, and be he God or devil, we will follow him."

Famine conditions say so (Mt. 24:7). The World Food Bank estimates that by the end of this decade one-half billion people will starve to death. That is one-fourth of the world's population. The famines predicted in Matthew 24 precede Christ's coming to reign. If that is so, how much closer is the Rapture!

Plagues and pestilences say so (Mt. 24:7). Thanks to jet travel, plagues can spread faster than ever before in history. John Cionci, medical doctor and correspondent, says, "We think it likely that AIDS is the worst plague in human history." I have read that one-fourth of the population of Africa will die of this disease.

The Euphrates River says so. The Turks are building the Ataturk Dam. It can hold nearly 50 billion cubic meters of water. For several weeks in January 1990, the Turks interrupted the flow of the Euphrates on its ancient course down into Mesopotamia. To fill it completely, they would have to stop the Euphrates for nearly two years. Read Revelation 16:12 at this point.

Modern technology says so (Rev. 13:16-18). All the technology is already in place for the Antichrist to enforce his law concerning the number 666. Every time you use your VISA card, be reminded that the Lord's

coming is near. Credit cards with chips, scanners, the Internet, all tell the same story. Beginning with the social security number, this intrusion on our privacy has all been introduced gradually, but now Big Brother knows all about us. An ACLU spokesman said, "If Congress tried to introduce a central file on every person, it would go down to defeat...but what couldn't be done frontally has happened incrementally."

Toshiba has developed a chip that has memory equal to 10,000 times an average person's personal computer's capacity. It could contain your personal history, your credit rating, your religious affiliation, your family—everything about you.

The increase of the Anti-Christian spirit says it (1 Jn. 2:18). At one time it was considered respectable to be a Christian. Now the word brings forth a stream of vitriol. Believers are sneered at as fundamentalists, right wingers, etc. It is estimated that 160,000 Christians have been martyred during this last year. And there have been more Christians who have died for their faith during the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined.

Add to the above the increase of earthquakes (Mt. 24:7; Lk. 21:11), wars and rumors of wars (Mt. 24:6), increase of spiritism (1 Tim. 4:1-5); and the general confidence that there will be peace and security (1 Thess. 5:3).

I was encouraged lately to read that more Jews have been saved in the last 19 years than in the last 1900 years. It made me wonder if God is calling out a remnant for His name, predecessors of the 144,000 who will be His witnesses during the Tribulation period.

Many of the signs we have listed are conditions that will prevail before the Lord Jesus comes back to the earth to set up His kingdom on earth. His coming to rapture the Church takes place at least seven years before then. If we already see foreshadows of the events, we have every reason to look up and believe that our redemption draws near.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

*Watch for two new books by William MacDonald from Gospel Folio Press—Once in Christ, in Christ Forever (on Eternal Security) and My Heart, My Life, My All (what the cross means to our daily lives).*

**U**



## FRONT LINES

### ▷ NEW YEAR'S IN GRENADA

Joe Jeremiah (MD) plans, Lord willing, to speak at the New Year's Day conference in St. George's, Grenada, in the West Indies. Eight assemblies on the island will participate in the conference which will be followed by a one-week gospel crusade (Jan. 4-9, 1998).

In preparation for the meetings, a number of gift Bibles along with gospel tracts and 2000-3000 invitation flyers have been shipped to the island. Your prayer support for this evangelistic outreach is valued.

### ▷ TAMPA BAY BIBLE STUDY

The Bible Study Program held at Holiday Gospel Assembly, 1842 Grand Blvd., Holiday, FL, will meet from 10AM-4PM on Saturday, Jan. 10. The speaker will be J. B. Nicholson, Jr., from Grand Rapids, MI, speaking on the subject of "Dispensationalism Contrasted with Covenant/Reformed Theology." For more information, please contact:

David Dunlap  
3116 Gulfwind Dr.  
Land O' Lakes, FL  
34639-4660  
(813) 996-1053

### ▷ PARK OF THE PALMS

The schedule speakers for the 1998 Bible Conference at Park of the Palms in Keystone Heights, FL are as follows:

Jan. 17-23	David Adams
Jan. 24-30	J. Philip Morgan
Jan. 31- Feb. 6	James Naismith
Feb. 7-13	Dan Smith
Feb. 14-20	David Levy
Feb. 21-27	J. B. Nicholson
Feb. 28-Mar. 6	James Cochrane
Mar. 7-13	Abe VanDerPuy

For more information, contact:

Park of the Palms  
706 Palms Circle  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(352) 473-4926

### ▷ SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

The Christians that meet at Queen St. Bible Chapel in Sault Ste. Marie, ON, will continue their monthly in-depth Bible studies in 1998. The studies begin at 10:00 AM and continue until 2:30 PM.

Jan. 17	Boyd Nicholson
	Prayer and Worship
Feb. 14	J. B. Nicholson, Jr.
	7 Signs in John's Gospel
Mar. 14	Arnot McIntee
	Things to Come
Apr. 10-11	Randy Amos
	The Resurrection

Phone Peter Aceti at (705) 942-6967 or Joe Reese at (705) 946-0289 for details.

### ▷ LABORERS TOGETHER

On January 23-25, Bible and Life Ministries (working with the Christians at Lakeside Bible Chapel in Tampa) will be conducting a gospel outreach. They invite you to join with 30-40 laborers in working to spread the gospel. They plan to visit 2,000 homes with the gospel message, literature, and invitations to attend gospel meetings each evening. All study materials, meals and overnight accommodations will be provided for workers.

If you are interested in helping in any way, please contact David Dunlap at (813) 996-1053.

### ▷ BIBLE TEACHING

A series of Bible teaching seminars for believers 18 years of age and upwards is planned to be held at Camp Galilee in Renfrew, ON. The

### ADDRESS CHANGE:

**MSC Canada**  
**509-3950 14th Ave.**  
**Markham, ON L3R 0A9**  
**Phone: (905) 947-0468**  
**Fax: (905) 947-0352**  
**E-mail: msc@msc.on.ca**

presentations will be a help in various aspects of assembly life.

D.V., Willie Burnett will present "Preparation for Teaching;" Bettine McCullough will address the women on "Sisters, Their Conduct and Service;" and Brian Gunning will discuss "Assembly Life and Issues."

Couples and singles are welcome. A children's program will run during the seminar sessions.

Camp begins on Lord's Day, March 15, with supper; and closes with lunch on Wednesday, March 18. Conference fees are: \$120 for singles, \$195 for couples, \$50 for children (6-13 years), and no charge for children under 5 years old.

For more information, contact:

Jim and Elizabeth Paul  
Phone: (613) 829-1292  
Fax: (613) 829-1524  
jimpaul@cyberus.ca

### ▷ WORKERS' CONFERENCE

Plan to attend the sixth annual Ontario Elders' and Workers' Conference, May 5-7, D.V. The conference will be hosted by the Scottlea assembly with other assemblies from the St. Catharines, ON, area joining in providing lodging and meals.

The theme: "Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass." Paul Grieve (South Africa) and Randy Amos (NY) will give morning and evening sessions. Boushra Mikhael, J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr., and Ernie Sarlo will take plenary sessions.



### ▷ BEREAN BIBLE CHAPEL

In March of 1995, a group of saints began meeting in a home in Windsor, ON. The Lord has providing larger facilities to accommodate the increased number in fellowship and others who attend regularly. The assembly now meets at:

2280 Foster Ave at Walker Rd.  
Windsor ON N8W 5C9

The schedule is as follows: Sunday, Lord's Supper at 9:30, Ministry of God's Word at 11:00 and 7:00. Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 7:30.

Correspondent:

Mr. Victor Salmons  
3070 Radisson Ave.  
Windsor, ON  
Phone: (519) 969-0805

### ▷ LAKESIDE BIBLE CHAPEL

The saints of the Lakeside Bible Chapel, Lincolnton, GA, recently enjoyed their first anniversary in the present facilities. A year ago, a group of about seven families purchased a former restaurant and remodelled it for a place of gathering to the Lord. Since then, He has added to the fellowship several more families and has blessed the nursery with five newborns.

Shortly after occupying the new building, the assembly hosted a weekend seminar on how to discipline young children. The Biblical teaching ministry has focused on consecutive studies such as the

Feasts of Jehovah and the Holy Spirit. Rex Trogdon is expected for a week of meetings on New Testament church truth in January.

Lakeside Bible Chapel, situated on Thurmond Lake, is within a convenient drive of Savannah Lakes, a first-class retirement development. For more information about the general area and the assembly, call:

Bernie O'Neill (706) 359-5554  
Sam Thorpe, Jr. (706) 359-6297

### ▷ PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

The Christians who were meeting in a home in Mt. Sterling, WI, have built a new building in Prairie du Chien, WI. Visitors in the area are welcome! The address is as follows:

Christian Assembly  
900 Cliffhaven Dr.  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821  
(608) 326-7208  
The correspondent is:  
Robert L. Borne (608) 326-7474

### ▷ BIBLE LANDS TOUR

Randy Amos (NY) and Mark Kolchin (NJ) will be conducting a 13-day Bible Lands Study Tour. The trip is scheduled, Lord willing, for May 11-23, 1998.

The tour will include two days of visiting ancient sites in Rome, three days in Egypt, and eight days in Israel. Contact Mark Kolchin at:

P. O. Box 315  
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734  
e-mail: honeyrock@juno.com

### ▷ COMMENDATIONS

#### Robert and Debbie Whattoff

The believers gathered in the name of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at the Grace Bible Chapel in Springfield, IL join together in the hearty recommendation of Robert and Debbie Whattoff to the work of the Lord in North America and elsewhere as the Lord may lead.

Bob and Debbie's work has been known to the assembly in Springfield over many years, both in Brazil, where they labored previously, and in the United States.

