

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE CHARACTER OF THE MILLENNIUM

The idea that the world as a whole is not materially changed in the millennium is one with which I have no sympathy. Those who hold this idea seem to think that while great and amazing changes will take place in the people of Israel and in the land of Israel, the other nations and the balance of the earth will not be greatly affected by the personal presence of Christ. One writer states it, "The world as a whole is not materially changed by the Millennium, except in accord with Isaiah, chapters 2 and 60." This amazing statement carries its own refutation, since all anyone needs to do is to read Isaiah 2:1-5 and Isaiah 60 and he will see at once that when the conditions described there are a reality everything on earth will be so different that the mind is not capable of conceiving such a blessed state. The prophecy in Isaiah 2 begins by looking beyond the present all-pervasive conditions of sin, suffering and death to a day when Israel is not only restored but shining forth in such a way that the light of God is given out to all the earth. Even the removal of all things related to war would change the world beyond recognition.

However, it is not my belief that Isaiah 2:1-5 belongs to the millennium. These things "come to pass in the last days," and Acts 2:17 and 20 make it exceedingly plain that the period of time called "the last days" precedes the day of the Lord. The second coming of Christ and the millennium both take place in that time called the day of the Lord. Believing as I do that following the dispensation of grace there will be two great transitional periods before the eternal state of the new heavens and new earth, I place the fulfillment of Isaiah 2: 1-5 in the first of these periods.

Another writer boldly declares: "During the time of the Millennium Israel will be in her promised land. For the most part, Gentiles will be outside. It will be a time of unrest and rebellion and will end with the greatest revolt ever known." It is hard *to* believe that anyone could write a statement such as that, but there it is. A careful reading of Matthew 25:31-46 would make it impossible for anyone *to* put forth a teaching such as this. All will agree that the scene pictured in this portion takes place at

the second coming of Christ and that it is the introductory event *to* His millennial reign (verse 31). All nations (in their representatives) are gathered before Him. Some are set on His right hand and others on the left. The King then says *to* those nations on His right hand: "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

But *to* those nations on His left hand He says: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels." Matt. 25:41.

Wholly apart from the exact meaning of the passage just quoted, these facts are plain. Those nations on His right hand are the ones who enter into the millennial earth, and those on the left have *no* place in it. In spite of this some would have us *to* believe that these righteous nations that enter the kingdom are in a state of unrest and rebellion and that they climax this state of *foment* with the greatest revolt ever known. Since this great assize deals with "all nations," and with a purging of such magnitude taking place, how can the nations that "inherit the kingdom" be in a condition of unrest and rebellion. If this be true, then they sure put it over on the One who sits on the throne.

Another writer declares: "The millennium ends exactly as every other dispensation has ended, i.e., in failure." I do *not* agree with this statement in the least, as I feel that it reflects upon the power and the spirit that God will put forth in that time. It is entirely true that when the thousand years are expired, Satan will be loosed out of his prison (Rev. 20:7). He will then go forth *to* deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth. He seeks *to* mobilize them for battle. We are told also that the population of these nations has so increased that they are like the sand of the sea. Out of this great number, he will succeed in deceiving some and these will march against Jerusalem and surround it. They are in all probability unarmed, as their purpose is *to* secure the supreme seat of government by a *coup d'etat*. They meet not one grain of resistance until they surround the city. Then fire descends from God out of heaven and devours them. This is the Biblical record of what some say will be the "greatest revolt ever known."

These facts reveal in reality this is only an attempt at revolt. A government, which does not even possess a cap pistol to defend it is entirely equal to this revolt. In it we see the failure of some men, but not the failure of Christ's millennial reign. His government is equal to any revolt. The idea that the nations will be in a state of unrest and rebellion throughout the thousand years, and that this will finally come to a head in full revolt at the end is foreign to the Word of God. There is neither unrest nor rebellion until Satan is loosed. The revolt that follows is based upon his consummate ability to deceive. The revolt is unsuccessful. Instead of saying that "the millennial kingdom ends in revolt" or "in failure," it would be better to say that one of the closing scenes of the millennium is God putting down speedily a satanically inspired attempted revolt against His government. A parent has not failed if his child suddenly revolts against his authority.

Another passage, which enters into this discussion is **Isaiah 65: 25**. There we read:

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpents meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord.

See also Isaiah 11:1-9 where about the same truth is revealed in more detail.

In regard to these two passages it is declared that while they are usually taken to describe the condition of things all over the earth during the millennium, yet this, they say, cannot be true for these passages are limited in their application by the words "in My holy mountain." It is held that these words limit these truths to Israel, and that these conditions will be found only in Palestine.

Admitting, for the sake of the discussion, that "my holy mountain" does refer to the land of Israel and that these passages do describe the peculiar blessings of Israel, I do not believe that this means

that no other land shall be blessed in like measure. In other words, I do not believe that the lion will have his ravenous nature changed only in Palestine; nor that an innocent child will be safe there if it plays near a poisonous reptile while over the border a child will be in mortal danger. God's Word reveals that his purpose in blessing the people of Israel and the land of Israel is so that all peoples and nations will be blessed. See Acts 3:25, 26. However, Israel's peculiar blessings both in the kingdom of the heavens and in the millennium must not be ignored. Israel's blessings in the kingdom will be a foretaste of the millennium. Her blessings in the millennium will be a foretaste of the new heavens and new earth. Israel is never to be blessed alone.

Isaiah 60:1, 2 has been used in an attempt to prove that only Israel is blessed in the millennium. This passage reads:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.

This passage does not describe millennial conditions. In fact it better describes conditions today than it does the millennium. It sets forth a time when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples. Israel is in this condition as well as others. Then God calls upon Israel to arise and be enlightened, for her light has come. But that does not mean that Israel alone is enlightened and the rest of the world remains in gross darkness. The passage, which follows shows that after Israel's enlightenment the Gentiles do not remain in darkness.

And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Isaiah 60:3-5.

There is no doubt but that Isaiah 60 sets forth a great pageant, which someday will be acted out to the very letter. This pageant must precede the second coming of Christ. It cannot be the millennium, as the principal actors (peoples in gross darkness) could never survive the purging that takes place when He comes. See 2 Thess. 2:8, 9.

The Rod of Iron

It is said that we must be prepared to find in the millennial kingdom the execution of judgment, that there will be sin in that kingdom and death as a consequence. In support of this Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27, 12:5, and 19:15 are offered as proof. These passages read:

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Psalm 2:9.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. Revelation 2:26-27.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Rev. 12:5.

And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Revelation 19:15.

These passages are used to prove that the nations in the millennium are seething with unrest and rebellion, and that this calls for the most drastic punishments. We need to take a close look at these verses.

There is no doubt but that these passages describe the government of Christ in the millennium. However, the first one is much wider than that for in this passage the king is declaring the divine decree, which is the basis of the kingdom of the heavens, which the kings and counselors of the nations are planning to overthrow.

The real meaning of these passages, comes when we get the translation straight, for it has not only been misinterpreted, it has been mistranslated.

Note first the word "break" in Psalm 2:9. Young, and the Companion Bible both translate this as "rule" and Rotherham translates it as "shepherd." This reading is based upon the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate. The word "rod" is *she bet* and when it is related to government it means *scepter*. See Gen. 49:10; Num. 24: 17, Psalm 45:6; Isa. 14:5. It is translated "rod" in Psalm 23:4 where it has to do with the tools of a shepherd. The words "dash them in pieces" is literally to crush, and the exact meaning can be found in Jeremiah 18:4 where we see a potter crushing an unfired vessel, and the symbol is related to God's dealings with nations. In view of these facts Psalm 2:9 should read:

Thou shalt shepherd them with an iron sceptre, thou shalt crush them like a potter's vessel.

