

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR

Paul's exhortation to Titus, recorded in Chapter 2, verse 13 of the epistle written to him, sets forth a vital matter that is a definite part of the life and walk of those who are now believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. As God's present calling we must do the thing that is declared there if we would live well-pleasing to God in this the dispensation of. the grace of God. We must live:

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13.

It should be carefully noted that the idea of *living* needs to be carried into this passage from the preceding verse. Paul does not begin a new sentence in verse 13. We should live soberly, we should live righteously, we should live godly in this present world, we should live looking for (anticipating) that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

However, before this can be done, we must come to a decision as to what "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing" really is. We must know what the Spirit of God means by these words. We cannot live looking for an event if we do not know what it is.

Some may try to answer the question and end the search by saying it is a "person" we are looking for, not an "event." We refuse to be thus diverted from our search for truth. These words describe a definite event linked up to a person. Just what this event is should be settled, and it should be settled in such a way that we know we are resting upon the facts of God's Word.

Of course there are many who apart from any study or consideration are sure that they know what this "blessed hope" is. Three ideas are *set* forth. It is the declaration of some that this is "the rapture," the sudden removal of all living believers from the earth. Others insist that this is the second coming of Christ. A third group teaches that this "blessed hope" is "our manifestation with Christ in glory." Those who make this statement are quite hesitant about enlarging upon it, but when they do we find that it is nothing more than "the rapture" theory stated in different words.

These three ideas as to the meaning of "that blessed hope" are arbitrary opinions, not based upon any real facts in Scripture. To actually and honestly live looking for our sudden removal from this earth would result in a life so disordered and unreal that we would bring disgrace upon our great God whom we claim to follow. It does not help the matter if we drop the term "rapture" and call it "being manifested with Christ in glory." This cannot be what Paul meant when he told us to live in anticipation of His "glorious appearing" in Titus 2:13.

The Word *Epiphaneia*

It becomes evident at once to the careful student that this matter in the end is going to be settled by a true and correct understanding of the Greek word translated "appearing" in this passage. This is the word *epiphaneia* (pronounced ep-if-AN-i-ah), a word in regard to which there are many opinions. In order to free ourselves from this quagmire of human opinions we will need to adopt as a fixed principle of interpretation the rule that in dealing with this word it must be taken in its easy, natural meaning. This meaning will be its basic meaning as used by New Testament writers; then we will allow this basic meaning to guide us in dealing with every occurrence of this word. This, and this alone, will free us from the "everyone hath a doctrine" confusion.

In regard to the basic meaning of this word it *seems* best to state the conclusion first, then to present the facts upon which this conclusion is based. *Epiphaneia means a favorable intervention.* We will test this basic definition in every New Testament passage.

To show that this definition is not a "private translation," it may be well to add here that the celebrated Herman Cremer defines this word by such phrases as "the help-bringing appearing of the gods," "the manifestation of divine power and providence in extraordinary events," and "a miraculous interposition of God in behalf of His people." These definitions or explanations of *epiphaneia* come from its use by Classical Greek writers. Thus the definition of "favorable intervention" is based upon the facts of usage. Further facts shed much light on this word. These will be set forth, and the reader can then come to his own conclusions.

The History of *Epiphaneia*

This word has an interesting history which is not difficult to trace. Its origin is found in the verb *phaino* (pronounced FAI-no), which originally had to do with rays of light, and in the course of time came to mean "to shine." When we see the rays of the sun coming through the window we usually express this by saying that the sun is shining. By this we mean that the rays of the sun have become evident to the sense of sight. The sun is always sending forth light, but it is not always visible to us. The ancient Greek would express this by the word *phaino*. By an easy transition this word was in time applied to the appearing of men and things. Therefore, as a rule when this word is found in the New Testament it means "to appear." Note the following occurrences of *phaino*.

Matt. 1:20 - the angel of the lord *appeared* unto him

Matt. 2:7 - what time the star *appeared*

Matt. 13:26 - then *appeared* the tares also

It should be noted here that this is a later meaning of *phaino*, but in passing to this meaning the word does not lose its earlier meaning. Note the following occurrences where *phaino* is used in its earlier sense of "to shine:"

Matt. 24:27 - and *shineth* even unto the west

John 1:5 - And the light *shineth* in the darkness

Rev. 1:16 - as the sun *shineth* in his strength

From this word another word developed by adding the prefix *epi* (upon). This resulted in the word *epiphaino* (also a verb), which according to its elements should mean "to shine upon." However, this word was developed to express a peculiar idea, a distinct phenomenon which the word *phaino* did not and could not express. This is the word that means "to intervene favorably." It appears four times in the New Testament as follows:

Luke 1:79 - to give *light* to them that sit in darkness

Acts 27:20 - nor stars in many days *appeared*

Titus 2:11 - bringeth salvation *hath appeared*

Titus 3:4 - love of God our Savior toward man *appeared*

From this it will be seen that *epiphaino* is translated "give light" once and "appeared" three times. These are all very weak translations. They make the word *epiphaino* to mean nothing more than *phaino*. This destroys the value of a divinely selected and inspired word. It is essential that we know accurately what this verb means since it is the basis of the noun *epiphaneia*, the word with which we are primarily concerned.