Currently their ministry is focused on reaching foreign exchange students at the University of Illinois campus and other outreaches to win precious souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. For personal contact or further information, their address is:

806 Wesley  
Savoy, IL 61874-9555  
Phone: (217) 352-5223  
E-mail: whattoff@prairienet.org

#### David and Gail Isom

This will amend the commendation dated April 19, 1995 of David Isom by the fellowship of Christians at the Marble Hill Chapel in Marble Hill, MO.

This commendation is amended to include Mr. Isom's wife, Gail, and to change the area of service described under the previous commendation from camp ministry at the Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp at Vienna, MO, to such a ministry at any and all Bible camps acceptable to assembly fellowships.

Mr. and Mrs. Isom have been active in just such an area of ministry at Turkey Hill for the past 3 years and at other camps for the past several months. The elders of this as-





## Front Lines

sembly are pleased to commend them to that service.

### ▷ PASSING INTO LIFE

#### David McCartney

David McCartney, age 92, passed into the presence of the Lord on September 30, 1997.

Dave was saved as a young man in Northern Ireland and moved to Winnipeg, MB, at the age of 21 where he was associated with Arlington Street Gospel Chapel.

In 1950, he was transferred to Victoria, BC. Dave's love for the Lord and His people, and his ability to preach and teach the Word were valued throughout Victoria Island. He was held in high esteem by the Christians at Victoria Chapel.

#### Charles E. Sells

On August 19, 1997, "Charlie," age 94, passed quietly into the presence of the Lord at Pittsboro Christian Village. Charlie was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and did the work of an elder at Roseland Gospel Hall (Chicago) and Pittsboro Gospel Chapel (NC). He was active in the Chicagoland Sunday School Superintendent's Association, and the Chicago Missionary Study Class. He was a retired volunteer worker at Lake Geneva Youth Camp, and actively supported missionaries through CMML and the missionary conferences.

#### James Yencarelli

Please forgive the late notice of the homecall of Jim Yencarelli of Tucson, AZ, who passed away on April 27, 1997.

Jim grew up in the assembly environment in Long Branch, NJ, and later moved to Tucson Bible Chapel

where he served for more than 23 years in the Sunday School, DVBS, and in Christian camp work, most recently as president of SouthWest Bible Camp. He was outstanding in doing the work of a deacon. He had a deep interest in missionary work.

#### Florence G. Woods

Florence Woods went home to be with the Lord on September 30, 1997, after a short illness. She was born in Manchester, CT, and lived all 89 years of her life there. She was saved as a young girl of 11 and was in fellowship at the Gospel Hall for more than 50 years. She has been in the assembly at Prospect Bible Chapel (Hartford) since 1974.

She was a faithful witness to the Lord Jesus Christ during her life and also in her death. She was well-known to the assemblies in the Northeast for her hospitality and kindness to the Christians.

#### Gerald H. Thomas

On November 2, 1997, Gerald Thomas was unexpectedly called home to be with the Lord whom he loved and served.

Raised in Stoney Point, MB, in a family with 12 children, Geri learned the value of hard work. On his return

from World War II to Winnipeg, he became an active worker in that area. To reach children for Christ, Gerald was instrumental in starting Faith Bible Camp. He fellowshipped at Arlington St. Gospel Chapel (Winnipeg) where he served as an elder and also preached in many of the area assemblies.

### ▷ THANKS FOR PRAYING!

Uplink readers may remember a prayer request that appeared in the What's Going On? section of the May issue for an Asian Conference to be held in Singapore. At least one reader responded to the notice and was able to catch a courier flight to Singapore. She reports that the time was wonderful...a little foretaste of heaven! She brought back to North America the following greetings from our Asian brothers and sisters:

"Heartfelt thanks to all who prayed for the Asian Assemblies Conference held in Singapore, August 12-16. God surely blessed His Word through the practical ministry of J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr. Hearts were refreshed and the Christians encouraged by hearing reports of the Lord's work in the different countries. The theme was "Hold that fast which thou hast" (Rev. 3:11). **U**

### uplook@uplook.org

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All of the staff have separate mail boxes. Please use the specific account if you are directing a letter to a particular person. The address is firstname@uplook.org (eg. kevin@uplook.org).



*Rescued from the Devil's Lair*

HENRY LAIR

I turned 40 on January 19th of this year. It was a Lord's Day morning. My thoughts were everywhere except my birthday. Actually, 40 is a lot younger than you think once you arrive there. Over breakfast I talked to my family about the glorious return of Christ. I thought that was a fitting topic to muse on during a birthday you don't want and didn't ask for.

The Lord would have none of it. It seemed just seconds after I arrived at the chapel and sat down, a brother rose from one of the back pews and said, "May we turn to Psalm 40." I thought, How strange—the 40th psalm on my 40th birthday. After a few lovely thoughts, the brother sat down. As I reflected on that psalm, I was almost overcome by a wave of gratitude; the great faithfulness of our God overwhelmed me.

I remembered the horrible pit that I was in when the Lord first began to open that psalm to me. I was in the pit of a Federal prison, serving a sentence for distribution of cocaine.

Then I remembered my 30th birthday. Shortly before, I had gone to court, was found guilty, and had been sentenced to 5 years in prison. I turned 30 waiting to go to federal prison. Now I had turned 40 sitting with a small company of the Lord's people worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. What a difference a decade can make when God is involved!

The decade between ages 20 and 30 was quite a time of turmoil for me. I don't have the space or the inclination to review all the details of my life with cocaine, but perhaps we can hit the high points (a very subjective phrase).

*Army brat.  
Travel photographer.  
Jeweller.  
Drug dealer.  
Cocaine addict.  
Con.  
Repentant sinner.  
Child of God.  
Who is too tough for the Lord?*

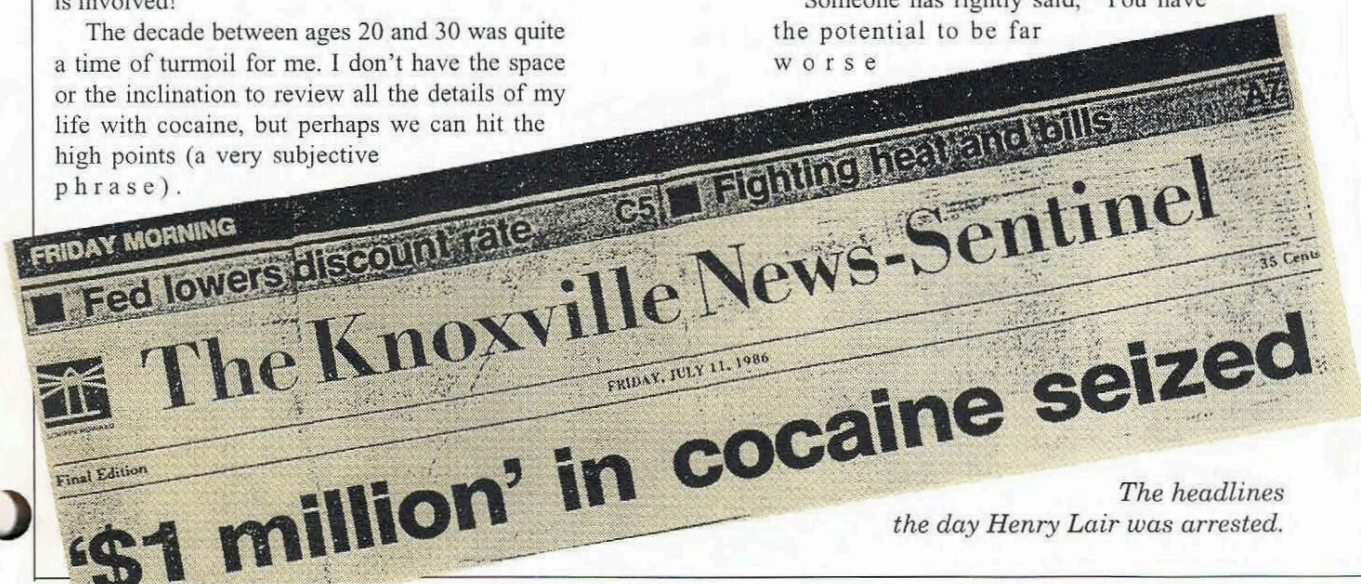
Something every person needs to know is that I was a "professing believer" the whole time. "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (Gal. 6:7). I could recite John 3:16 almost all my life. I still have the Bible I won for reciting Psalm 23 in VBS one year. How could this happen? Could it happen to you?

Perhaps the phrase that pops into my mind is "an empty profession." There was no reality in my experience with Christ. In the mid 1970's when I went to high school, it was cool to be a Christian. The most popular kids all went to "Young Life." The stars in sports participated in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

But I should have known something was amiss in my wicked heart: I bought a New American Standard Bible and signed the front inside cover, *Henry (Joe Spiritual) Lair*. I had been playing a game with God and I was about to lose.

Without a true relationship with God, you can excuse yourself from some of the provisions God has given in His Word. I guess when I read "*Don't be unequally yoked with an unbeliever,*" I must have thought it said, "unless you are a strong, upright Christian like Henry Lair." What a fool! I married outside of God's will and remained out of His will for the next several years.

Someone has rightly said, "You have the potential to be far worse



*The headlines the day Henry Lair was arrested.*



than you have ever been." After the inevitable divorce, I felt offended and cheated. I thought I was a fine, moral man that deserved better treatment. Things were just not going according to my own little plan for my life.

It has also been said, "The self-made man has a fool for his creator." Without a shred of evidence that I was saved, I truly felt I had given God sufficient time to "prove Himself." Thinking that I had given the "right path" in life an adequate trial, I determined the old morals of my parents and God were a farce and I proceeded to search out other paths. Please keep in mind that when I say I had kept to the "right path" in life, that was simply a figment of my imagination. I was nowhere near to living the Christian life, although I hadn't completely strayed from it...yet!