If any should doubt the correctness of this reading, then let them carefully examine the three New Testament passages. The word "rule" in all passages is *poimaino* which is translated "feed" in John 21:16, Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 2:5. It means to take sheep where they can get nourishment and should be translated shepherd (verb) in all its eleven occurrences in the New Testament. It is the verb form of the noun *poimen* which is always translated "shepherd" in all New Testament passages except Eph. 4:11 (pastors). The word "rod" in all three passages is *rabdos* and it will be found in Heb. 1:8 (sceptre); Hebrews 9:4 (Aaron's rod); and Hebrews 11:21 (staff). It is not an instrument for punishment but (in the case of sheep) and instrument for guidance.

The phrase "broken to shivers" in Revelation 2:23 is *suntribo* and means to crush together like a potter would knead clay that is to be shaped into a vessel. It is translated bruise in Matt. 12:20 and Rom. 16:20. It cannot mean "broken to shivers." This is a translator's emotional expression that is without logic to support it. Since all these passages have to do with the nations we see the Lord shepherding them with an iron sceptre in the millennium.

There are other passages that are used to stultify the character of the millennium. Psalm 18:14, Psalm 66:3 and Psalm 81:15 are retranslated to prove that the nations do not submit to the Lord, that they yield only feigned obedience to Him. In spite of the fact that this is the marginal reading of the *King James Version*, I repudiate it as an adequate translation of these passages. It will not *harmonize* with the context in any of them. The Hebrew word *kachash* is a flexible word and can have several meanings. The exact meaning must be gained from the context, and the context will never yield this meaning in the three passages cited. Take Psalm 66:1-3 for example.

Here, the earth is called upon to make a joyful noise unto God, to sing the honor of His Name, to make His praise glorious. They are to say unto God "How fear inspiring are thy works, through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee, they shall sing to thy name."

Now, take out the word "submit" and insert "yield feigned obedience" and see how ridiculous it becomes. Imagine glorifying God because his enemies have practiced deception before him. "Feigned obedience" is what the nations are yielding now. They get away with this because of His grace. But they will never get away with it in the day of His power. See also Psalm 61:1 -6 and insert

"yield feigned obedience" in place of "submitted," and see how ridiculous it becomes when read in the light of the context. This would make it to say that if Israel had hearkened to the Lord and walked in His ways the result would have been that the haters of the Lord would have yielded feigned obedience to Him. This is absurd. They would have submitted.

In closing this study let me say again that I believe in two great transitional periods before the new heavens and the new earth. I refer to these as transitional for they are ever moving toward that great goal revealed in Revelation 21 and 22. The first of these is the kingdom of the heavens and the second is the millennium. I believe that the first of these began when Christ arose from the dead and continued for about 34 years until the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. In this time the kingdom of the heavens was only in a stage comparable to the blade stage of growing grain. This kingdom was suspended at Acts 28:28 and was superseded by the dispensation of grace, the period of time in which we now live. When God has completed His purposes in grace, He will resume His purposes in government (kingdom) taking up where He left off and bringing in the kingdom through stages comparable to the ear, the full grain in the ear, and the ripened grain. I do not believe that this will be a time of sinlessness or perfection, but I do believe it will be a time when righteousness, truth, and peace will be predominant.

It is my conviction that the following prophecies will be literally fulfilled in that day. Isaiah 2:1-5; 4:2-6; 11:1-16; 14:1-2; 32: 15-20; 33:5-6; 42:1-4; 44:28; 45:1-25; 51:3-6; 60:1-22; 61:11; Ezekiel 11:17-21; 20:33-44; 28:25-26; 34:11-14; 34:22-31; 36: 24-38; 39:21-29; Hosea 2:14-23; Joel 2:28-32; Malachi 4:5-6.

The reader is urged not to pass over these passages as being a mere list of references. Let him read each one, meditating upon them, so he will know what Israel and the world can expect when God intervenes and man's government is superseded by heaven's government.

Furthermore I believe that promises such as John 6:39, 40, 44, and 45 will be fulfilled in that time. I believe that the unveiling (*apokalupsin*) and the forthshining (*epiphaneia*) of Christ will take place at the beginning of heavens' government. (Neither of these words denote the second coming). When that day begins 2 Timothy 3:9 will be seen as a reality and 2 Timothy 4:1 will be in operation. The living and the dead will be judged at His *epiphaneia* and His kingdom. All this precedes the second coming and it precedes the millennium.

It is my teaching that the millennium is ushered in by events such as these:

1. The second coming and the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:11-16.
2. The Son of man gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend. Matthew 13:41.
3. The severance of the wicked from the just, with the wicked being destroyed. Matthew 13:41.
4. All nations will be gathered before the Lord. Those who pass this test will have a place in the millennial kingdom. Those who do not are eliminated. Matthew 25:31-46.
5. All who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ to be punished with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." 2 Thess. 1:8-9.
6. The beast and false prophet are destroyed. Revelation 19:20.
7. The man of sin is destroyed. 2 Thess. 2:8.
8. Satan is bound, cast into an abyss, and a seal set upon him. This renders him totally inoperative for a thousand years. Revelation 20:1-3

All of these mighty works of God introduce the millennium. How then can it be that they make no change? How can anyone say that the millennium is to be characterized by unrest and rebellion?

Finally, it is the teaching of God's word that the millennium gets its character from the personal presence of Christ. I leave it to the reader to judge as to what this character will be.

THE END

THE SCOPE OF PROPHECY

In seeking the meaning of the prophecies of Scripture the student must be free and he must keep himself free to believe whatever these divine predictions may teach. With this principle in mind I am not willing to accept in advance any limitations upon the scope of the prophetic message of the Word of God. This would lead to a spiritual bondage, which would make true understanding impossible. The scope of a prophetic passage can be determined only from a study of the passage itself. It cannot be determined in advance. No prophecy can be limited until it is carefully studied and its subject is determined. If a prophecy concerns Christ, then it must be limited to Him. If a prophecy concerns Jerusalem, it must not be applied to London. If it concerns all nations, it must not be limited to the nation of Israel.

The first great prophecy of the Bible is found in Genesis 3:15. There we read that the seed of the woman will bruise (crush) the head of the serpent. In spite of the problems that relate to the correct interpretation of this passage, one truth stands out clear. The head of Satan is to be crushed. This tells us of a complete clearing up and cleaning up of all those things, which have flowed out of the work of Satan, which brought sin and death into the world. Some see in this statement a prediction of the complete destruction of Satan himself. This is a truth, which is most certainly taught in other places in Scripture, but it seems that Satan's head is crushed even before he is destroyed at the end of the thousand years. Of course if we take this head crushing to be literal, we cannot see anything else but the end of Satan, but I do not believe that these words are literal. Satan is not to be destroyed by his head being crushed. He comes to his end by being cast into the lake of fire. See Revelation 20:10.

It will help us to understand this figure of speech, if we will note that the Hebrew word *rash* which is here translated head is primarily and fundamentally a mathematical term and has to do with the *sum* of a column of figures. The ancients added *up* and put the total at the top calling this the head. See Exodus 30:12, Numbers 1:2,49; 4:2, 22; 26:2; 31:26,49 where *rash* is translated "sum." Therefore, if we add up all that came out of Satan's act in leading Adam and Eve to transgress, we will find what it is that the seed of the woman is to crush.