An interesting part of the history of this word is to note its use among those "bold plowmen of the wave" who sailed their ships on the Mediterranean. This, in the days of Christ and Paul, was an exceedingly hazardous occupation. The timbers of these early sailing vessels were so badly put together that when subjected to the strain arising from a storm, they were required to be under girded by means of strong ropes. Due to this they seldom ventured out of sight of land or of some port into which they could run in stress of weather. Gales often reached hurricane strength, and ships were constantly being blown out to sea. This danger was heightened by the fact that clouds and rains usually followed a gale, so that ships often found themselves off course with no means of knowing their location. The sun and stars would remain hidden for many days at a time following such gales, causing the gloom and depression of sailors and passengers to constantly increase. But when the sun or stars did appear, the sailors would call this an *epiphaneia*, meaning both a shining upon and a breaking through. They spoke of it as if the sun or stars had intervened favorably in their behalf.

A vivid picture of this is seen in Luke's account of the voyage to Rome recorded in Acts 27. This is a masterpiece of descriptive writing, and it is considered by many authorities to be the best record in all literature of an extended ancient voyage. This account needs to be carefully read - but since so few are willing to do any extensive reading, a few pertinent passages will be quoted here.

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only to the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Acts 27:9-10.

Since all navigation on the Mediterranean usually ceased from the middle of November to the middle of March, Paul took the view that a continuation of the voyage so late in the season was sure to end in disaster; but his advice was not heeded, and the ship sailed on hoping to reach the more commodious harbor of Phenice and to spend the winter there. Everything seemed to be going well, when down from the Cretan mountains a typhonic wind struck the vessel, and not being able to face the wind they allowed the ship to be blown by it, making no attempt to maintain their course. Many attempts were made to improve their situation, but to no avail. Fearing lest they should be blown into

a certain quicksand area, they changed their course and were blown on into the Mediterranean. As the tempest continued, their situation became desperate. Luke sums it up in these words:

And when neither sun nor stars in many days APPEARED, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. Acts 27:20.

The word translated "appeared" here is the Greek word *epiphaino*. It sets forth an idea that our word *appear* does not begin to express. This word would not have been used of the ordinary shining of the sun or stars as they usually appear each morning or evening. Neither would it have been used by men on land to whom the sight of sun or stars made little or no difference. In such cases the Greek would have used the word *phaino*. But to men lost on a trackless sea, entirely dependent on sun or stars for guidance in their course, *epiphaino* is the word they would use if sun or stars had not been seen for a long time and then suddenly broke through the clouds. It would seem to those who were so dependent upon them that the sun or stars had broken through in their behalf; that they had actually intervened favorably to give them the help they so sorely needed.

This is what has led some to correctly define *epiphaneia* as meaning a "breaking forth" or "breaking through" (see Thayer). This is a figure of speech which we still apply to the sun or stars after they have been obscured for a time by the clouds.

The writer's studies into this word have resulted in the feeling that it may have originated as a nautical term, and that this word, like all expressive words, was taken up by others. It was laid hold of by the military to describe the rescue of beleaguered soldiers when their own fellow-soldiers suddenly appeared and broke through to give them aid. Then it was used by many writers to indicate any favorable intervention by the higher powers to help men. As Trench says, "This grand word was constantly employed to set forth these gracious appearances of the higher powers in aid of men."

Thus, to repeat what was said before, from all this we see that while *epiphaino* in its elements means literally "to shine upon," yet it is evident that this word was not coined to express this idea, and there is no record that it was ever used in any such literal sense. All evidence shows that it was used to indicate a breaking through in order to help, that is, a favorable intervention. In this definition we have a truth that will illuminate every passage in which these words occur, both the verb and the noun. Since there is no one word in English that can be used to express the real meaning of these words we use "intervene favorably" to express the verb, and "favorable intervention" to express the noun. This is the natural, unstrained meaning of these terms. It was their meaning when used by Classical Greek writers. It is their meaning in the New Testament.

In examining all passages in which these two words occur, we will find that four great events in the New Testament are described by these terms; that four things are called a "favorable intervention." Let us consider first all the occurrences of the verb.

Luke 1:79

To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

In this passage *epiphaino* is translated "to give light." This is interpretation, not translation. Even though the statement is true, it is not what the Greek says. The reference here is to the first coming of Christ, of which John the Baptist was the forerunner. Christ intervened favorably in behalf of those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The words "those sitting" picture men who are tired, worn out, and helpless, having given up the struggle. "In darkness" is intensified by describing it as "death's shadow." This passage tells us that the first coming of Christ was (and still is) an *epiphaneia*, a favorable intervention in behalf, of those who are in this desperate condition. He intervenes as a gracious guide to men who have lost their way. This is a most encouraging truth. Many have experienced it upon coming to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Acts 27:20

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

Here *epiphaino* is translated "appeared." What these sailors, prisoners, and passengers needed most was a favorable intervention of the sun or stars. From these they could have taken a reckoning and established the position and course of the ship.