My first stop on the highway to hell was quite a step off the path. I discovered cocaine, alcohol, and immoral sex all in one night. I had gone to visit a trusted relative of mine. He took one look at me and said, "Hank, I can make you happy! I hate seeing you like this. I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY!"

If there is truly pleasure in sinning for a season—and the Bible makes it plain there is—I thought I had really discovered the mother lode of happiness. I was determined to live out the rest of my days sniffing drugs and bar hopping. Quite a life plan for someone who could recite John 3:16 all his life, wasn't it?

It didn't take long for the lie of that lifestyle to surface. Within a year, I had lost a business I had built for seven years, my health was beginning to fail, and everything precious to me was gone. But the lifestyle itself provided an insidious way to self-perpetuate. I began to sell cocaine. I never actually made the decision to become a drug dealer. The thought of it sets my teeth on edge. It seemed the last rational decision that I made, the last decision I can truly say I thought about making, was that decision to try cocaine. From that point on, I had neither power nor desire to change the course

## 4 people indicted on coke charges

By ROBERT WOMACK

The Knoxville Journal

Federal authorities may have broken a major cocaine-selling operation which allegedly used telephone beepers to set up sales of the white powder.

Five men, including a Colombian native, have been charged in federal court for possession and distribution of cocaine. About a pound of cocaine with a street value of about \$1 million also was seized.

"All these individuals and other individuals associated with them use telephone beeping devices and code numbers to contact each other and arrange sales of cocaine," Drug Enforcement Administration agent Lowell Miller said in an affidavit filed with the court.

Four men were indicted Wednesday by a grand jury on conspiracy and distribution charges while the Colombian, Juan Antonio Gordillo, was arrested for possession at a West Knoxville motel after 494 grams of cocaine and other drug paraphernalia were found during a search of his room.

The indictments followed the buy of about two ounces of cocaine by an undercover informant for the DEA for \$3,500 during several weeks.

Indicted were Henry Donald Lair, 29, 1228 Amber Meadows Drive; Jeffrey D. Bales, 28, 4822 Pine Grove Road; Stanley Jerome Voje, 38, Westbridge Apartments; and James A. Troutman, 38, of Danbridge.

Miller alleged all were involved in selling cocaine on a regular basis. Miller said the confidential informant made his first purchase of one-half ounce of cocaine at a meeting with some of the defendants at Voje's apartment. Before

*I felt that if  
God truly knew my  
wicked heart,  
my bent toward sin,  
and my wayward  
spirit, there would  
be no way He could  
accept me.*



## Rescued from the Devil's Lair

of my actions.

When had I decided to become a thief? I never decided to be a thief; I hated thieves. But I proceeded to steal from many people in many ways without any guilt or remorse about it whatsoever. When had I decided to become addicted to cocaine? When had I decided to be so addicted to cocaine that after a near-crippling overdose, I continued to use the drug. I never made that decision, but I was severely addicted. My point is this: one decision to try cocaine, against my better judgment, would set the stage for a near-death experience with the drug and a five-year prison sentence for me.

As I look back, it almost seems I was being driven by a force not my own. I don't want to give the impression that I'm a demon hunter. Far from it! I accept full responsibility for my downward spiral. I would just like to remind you that we do have a ruthless enemy. We are in the war zone, so, beloved, keep your heads!

When the DEA & FBI finally caught me and tossed me into jail, I was terrified and confused, but the real shocker is this—I felt the beginnings of a sense of relief. I looked toward prison with mixed emotions. Can you imagine that a person who had just been manhandled by law enforcement officers, had been strip searched on the side of a busy highway, and was tormented by the good cop-bad cop routine all the way to jail, could actually sense relief? It is true: sin is a baffling enemy of life.

Finally I ended up in prison. I can remember lying on my upper berth crying like a baby. I actually remember saying to myself, "How did a fine Christian lad like you wind up in a joint like this?" Thinking of myself as a fine Christian, when my body had been wracked by drugs, my mind bent by wickedness, and my whole self devoted to sin—I'm very glad I arrived on the scene during this age of grace!

Prison began the work of clearing drugs out of my system. I had begun a complete regime of spiritual, physical, and mental recovery—all in the energy of the flesh. You know that I still floundered around.

Our chaplain was an accommodating man. He began the first sermon I heard him preach with, "Isn't our God lovely? He has designed many religions so no matter if you are Muslim, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon or any of the rest, we can all get together and worship

the same God under many names!"

But the Lord sent Henry Sardina to prison to open the eyes of the blind, of which I was chief. Several things were on the agenda if you were going to be disciplined by Henry S. You needed a good KJV Bible, *Notes on the Pentateuch* by CHM, and you had to enroll in the Set Free Prison Ministry correspondence courses. No time for nonsense!

One night as I was reading the book, *Knowing God*, by Chuck Colson, this phrase popped out at me, "To know God, you must first be known by God." I began to lose hope. I felt that if God truly knew my wicked heart, my bent toward sin, and my wayward spirit, there would be no way He could accept me. In desperation, I cried out to God for mercy, and do you know what? He *did* accept me, in the Beloved. God had so much love stored up in His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we can be accepted in Him!

That is not the end of the story. I continued to do the Emmaus courses and grew by His grace. After being released from prison, I was established in a local fellowship (His grace working again through Henry Sardina who risked a parole violation to introduce me at Lake Howell Bible Chapel). I have been at the Lake Howell assembly ever since.

Now a new chapter opens as the Lord has seen fit to bring the very same ministry—Set Free Prison Ministry—that helped me while I was in prison, and has allowed us to take up the work. And by His matchless grace alone He has made me the area director. I can't help but think of the comments made about Paul in the book of Acts, "*He who once set about to destroy Christianity now preaches the very same thing.*" God has granted that the very same courses I took in prison, I'm now sending to prisoners! To Him be all the glory.

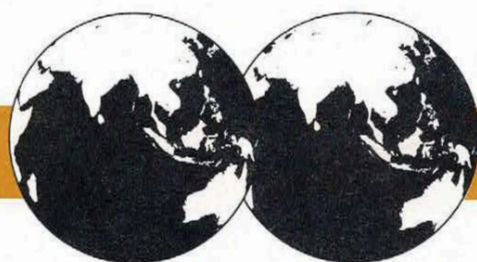
*Henry and his wife, Darla, make their home in Orlando, Florida, where Henry works with his father in a jewelry business. They are involved in the assembly at Lake Howell and Henry does some preaching as the Lord leads.*

**U**



"THE FIELD IS THE WORLD"

## WHAT'S GOING ON?



### ▷ NTM HOSTAGES UPDATE

Christians around the world were alerted to pray for and publicize the conference of South American political leaders that was held in Venezuela, November 6-9. The wives and children of the three New Tribes Missionaries that have been held hostage by Colombian guerrillas for five years attended the conference, hoping to attract the attention and support of South American leaders. It is believed that the guerrilla captors are in contact with some of these governments.

The report following the conference was encouraging. A new coalition was formed called The Friends of Columbia, involving Costa Rica, Venezuela, Mexico, and Spain.

The foreign ministers of those countries announced that their group would do all they could to act as spokesmen, learn the status of the hostages, and bring about their release. Cuba has also committed to taking a more active role in the effort.

Your continued prayers for Mark Rich, Rick Tenenoff, and Dave Mankins, along with their wives and children are appreciated.

### ▷ WEEPING TURNED TO JOY

In the October issue of *Uplook*, we reported the death of two MAF missionary pilots to Ecuador, Job Orellana and Dan Osterhus. Their Cessna 185 plane slammed into a 9,500 foot mountain between Shell and Bantos, apparently due to heavy wind and turbulence.

Funeral services were held for the two men in Shell, Ecuador with hundreds of people in attendance. At least nine people made professions of faith as a result. —*World Pulse*

### ▷ ANOTHER MISSIONARY DEATH IN ECUADOR

Two days following the burial of the MAF pilots, a third missionary to Ecuador died. Neal Eldrenkamp, serving with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, was killed by car thieves.

Eldrenkamp, 38, his wife Ruth, daughter Luanna and son Jonathan, 4, were driving along the Nueva Oriental Highway. Neal had stopped the car to videotape a brush fire. When he returned to the car, three men stopped Eldrenkamp at gunpoint and took his keys. When Eldrenkamp asked the men to release his family, the one who was sitting at the wheel shot him. Eldrenkamp was holding Jonathan at the time. No other family members were hurt. Ruth Eldrenkamp is expecting their third child in mid-November. —*Pulse*

### ▷ MOST IMPORTANT

*Life Magazine's* September 29 issue named the printing of the Gutenberg Bible in 1455 as the most important event of the last 1,000 years. They saw the event as ushering in the information revolution. It appeared at the top of a list of 100 of the most important events of the millennium (the Protestant Reformation came in third).

Martin Luther ranked third on a list of 100 of the most important people. —*World*

### ▷ WORLD INCOME

While on the whole the world is getting richer, the gaps between industrial and poor countries continues to widen, according to the United Nations. The proportion of global income produced by the richest fifth has increased from 69 percent in

1965 to 83 percent in 1990. The average per-person income of the richest fifth was 31 times that of the poorest fifth 30 years ago. In 1990, it was 60 times greater. —*Pulse*

### ▷ PEACE BOOKS IN MID-EAST

The Bible Societies in the Middle East are producing peace booklets they hope will point people to Christ. Fifty-thousand booklets will be available around Easter time in both Arabic and Hebrew, and will be distributed throughout Israel, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The material will use Scripture to help address peace and conflict resolution issues. The illustrated booklet highlights the cause of crisis—mankind's lost relationship with God, human greed, and struggle for power.