The first two chapters of Genesis sets forth a record of things which are good and all of which came out of God. For example, the Spirit moved, God spoke, light came, God made the firmament, God made two great lights, and God created man. These are all good and they are all out of God. However, at chapter 3 we see Satan coming upon the scene, and from that point forward we see a multitude of things which are not good, and which are not out of God. These things find their source in Satan and they head up or sum up in him. He is the fountainhead of sin and death and all that is related to these things. Thus the promise of God to crush the head of Satan is a promise to abrogate and to eliminate all that heads up or finds its source in him.

From this we see that the first great prophecy in the Word of God is as wide in scope as the works of Satan. All that he has marred in this earth God will restore. This will result in the earth being restored to the condition that existed before the fall. This first prophecy is a promise from God that in some future day He will intervene and bring forth His power to insure the defeat of evil and the victory of good. This prophecy speaks of Christ and His people, of Satan and his followers, and of God's ultimate victory over sin and death. This prediction sets the scope of all prophecy.

The Promises to Abraham

In order to further our theme, let us consider another great prophecy recorded in **Genesis 12:1-2**. This is the beginning of all the prophecies that have to do with the blessings that are to come upon the descendants of Abraham. Yet it is perfectly clear that in this great prophecy we find both limited and unlimited predictions. We will examine these step by step.

1. **I will make of thee a great nation.** This promise must be limited to Abraham and the nation, which came out of him.

2. **I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.** This is limited to Abraham and cannot be claimed by any other.

3. **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.** There is room here for differences of opinion as to whether this promise is to the man Abraham, or whether it is to Abraham and his descendants. But it cannot be enlarged to include anyone beyond the descendants of Abraham through Isaac.

4. **In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.** Here we find a promise which reaches out and promises a blessing through Abraham to "all families of the earth."

In these four steps, three great truths stand out.

1. God has declared His purpose to bless "all families of the earth," but when He does, it will flow through the seed of Abraham.

2. The seed of Abraham must be blessed first, but God has no plan or purpose to bless the seed of Abraham apart from a greater purpose to bless every family of the earth.

3. Israel, the seed of Abraham, is to be a channel for God's blessings to all families and peoples of the earth. When God blesses Israel she must be open at both ends, the receiving end and the giving end. She is not to be a vessel or a container. All promises of blessing for Israel have a fuller purpose to bless every family of the earth. This cannot be limited to some families or to certain lands. See also Genesis 22:15, 18 and Acts 3:25, 26.

The Witness of the Psalms

Many readers of the Bible fail to realize that most of the Psalms are prophetic in their character. They speak of great blessings to come. An examination of some of these passages reveals the scope of prophecy.

And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness. Psalm 9:8.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. Psalm 22:27-28.

Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations (astonishing things) he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:8-10.

O clap your hands, all ye peoples (note the plural); shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible (fear-inspiring), He is a great king over all the earth. He shall subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. Psalm 47:1-2.

For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen (nations): God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. Psalm 47:7-8.

So the heathen (nations) shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. Psalm 102:15.

The Lord has prepared "His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Psalm 103:19.

Many more passages could be cited, but these are sufficient for our purpose. I have made a most careful study of all these verses in their contexts and know that if we receive their message we must believe that when God brings His government into this earth it will embrace every man and every land east, west, north and south. The scope of these passages cannot be limited by some arbitrary barrier.

The End

THE SEVEN MILLENNIUM THEORY

In the quarter century or more that preceded the year 1000 A.D. the thoughts of many people were dominated by the idea that the year 1000 would mark "the end of the world." There was no sound reason for this idea, although many theories were advanced in support of it. It spread like a prairie fire until the idea even seized the ungodly, resulting in a wave of immorality almost without parallel. Men determined to have their final fling before doom came. But the year 1000 came and went and nothing happened.

Since that time "date setting" has been the favorite occupation of many. These attempts as a rule have been related to the time of the second coming of Christ. Men have set their dates and shouted them from the housetops. In the past two centuries a thousand men have set as many different dates for the return of the Lord, but when the date arrived nothing happened. On the basis of experience alone one could not be condemned if he denies relationship to any teacher or teaching which attempts to set a date for the close of this dispensation of grace, for the second coming of Christ, or for the beginning of the millennium. I for one cannot extend sympathy to those men who claim to know more concerning the date of the parousia of Christ than the Lord Jesus Himself knew in the days of His humiliation (Matt. 24:36).

In the thirty-three years that I have been a student of the Word of God I have bent backward to keep my ministry from ever being associated with anything that savored in the least of date setting. I have always believed that any attempt to set even approximate dates for events predicted in the Bible is part of the unfruitful works of darkness. These efforts have never produced any fruit, and I can have no fellowship with them. The years have proven the wisdom of such a course, and I see no reason for deviating from it in the least.

At the present time quite a number of men are setting upon the year 2000 A.D. [*Ed. Note: and here we are in the year 2003*] as being the date for the beginning of that glorious millennium of human history when Satan will be bound and Christ will be personally present upon the earth. Some of these who are generalizing and speculating in regard to this date are men who claim to recognize the Acts 28:28 dispensational boundary line. I would be untrue to my ministry if I failed to disassociate myself from all present attempts at date setting. Nevertheless, I can disagree without being disagreeable, so I will in love seek to enlighten all as to what I believe to be the truth concerning these matters.

This theory as to the time of the beginning of the millennium is not new. I first came upon it thirty years ago and was momentarily intrigued by it. But after careful consideration I rejected it feeling that it was founded solely upon inferences and not upon any direct teaching in the Word of God. This theory is that God's great program for the human race is to be worked out in seven millenniums, or to say it another way in seven one thousand year periods. It is held that from the creation of Adam to the beginning of the new heaven and earth is to be just seven thousand years. Since according to the commonly accepted chronology 5953 years of this time has passed and a thousand years is required for the millennium, this leaves only 47 remaining years before the first day of the millennium begins. Then since seven years of this 47 is allotted to Daniel's seventieth week that leaves just 40 years before the making of that covenant which will mark the beginning of the seven year period that will precede the millennium. Moreover, inasmuch as the stage must be completely set for that seven-year period, in that Israel must be restored and the temple must be rebuilt etc., that means that every prophecy that deals with events preceding the millennium must be fulfilled within the next 47 years. Some allow 33 years for the "setting of the stage" for Daniel's seventieth week, and this means that the dispensation of grace must end in seven years or in 1960. Others allow only 16 years for this preparation and that leaves 24 years more for this present dispensation, causing it to end in 1977.

Some men are so sold on this time table that they refuse to have anything to do with the idea that there could be a long period of blessing for Israel and for the world under heavens' government before the second coming of Christ. They need to be reminded that the Lord does not run His program, according to man-made schedules and timetables. However, I would make it plain that I do not reject the idea of the millennium beginning in 2000 A.D. because of my teaching in regard to the long period of blessing which I hold must precede the second coming. I reject it simply because I believe that it has no real basis in the Word. All foundations upon which this theory rests have been repeatedly examined. The major arguments in behalf of it we will now review.

In **2 Peter 3:8** we read: **But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**

Many times I have studied and expounded the chapter in which this passage appears. Each time I have found in it a number of truths. This passage tells me:

1. A divine promise is as certain of fulfillment in a thousand years as it is in one day. A human promise always becomes weaker the longer it remains unfulfilled. Time has no such effect upon God's promises. This truth is in harmony with the question that calls forth the revelation made in this chapter- "Where is the promise of His coming." 2 Peter 3:4.