Titus 2:11

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

Here *epiphaino* is translated "appeared," but this makes the passage to say something that was not true then and is not true now. The truth here can best be expressed by an expanded paraphrase: "For the grace of God bringing the blessing of deliverance and preservation has intervened favorably to all humanity." This is a passage that heralds a great truth, one of the greatest in the New Testament. From it we learn about another *epiphaneia*, the favorable intervention of the grace of God.

The student of the Word who has learned from its pages the great truth that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament, will also have learned that He was actively at work in behalf of mankind from the creation of Adam until that time when He was made flesh and intervened favorably in behalf of those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Thus, all the work He had ever done in behalf of mankind found its culmination and great triumph in that *epiphaneia* (favorable intervention) when God was manifest in the flesh.

The same student will know that the grace of God, that aspect of His character which leads Him to show love and favor to the undeserving, is first seen in some of God's dealings with Adam and Eve. Beginning with this first pair, a great trail of grace can be followed until it reaches its greatest peak in the years that followed the death and resurrection of Christ. Grace is seen as reigning dominant over all other methods that God used in dealing with men. However, even in the great grace of the Acts period, the supreme display of grace had not yet been reached. There came the time when grace intervened favorably in such manner that this should now be called the *epiphaneia* of the grace of God. Grace intervened in a manner that mankind had never experienced before. This took place at that point in history marked by Acts 28:28. It was at this point that God suspended all activities that had to do with His prophesied kingdom purposes and began to write into the long history of His dealings with mankind a record of the graciousness of His character.

The favorable intervention of the grace of God as an administration (dispensation) is a truth that is realized only by those who take God at His word and think accordingly. Since God in grace now acts silently and secretly, and since His present riches are untraceable, there is nothing about God's present dealings with mankind that can be perceived by the senses. The man of faith knows that there came a time when the grace of God bringing the blessing of salvation intervened favorably in behalf of all mankind. This does not mean that all men will accept the blessing that grace brings, but it does mean that the whole human race is in some manner being blessed because of the advent of God's great administration of grace.

When the book of Acts is carefully studied, and we think upon the dark and dismal days that followed Paul's last visit and arrest in Jerusalem, and the years that passed until he stood before the chief of the Jews in Rome, we hope for something that will alter the course of events. The Jews will

not have their Messiah, Paul is a prisoner, and he at last makes the announcement that sidetracks all God's kingdom purposes. He declares that the salvation of God has been sent to the nations. This fact makes impossible any further fulfillment of God's prophesied program, since every line of prophecy demands that the salvation of God shall be with and among His people Israel. It seems at this point that there is nothing left for humanity but that the ravages of sin, disease, war and pestilence shall destroy it.

However, God had a secret purpose and program which had never been made known to the children of men. He will demonstrate His grace by means of an administration of grace, and by so doing He will write into the history of His long dealings with mankind a complete record of the graciousness that is His greatest attribute. It is the grace that He is now showing that acts to deliver and to preserve the human race.

As an illustration of the truth of this passage, let us consider that on every hand today, those who make a study of the present world scene unite in testifying that we are living in an hour of dire crisis which might indicate the eclipse of civilization and the destruction of humanity. The threat of total atomic war, which daily hangs over the head of mankind, has caused thinking men to speak of the probable result in such phrases as "the annihilation of all human life," "the complete collapse and extermination of mankind," and "we may be the last generation of mankind." A writer in the Christian Century sums it up as follows: "From this hour onward, one cannot be assured of continuation of earthly and human existence; one can only hope for it."

We would be inclined to fully agree with these statements if it were not for two very plain statements in the Word of God. The first is in the passage we are considering (Titus 2:11), which tells us that the unmerited favor of God bringing the blessing of deliverance and preservation has intervened favorably in behalf of all humanity. The second is found in I Timothy 4:10, which tells us that the living God is now acting as a Savior of all mankind, specially of those that believe. In view of these two great declarations we can be assured of the continuation of humanity, and we can do more than just hope for it, we can expect it. Atomic warfare might come but it can never destroy the human race. It is part of the grace that God is showing in this the dispensation of grace that He acts to deliver and to preserve the human race from everything which might destroy it.

This great truth has long been obscured by those who have sought to relate Titus 2:11 and I Tim. 4:10 to all individual men instead of to humanity. These passages do not teach that every individual will be preserved. We must not make the mistake of seeing the trees and failing to see the forest. The forest of humanity will continue upon the earth even though many individual trees may fall. Let all who see God's present work of grace offer thanks and praise to Him that the grace of God has favorably intervened and that He is now acting as the Savior of all humanity.

Many of the benefits that are part of the dispensation of grace are universal and unlimited so far as the human race is concerned. Grace is God's present method of dealing with the whole human race. Titus 2:11 is the epigrammatic proof of this. The human race has been preserved. The human race will be preserved. Because of God's commitment to an administration of grace, the "rotten apples" are left in the barrel, but God has preserved the barrel in spite of the rottenness of many.

We will now consider the final occurrence of the verb.

Titus 3:4

But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared.