### ▷ BIBLES ON ISLAMIC TURF

A Bible bookstore will be opening in Samaria in the West Bank of Israel, making the teachings of the Lord Jesus available to anyone who wants to buy a Bible. Missionary leaders believe this opening could open people's hearts to the teaching of Christ. Officials says the shop is being supported by Yassar Arafat, who was presented with a Children's Bible for his daughter.

In Iraq, workers are requesting help to meet the growing demand for Scriptures in their country. The Bible Society in Jordan has recently been given permission to distribute 200,000 New Testaments to students in Iraq. However, the demand is greater than the supply, and Bible Society members say at this time they will only be able to print 30,000 New Testaments for this project.

—*Bible Society*



### ▷ DROUGHT WREAKS HAVOC IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The drought caused as a result of the weather phenomenon known as El Niño is wreaking havoc on the people of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. In what is normally the rainy season, it is affecting millions. Thirty-five thousand people are currently needing food assistance. Another 500,000 have no food in their gardens, and 200,000 more will join them in the next week or so. Within three weeks to a month, it's expected that a million people will be facing starvation conditions and fully dependent on outside aid.

—Mustard Seed

### ▷ TO TEACH OR TRANSLATE?

Also in Papua New Guinea, the need for teachers is causing some Bible translation projects to be put on hold. Nate Kruger is assistant Director for Personnel for Child Education for Wycliffe Bible Translators. He says they have over 500 students there and over the last couple of years they haven't been able to staff the schools as they would like. They are pulling people out of their core activities of translation and literacy, to help staff the schools so the families don't have to go home.

There are 800+ languages spoken in Papua New Guinea, which is why Bible translation work is so important. This year there are 11 New Testaments that are being dedicated. One of those has had to be put on hold because it is more than the branch can accommodate because of their schedule.

—Wycliffe

### ▷ BIBLE STORIES FOR NATIVE LANGUAGE LESSONS

A former Soviet bloc country will

soon help workers spread the gospel to nearly everyone in that country. People in one Central Asian country have almost lost their native language, and now, government officials want them to relearn it, but they have no books in their own language. They only have books in Russian. So the government has given permission to foreigners to supply Bible story books for the children, in their native language.

Workers also plan to use television to reach the people. That's because the government wants 50 percent of the programs to be in their own native tongue. The workers there have found they can buy the rights to the New Testament on video, and have it translated into the native language. The local government will broadcast this, free of charge, on national TV, to every home in the country. The programs are expected to start within the next few years. —Mission Network News

### ▷ GAY QUOTAS IN DC

Having pledged to name five homosexuals to top White House posts, President Clinton chose as his first appointee an ex-nun and lesbian activist, Virginia M. Appuzzo, 56. She will take over White House operations, the job once held by Clinton friend, David Watkins. With a long record of involvement in Democratic politics and AIDS causes, she becomes the highest-level open homosexual in a US administration. She was appointed an associate deputy secretary of labor in 1996. —World

### ▷ THE CHURCH AT WORK

If you wonder what kind of impact Christians are making at home and around the world, the November

17 issue of *Christianity Today* introduced one hundred ministries that they believe are making a significant difference in the lives of people. Here are a few that were listed:

- The *Anastasis*, one of three vessels operated by **Mercy Ships**, docked in Togo and Madagascar last year. Together doctors treated more than 10,000 people on land and performed 898 surgeries on board, including 585 eye operations, many of which gave sight to children who were blind since birth.

- **Gideons International** distributed 38 million Bibles in 70 languages in 158 countries last year.

- **Deaf Missions** is using video format to translate the Bible into American Sign Language. The translation, which is being done by deaf people, will run 200 hours and is 25 percent complete.

- Through **Compassion International**, more than 240,000 needy children in 20 Third World countries are being sponsored. The program allows them to grow up healthy, well-educated, and "aware of Jesus."

- **Pacific Garden Mission** in Chicago is 120 years old. It recently opened a new dormitory to house 130 homeless women and children per night. It also provides beds for 420 men each night, serves 2,300 meals a day, and enrolls 185 students in its Bible institute/rehabilitation program.

- **Campus Crusade for Christ** estimates that more than 71 million viewers worldwide saw the Jesus film last year from television broadcasts alone. The film has been translated into 410 languages. —CT

**U**



## *A Call to Faithfulness*

CHET PLIMPTON

*It has been said,  
"A little thing is a little thing,  
but faithfulness in a little thing  
is a big thing."*

**S**teadfast, loyal, conscientious, true, committed. These are only a few words which help us to define faithfulness. Faithfulness produces both blessing and suffering. We all like blessing but tend to avoid suffering. Yet we cannot have one without the other. Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful man shall abound with blessings..."

A good example of this is seen in the life of Abraham who was blessed by God and was in turn made a blessing to the world. Nehemiah 9:8 says of him that "his heart was found faithful before God." We must also remember that Abraham endured considerable suffering and self-sacrifice.

Faithfulness can be costly for us, as in the case of Antipas in the church of Pergamos, whom God called "my faithful martyr" (Rev. 2:13). However, can any suffering as a result of faithfulness be compared to the anticipated joy of hearing your Lord say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant..." (Mt. 25:21)? Take just a few minutes to consider the following five questions, and apply the Word of God to your own life.

### WHAT DOES GOD REALLY EXPECT OF US?

*"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12).*

God expects us to be faithful according to what we have to give. He does not expect us to give more than we have, even though what we have to give doesn't seem like very much. Remember the 5,000 men Jesus fed with only five loaves and two small fishes? Philip spoke for many of us when he said, "...but what are they among so many?" (Jn. 6:9). There is so much to do and we have so little to give! What good will it do for us to even do the little we can do? What good will it do for us to be faithful? The Scripture even emphasizes that the two fish were "small," yet as Christ broke them into pieces, every hungry mouth was satisfied.

Don't ask me how He did it—it was a miracle!

If only we are willing, as the verse says, God will accept what we have, and in His hands it will be multiplied. When we foolishly look around and see others who seemingly have much more to offer by way of talents and abilities, we begin to compare what little we have with the abundance they have, and discouragement soon sets in. Some may have two small fishes to place in His hands and others may have two full baskets to place at His feet, but neither is sufficient to feed the crowd without His touch.

Remember, He is the One who accepted the two mites of the poor widow and pronounced to His disciples the amazing news that what she had given far surpassed the wealth tossed into the treasury by the rich, whose pockets still bulged with their riches as they walked away from the temple (Mk. 12:41-44). She wasn't rich, but she was faithful. She didn't give much, but she gave all that she had.

### HOW DO WE REGARD OURSELVES?

*"Let a man so account of us (regard us) as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1-2).*

Do we regard ourselves as missionaries, teachers, administrators, or as having certain skills or abilities? It may be fine for us to recognize our own job description, but more than anything else, we ought to regard ourselves as servants of Christ, as those whose chief ambition is faithfulness to Him.

Faithfulness is really a motive of the heart. It is what motivates a man to do what he should, when he should, regardless of what people think of him. Actually, it matters very little what others think of you and me. Paul said, "...with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment" (v. 3). Just because others think we are doing a great job does not necessarily mean we are being faithful to our stewardship. What really matters is what God thinks. To please Him, it is absolutely necessary that we are faithful.

There are many learned skills that are truly important in the work. Some are skilled in highly technical areas, helping the work progress more rapidly. Others are gifted in teaching, helping, or giving, to name



just a few gifts given by the Lord to His Church.

We have certainly become more sophisticated in our approach to Christian service. What Moses could have done with a computer to keep accurate tabulations of the thousands of people God had entrusted to Him! Can you think of Paul and Silas travelling on their missionary journeys with our comfortable transportation? Thank God for every advancement to speed the spread of God's Word. However, let us remind ourselves constantly that none of these excellent advancements can replace the Word, the Spirit, or the crucial need we have to be faithful, because only through faithfulness can God use our lives to accomplish His will.

### IS OUR CONDUCT FREE OF CORRUPTION & NEGLIGENCE?

*"Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but*

*they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Dan. 6:4). One translation says, "They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent" (NIV).*

Historically, many people who serve in governmental affairs—as Daniel did—fall prey to corruption and negligence. Have you noticed how quickly political parties expose any failure in the lives and conduct of those in opposition? We have also seen how quickly and gladly men expose the corruption that sadly is all too prevalent today in the lives of those in Christian leadership. Daniel's life is a gust of fresh air to those of us gasping for breath in the smog and pollution of unfaithfulness all around us.

How glad these wicked men would have been to find some tarnish in Daniel's character, some proof of his taking advantage of his position, some record of his directing government funds to his own pocket, some

foolish, morally compromising behavior. Yet, as they scrutinized his life, they came up empty! Would our lives bear such scrutiny? Paul wrote to Titus, "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God" (1:7).

Do you long to have a life that is free of corruption and not evidencing negligence? There is no "shortcut" to realizing this. We must choose to be faithful one moment at a time to conduct ourselves as good stewards. If we have failed, God's grace is there for us. The father ran to embrace his prodigal son, even though his son had wasted all his inheritance in blatant unfaithfulness. Yet resources, opportunities, years are wasted.

Corruption and negligence enter our lives seemingly by the small choices we begin to make and then continue to make. Entertaining



- *The night Daniel met four kings: the king of beasts, the king of Terrors, the king of Persia, and the King of kings.*



## A Call to Faithfulness

thoughts we should not, putting off doing things that we should do, ceasing to read and meditate daily on God's Word; generally "letting things slip," spiritually.

### DO WE HAVE THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE?

*"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).*

"Putting the cart before the horse" basically means that we have things mixed up and are trying to accomplish something the wrong way. A horse is meant to pull the cart; the cart is not capable of pulling the horse. It makes no more sense if one is given responsibility before being a faithful person. Some mistakenly feel that, as their responsibility becomes greater, they will naturally respond with greater faithfulness; however, the cart of responsibility is now placed before the horse of faithfulness. The unfaithful person scoffs at little things to do as though they are too insignificant to be too concerned about. He deceives himself into thinking, "If only I were given something important to do, I could show people how faithful I am! Poor me, I can't be faithful because I don't have anything really big to do!"