2. Time with God has none of the limitations, which it has with us. Past, present, and future are all alike to God. With us a day is a day and a thousand years is a thousand years, but with God a day may be a thousand years and a thousand years a day.

3. A long time in God's sight is like a very short time in ours, and a short time in God's sight is a long time in ours.

4. God can either execute in a single day or spread out over a thousand years any purpose of His mind or action of His hand.

These are the truths that I believe God would have us to learn from 2 Peter 3:8. The correctness of this is further demonstrated by a passage from the Psalms where we are told:

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, even as a watch in the night. Psalm 90:4.

A watch in the night among the Hebrews would have been four hours. Therefore a thousand years with God can be either twenty four hours or four hours, a day or a sixth of a day. This is the Spirit's method of setting up a guard so that no one would think that God was establishing fixed values. If we say a pound is twenty shillings and twenty shilling is a pound we are declaring fixed values. But God was not doing this when He said a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. He also declares that a thousand years is as four hours.

However, there are some who see far more in the Peter passage than the truths set forth above. They see God establishing fixed values. Then they go to the first two chapters of Genesis where they find six days of creation and one of rest, and this gives them the theory that God's program for man covers 7000 years. Since the seventh day was the sabbath then the seventh thousand year period of human history has to be the millennium. And now the floodgates are open for the imagination, producing outrageous anti -biblical results.

I am not able to put my eye to the keyhole of a simple passage such as 2 Peter 3:8 and see the far reaching propositions that these men claim they see. Furthermore, I know that the theory they are expounding is not taught in this passage even when it is combined with the first chapter of Genesis. They hold that these six days correspond with and are typical of the six millenniums of human history that have already run their course. Let us examine these days and get the facts. Let us see if this creation week has a prophetic character.

1. **On the first day God said, Let there be light. Genesis 1:3.** This being the first of the creation days it should correspond in character with the first thousand years of human history. On the basis of commonly accepted dates this would be from the creation of Adam to the translation of Enoch. I see no correspondence here, no likeness of character between this first day and the first thousand years of man.

2. **On the second day God made the firmament and divided the waters above and below. Genesis 1:6, 7.** This second creative day should correspond with the second thousand-year period of human history. I see no correspondence between this second day and the period it is supposed to typify.

3. **On the third day God called forth the dry land and made the earth green and fruitful.** This should correspond with that period of time between Abraham's birth and the reign of king Saul in Israel, but there is no correspondence.

4. **On the fourth day God made two great lights, the sun and the moon.** He made the stars also. Genesis 1:14-17. According to the theory we are examining, this should correspond with the thousand years between the reign of Saul and the birth of Christ. This was one of the darkest periods

of human history, and there is no correspondence between the fourth day and the fourth millennium of man's history.

5. **On the fifth day God created animal life.** Genesis 1:20-23. If the theory we are examining is correct it should be prophetic of the thousand years that elapsed between the advent of Christ and the discovery of North America by Leif Ericson in 1000 A.D.

6. **On the sixth day God created man.** Genesis 1:26. This should correspond to the sixth thousand year period of human history, a period not yet complete. There is no correspondence.

7. **On the seventh day God ended His work and rested.** Genesis 2:1. This we are told is a foreview of the millennium, prophetic of that thousand year period spoken of in Revelation 20:1-4. But when the facts are faced there is no correspondence, likeness or identity of character between these two. Whatever the character of the millennium may be it is not in any sense a sabbath. There are no points of comparison between the two.

On the seventh day God ended all His work. He does not cease His work during the millennium.

On the seventh day God rested. He does not rest during the millennium.

To observe a Sabbath, man must cease from all labor. But man will work throughout the millennium.

To be a sabbath, like the seventh year sabbath, the land must rest and neither be plowed or planted (Lev. 25:1-7). The earth will be tilled all through the millennium. See Amos 9:13.

The Hebrew word for sabbath is never used in connection with the millennium

The Greek word for sabbath is never used in connection with the millennium. This statement is made in full recognition of Hebrews 4:9 where *rest* should be translated *sabbath*. This has no reference to the millennium. It has to do with the "perfection" mentioned in Hebrews 6:1.

The millennium is not a sabbath for God, it is not a sabbath for man, it is not a sabbath for the earth. It cannot be typified by or correspond with the seventh day of creation.

I will not deal with numerous other passages, which are misinterpreted and rushed in to bolster this unscriptural theory. One of these is Hosea 6:2. The "one day equals a thousand years" theory is applied to this passage. To make it come out right these "two days" are started with the birth of Christ, and since they are made to be a thousand years each, this leaves only 47 years until God revives and raises up Israel. However, the facts in the context deny this. The beginning of these two days will be when Jesus Christ unveils Himself to Israel and they cry out:

Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Amos 6:1-2.

These days are twenty-four hour days. If this seems impossible, then God's ability to work quickly is not being considered.

In this study for the sake of the discussion I have accepted the years of the commonly accepted chronology as being correct. I know that when the years are computed from the Septuagint Version, 1500 years more must be added between Adam and Christ. If the Septuagint contains the correct figures, it would indicate that man has already been on the earth about 7500 years. The witness of the Septuagint cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Its chronology could be the correct one.

We need to carefully note and to absorb into our thinking the fact that when Jesus Christ was upon earth the first two chapters of Genesis were as open to him as they have ever been to any man. He was familiar with Psalm 90:4, and while 2 Peter 3:8 had not yet been written, He knew the truth it

contains as well as we do who have it in written form. He was in possession of every fact that any man possesses today. Nevertheless, in reference to His *parousia*, that event which introduces the millennium He said:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Mark 13:32. See also Matt. 24:36.

Today we find men who claim to know more about the exact date than Jesus knew in the days of His humiliation. I, for one, repudiate their claims.

The End

THE REVOLT AGAINST THE KINGDOM

All readers of these lines will know that it is my teaching that the world is now under an administration of grace. This began at the close of the Acts period and has continued for more than 1900 years. This administration is secret in its operation, so if men wish to deny that God is actively showing grace to the whole world, we who believe it cannot disprove their denials. We can only pray that God will open their eyes to the truth of what He is now doing.

It is also my teaching that the next thing, which the world will experience is a dispensation of the government of God. Familiarity with the Bible will bring the conviction that our God has declared His purpose to govern the world when the time is ripe for it. As far as we are concerned and the world is concerned the time is ripe for it now. Never before in man's history has a super-government, worldwide in its scope been needed more than it is needed now. Men have tried to provide it, and still persist in the vain hope that they can bring it to pass, but they are doomed to defeat. The best they can produce is human government, when what is needed is heavens' government.

The Apostle Paul reveals in his final epistles that God's purpose to govern the world must wait until He has completed His purpose to demonstrate the graciousness of His character. This He is now doing by means of an administration of grace.

Every statement in the Bible about "the kingdom of God" is a declaration of truth concerning the government of God. Every statement about "the kingdom of the heavens" is also a statement about God's government. We may not be able to understand every statement, but it will help greatly if we at least know what these statements are about. We must be done once and for all with that loose thinking, which makes the term "the kingdom of God" to denote almost everything that someone's fancy decides to make it. Let us define our terms.