In this passage *epiphaino* is translated "appeared," This is very weak, and it misrepresents the truth, It seems to make Paul say that "the kindness and love of God our Savior" had never appeared before

a certain time. This is not the truth. A more accurate rendering would be: "But when the kindness and affection for humanity of our Savior, God, favorably intervened."

From this we learn that there is a specific time in the history of God's dealings with the human race when His kindness and affection toward humanity shone forth, or broke through, or intervened favorably. This is usually connected with the death of Christ, but in the light of the immediate context it seems that it should be related to the advent of the dispensation of the grace of God. The use of the word *chrestotes* (kindness) along with the word *philanthropia*, (affection for humanity) indicates that this is the truth stated here. Not until we "know as we are known" will we ever fully appreciate the great affection for humanity God is showing in this present administration.

The noun *epiphaneia* occurs six times in the New Testament. A concordance of all occurrences is here given.

II Thess. 2: 8 - destroy with the *brightness* of His coming

I Tim. 6:14 - until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus

II Tim. 1:10 - by the *appearing* of our Savior Jesus Christ

II Tim. 4:1 - at His *appearing* and His kingdom

II Tim. 4:8 - them also that love His *appearing*

Titus 2:13 - the glorious *appearing* of the great God

These six passages reveal a wealth of truth which we can add to the facts we have gained from the four occurrences of the verb.

II Thessalonians 2:8

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the bright ness (*epiphaneia*) of His coming (*parousia*).

A definite order of events is revealed in the context of this verse, in which the favorable intervention of the *parousia* (personal presence) of Christ is set forth as the grand climax. It is the day of the Lord that is in view here, and Paul declares that it shall not come until there has been (1) a falling away (2) the revelation of the man of sin. Then will follow his desecration of the temple of God, and the favorable intervention of the second coming of Christ.

This demonstrates beyond all question that the personal presence of Christ at His second coming is an *epiphaneia*; that it is a breaking through in order to give help, a favorable intervention. However, this cannot be the "blessed hope" that we are instructed to live looking for. Too many great events must precede the *epiphaneia* of His second coming; therefore, it cannot be our immediate expectation. This makes plain the error of those who are saying that the *epiphaneia* is our hope while the *parousia* is Israel's hope. They reveal a lack of understanding of both of these important words. True, there is one *epiphaneia* which is our blessed hope. For this we are to live looking. But we must know which *epiphaneia* is our hope and what it is we are looking for.

The divine intervention described in II Thess. 2:8 will not be favorable for the man of sin, but it will be a favorable intervention in behalf of beleaguered Israel whom he seeks to destroy.

I Timothy 6:14

That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing (*epiphaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this passage an *epiphaneia* is mentioned again without being identified. However, there are things in the words that follow that provide a positive clue as to which *epiphaneia* is meant. The words "in His times" should be "in its times," and they refer to the *epiphaneia*, not to Christ. Under the situation or condition of things brought about by His favorable intervention He is going to be showing that He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is also going to be showing that He alone has immortality. Thus, the first great lie ever told (ye shall not surely die), one that has been constantly perpetuated by the false teaching about "the immortality of the soul," is going to be nullified and set right. All this belongs to the day when the Spirit of truth will enlighten mankind in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment.. This *epiphameia* is God's government bringing a tidal wave of light and truth.

II Timothy 1:10

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

This passage has reference to the first coming of Christ. Indeed this was a favorable intervention. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

II Timothy 4:1

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing (*epiphaneia*) and His kingdom.

This passage brings us to grips with the truth concerning that favorable intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ for which we are to live looking. Here the *epiphaneia* is defined as being "His kingdom." The Greek word *basileia* here translated "kingdom" means government. The last phrase would be better translated "at His appearing, even His kingdom." The two nouns here are in apposition; one defines the other. This passage speaks of the favorable intervention of the government of God through Jesus Christ.

The word "judge" here does not have to do with settling the final destiny of either the living or the dead. We err grievously when we constantly connect this word with God's determining the final destiny of men. To judge is to fully review and consider a matter; to come to a conclusion concerning it; then to so order that it shall be that way.

This passage tells us that a time is coming in the future when God is going to make a full review of all the living upon the earth and all the dead in the state of death. He is going to consider them carefully and come to a conclusion concerning them. If among the living, He will determine whether they are to continue to live or to be purged from among men. If among the dead, He will determine if they are to be raised from the dead to live again upon this earth under His benevolent government. If, they are to be raised to live under His government, then the time of their resurrection, their position, their rewards, and their future service will all be determined by this review. This is to take place at that time when God intervenes favorably to govern the earth.

The great theme of the Bible is that the day will come when the government of God will be a reality upon the earth. God is going to impose His rule upon the nations of this earth (Psalm 67:4). He is going to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). He is going to reign over the nations (Romans 15:12). He is going to show judgment (an equitable administration of justice) to the nations (Matt. 12:18). The nations are going to hopefully trust in Him (Matt. 12:21). He will judge Israel righteously and govern the nations upon the earth (Psalms 67:4). All the ends of the earth shall fear Him (Psalm 67:7). This is the blessed future of Israel, of the nations, and of the earth. All this will be

a reality when God intervenes favorably and imposes His government upon the earth. This is the *epiphaneia* spoken of in II Timothy 4: 1. It is the intervention of God's government. It is a day when the order and rule of God will be a reality upon the earth. It is the day when God's government will replace all those elements in human government that have been so imperfect, unrighteous, and disappointing.