A faithful person does not stumble over what it is he has to do by trying to evaluate its importance. He is instead taken up with who he has to please, and so nothing is too great or too small.

*"No service in itself is small  
Nor great though earth it fill;  
But that is small which seeks its own,  
And great, that seeks God's will."*

We must be convinced that faithfulness is not determined by the task at hand. Faithfulness is an attitude of heart that each of us can choose for ourselves and then apply to each new day and its challenges.

What do you have to do just now? Is there a teaching lesson to prepare or some grass to cut? Perhaps you were just on your way to see some Christian to encour-

age him? On the other hand, maybe the drainpipe is clogged up and you need to clean it out. Some tasks throb with excitement, while others are quite mundane.

As we learn to choose faithfulness, we understand how to apply ourselves to everything we do with all of our hearts. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

### ARE WE REPRODUCING FAITHFULNESS?

*"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Ps. 12:1).*

Science records for us that in past generations many creatures have become extinct because of adverse conditions and failure to reproduce their own kind. Many creatures are even now considered endangered species. That means they are on their way out unless their fate can somehow be reversed by careful management.

What about faithful men and women in the service of Christ? Are they an endangered specie? Should we be concerned, as the writer of this Psalm seemed to be? It appears that throughout past generations, parents have not taught children the importance of faithful attitudes and behavior to the degree that their forefathers taught them. We have

lost much of our concept of being conscientious and committed.

Psalm 12:1 seems definitely a prayer we should raise to God. What is the use of all the training we receive, the skills we learn, or the tools we acquire if we fail to learn faithfulness? Do we really think we can get the job done without it, or that we can please Him without it? May God give us a longing to learn faithfulness and the ability to reproduce it in others.

*Chet and his wife, Anita, serve the Lord with New Tribes Missions in Sanford, FL. They fellowship at the Hiawassa Assembly in Orlando.*





PATIENCE



**O God, how wide Thy glory shines! How high Thy wonders rise!  
Known through the earth by thousand signs, by thousands through the skies.  
Those mighty orbs proclaim Thy power; their motions speak Thy skill;  
And on the wings of ev'ry hour we read Thy patience still.**

The best testimony that Stephen bore was his last—not when he was preaching and working miracles, but when he pleaded for his persecutors; for then he most resembled the Lord Jesus in patience, forgiveness, and love.

—ANONYMOUS

**Let us lay aside every weight,  
and the sin which doth so easily  
beset us, and let us run with  
patience the race that is set be-  
fore us, looking unto Jesus.**

—Hebrews 12:1-2

AN EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE

*O ye, whose hearts in secret bleed  
O'er transient hope, like morning dew,  
O'er friendship faithless in your need,  
Or love to all its vows untrue,  
Who shrink from persecution's rod,  
Or slander's fang, or treachery's tone,  
Look meekly to the Son of God,  
And in His griefs forget your own.*

*Forsaken are ye? So was He;  
Reviled? Yet check the vengeful word;  
Rejected? Should the servant be  
Exalted o'er his suffering Lord?  
Nor deem that heaven's  
omniscient eye  
Is e'er regardless of your lot:  
Deluded man from God may fly,  
But when was man by God forgot?*

—Mrs. L. H. Sigourney

**O patient, spotless One!  
Our hearts in meekness train,  
To bear Thy yoke,  
And learn of Thee,  
That we may rest obtain.**

Lord Jesus, come!  
The Man of sorrows once,  
The Man of patience waiting now;  
The Man of joy, forever, Thou,  
Come, Saviour, come!

**But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

2 Timothy 6:11-12

**Knowing this, that the trying of  
your faith worketh patience. But  
let patience have her perfect work,  
that ye may be perfect...wanting  
nothing.**

—James 1:3-4

He may cause many to learn things they might not be disposed to, but He will abundantly bless if they wait upon Him and keep the Word of His patience.

—J. N. Darby

**Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting,  
With exactness grinds He all.**

*We ask a petition for a week, a month, a year; then we tire for want of patient continuance, forgetting that delays are not denials, but tests to faith and patience. Can we hold on to God till He shall answer? Though the answer tarry a long while, yet it shall come when patience has done her perfect work.*

—FRANKLIN FERGUSON

**Whate'er Thou deniest,  
O give us Thy grace,  
Thy Spirit's blest witness,  
The smiles of Thy face;  
And grant us still patience  
To wait at Thy throne,  
And find, never ceasing,  
The foretaste of Home.**

—FRIEDRICH VON LOGAU





## Perilous Times

W. ROSS RAINEY

*Who would deny that these are perilous times? The dangers to believers in the West are different from many lands of persecution, but the devil's wiles are dangerous and debilitating just the same. Are these the last days?*

Many years ago I was invited to attend a Rotary luncheon in Plymouth, Michigan. Three men spoke briefly, one of whom I had the joy of meeting personally—namely, the late Mr. Stanley S. Kresge, a son of the well-known S. S. Kresge who founded the chain of stores bearing his name. At the luncheon the question was asked, “Is the world getting better?” Of the more than 100 men present, only three or four—which included myself—indicated “no” by our raised hands. Mr. Kresge, a truly born again man, raised his hand with the majority who felt that the world is getting better.

The Bible, however, clearly reveals that the world is not getting better, 2 Timothy 3 and other Scripture passages categorically substantiating the worsening of world conditions (see Mt. 24:1-28; 1 Tim. 4:1).

“This know also,” wrote the Apostle Paul, “that in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1). To what does the expression “the last days” refer? Some say it refers to the period of time between Christ’s first and second coming, while others relate it to that period of time more immediately preceding Christ’s return. The latter is the meaning Paul most likely intended, and which agrees with Peter’s words in 2 Peter 3:3, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.”

Paul tells us that as the “times” or seasons draw to a close, they will become “perilous,” this word meaning *hard to deal with, difficult, savage*. It is the same word in the Greek text used to describe the two demoniacs of Matthew 8:28, where the King James Version renders it “fierce,” the passage suggesting that the violence of the end times will be energized by demons.

Increasing apostasy will mark “the last days,” a period in which today there is every evidence that we are already living, and which will lead to the manifestation of the apostasy and the Man of Sin following the Rapture of the church (see 2 Thess. 2:1-4). It is noteworthy

that what is described as a future peril was even in Paul’s day a fact (see 2 Tim. 3:5, 6, 8), the features of the end having been visible from the beginning.

Let’s look now at the first of three main indicators about the increasing apostasy of “the last days,” which the Apostle Paul has set forth in great detail.

### THE DESCRIPTION OF THE APOSTATES

*“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”* (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Regarding these verses, H. A. Ironside has said:

But it may be here objected: ‘When have men in general been other than as here depicted? Is not this but a repetition of what Paul has already said in describing the heathen world in his day? (Rom. 1:29-32). In what special sense are they any more characteristic now than then?’ To these very natural queries I reply that such things, indeed, ever described the heathen; but in 2 Timothy 3 the Holy Spirit is describing conditions in the professing church in the last days! It is not the openly wicked and godless who are being depicted here. It is those who have a form of godliness, while denying its power. This is what makes the passage so intensely solemn and gives it such tremendous weight in the present day.<sup>1</sup>

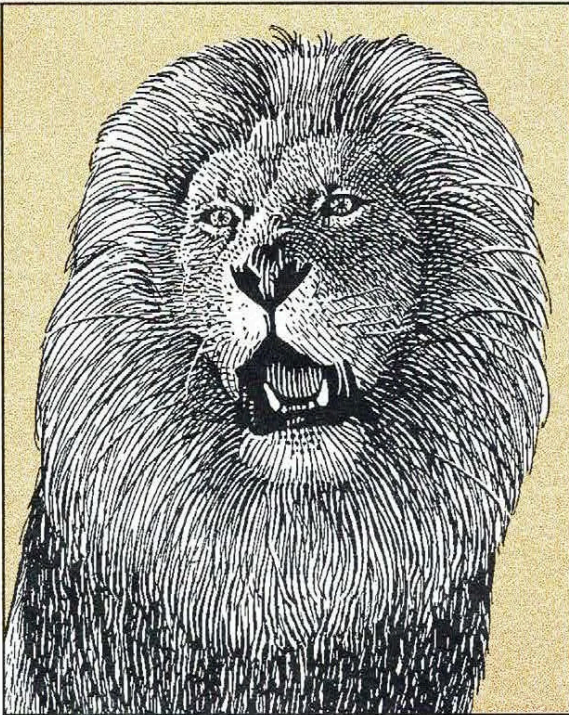
Many Bible students and scholars, such as Warren W. Wiersbe, list 18 characteristics of the end times, while W. Graham Scroggie lists 20, H. A. Ironside 21, and H. L. Wilmington 22. The difference lies in whether or not the details of verses 6 and 7 are included.

One thing is certain, the clear command to God’s people is, “from such turn away” (v. 5), or as J. B. Phillips translates it, “You must keep clear of people like this.”

### THE DECEPTION OF THE APOSTATES

*“For of this sort are they which creep into houses,*





and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:6-7).

Through Satanic subtlety, false teachers representing various cults and isms of today "worm their way into homes" (v. 6, NIV) to blind and bind their unwary prey. As to their adherents, "silly women" refers to unstable women, their consciences burdened down with the guilt of sins. Such persons are prime targets for the representatives of today's multiplied cults and religions who go from door-to-door peddling their religious rot (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons). Such women have a craving lust for anything new, there being an emphasis here on sexual lust. They are always searching for some new reality, trying this avenue and that, but they are never satisfied nor do they ever arrive at the truth.