The kingdom of God was announced by both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ as being "at hand." Mark 1:14, 15. The Lord Jesus announced that some of His disciples would not experience death until they had "seen the kingdom of God come with power." Mark 9:1. He also declared that the kingdom of God would appear progressively and would be in the same states as is seen in growing grain; the blade, the ear, the full grain in the ear, the ripened grain, and the harvest. Mark 4:26-29.

From these declarations we can establish these irrefutable facts. (1) The kingdom of God was not present when John and the Lord began their ministry, and it had not yet come when the Lord spoke

to His disciples just before His transfiguration. (2) When it does come it will develop progressively like growing grain. (3) It began before some of the disciples had experienced death.

In harmony with this it is my teaching that the kingdom of God, God's government, began when Jesus Christ arose from the dead and that it was in the earth in a stage comparable to the blade stage of growing grain during the 33 years of the Acts period, and that it was suspended to make way for God's complete demonstration of the exceeding riches of His grace. When this is complete God will resume His purposes to fully establish His government in and over the earth.

That time of God's government is described by many titles in the New Testament. It is called "the kingdom of the heavens" meaning heavens' government; the kingdom of God, meaning God's government; the regeneration, Matthew 19:28; the times of refreshing, Acts 3:19; the times of restoration, Acts 3:21; the day of Christ, Philippians 1:6; and "the last days" in Acts 2:17-21. It precedes the second coming of Christ and it is not the millennium. It is a long period of time, probably covering in its entirety a period of over five centuries. It is characterized by divine laws, divine order, divine light, and divine righteousness. It will not be a time of sinlessness, even though sin in that day will be the exception, not the rule as it is today. In its final years it is characterized by God putting all subjects of His government to the test to see if they have learned obedience. One of the outcomes of this test is a revolt against God's government.

Even though it is emphatically taught in the Word of God, it is quite difficult for many to believe that after men have witnessed and enjoyed the benefits and blessings that accompany heavens' government that there could be a revolt against it. The teaching that God is going to intervene and inject Himself into the affairs of men and nations, bringing in His government upon the earth appeals to many. They feel it is what God ought to do. But that in his government a condition should exist that permits a revolt after this government has been long established does not seem to be in harmony with the wisdom of God. Nevertheless, the Word teaches that there is to be a revolt against heavens' government, and our hesitancy to accept this truth cannot alter it in the least. The reader will note carefully that I am speaking of the revolt that takes place at the end of the kingdom of heaven period and not the attempted revolt that takes place in the little season at the end of the millennium.

Much of the difficulty here rests upon misconceptions. There is also a failure to lay hold of all the facts. While the Bible teaches that there is to be a revolt, it does not teach that this revolt is successful or that the kingdom of God is overthrown by it. Neither does it teach that ALL subjects of the kingdom join in it. This revolt is the work of a minority and any apparent or temporary success it seems to enjoy is because God permits it to test all people. Some of its apparent success is based upon the facts that the true subjects of God's government cannot use force of any kind against it. They must, wait, suffer, and even die until such time as God intervenes in their behalf. It will help greatly if we remember that this revolt is the result of a condition permitted by God for the purpose of producing a time of testing "which comes upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10. That men should be tested in this manner is in harmony with principles that are often seen in God's dealings with man.

The Testing of Adam

The testing of Adam sets the pattern for all future testings of mankind by God. As part of his spiritual development he needed to learn obedience and to earn the righteousness that comes from obedience. Full spiritual development was made possible in his case by God giving him the power of choice. For a choice to exist there must be alternative courses of action possible. With this in view God planted a tree in the garden, the fruit of which man was forbidden to eat. These conditions as

arranged by God made it possible for man, if he chooses, to be a willing recipient of good from God. He would have imputed to him that righteousness that comes from obedience, that is, by voluntary submission to the divine will and word.

In putting Adam to a test such as this, it is evident that God assumed a calculated risk. Adam could choose the evil and bring dishonor to God. But if He does God is equal to the situation.

Thus we see Adam in a perfect environment, where nothing undesirable existed, hedged about by every favorable circumstance. All he needs to do to maintain himself in this state is to choose the good and refrain from the evil. If God had eliminated this one tree from among the many trees of the garden, all danger of man being disobedient would also be eliminated. But all hope of him ever being obedient would also be gone.

The circumstances of Adam are not paralleled in the kingdom of heaven, but the nature of the test is the same. Under heavens' government neither men nor nations will be permitted to walk after their own ways, for in that day the Lord will make his path clear to all by saying "this is the way, walk ye in it." "Bands and cords" will be placed by God upon the nations, even as we place bit, bridle or halter upon a horse in order to govern all its actions. Since God's workings in the kingdom will be open and not secret, men will soon learn the joys, blessings, and the satisfaction that comes from walking in harmony with the great moral laws under which they will live at that time. It will be a world of absolute justice, where no one will ever suffer except what they strictly deserve to suffer; where the innocent never suffer, only the guilty, and they suffer only what is due their transgressions. In other words man will be so hedged about that there will be every incentive for doing good, and nothing but pain can come from evil. It may be at that time that when Satan sees the complete loss of all his following he will again challenge God as he did in the days of Job saying, "Does man serve you for nothing? You have placed a hedge about him, about his house, and about all that he has on every side. You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased. But just loose his bands, untie his cords and see how quickly he will desert you. Just cease for a while to bless him when he is good and cease holding the threat of punishment over him when he is bad, and then see how speedily he will turn from serving you and follow me." Note carefully that I do not say that this is the way it is going to be. All that I say is that it happened this way in Job's case it has been recorded for man's instruction, and that Satan is called "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10) at the time this revolt is taking place.

The truth in regard to this time of testing which men who have lived long under God's government will have to face, and the revolt that comes out of it is set forth in many portions of Scripture. In fact all the truth of Daniel's seventieth week (a seven year period) is related to this. In five great portions of the Word it is the subject, and once this is recognized problems that have troubled expositors for centuries will disappear. We will briefly consider these portions in order. The reader will note that any deviation from the *King James Version* is due to the fact that the translation needs to be corrected.

Psalm 2

This Psalm opens with a question. The inspired writer asks, "**Why do the heathen rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing?**" This question concerns nations and peoples. They are regarded under the figure of a great sea, a figure often used of the nations. See Isaiah 57:20. The speaker asks why the nations have become restless or tumultuous, and why the peoples mutter an empty thing. Rotherham translates this first question, "Wherefore have nations assembled in tumult." In order for this question to make sense the nations would first need to be at rest and quiet, then suddenly become tumultuous and begin to roar, even as the sea does when it is disturbed by invisible

forces.

The peaceful and quiet conditions which have preceded this tumult are set forth in Psalm 1. These Psalms are prophetic. The first anticipates the blessed condition that will exist under God's benevolent government when the kingdom of heaven is a reality. The second Psalm anticipates the disruption of this blessed state. It does not deal with conditions that existed at the time it was written. It does not reflect any present condition. Neither does it picture heavens' government at its glorious peak when justice and judgment have been established in the earth. It has to do with the harvest time of God's government when He puts men to the test to see if they have learned obedience.

A more detailed description of the condition that has caused these two questions to be asked is found in the next two verses.

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. Psalm 2:2-3.

This statement indicates that the kings of the earth, who before this have been submissive to the divine government (in fulfillment of Isaiah 60:3, 4; Psalm 18:44; Psalm 66:3), have suddenly "set themselves" or taken a firm stand. The rulers of the earth have taken counsel (sat in assembly) together against the Lord (Jehovah) and against His anointed one. Since the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus of the New Testament, the anointed one here cannot be the Lord Jesus. This refers to the kingship of David in the kingdom of the heavens. At that time the Lord will be upon His throne in the heavens (Psalm 103:19,20) and the resurrected David will be upon the throne in Mt. Zion (see Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23, 24; Ezekiel 37:21, 28; Hosea 3:4, 5). The kings and rulers of the earth have agreed to break the bands of Jehovah and His anointed one, to cast their cords from them.