II Timothy 4:8

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing (*epiphaneia*).

This precious promise should bring forth some deep exercise among God's children. Do we love His *epiphaneia* with such a love that our hearts are fixed upon it?

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

This final occurrence of the word now brings us back to the passage we started with and to the question asked in the title of this study, "What are we to live looking for? What is this *epiphaneia*?" In view of some of the facts we have learned from our review of all occurrences of this word, it is evident that the Greek of this passage could be more accurately rendered: "Anticipating that blessed expectation, even the favorable intervention of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

In this passage the blessed expectation *is* the breaking forth of the glory of Jesus Christ. The word *glory* is a common one, especially in religious circles. Few there are who have any understanding of its actual meaning. John declares that he and his fellow apostles beheld the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They could not give Him this glory. It had been given to Him by the Father, but they beheld it. The knowledge of it was made plain to them. There were many who saw Him as a person, but they saw nothing but a carpenter's son (Matt. 13:55). His own apostles saw Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, but this was only because the Father had revealed this unto them. The true glory of Jesus Christ is all that He is in the sight of God. It is what God esteems Him to be, not what man esteems Him to be.

The time will yet come when it will be made plain in every square foot of the universe just who and what Jesus Christ is in relation to God and in the sight of God. The esteem in which the Father holds Him will be revealed. This is knowledge which God will force upon the human race so that it becomes a part of the conscience of every man. This is what Paul calls the favorable intervention of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. When this takes place, all the confusion concerning Him will be dispelled.

This is the blessed expectation which Paul sets forth to Titus. This is what we should live anticipating. This should be the expectation of all who believe in Him.

This is not His second coming. This is not His personal presence upon the earth. This is that great work which God does when He speaks once more from heaven and says, "Let there be light." This light will concern the Lord Jesus, and it will become one of the great foundation stones upon which His government of mankind is to be erected. We should live anticipating this, as it could happen at any moment.

The Four Events

From our studies we have learned that the word *epiphaneia* cannot be applied to anyone event in Scripture. Four great events are described by the use of this term.

1. The first advent of Jesus Christ. Luke 1:79.
2. The advent of God's present administration of grace. Titus 2:11 and 3:4.
3. The advent of God's government over the earth. II Tim. 4:1.
4. The second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. II Thess. 2:8.

Each of these events can be properly described as a favorable intervention. Each is a breaking through in order to help. Two of these are past events and two of them are still future.

What are we looking for? The writer cannot speak for others, but as for himself, he is living in anticipation of that day when the government of God shall break forth upon the earth, bringing a tidal wave of light, truth, healing, and health.

The End

BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD

Reference was made in our previous issue to a statement by Mr. Charles H. Welch in *The Berean Expositor* in which he said, "There is no interval for a Pre-Millennial kingdom in the records of the Apocalypse." The truth of this I readily admit, and I have never hinted that a time of divine government for Israel and the nations in advance of the second coming of Christ can be found in the book of Revelation. I do not believe that Revelation gives the complete picture of all that is to happen in the future. The final book of the Bible belongs to the day of the Lord; however, there are most positive revelations in Scripture of events that will precede the day of the Lord. If these direct statements are received and believed, then we will be forced to admit that a time of divine blessing for Israel and for the nations must precede the opening scenes set forth by John in the Apocalypse.

In **Revelation 1:10** the writer declares:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

As to the meaning of this phrase I will quote from three writers with whom I am in substantial agreement.

In a word, he was (*en pneumati*) **IN SPIRIT** - in a condition wholly loosened from the earth - transported by means of the Spirit, - (*en te kuriake hemera*) **INTO THE LORD'S DAY** - stationed as a spectator amid the very scenes of the great judgment itself. Lectures on the Apocalypse, *Dr. Joseph A. Seiss*.

John was transported by spiritual instrumentality into the scenes which shall take place in the Day of the Lord, and records what he then saw in vision: namely: the things which shall take place literally and actually in that Day. How this may have been accomplished we may learn from Ezekiel 8:3. *The Apocalypse, Dr. E. W. Bullinger*.

There is no mystery about the meaning of John when he tells us that he "came to be in the day of the Lord in spirit." It cannot possibly mean that he felt in a specially spiritual frame of mind on a

Sunday - such a suggestion is too trivial to require refuting. We should, moreover, be thankful that the expression "I became" has been used in ver. 9 in a sense that is literal. John *became* in Patmos literally and really. He *became* in the day of the Lord in Spirit, and not literally and really.

The book of Revelation is taken up with something infinitely vaster than days of the *week*. It is solely concerned with the **day of the LORD**. To read that John became in Spirit *on* the Lord's day (meaning Sunday), tells us practically nothing. To read in the solemn introduction that John became in spirit *in* the Day of the Lord, that day of prophetic import, is to tell us practically everything.