False teachers take advantage of such cravings and problems, promising quick and easy solutions, all with a view to controlling people's lives and money.

As Wiersbe has commented:

The fact that Paul described 'silly women' does not suggest that all women are like this, or that men are not vulnerable to the wiles of false teachers. In Paul's day, women were especially susceptible to this kind of experience since they had a low status in society. Whether they are men or women, people who fall for this false religious system have the same characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE DOOM OF THE APOSTATES

"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (2 Tim. 3:8-9).

Here, the magicians of Exodus are named, Jannes and Jambres, meaning "seduce" and "rebel," respectively. Modern day followers also use magic (see Acts 19:19). Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses by imitating what he did. Satan is a great imitator or counterfeiter. As in Moses' day, so today, false teachers also oppose God's truth. They are further described as "men of depraved minds" (NIV) and "reprobate concerning the faith," the Greek word for "reprobate" meaning *rejected after testing*.

As the Apostle Paul predicted, such will advance only so far, and then God's judgment will fall. Then, just as Jannes and Jambres were exposed for what they were, so shall these modern-day false teachers be exposed for what they are—counterfeits and fools, veritable dupes of the devil.

Why is it that so many people in the world today are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"? (v. 7). Among the causes are:

1. They have rejected Him who is *the Truth*—the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6).
2. They love their sin (Jn. 3:19-21).
3. They have been blinded by human pride and the vain reasonings and speculations of human philosophy (Col. 2:8).

What about you? Have you entered into a knowledge of the truth by faith in Him who personifies all truth—the Lord Jesus Christ?

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 H. A. Ironside, *Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, pp. 212-213.
- 2 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Faithful*, p. 155.
- 3 G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 10.

Ross and his wife Lillian live in Plymouth, MI. A frequent contributor to Christian publications, Ross has an extensive itinerant teaching ministry.





# The Joys of Hospitality

BRIAN GUNNING

**H**ospitality: the act, practice, or quality of being hospitable; friendly and solicitous entertainment of guests. So says *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

Hospitality: PHILOXENIA, love of strangers (philos, loving, xenos, a stranger), is used in Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2, lit., be not forgetful of hospitality, writes W. E. Vine in *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

We are exhorted positively to be given to hospitality (Rom. 12:13), and negatively to not forget to entertain strangers (Heb. 13:2).

Get a taste for entertaining and you will look for opportunities to be given to hospitality. Whether you entertain regularly or have never thought you could do it, here are seven observations about hospitality.

1. *Hospitality meets a practical need.* In assembly life we have visitors. It might be a traveling preacher or missionary. It could be believers visiting in the area or a college student away from home. Opening your home to them meets a practical need in providing a meal and perhaps a place to stay during their visit.

2. *Hospitality provides rest and comfort.* Visiting speakers at your assembly, new believers needing exposure to a Christian home, or a young student facing a first away-from-home experience at an ungodly university can find spiritual rest and strength in your home. It is not culinary skill, but the spiritual environment that refreshes. Uplifting conversation and fellowship, good, clean humor and a listening ear all contribute to a refreshing time for all believers.

3. *Hospitality is an opportunity to develop lifelong friendships.* You cannot beat having a cup of coffee or a meal with someone as a means of getting to know one another. Many lifelong Christian friendships began through hospitality.

4. *Hospitality will demand sacrifice.* It is not always convenient to entertain. A meal has to be planned and prepared. Other activities may have to be put aside. You may even have to give up your own bed. Hospitality touches our hearts. It tests us as to what kind of servants we really are. You see it is not the condition of the carpet that

*Hospitality isn't about Martha Stewart living. But it is about living like another Martha. You know, the one in Bethany.*



determines hospitality, but the condition of the heart. However, it is a sacrifice well rewarded. I do not know a single Christian given to hospitality who regrets it. The inconvenience is minor. The blessing is major.

5. *Hospitality influences our children for good.* It is good to open your home when you are young. Young couples should determine to use their home for the Lord. This is not only good for you and the assembly; it is good for your children, too. They get to see other Christians in a slightly different light. Preachers and missionaries who may appear almost superhuman on the platform, turn into warm and wonderful friends in the home. Don't worry about children's inappropriate remarks or outbursts of the old nature. Most traveling workers have seen it all, usually beginning in their own homes. It will influence your children for good when they see you serving the Lord's people.

6. *Hospitality encourages others in this important Christian duty.* When entertaining visitors to your assembly, invite others from your assembly as well. Encourage them to entertain by example. Some folks are hesitant to step into this ministry, but once they see how it is done, they will have confidence to do it themselves. It will shock your elders when the saints line up to do the entertaining.

7. *Hospitality towards others is considered a ministry towards the Lord Himself.* "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Mt. 25:40). I would have liked to have been in that home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. It was in that home the Lord Himself was a guest, right up to the time of the cross. We can only imagine what went on there. It would have been days of heaven on earth. But our homes can be like that now. When we serve His people, we serve Him. And His blessing will remain.

Hospitality. What about you? Are you given to it, or is it done grudgingly? Do you forget, or is it foremost in your mind? The blessings of hospitality are many, but I'm not sure who gets the bigger blessing, the host or the guest.

U



## The God of Patience

L. W. G. ALEXANDER

*The mills of God grind slowly,  
But they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands watching,  
With exactness grinds He all.*

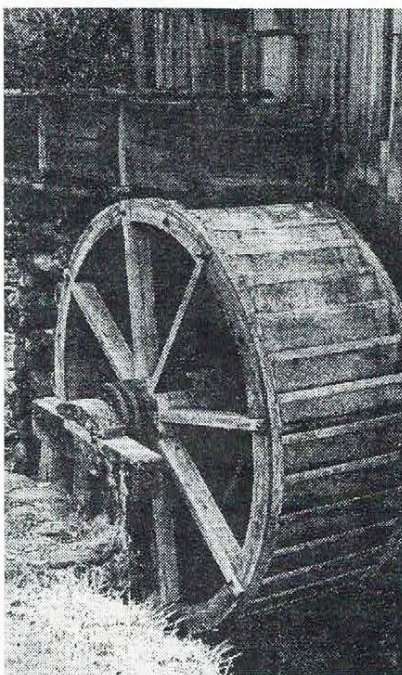
*We call them happy who endure.  
Yet how adept we are at avoiding such a need  
to endure in our own lives.  
But the wonderful arrangement is this: The God  
who goes on enduring will teach us how to  
endure—and in the process will  
reveal Himself to us.*

**T**he writer of these words had learned a little of the God of Patience. It is no cause for wonder that perfect patience should be combined with almighty power, that the Almighty God should be the God of Patience. It is this very fact that He is possessed of almighty power which enables Him to exercise a patience with sinners that causes His redeemed to marvel and to adore His grace. Alas! it often leads His enemies to revel more wantonly in sin and emboldens them in more daring defiance of the God of heaven.

Yet God is working all things for His own glory, and the issue is so certain that He can in patience await the moment when His glory will be eternally secured and His wisdom clearly vindicated. The working out of His purposes may occupy ages, His counsels may appear again and again to be hopelessly thwarted, but the God who spoke light out of darkness, who modeled a world that He could pronounce to be very good out of chaos, is patiently working toward the consummation of His purposes. Then a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness shall dwell, and in which He will be all in all, will eternally display His glory. Then His power and the wisdom of His patience will be revealed to a worshipping creation.

### THE FRUIT OF HIS PATIENCE

In few things do men reflect less the character of God than in the matter of patience. Christians in particular need to learn from the God of Patience. Endurance is that in which many most signally fail. They start out on the pathway of faith and make progress for a time, but when trials or sufferings abound they often fail to endure and so forsake God's pathway.



Every believer is saved from the wrath to come, but only such as "endure to the end" can know the gain of a saved life. Patience therefore is a vital matter for Christians. In eternity alone can the full measure of its fruit be reaped; in eternity alone can they who have failed in endurance learn the magnitude of their loss.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is from first to last an earnest exhortation to endurance. In the days of the writer of that letter many were going back. In former days, after they were enlightened, they endured a great conflict of sufferings, they became a gazing-stock, and took joyfully the spoiling of their possessions. But the burden was heavy, and the time seemed long, and many had given up; others were discouraged and were ready to go back. What says the Spirit to such?

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience...For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him (Heb. 10:35-38). Here then is exhortation to patience blended with solemn warning to all who would shrink back. Here also is clearly indicated that by which alone patience can be sustained—faith, faith in God!

Faith brings the soul into touch with God. Faith enables the Christian to lay hold of the sustaining grace



## The God of Patience

of the God of Patience. Thus by getting to know the God of Patience, the Christian becomes patient. He reflects the character of the God whom he adores.

### AN EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE

It is written that Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. So far as appearances went, Moses and the people whom he led courted disaster at every turn. How could they be delivered from Pharaoh's grasp? How could they find a pathway through the sea? How could they subsist in the wilderness? How could they overcome the inhabitants of the land? Man would say impossible; abandon the idea; remain where you are. But by faith Moses "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). He saw One whom others did not see. And because his faith was in God, he endured for forty years under the leading of the God of Patience.

### THE PATH OF PATIENCE TODAY

Is the path in which God leads His people today as difficult as Israel's of old? Are the dangers as formidable as the sea and the desert and the giants? Shall we therefore say that God's path is impossible? Shall we remain in bondage when He calls to liberty? Or having heard His call and entered the path, shall we shrink back when the sea roars and the desert burns and the giants threaten? Where, then, would be our patience, where our faith, where our God?

Let the God of Patience be known, let His presence be realized, let His power be felt, and all questions as to the doing of His will are thereby answered. Our challenge then becomes, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). We endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

At times God permits tribulation to overtake His people in order to work patience in them. These trials are a proving of our faith. Tribulation works patience. It is therefore often God's blessing conforming us to the image of the God of Patience.