In the day when David wrote these words, all nations were permitted to walk in their own ways (Acts 13:16), and this is just as true today as it was then. The Lord Jesus has no bands, no cords, no bit, no bridle upon the nations today. But this Psalm anticipates a time when the nations shall have been brought under Jehovah's government. Rotherham has seen this, and he declares in a very pertinent paragraph:

We are indebted to Delitzsch for calling attention to the obvious but much overlooked circumstance, that those kings and counsellors who are discovered in rebellion when the psalm opens, have already come under obligation to Jehovah and to his Anointed One. They are already under the restraints of duty to Jehovah and to his Christ; since it is under these restraints that they turn restive, against those restraints that they rebel.

Again Rotherham says:

It is during the joint session of the Son with the Father in heaven that these kings, senators and nations were brought under those obligations to Jehovah and his Anointed One from which they ultimately desire to break loose. (Studies in the Psalms, pages 52 and 54).

Thus the opening verses of the first Psalm show that a general rebellion is in the making against Jehovah and His anointed. The balance of the Psalm gives a very brief epitome of how this rebellion is dealt with. For a detailed account we would need to go to Revelation chapters 4 to 20. But our present interest is in Psalm 2.

At the plans for this rebellion the one who sits in the heavens will laugh, the Lord will have them in derision. The manner in which He laughs at them, His derision of them consists in the announcement of an accomplished and established fact. He proclaims the great fact upon which the government against which they are rebelling is based, **"I have set My king upon My holy hill**

Zion." These words declare that the presence of David upon the throne in Zion is a divine arrangement. But to get the full picture let us read what follows in a more accurate translation.

Yet I have installed My king on Zion My holy mountain. Let him proclaim My decree! Jehovah said to me: My son art thou, I today have begotten thee: Ask of Me, and let Me give nations as your allotment, and the ends of the earth as your possession. Thou shalt shepherd them with a sceptre of iron, as a potter's vessel thou shalt crush them.

Some will shrink back from applying these words to the resurrected David. They will point to the fact that the first part is quoted in Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5 and Hebrews 5:5 where there is no question but that they refer to Christ. But they must remember that many things, which are true of Christ also become true of His people. As an example 2 Samuel 7:14 when first spoken had to do with Solomon. The first part of these same words are found in Hebrews 1:5 where they have to do with Christ. They are found again in Revelation 21:7 where they have to do with the overcomers. So also Psalm 2:9 is spoken concerning the resurrected David. In Revelation 2:26, 27 it is spoken concerning the overcomers. In other references as already cited it is spoken concerning Christ. Remember, it has to be true of Christ before it can ever be true of His people. See also Psalm 89:20-27.

In closing our consideration of this Psalm we must not fail to note the merciful, subduing light, which is cast back upon the earlier parts by the exhortation with which it closes. The kings are called upon to act wisely or show prudence. The judges of the earth are urged to accept the instruction. They are invited to resubmit themselves to the Lord, serving Him with reverence and rejoicing in Him with humility. If *they* fail, *they* are warned that *they* will perish from the way when the full heat of His anger is manifested. This warning note with which the Psalm closes is characteristic of that time when the Lord shall shepherd the nations with a rod of iron.

Matthew 24

The second great passage, which gets its character from the revolt against God's established government is Matthew 24. The words recorded in this chapter were spoken very near the close of our Lord's earthly ministry. Before He spoke these words He had already given them the most extensive revelations concerning the kingdom of the heavens. He had dealt with its subjects, its nature, its laws, and its punishments. He had even revealed to them the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens. His disciples knew that in all probability *they* would die as martyrs before this kingdom was fully established, but *they* fully expected to be raised and live in it right through to its end. But in Matthew 24 we see His disciples looking forward to the conclusion of the kingdom and *they* ask Him what will be the sign of His personal presence (*parousia*) and of the consummation of the eon. This consummation of the eon is "the harvest" spoken of in Mark 4:29; Matthew 13:30 and 39. The eon *they* are inquiring about is not "the present evil eon." *They* want to know about the conclusion of that eon of the kingdom, which when it reaches its consummation is followed by the millennium.

I believe that the Lord gave these disciples open and honest answers to these questions setting forth the unique and distinct things, which will be seen at the close of the kingdom of the heavens. However, every sign He gave is meaningless unless we recognize that under heavens' government no false christs will arise and deceive men, there will be neither wars or rumors of wars, no famines, no earthquakes and no pestilence. The world will be free of these things for many centuries, and when *they* appear again *they* will be of the greatest possible significance. These things will be related to God speaking to men in His wrath and vexing them in His sore displeasure, as we have already seen in the second Psalm. These things will then indicate that "his wrath is kindled but a little." But let us

examine these signs in more detail. The first sign is recorded in **verse 5**.

For many shall come in My name, saying, I am christ; and shall deceive many.

It is positive history that there were false christs before the Lord ever came. Barabbas is believed to have been one of these. There has been a steady stream of false christs ever since this sign was given. Therefore, if men claiming to be Christ and the deception of many by them is supposed to be a sign, then it is a sign of no possible value. Some have tried to explain this chapter by saying that it reveals "the course of this age," but the fact remains that they asked for signs and the Lord gave signs that point to the object of their question. If our Lord gave them as a sign the fact that men would appear claiming to be Christ then it is a sign without significance. The history of mankind for 1900 years is filled with the record of petty men claiming to be the Messiah with little sects of fanatics acknowledging their claims. This flow of false Messiahs has been so steady that it could not possibly be a sign. The only way that an event can be the sign of anything is for it not to exist or be present and then it appear to the eyes or minds of men.

In giving this as a sign our Lord anticipates the kingdom of the heavens when no man will ever dare make a false claim of such magnitude, and if by chance someone would be bold enough to try it, he will feel the divine wrath, which will be the portion of all who make such claims. Yes, the world is to enjoy a long period of freedom from such deceivers, but at the end when God relaxes His restraints and tests men by allowing them to choose their own way, these false Messiahs will again appear and deceive many. When this takes place it will be the most positive sign that heavens' government has reached its concluding chapter and that the personal presence of Christ is not far off.

The second sign given is a group of adverse things. There are to be wars, rumors of wars, clashes of governments, clashes of nations, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. And it is to be noted that these things are not given as the "course of the age." These are the beginning of sorrows, and this means that such sorrows as these have not been present.

Men who do not know the Scriptures or the power of God have great difficulty in believing that mankind is going to enjoy a long period covering many centuries when wars, famines, plagues and earthquakes will be unknown. However, believe it or not, these are the benefits men are to enjoy under heavens' government. The very character of the words "many shall come," "ye shall hear of wars," "nation shall arise against nation," "there shall be famines" indicate that these things will not be present but at a certain crucial moment they will begin to appear. These words and all that follows are related to the time of testing, the failure of some men, and the revolt against the kingdom that concludes the kingdom of the heavens. It is impossible for us to believe that the Lord gave as signs of His coming things that had always been present and which would always be present.

Matthew 24 does not cover a very long period. It seems that everything recorded there will take place in seven years. The promise is made that the one who endures or remains faithful to the end will be saved. Matt. 24:13.