If in Rev. 1. John is taken, in spirit, to the future day of the Lord to see the visions and to write them in a book, ALL the book that he writes, including chap. I, II, and III, must be future in their interpretation. There is no part of the prophecy or vision that is not "in the day of the Lord." *This Prophecy, Mr. Charles H. Welch.*

From this quotation it will be seen that Mr. Welch and I are in full agreement that **ALL** the book of Revelation, every vision in it, every chapter in it, belongs to the day of the Lord.

It is also my conviction that *this* day of the Lord includes the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks, the thousand year reign of Christ, and the little season at the end. All of Revelation is future. Not one part of it belongs to past history except the first ten verses of the first chapter. These relate the experience of John in regard to the vision given to him. Thus there is no disagreement between Mr. Welch and me as to the Apocalypse belonging entirely to the day of the Lord. Now, what about the things which Scripture declares must take place before the day of the Lord? Can we as mature believers reach some agreement here? I will be happy to explore this possibility and hope Mr. Welch will do the same.

In view of what has already been said, it is my firm, conviction that everything in Scripture which is declared to be "before the day of the Lord" will take place before the fulfillment of any vision recorded in the book of Revelation. . The reader will readily see that this position is logical. Since Revelation belongs to the day of the Lord, all things "before the day of the Lord" must precede it.

Elijah Shall Come First

The first great event that must precede the day of the Lord is the appearance and ministry of Elijah.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5-6.

From this we see that before the day of the Lord comes, before the first vision of Revelation is fulfilled, there will be a man sent from God named Elijah. This man will be none other than Elijah the prophet, Israel's greatest prophet. He will do a work of such far-reaching spiritual importance in Israel that when the Lord comes there will be no reason for Him to smite the earth with a curse.

Our Lord enlarged and explained this great truth when He said to His disciples: "**Elias (Elijah) truly shall first come, and restore all things.**" **Matt. 17:11.**

If these facts of Scripture are honestly faced they will change our entire conception of the book of Revelation. It is not only future, but every line of it must be placed in a time beyond the appearance of Elijah, beyond his great accomplishment of "turning the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers." Yes, before the first event prophesied in Revelation takes place, there must be, through the ministry of Elijah, a restoration of all things in Israel.

These facts are given no place by those who have written commentaries on Revelation, not even by those who admit that the whole book belongs to the day of the Lord.

The great truth of what must take place before the first line of Revelation will be fulfilled provides solid encouragement for those who honestly recognize the difficulties, questions, and problems that face every student of this book. There is real consolation in the fact that before the first vision recorded in this book is fulfilled, a man sent from God named Elijah will have appeared. He will be fully capable of explaining every word of this book. He will restore man's lost understanding of the divine idioms used throughout this book. The world will know what every word of Revelation means before any man is called upon to face the things revealed in it. Thank God for this.

Accepting the truths declared in Malachi 4:5-6 and Matthew 17:11 at their face value, no other belief is possible but that there will be a period of beneficent and benevolent divine activity before the first event predicted in Revelation is fulfilled. This is enough to prove a premillennial kingdom of God, but there is much more.

The Spirit Poured Out

Another statement of things that must take place before the great and notable day of the Lord comes is so vast that it serves as a challenge to all who claim to take God at His word and to think accordingly.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, 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 vapour 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 2:17-20.

In this passage we have two definite time elements that enclose the promises made in it. "It shall come to pass in the last days . . . before that great and notable day of the Lord come." No more positive words could be used to describe a time of divine activity before the Apocalyptic scenes shall be fulfilled.

We can be only amused at the confusion of those who struggle to make this passage say less than it does say, or to make it mean something different. Since these words were spoken to "Ye men of Judea," we are told that this limits "all flesh" to Israel. One might as well say that if I am speaking directly to you and speak of "all mankind" that this makes "all mankind" to be limited to you. Then we are told that verses 19 and 20 describe "the great tribulation." If this is so then "the great tribulation" is something that precedes the scenes of Revelation. This would make two "great tribulations" - one before the day of the Lord and one in the day of the Lord. They link Acts 2:19, 20 with Revelation 6:12, never stopping to think that one of these events precedes the day of the Lord and that the other takes place in it.

Such struggles with the truth are in vain. Let us here meet the test of believing the Word of God, and recognize in Acts 2:17-20 a record of divine activity, benevolent and beneficent in its character, that will precede the events described in Revelation. This will call for an entirely new concept of the truth revealed in the final book of the Bible, but let us be equal to this also.

A Falling Away First

God's future program for mankind is first blessing and then testing, then again blessing followed by testing. The first period of blessing will be under the kingdom of God. The first testing will be

when God once again permits man to walk in his own way. This will demonstrate the righteousness of many but will reveal the unrighteousness of some. The second period of blessing is in the millennium, followed by the loosing of Satan in the little season. Both of these testings result in an uprising against God upon the part of some. Let us consider the uprising which must precede the day of the Lord (not "day of Christ" as in King James Version).

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. II Thess. 2:3.

