

MSB252

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBUCAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder - David R. Hettema, Director

THE RAPTURE: IS IT REAL?

By M. B. Hammond

The Day of the Lord is the time frame for the second coming and personal presence upon earth of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am awaiting His return though I will most likely die and be resurrected before enjoying that time.

I have no false aspirations about my "soul" going to heaven to be with Him, for my nature is dust and when I die I will return to the elements, even though my spirit goes back to God. I call myself a Dispensationalist, but I know that the Holy Spirit provides me (or anyone) with progressive revelation so that I can continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3: 18).

My lifelong direction has come from the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15: **"Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."**

In my youth I learned from the late Otis Q. Sellers, Dr. E.W. Bullinger (The Companion Bible), and Sir Robert Anderson (The Silence of God) that we are living today in the Dispensation of Grace (Eph. 3:2). They revealed the Acts Period as a unique, miracle-working dispensation in which "the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5:5) was given to the believers in the form of manifest gifts of the Holy Spirit to display blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is sad to me that so many devoted Christians, calling themselves

Dispensationalists, do not see the Acts 28:28 division between the various dispensations and are still fixed in the errant Platonic belief that man "has" a soul which goes to heaven when he dies. Such teachings deny the most marvelous and glorious work of God in providing resurrection to all worthy mankind. In fact they perpetuate Satan's lie to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), thus conflicting men's understanding of the destiny of mankind as well. These teachers include Dr. Billy Graham and the leaders of the Dallas Theological Seminary. These Dispensationalists all envision "the rapture" as the next thing in God's prophetic plan. This non-Scriptural tenet dates back to the mid-nineteenth century and the work of J.N. Darby, who first presented this idea. Furthermore, their insistence on the imminency of Christ's return completely ignores the things that Scripture clearly identifies as occurring before the Day of the Lord.

The Darby-Scofield system of Dispensational teaching placed 69 of Daniel's 70 weeks (Dan. 9:25-27) as having been accomplished before Christ's death (see notes on Daniel 9 in the Scofield Reference Bible).

Bullinger used this concept to develop a detailed chronology of Old Testament times (see The Companion Bible, Appendix. 50). As a result, his dates for the Babylonian captivity of the Jews and prior events are about 80-100 years in error with the best of secular dating and the chronology of James Ussher. My own studies indicate that Ussher's work is reasonably accurate up to the kings of Israel. Most dispensational scholars have bought into Darby's error, though using different methods to justify their prognosis. These men present an eschatology completely foreign to the truth of the Bible.

In 2 Thessalonians 1-4 Paul declares, **Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming** (*Gk. -parousia*, personal presence) **of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as the day of the Lord** (not Christ here) **is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away** (rebellion) **first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.** Sellers (see Seed & Bread No. SB111 , *Before The Day Of The Lord*) showed how the Lord planned to provide a full restoration of Israel with the temple, order of worship, and

government in place before the Day of the Lord took place. Dispensationalists have called this son of perdition the Antichrist and have tried to identify him with vile men living on earth in current times. They are willingly ignorant of the fact that God is working in secret in the Dispensation of Grace, and He is not fulfilling prophecy at this time. Likewise, they ignore the fact that 400 years of silence from the writing of Malachi to the time of Christ, was another period of God's silence, leading up to the manifestation of God's salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost Peter spoke to the Jews of all nations in Jerusalem, saying, **But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days** (*Gk.-eschatas hemeras*), **saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable Day of the Lord come** (Acts 2:16-20). (It is important to note that) This is only a partial fulfillment of this prophecy for many of the things described will come later, although there were many miracles, healings and other gifts of the Spirit evident to the people. Thus, there are many things which must take place before the *Parousia* of Christ. These "last days" equate to the statement in Isaiah 2:2, **And it shall come to pass in the last days** (*Heb.-acharyth yom; Septuagint Gk.-eschatas hemeras*), **that the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established on top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.**

The verses that follow in Isaiah (2:3-5) make it clear that there is to be a day yet to come when this world will be blessed by the Lord, and all its peoples will be given every opportunity to come to know and love God. There will be peace over all the earth and the people of Israel will be the priests of God for the nations.

This is not the presumed Millennium, when Jesus Christ is personally present as King here on earth. It is the time of the restoration of Israel; this is joining of that divided nation and David as their ruler as spoken in Ezekiel 37. It is the fulfillment of Malachi 4:1-6, a day when the Lord obliterates the

proud and the wicked, establishes the righteous and makes it possible for the restoration of Israel to the land. Note what God says, Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful (awe-inspiring) day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5), and clearly all of the promises God made to the Patriarchs will be fulfilled (see Seed & Bread No. **SB091**, *The Mission Of Elijah*).

Hosea says, **For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days** (*Heb.-acahryth yom*) (Hos. 3:4-5). That day of restoration Sellers designated as the premillennial Kingdom of God.

Jeremiah says, **Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people** (Jer.. 31:31-34).

Isaiah says, "**And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together**" (Isa. 40:5), for God has planned for a time when men will all know Him. However, after a long period of blessing, men will be tested (that is what "tribulation" means).

The parable of the sower in Matthew 13:24-30, and 13:37-43, clarifies that the tares (evil men) are allowed to grow with the good seed (righteous men) in the Kingdom, and at the time of testing the tares are burned in the fire.

Those who would frighten us with an imminent Annageddon make the rapture to be the "escape clause" for today's church. They postulate that the believer's reward is to be rescued from the horrors of the vengeance of the Lord and the battle of Annageddon in this passage:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are asleep in Jesus will God bring (lead forth) with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming (*parousia*) of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from

heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ (martyrs) shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4: 14-17).

This passage describes the second coming of Christ. He is coming to rule here on the earth for 1000 years. The battle of Annageddon follows His coming immediately: And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet. . . These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse, which sword proceedeth out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19: 19-21). The loyal followers and martyrs return to earth to live and reign with Him (Rev. 20:4). This is not a rapture or rescue, but rather a position for those who will serve Him in His reign. By the time this takes place the tribulation will be over, the seven vials of God's vengeance have been expended, and those that had the mark of the beast will have perished. The people of Israel, who had been chased out of the land (Matt. 24:16-20, Rev. 12:14-17), are returned and see the mighty protection of the Lord as He saves them from that attacking anny (Zech. 12:8-14).

It can be seen that the idea of a rapture is totally foreign to the word of God, and that He has planned a most wonderful blessing of all mankind with health, peace and plenty for all men. This Kingdom of God must take place before the Day of the Lord, and God will not bring the final testing until men have had every chance to know and love Him. When that happens, the "falling away" marks the withdrawing of God's restraints. Then, the events of Matthew 24, such as wars and rumors of wars, famines, and pestilences and earthquakes in many places (Matt 24:6-7), will be far more indicative of the end time than today's events.

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