Patience also works probation—a putting to the test. Thus in the trial God puts us to the test, He tries us to see what is in our hearts, whether we will keep His commandments or no. If we endure unto chastening—if we regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, if we faint not when we are reproved of Him—then

through such exercise we become partakers of His holiness, and are enabled to better reflect the character of the God of Patience.

### THE STIMULUS TO PATIENCE

In the Hebrew epistle the Lord's coming is presented as a stimulus to patience. The burden will require to be borne only a very little while longer. He is coming; therefore endure! In the epistle by James the same blessed hope is seen to be the only limit to patience. Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

Here also the God of Patience, the Husbandman, is presented as waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, being long patient over it until it receive the early and latter rain. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. 5:8).

### INSTANCES OF INDIVIDUAL PATIENCE

The Scriptures abound with instances of individual endurance. We may well take for an example of suffering and of endurance the prophets who spoke in the Name of the Lord. What did many of them not suffer? "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5:11).

In the Lord Jesus we behold the perfect pattern of endurance. Throughout His life He constantly endured the arguing of sinners. Never did He faint beneath the weight of His burden. He set His face steadfastly toward the fulfilling of the Father's will and in spite of all around Him, though not indifferent to it, He pressed on to that goal. Darker and darker His path became, fewer and fewer was the number of His followers, fiercer and fiercer became the world's hate, until with lawless hands they nailed Him to the tree. Still He endured—He endured the cross, despising shame. What glory to God will result from that endurance, eternity alone can tell.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).

U



## Future Events Cast Shadows

R. E. HARLOW

**C**onceivably in the year 1998 God will press the button to start in motion a series of events according to His plan. For the attentive Christian the anticipation of these prophecies generates massive repercussions on his demeanor.

### THE RAPTURE

Before the greatest tribulation the earth has ever experienced, the Lord will snatch away His people to be with Himself. The Rapture is undated on earth, but soon. We say soon being cognizant of global trends today. These are preliminary to the mighty movements of the near future as disclosed in Scripture. Consider: the European Union, partial at present, but progressing; the amalgamation of religious groups: Rome and main line Protestants; the platitude that Hinduism and Islam have some good features, etc.; dictators in many smaller nations; the global sweep of diseases and epidemics. You can say that these ills have been the experience of mankind through history. The difference is that these are all conspicuous today, as well as other factors prophesied in the Bible.

We should be ready for the Lord's return. Walk with Him daily, hourly, talk with Him as your best Friend, and much more, whom you will soon see physically, you in your new body. It is exciting!



*We don't need fortune tellers, economic prognosticators, or even prophets to tell us what lies ahead for the believers. We have a sure light shining on events that cast their shadows across our paths.*

### THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Some will receive a crown, and have the ecstasy of laying it at His feet. Those who have built with gold, silver, and precious stones will rejoice to see that these materials were not only fireproof, but bring an eternal reward.

Some serve faithfully and well. They will never, through infinity, forget the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," nor the look of approbation on the King's face as He says them. He cannot lie. He never did on earth; no one can in heaven. The Lord will speak these words of commendation only to those individuals who have so served Him. There are no consolation prizes at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Judgment Seat (*bema*) is sometimes called the Award Throne. But the word is never used in the New Testament except for judgment: Pilate, Herod, Gallio, Festus, Caesar. These rulers did not give honors to athletes. The Judgment Seat of Christ will be a time of joy and sorrow, as some see a happy, relaxed life go up in a cloud of smoke. This will bring no joy to the One on the throne either, but giving rewards, crowns, or words of commendation will bring Him great satisfaction.

The present influence of this proven truth is obvious and effectual. We still have remaining a minuscule amount of time, a nanosecond, to serve Him during His rejection, compared to a mega-million of aeons to enjoy the fruits.

### THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

This will be a time of sharing joy, the Bridegroom with the Bride. Both speak of their joy in the other, in the Song of Solomon. So now, in communion with Him, we share His joy. For example, you hear of souls being saved. Recollect the joy of the Shepherd who found one sheep. He called many in to rejoice with him. Or the Father who said, "It is fitting that we should rejoice and feast. My son was dead but is now



alive again; he was lost but now he is found."

The woman also rejoiced when she found her lost piece of silver, and shared her joy. The Holy Spirit now intercedes for us with unutterable groanings. This is a root used only of sorrow, Acts 7:34; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:17. When did you last weep over worldly trends in the assembly or in yourself?

If the Lord gave us two knowledge tests, one on sports or politics, the other on Bible knowledge, would some get an A grade on the first and F on the second?

A young woman was engaged to be married. She learned that her fiance was an avid stamp collector. It is said that she had always thought this hobby rather tedious. She started to learn all she could about what she knew her husband found to be valuable. Question: What are the interests of the Lord of glory, who will share His throne with us forever? This outlook might change our lifestyle in the right direction.

Learning God's Word is the best means of preparing to be with Christ till "death separates us," and neither He nor we can die again. For His part He is washing us by the Word, that He may present us to Himself glorious, spotless, wrinkle-free, holy, and without blemish.

### THE MILLENNIUM

Only then can we expect good government on a worldwide basis. The same applies to the world economy. It may not be popular today, but the Holy Scripture tells us to obey the powers that be, not devote our one and only precious lifetime seeking for the perfect government. Our Lord is making people better by giving them the new life and the Holy Spirit. Our zeal should be focussed on giving them the gospel, backed by a testimony of personal life.

We should pray for all in authority. God will have all men come to Himself. This is His deep desire, not His supreme fiat. Christ-rejectors would never be happy in the Father's home, where the Son is supreme.

We and He will be happier if we prepare properly for His coming.

*Ed and Gertrud Harlow have served the Lord worldwide for many years. They are presently active in Everyday Publications, providing simple English commentaries for Third World countries, as well as books in other languages.*

**U**

# A WONDERFUL DAY

Glorious day when we stand in His presence,  
All of our heartaches and sorrows are past,  
No more burdens too heavy to carry—  
We shall see Jesus at last!

Wonderful day when we shall be like Him,  
Features were marred by sin here below;  
Now they are radiant, beautiful, glorious!  
Cleansed by His Blood, made whiter than snow.

Marvelous day all suffering ended,  
Glorious bodies now, like to His own;  
We will be kings and priests in God's Kingdom,  
With glory and honor around the great throne.

Radiant day—the day of His crowning—  
The thought of this day is immeasurably sweet;  
Then we will stand transformed in His likeness,  
Casting our trophies and crowns at His feet.

Victorious day—the day of the Rapture,  
The Lamb who was slain is now become King!  
The Bride of the Lamb, in garments all glorious,  
Is singing sweet songs the Bride only can sing.

Triumphant day—great day of His power!  
All the kingdoms of earth will crumble and fall;  
The saints of all ages in garments of splendor  
Are crowning Him King to rule over all!

—A. H. DIXON



## The Timing of His Return

LARRY PRICE

**T**he New Testament presents the coming of the Lord Jesus as the hope, comfort, and encouragement of the Christian. Our hope does not rest in reforming the world, in politics, science, medical advances, technology, or education. We are waiting: "for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess 1:10). "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

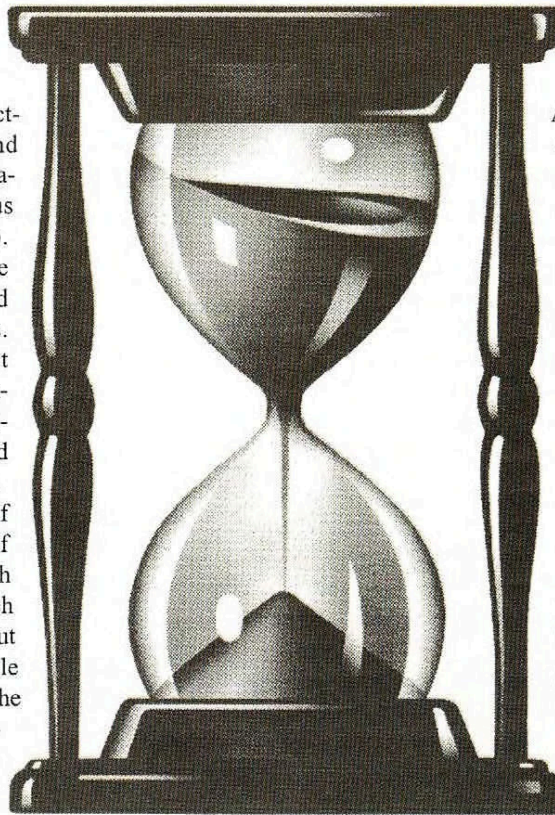
The Church, consisting of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this age, is instructed from the Bible to watch and wait for His return. The expectation of His return encourages us to live holy lives (1 Jn. 3:2-3). This hope, properly held in the heart, spurs us on to labor and witness for our Lord (1 Thess. 5:6-7). The knowledge of that great reunion is a source of comfort as we, in this life, are separated from those who have died "in the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

While the Saviour Himself emphatically declared, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mk. 13:32), the Bible does not leave us in doubt as to the general timing of the Lord's return.

The next event to occur on God's timetable is the Rapture of the Church (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The Lord Jesus will return to the air and "catch up" from the earth living believers whose bodies will be transformed and equipped to live in heaven. Those believers who have died in the Lord will at that time be raised and meet the Lord in the air with the living saints. When will this great event take place?

*The Lord's return is premillennial.* There are three major views held concerning the return of the Lord in relation to the establishing of His kingdom. All three use the word "millennial," the Latin for 1,000:

*They themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven...who delivers us from the wrath to come.*



1) *Amillennial.* This view teaches that there is no literal kingdom, no future for Israel. A general judgment will occur after the Lord's return. It relies heavily on the "spiritualizing" method of interpretation.