The word translated "falling away" here is *apostasia* which in the Septuagint means a revolt. A record of this revolt is found in Psalm 2, where a rebellion against Jehovah and His Anointed is described. The nations are, therefore, at the time of the rebellion subject to Jehovah. As Rotherham says:

We are indebted to Delitzseh 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 those restraints that they turn restive, against those restraints that they rebel. *Studies in the Psalms*,

The definite article precedes the word *apostasia* in II Thess. 2:3. It is not *a* rebellion, it is *the* rebellion. The outstanding rebellion referred to in prophecy is the one set forth in Psalm 2. This, it is my conviction, is the one to which Paul refers in II Thessalonians. This must precede the day of the Lord; must precede all things written in the book of Revelation.

Even the unveiling of the man of sin must precede the day of the Lord. While most of his diabolic activities will take place within the day of the Lord, yet that day will not come until he has been unveiled. Much of Revelation concerns his activities but he must be in evidence before any of it is fulfilled.

Yes, it is entirely true - there is no interval for a premillennial kingdom in the records of the Apocalypse. But what about those things that must precede the day of the Lord? An interval of time must be required for the fulfillment of these.

The word of God sets forth positive facts that indicate a long period of divine activity that is no part of God's present administration and must precede the day of the Lord. Prophetic systems have been devised which leave no time for this. The question we now face is whether we shall preserve our traditions or come to grips with the Word of God.

The End

THE CORINTHIAN ERROR

What was the Corinthian error? Whether one is a casual reader or a diligent student of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he realizes when he comes to the fifteenth chapter, that a serious error is being dealt with; that a false teaching is being refuted. If we ask what this error is, the answer usually given is that some among the Corinthian saints did not believe in the resurrection.

This answer does not satisfy the diligent student. It causes too many complications and creates too many problems. This will be realized by the student if he has kept in mind all that he has learned from this epistle before he comes to this next-to-the-last chapter.

This epistle is addressed to the outcalled of God in Corinth. They are described as being "sanctified in Christ Jesus," "called saints." They had been enriched by Christ in all utterance and knowledge, and they came behind in no gift. In the opening words of the fifteenth chapter, Paul speaks of them as being those to whom he had preached the gospel, as those who had received the gospel, and who were standing in it. One feature of this gospel which they had received and in which they stood was the truth that "**Christ rose again the third day.**" This they believed. In view of this, it seems to be a false charge when we say that some among the Corinthian saints did not believe in the resurrection. They did believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so they cannot be classed with those who say "there is no resurrection," even as did the Sadducees. In fact the evidence indicates that they had actually taken up Paul's message and were heralding the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:12). What then was their error?

Could it be that they had held the Sadduceean view before they believed and had brought this error into their new found faith? Or could it be that after becoming believers they had adopted the Sadduceean error? If they said, "There is no resurrection," then one of these explanations must be true, but it does not seem that either one of these can be true.

In the Gospels and Acts we find that the group called the Sadducees are described as those "which say there is no resurrection," and as being those "which deny that there is any resurrection (Matt. 22:23, Mark 12: 18, Luke 20:27, Acts 23:8). Our Lord warned against "the leaven of the Sadducees", that is, against their teaching, and since we know nothing more about their beliefs than that recorded in the Word of God, His solemn warning was directed against their denial of the resurrection.

There is no record that any Sadducee ever became a disciple of or a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their preeminent doctrine was a denial of resurrection and this made it impossible for them to believe in One of whom the claim was made that He had died and had risen again. We are inclined to admire them for their honesty. They said, "We do not believe in resurrection, therefore we cannot believe in one who claims to have risen from the dead." The present day deniers of the resurrection of Jesus Christ are not troubled by any such intellectual honesty. They deny the resurrection, but claim to be followers of the One who claims to have risen from the dead.

If in the Corinthian ecclesia there were men who denied the resurrection, then they must have been of the Sadducee persuasion before they believed, or else they turned to Sadducee principles after they believed. But this cannot be, for no man can be classed as a believer in the record God gave of His Son if he denies the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And if He abandons this truth after having professed to believe, he has believed in vain; he has failed to continue in the faith. The Corinthians cannot be charged with this. Paul's description of them establishes the reality of their faith. What then was their error?

The Sadducees said, "There is no resurrection." Some among the Corinthian believers said, "There is no resurrection of the dead."

The casual reader may say that he fails to see any great difference; that both statements appear to be about the same. The difference is this: the Sadducees denied resurrection as a principle. They said there was no such thing as a restoration to life of one who was dead. No believer in Corinth would have agreed with this, since it strikes at the very heart of all true Christian teaching. But some in Corinth did deny the totality of resurrection, the universality of resurrection so far as men are concerned.

No one among the Corinthian saints denied the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They proclaimed this. They did not deny the fact of resurrection. They did not deny the resurrection of some of the dead, but they did deny the resurrection *of the dead*. In all probability they believed in the resurrection of the just, but denied the resurrection of the unjust. To say "there is no resurrection of the dead" is to deny the universality of resurrection. This was the Corinthian error.

That this is the truth is seen in the fact that Paul begins at this point to declare and to prove the universality of resurrection. Let us see how he does this.

If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. I Cor. 15:13.

The term "the dead" as used here cannot mean any less than all the dead. When Christ died and rose again He purchased a new life for every man. It is therefore mandatory that everyone who has ever died shall live again. The only way the universality of resurrection could be denied is to deny the resurrection of Christ. Some may think that resurrection should be limited to "the dead in Christ," but no such limiting phrase is used here.