The word "saved" here does not mean forgiven, redeemed, or justified. It means blessed, and the exact nature of this blessing is found in such passages as Revelation 2:7, 11, 17; 3:26, 27; 3:5, 12, 21; Revelation 21:7. These words do not set forth a way of life or a plan of salvation for men today. They cannot be applied to men in this dispensation of grace, and they will have no immediate bearing upon men in the dispensation to come, the kingdom. They do become applicable in that day when God begins to put to the test all men who have enjoyed the rich blessings of His government. Those who endure, who stand their ground, who take all that a true confession of Christ brings upon them will be blessed. This blessing has to do with their position in the millennium. .

We are further told that at that time "this gospel of the kingdom" is to be heralded in the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all nations. The word *gospel* means message, *preach* means herald,

and *kingdom* means government. "This message" in this passage means the things set forth by our Lord beginning at verse 4 and continues through verse 51. This is a government message (like Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation), and it is to be heralded to all the world. It will give men the light they need to analyze and deal with the situation they are facing. Since nonresistance of evil is a divine policy accepted by all loyal subjects of the kingdom, many will pay with their lives for their faithfulness. But they will die "in Christ" and they will not be dead long. They will be raised at the *parousia* of Christ. Their hope is set forth by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This is a resurrection of martyrs who died at the hands of evil men in the revolt against God's government.

Matthew 25

The story of the ten virgins reveals the inward causes of the failure of some when the world is tested. This parable applies to the kingdom only at the time specified. The first word "then" indicates that it is related to that period of which our Lord is speaking in Matthew 24. This parable is not applicable now, neither is it applicable as the kingdom runs its course. It is applicable only at the close of the kingdom. It reveals why many are deceived when the false christs and prophets arise.

This parable deals with the subject of the kingdom. By means of a common figure of speech the subjects of the kingdom are called by the name of the whole. Thus the words "then shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened unto ten virgins - means, then shall the kingdom subjects be likened unto ten virgins. These subjects are likened to five wise and five foolish virgins. The wise have been careful to maintain and to have on hand a good supply of oil. The foolish have neglected their supply and are burning the wicks. The oil stands for both the Holy Spirit and the things of the Spirit. The next dispensation is truly the dispensation of the Spirit, and to neglect the giver and His gifts in any manner will be fraught with great danger.

2 Thessalonians 2

This chapter deals with two things that must take place before the day of the Lord can be present. The day of Christ precedes the day of the Lord. All that is needed to bring in the day of Christ is for the Lord in heaven to begin those multiplied activities, which will result in His government being established on the earth. But the day of the Lord cannot come except there be - (1) the apostasy, and (2) the revelation of the man of sin (or the lawless one). These two events must precede the day of the Lord.

Now if there is one thing which we can be sure of, one thing established as a fact from Paul's words in 2 Thess. 2:3, *there was no apostasy, there was no falling away when Paul wrote these words*. If there had been it would have nullified everything he said. His argument that the day of the Lord was not present was based upon the fact that "the apostasy" had to come first. If it were there, his argument is useless.

This statement may come as a shock to many when they think of all the satanic activities that were going on both before and at the time Paul wrote these words. Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 reveals some of these activities. Acts 4:1.3; 5:17-18; 12:1-4; 13:44-45; 16:16.24 set forth some more. But none of this can be described as apostasy.

The use of this word *apostasia* in the Septuagint shows that it revolt against duly constituted authority. See Joshua 22:22 (rebellion) Jeremiah 2:19 (forsaken). Thus 2 Thessalonians 2:3 speaks of

a revolt that must come before the day of the Lord. This is the revolt that takes place at the conclusion of the kingdom of the heavens. There can be no revolt until God's government is fully established in the earth.

WHAT DOES OIKOUMENE MEAN

Do not let the title of this article frighten you. It deals with the meaning of a very important Greek word, which appears fifteen times in the New Testament. Some will say they cannot pronounce it, let alone knowing what it means. So let us get the pronunciation first and maybe this will give them some confidence. It is pronounced *oy-kou-MEN-ay* (make it rhyme with boy-to-MEN-say). It is translated "**world**" fourteen times and "**earth**" one time. Its exact meaning is important to every careful student of the Word. Since five different Greek words are translated "world" and five are translated "earth" in the New Testament, we can take an important step forward on "the way of truth" if we will get this one word straight as to its meaning.

Some believe that this word is limited in its meaning, that it cannot mean more than the lands ruled over by Nebuchadnezzar and it sets the limits of "the prophetic earth." I do not agree with this, since an examination of all the facts will show that it is an exceedingly flexible word.

In **Acts 17:31** we find an occurrence of this word, which I believe is unlimited.

Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Since the word judge here means to decide, to set the order, to set right, it is very important that we know how much of the earth as we know it today is going to enjoy this blessed ministry of the Son of God. This passage is quoted from Psalm 9:8 where we have the additional statement, "He shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness." Since this ministry is greatly to be desired, I will have to be pardoned if I am slow to accept a teaching, which includes Europe and the British Isles in this blessed rule, but which excludes the United States. But, God forbid that I should ever try to include either myself or my country in on some promise, which was not made to us. I do not reject a limitation or *oikoumene* here because of national aspirations, I reject it because I believe that *oikoumene* here means the whole inhabited earth. This is seen in the context of this passage where we are told that God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent (submit)."

In considering this word we are fortunate to find that it has an exact Old Testament equivalent. In Acts 17:31 where *oikoumene* is used we find that this is the word *tebel* in Psalm 9:8. Thus these two words are used interchangeably by the Holy Spirit, and this establishes beyond all arguments that these words are exact equivalents. When we examine all occurrences of *tebel* we find it used in the same flexible manner. In many occurrences it cannot be limited. See Psalm 9:8; Psalm 24:1; Psalm 33:8; Psalm 50:12; Psalm 96:13. It is translated "world" in all these passages.

The extent or limitations of the word *oikoumene* must be determined by each context. The scope of prophecy cannot be determined by it. It does not occur in the passages that speak of the blessings, which are to come upon all nations, all peoples, or all families. It can be limited in some passages, but it cannot be limited in Acts 17:31; Hebrews 2:5 or Revelation 16:14.

THE FAITH WE NEED

It was of a Roman centurion, a Gentile that the Lord Jesus Christ said, "**I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.**" **Matthew 8:10.** If we examine the record to find just what it was that caused the Lord to declare that He had not come upon such great faith before, it will be found in the fact that this man fully believed that the Lord could heal at a distance.

Just before this a leper had come to him saying, "**Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean**" (**Matt. 8:2**), and had received immediate healing from the worst scourge known to men. This was indeed a great example of faith, but the Lord offered no word of commendation.

As the Lord entered Capernaum this centurion came to Him, earnestly entreating Him saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." In answer the Lord said, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion realizing fully the censure that would come upon the Lord if He entered the house of a Roman centurion, declared that He was not worth of such. He said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." These words express his complete faith that the Lord could heal at a distance, and they brought forth the Lord's commendation for the greatness of His faith.

On every hand we find those who believe that the Lord can do nothing for Israel, nothing for the nations, nothing for the earth until He comes again and is personally present. They feel that His present location in the heavens renders Him practically powerless to do anything for suffering humanity. They feel that the world is in the mess that it is in because of His absence and that it will be no better until He is present. "There can be no kingdom without the King," is their rallying cry.