2) *Postmillennial.* The Lord comes after the kingdom is brought in. The millennium is ushered in by the preaching of the gospel (or by social/political reform). This view has been revived today under the title of "Christian Reconstructionism."

3) *Premillennial.* The Lord comes before the 1,000-year reign. It implies belief in a literal kingdom reign on earth by the Lord Jesus. He comes in power and glory to set up His kingdom. There is a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ (see Rev. 20:1-7). The promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled.

Why such a divergence of views? A person's approach to interpreting the Bible will determine their eschatology, that is, their doctrine of last things. The premillennial view is arrived at by the application of a consistent literal interpretation of Scripture (see Dan. 2:35, 45; Isaiah 7:14; 11:6-8; Lk. 1:32-33). While most who believe in the Bible as God's Word interpret the Bible literally, many abandon this approach when interpreting the prophetic portions of God's Word.

For example, when Zechariah 14:4 states that His



## The Timing of His Return

feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, the premillennialist interprets that to mean that His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives. When Luke 1:31-32 says, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest," all would agree that this was literally fulfilled at the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the interpretive roads part is on the remaining portion of the verse which states, "...and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:31-33).

One either has to spiritualize this part, ascribing to it some other meaning than what it says, or else consistently, literally interpret the entire verse.

*The Lord's return is also pretribulational.* One question which faces students of Bible prophecy: whether or not the Church will go through any or part of the time of tribulation that the Bible declares is yet to come. Though volumes have been written on this subject, here are four reasons from the Bible that show that the Church will not go through the Tribulation.

### THE NATURE OF THE TRIBULATION

The Tribulation is a period designed specifically for

the nation of Israel. This is not to say that it will not affect Gentile nations or that they will not be involved. But note in the following verses the references to "Jacob," "Israel," "thy people," referring to the Jews.

"These are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah...Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it...Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid" (Jer 30:4, 7, 10). (See also Dan. 9:24-27; Mt. 24:15-24). The Tribulation is not a period of time that involves the Church.

### THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

a) *A Mystery:* The Church which is His body did not exist in the Old Testament. It could not come into existence until the death of Christ, His resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit of God to form the Church. Though the Church was in the eternal plan of God, it was not revealed and could not be known until the Lord chose to make it known by divine revelation as the following verses show:

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the

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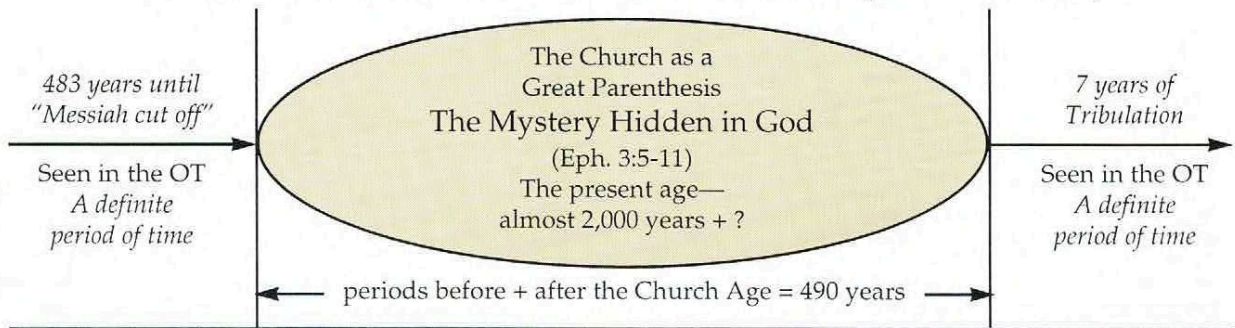
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## DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF THE 490 YEARS (DAN. 9:24-27)



sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph 3:5, 6, 9).

Because the Church is a New Testament entity not seen by the prophets of the Old Testament, the Church is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy. *The Tribulation* is the subject of Old Testament prophecy.

b) A "Parenthesis": This age has been likened to a "great parenthesis" (see chart above). The age in which we are living is a period of time not seen in the Old Testament. The parenthesis began with the birthday of the Church at Pentecost. Something must close this parenthesis. That event will be the Rapture. The Church Age will end and God's dealings with His Old Testament people will resume.

As the diagram seeks to illustrate, the Tribulation is a definite period of time mentioned in the Old Testament. The Church is not mentioned in that period of time. The age in which we are living is an indefinite period. Something must close the great parenthesis so that God's prophetic time clock will once again begin to tick. Since the primary activity of God in this age is the calling out of the Church, and since this age began by the formation of the Church, it seems reasonable to conclude that the event ending this period of God's dealings will be the removal of the Church.

c) *The Absence of the Church in the Tribulation Passages of the Book of Revelation*: The Church is not

mentioned in the book of Revelation from 4:1 until chapter 19. Although there are "saints" seen, these are not to be confused with the Church.

d) *The Stated Teaching of the New Testament*: Compare Revelation 3:10 with 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and Revelation 6:17. While space will not permit at this point a complete exegesis of these passages, a simple reading of these verses reveals that the Church has not been appointed to experience that time of tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 express the hope and confidence of the Church: "...and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

*The Lord's return is imminent*—"any moment": This term expresses the fact that there are no intervening signs which we are to look for, no great event to be fulfilled before the Lord's return at the Rapture. This is not true concerning the Revelation of the Lord in power (see Mt. 24). The doctrine of His imminent return stresses the fact that He may come at any moment, that the time of His arrival is uncertain (as far as we are concerned—the Father knows the exact time of His Son's return), and that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour. This produces in the believer a constant state of expectancy and an incentive for service and holy living.

As the coming of the Lord draws near, may we be reminded of the Bible's closing words, "He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly." May our hearts respond as did John's that day, "Amen. Even so, come [quickly], Lord Jesus."



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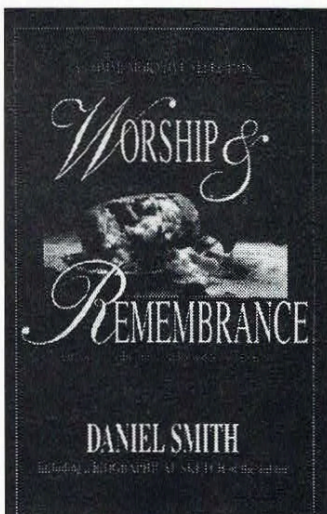
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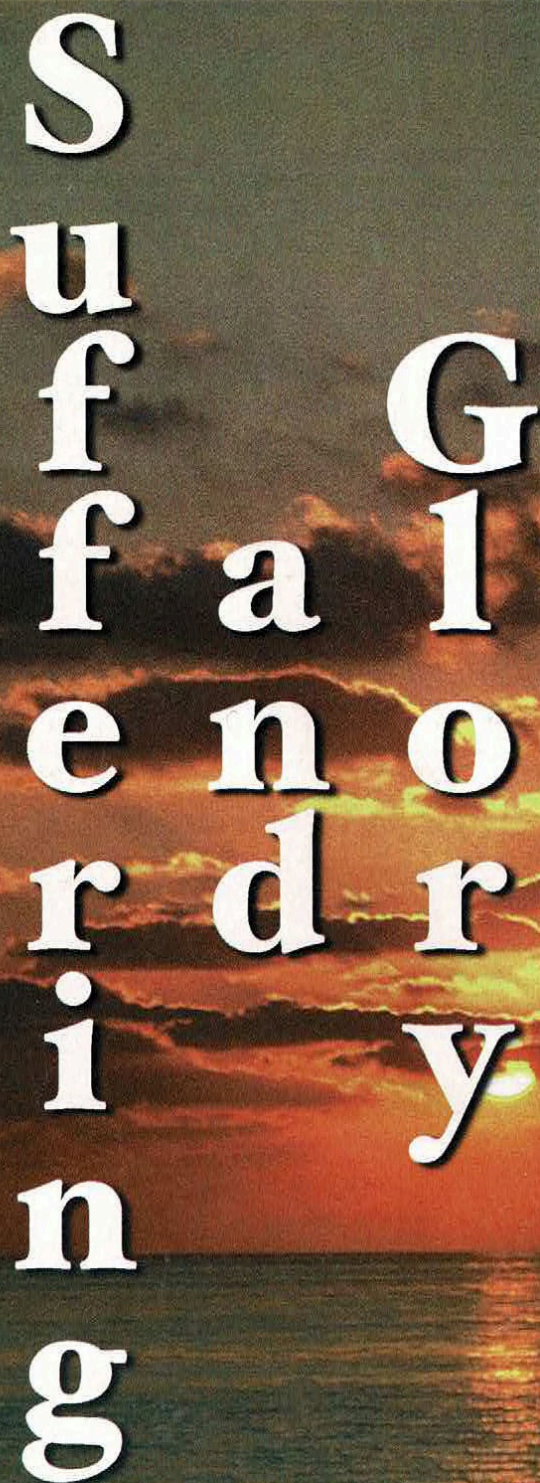
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# Suffering and Glory

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O, "well done," of the Master—sweet reward!  
To gain it what reproach or trial is hard?  
For this who would not earthly joys refuse,  
And willingly affliction's pathway choose?  
This earth is meant not for a resting-place  
To those whom God has rescued by His grace;  
Why should they love a world which to their L  
Could but a manger, cross, and grave afford,  
Or gather up and hoard its dung and dross,  
As if they would compare them with His cross?

'Tis easy now Delilah's lap to press—  
Beware, my soul, the subtle World's caress!  
To court a human smile or dread a frown  
May make thee live in heaven without a crown.  
As here the race for honor, fame and power  
Is waxing hotter, swifter every hour,  
Let every saved one the reward respect,  
In self-denying grace the cross accept;  
And though it cost our all, and gives us pain,  
'Twill be our title with the Lord to reign.  
Who suffer with Him shall His glory share—  
Who to the end endure the crown shall wear.

---

William Blane