Since these Corinthians were believers, they believed that Christ had risen from the dead, and they must also have believed that He had raised others from the dead. Furthermore, it must have been that in their own experience they had seen men raised from the dead, since this miracle was not uncommon in the thirty-three years of the Acts period. In view of this, Paul must be dealing with their denial of the totality of resurrection. This is demonstrated further by the fact that in verse 18 he singles out "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ." There would be no need for this if only the believing dead are in view all the way through Paul's discussion. Let the reader make an honest comparison between the terms "the dead," "the dead in Christ" (I Thess. 4:16), and "those fallen asleep in Christ," and he will see at once that the phrase, "the resurrection of the dead," is universal.

In many places in the New Testament we are told that Christ was raised "from among the dead." Was He raised from among "some of the dead?" In Matthew 10:8 the Apostles were commanded to "raise the dead." Were they to be selective in regard to this, or were they to raise each dead one upon whom they came?

As Paul's arguments for the universality of resurrection are traced out in I Corinthians 15, we come to his great climax in I Corinthians 15:20-22, the supreme statement being:

For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive. I Cor. 15:22.

This passage sets forth the universality of the death that came through Adam, and the universality of the resurrection that will come through Christ. It is parallel in truth with the verse that precedes it, thus providing a divine safeguard as to its meaning.

A. For since by man came death

B. By man came also the resurrection of the dead.

A. For as in Adam all die

B. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The criticism made by some that this would make verse 22 to be nothing more than "a superfluous repetition" of verse 21 reveals a lack of appreciation of the many parallel statements that are found throughout Scripture.

The words "in Adam all die" cannot mean any less (or any more) than every member of the human race. Some will raise the objection that Enoch and Elijah did not die. This is true, and an exact rendering of the Greek will remove any difficulty that this seems to cause. This should read, "For as in Adam, all are dying." This was true of Enoch and Elijah. They too were dying until God intervened and stopped the process of death working in them.

The words "in Christ shall all be made alive" must take in the same number as the "all" who are dying in Adam. Many attempts have been made to make this say, "all in Christ shall be made alive," and thus limit resurrection to those related to God through faith in Christ. But the order of the Greek words will not allow this, and no man has the right to change the statement, "in Christ shall all" to "all in Christ shall."

It must always be remembered that in any sentence in New Testament Greek the leading words have grammatical form, rank and order. This syntax is as fully inspired as are the words, and it cannot be altered without damaging the work of the Spirit. If we believe that "in Christ shall all be made alive" then we are believing what God said. If any believe that "all in Christ shall be made alive," he is also believing a truth, but it is not the truth stated here. We must believe the Word here, not man's revision of the Word. The order of the Greek words here will not allow the idea of "all in Christ" and the parallelism makes it impossible. This close parallel is marked by the words "even as" and "thus also."

The subject of I Corinthians 15:20-24 is resurrection. The subject is not salvation or reconciliation. The subject is resurrection. The Corinthian error was that they were denying the universality of resurrection so far as mankind is concerned. This is the error that Paul is refuting. The words "of the dead" here would be superfluous if they do not designate all who are in the state of death. The Corinthians did not deny *resurrection*. They were not Sadducees. Some among them **did deny the resurrection of the dead. This was their error.**

It is the promise of our God that He will raise the dead. He will yet do a work which when completed, all the descendants of Adam who have lived and died will have experienced resurrection from the state of death. This experience will be the portion of "both the just and the unjust," as Paul so emphatically states in Acts 24:15. This will be "every man in his own company." For some, this will come "after the thousand years are finished". (Revelation 20:5), and this is set forth by John in the statement, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Rev. 20:12.

The words "small and great" are a Hebrew idiom that is found quite a few times in the Old Testament, once in Acts and five times in Revelation. In every occurrence the term is all-inclusive and all-embracing so far as the subject is concerned. It never permits an exception or distinction unless that exception is recorded in the context. Note the following occurrences:

Genesis 19:11. Every man at the door of the house, no exception.

Deuteronomy 1:17. Every man in Israel to be treated alike, no exceptions.

I Samuel 5:9. Every man in Gath, no exceptions.

I Samuel 20: 2. Do nothing, no exceptions. Jonathan may have been mistaken about his father, but his statement permits no exceptions.

I Samuel 30:2. They did not kill one, no exceptions.

I Samuel 30:19. Nothing lacking, no exceptions.

Acts 26:22. Paul made no exceptions.

Revelation 11:18. All that fear God's name, no exceptions.

Revelation 13:16. All without exception are required to take the mark. Some refuse, but there are no exceptions to the requirement.

Revelation 19:5. All that fear Him, no exceptions.

Revelation 19:18. All classes of men, no exceptions.

The subject of Revelation 20:12 is "the dead." They are pictured as standing before God to be judged. John says, "I saw the dead," and as a safeguard against all attempts to limit this he adds "small and great." If any are among the dead at this time, they will be raised. There are no exceptions.

Does the reader believe in the resurrection of the dead?

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