These people have no appreciation of the fact that He told His disciples that it was to their advantage that He should go away (John 16:7). They have no faith in the ability of the Holy Spirit to do the work upon earth that will bring God's order in place of man's chaos and confusion. They reason that if the Lord should speak from His present location that His voice would fade out before it reached the ears of men upon the earth. They insist that Jesus Christ must come back and be personally present somewhere in Jerusalem before there can be any change in world conditions. They have much more confidence in the effectiveness of the second coming than they have in the work He did at His first coming. On every hand men are proclaiming the marvelous blessings that the world can expect from the second coming, and at the same time they infer that about all we can expect out of His first coming is a few brands plucked out of the burning.

Ideas such as these, flow out of a lack of knowledge and appreciation of the present dispensation of grace. Men fail to see that during this display of the exceeding riches of God's grace the Holy Spirit cannot do the great work He came to earth to do. His greatest work is related to God's government and not to God's grace. The world has never yet seen what the Spirit of truth can do. Even though He is now upon the earth, yet we see error rampant. In fact as far as the prevalence of error is concerned, the world is no different today than before the Spirit of truth came. Those who know the truth of the present dispensation know that the great work He came to earth to do has been suspended while God's great purpose in grace is worked out. When this is complete, the world will see what Jesus Christ can do, sitting upon His throne in the heavens, working through the Spirit of truth upon the earth.

There are very few today who believe the Lord can work at a distance. The centurion believed this and was praised for his faith. This is an aspect of faith that is sorely needed today.

EDITOR TO HIS THE FRIENDS

***In answer to many inquiries, I will start off with a few personal notes. As these words are being written the year is drawing to a close. When we look back over it we know it has been a good year. Very little has happened to mar our happiness. And in view of the good things, which have been our portion, we thank God and take courage. At present Mrs. Sellers is enjoying good health and no traces of her former serious illness remain. Like most people today she is inclined to overdo, and this forces upon her the need of complete rest for a few days from time to time. I enjoy the best of health, except for those few things which are usually present when one has reached the age of fifty-two. But being a man of faith I am inclined to accept those things, which I believe are the result of death, which works in every member of the human race. I refuse to become involved in the search for that universal therapy which will stop the workings of that which Adam's sin brought upon all men. Furthermore, I fully accept the teachings set forth in 2 Timothy Chapter 3 and am not in the least surprised to find it happening just as God said it would. I refuse to fret myself because of evildoers.

***Mr. Herbert Baudistel, my associate in this ministry, makes his home with us, and although he is employed as a mechanical engineer with the Water and Power department, he does an enormous amount of work for The Word of Truth Ministry. He is an excellent student, and the quality of his work will soon be seen in a series of studies in Philippians, which will appear in forthcoming issues of The Word of Truth. The three of us do all the work in connection with this ministry. There are no paid workers, no office force, and no office hours. I have always sought to keep this work as simple as possible. I do not want to be the manager of a business. My calling in life is to be a student and teacher of the Word of God.

***I am sorry that there has been such a long gap between issues of The Word of Truth. Many things have entered into cause this delay. If writing this magazine were the only duty resting upon my shoulders, it would probably go out more regularly. There are other ministries, which I perform and there is never quite enough time for all of them. There are times in the written ministry when three or four projects must be juggled at one time because of their interrelationship. In the past four or five months I have been gathering together a vast amount of material and the outcome has been two complete magazines (of which this is one) and two or three pamphlets. This means that not quite so much time will elapse before the next issue, and you will also be hearing from us soon in regard to several new pamphlets, which we hope to get into print.

***Our time between September 1 and November 10 was spent in ministry in the Mid-west and East. Meetings ranging from one to eight services were held in Rockford, Peoria, Bloomington, and Evanston, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; South Bend, Indiana; Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Newaygo, Michigan; Buffalo and Greenwich, New York; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fifty-three messages were given in thirteen different places. We traveled by automobile and we enjoyed every minute of it. When we finished the ministry in Philadelphia, Mrs. Sellers and I decided to come home by way of Florida, taking two weeks for the return trip. The interest shown in the truths presented brought us a great deal of satisfaction. Fully believing the truth

of 2 Timothy 4:3, 4 we do not attempt to perform a ministry, which will show that God was mistaken. We rejoice in the fact that in so many places small groups are willing to come together for the sole purpose of hearing the Word of God.

****It is now evident that our tape-recorded ministry is going to be a major feature of our work. We now have word of sixteen individuals or groups who have secured equipment and are waiting for the messages. Our absence from Los Angeles since making the announcement of this ministry in the previous issue has caused a delay in getting these studies ready, and we have also been delayed due to the need of developing some workable plan whereby we could properly take care of a ministry as large as this has turned out to be. At present we plan to make twelve copies of each message, these will be sent to twelve outlets, these twelve will send them on to twelve more. The second group that receives them will return them to us. Inasmuch as the tape can be used over and over again, we will reuse this for other studies. These messages are specially prepared for this ministry. They will be in two series. The first will be fifty to fifty-five minutes in length. Two separate messages are on each seven-inch spool of tape, which means each spool will bring you almost two hours of Bible teaching ministry. These will be issued on the average of one message each week, and those participating in this ministry will receive two spools (four messages) at a time (once each month). These can be kept a reasonable length of time, but if you wish to keep them permanently they can be purchased at prices, which will be set later.

The second series will be thirty minutes in length and will consist of verse-by-verse expositions of the various books of the Bible. There will be two of these on each five-inch spool and they can be borrowed or purchased outright. All these plans are somewhat tentative as the best we can do is make a start and work out a system as we go along.

****If you want to participate in this ministry you will need to secure a tape recorder. Get one which will take a seven-inch spool and which runs at 334 inch speed. These machines record as well as play the recordings, and it may be that you will find other uses for this equipment. If your children are studying music, make a recording of their efforts and play it back to them. We consider the following machines to be good. Revere, Model T-70163, list price \$225.00. Pentron, Model 9T3-C, list price \$179.50. Web-Cor, Model 210, list \$190.00. Ekotape, Model 109, \$169.50. Wilcox Gay Recordio, Model 2 A-10, list \$150.00. Eicor, Model 115, \$144.95. We do not have these machines for sale. Contact an appliance dealer in your own town, and he may be willing to give you a generous discount. No specific recommendation is made as to which machine to buy. I like the Revere. My associate Herbert Baudistel likes the Web-Cor. Harry Miller in Philadelphia likes the Pentron, and Howard Spurgeon in Peoria purchased an Eicor.

Many have asked how to use this tape-recorded ministry. Here are a number of suggestions. You can listen to the messages yourself if no one else is interested. Mrs. Letha Painter, a retired school teacher in Victorville, California uses her machine in this manner. You can invite in a group of congenial friends to listen with you. Mr. Herbert Vanden Berg of Grand Rapids hopes to use his recorder this way. You can have a regular meeting in your home one night each week using the messages for ministry, and if feasible follow up with further study and discussion. Mr. J. Robert Gibson of San Diego has been doing this for some time, making use of the studies we present here on Sunday mornings and Tuesday nights. You can have a simple Sunday Bible School in your home for your own family. The thirty-minute studies are designed for this. There are dozens of ways you can use this ministry.

****SPECIAL NOTICE. The Sunday meetings in Los Angeles are now being held in a new location. We meet each Sunday morning at 11:00 and Sunday evenings at 7:30 at 642 South Berendo Street. This is two blocks west of Vermont, and between Sixth Street and Wilshire Blvd. The Tuesday night class still meets at 7:45 at 607 South Kenmore Avenue.

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