

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE ORDER OF EVENTS

It is a major task but not an impossible one to become quite familiar with all that the Bible says from Genesis to Revelation, from the original creation to the new heavens and new earth which brings the earth back to its pristine condition. In fact this familiarity will come automatically to the one who is constantly reading, hearing, and meditating upon the Sacred Scriptures. If I had spent more than sixty years in working with the Bible and did not know what it says, I would judge myself as being mentally incompetent.

This in no way is meant to be a claim upon my part to understand all that the Bible sets forth. To know a thing and to understand that thing are two different matters. In both the divine realm and the human realm I know many things that I do not understand. I know from experience that there is a healing process that works in my body, but I do not understand how it works, and I do not think anyone else does. I am also familiar with the "four living creatures" and "the wheel in the middle of the wheel" spoken of in Ezekiel 1 :5, 16, but I do not know what God is telling us by means of these visions.

When one becomes familiar with the Bible he will surely know that it tells of many important events that are yet to come. And he will know quite well that the final event, beyond which divine revelation does not go, is that God makes "**all things new**" (Rev. 21:5), that this brings in a new universal state of things called **the new heaven and new earth** (Rev. 21:1), a condition of things which is also called "**the day of God**" (2 Peter 3:12, 13).

There are many who believe that the new heaven and the new earth is the next event in the divine order, and that it is produced by and immediately follows the second coming of Christ. This idea suddenly emerged and was quickly established about 1800 A.D. when the present intensive study of prophecy was only in its infancy. It ignores altogether much that God has said about things to come, making nugatory much of the Word by claiming it was fulfilled by some event in history.

Working backward from the new heaven and new earth we find in Revelation 20: 1-7 a period spoken of six times as "**a thousand years.**" This is the period of time that men call "the millennium" (from the Latin word *mille* which means a thousand, and the word *annum* which means years). However, the Biblical name for this period is the **parousia**, a word which has been twisted to make it mean "coming," but which really means (when used of a person) a personal presence when one is present because of who he is (his position) and what he does in fulfillment of his position (See Issues No. **SB024** and **SB025**). The parousia or personal presence of Christ is introduced by His second coming.

At His coming (*erchomar*) one of the first acts of His personal presence (*parousia*) is that He lays hold of Satan and binds him for a thousand years so that he is unable to deceive the nations any more until the thousand years of his imprisonment are finished, after which "**he must be loosed for a little season**" (Rev. 20:3, 7).

- * Thus we now see that beginning with the **second coming**, we have the thousand years of Christ's personal presence during which Satan is bound,
- * then this followed by "**a little season**" when he is loosed
- * and this in due time followed by the **new heaven and new earth..**

We have now established three very important periods of time in which every revelation concerning events that are connected with the second coming and all that follow it can be placed. However, one thing is crystal clear. Future prophetic fulfillments do not begin with the second coming of Christ. There are eighteen chapters in Revelation that tell of events that precede His actual coming recorded in Rev. 19: 11-16, and these chapters deal entirely with that period of time which is

- "**the revolt against the kingdom**" .. The events that take place in this seven-year period of time have been dealt with in SEED and BREAD, Issues No. **SB039, SB040, SB113, SB114**. All things spoken of in Matt. 24:4-26 take place in this time period. The last three and one half years of it is one of great tribulation.

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If we keep moving backward from the revolt against the kingdom we come to the most important time period in divine revelation, This is

- **the time period of the kingdom of God**, a long period of divine government. This is the era that is unrecognized and ignored by all present well-known writers and teachers who deal with prophecy. They take everything the Bible says concerning it and dump it all into the time period of the millennium. If it will not fit there, they simply ignore it, a fact that is seen in their treatment of

Matt. 12: 18-21. This passage sets forth three positive divine actions: (1) He shall show judgment to the nations; (2) He will send forth judgment unto victory; (3) In His name shall the nations trust. If God did these things today the world would never again be the same. God's promise made in Rom. 15:12 would find its complete fulfillment: **"There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall arise to be a ruler over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust."** This is a beautiful picture, the nations trusting in Jesus Christ. It explains why nations will be willing to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

The kingdom of God begins with many concurrent events, the chief of which is the divine assumption of sovereignty, Jesus Christ taking to Himself His great power and governing. We see this in Revelation 11:17 where the twenty-four elders are seen giving thanks to God for something which He did in the past and what He is then doing as a result of this action: **"We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, Who art and Who wast, for Thou hast taken Thy great power and dost reign."** This passage must forever remain unfulfilled if the Lord Jesus does not at some point in history assume sovereignty and govern the earth. All Scripture points to the fact that He does this and the result is the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Such prophesied events as the unveiling (*apokalupsin*) of Jesus Christ (I Cor.1:7), the manifestation (*phaneroo*) of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2 and Col. 3:4), the presentation of Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 4: 14), the blazing forth (*epiphaneia*) of His glory (Isa. 40:5, Titus 2: 13), the judgment of all living and all dead (2 Tim. 4: 1), are all divine actions that take place at the commencement of divine government upon the earth.

Of course the age-old question will arise, **"What about those who are dead?"** (1 Thess. 4: 13). This was asked almost two thousand years ago and it is a proper question. I for one am ready to accept the divine answer: When God presents Christ Jesus to the world, all who sleep in Jesus will be presented with Him (See Issue No. **SB096**). This is the truth that is so succinctly stated in 1 Thess. 4:14.

Regarding resurrections: it should be noted that the resurrection of all who enter the kingdom does not take place at one time. It will be each one in his own order and in harmony with the divine purpose. Then is also the resurrection of the martyrs who lay down their lives in the revolt against the kingdom. A clear distinction should be maintained between those who **"sleep in Jesus"** in 1 Thess. 4:14 and **"the dead in Christ"** in 1 Thess. 4:16. The entire time period of the kingdom of God comes between these two passages. The resurrection of those who "sleep in Jesus" is connected with the presentation of Christ and the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" is related to His parousia.

The "catching up" described in 1 Thess. 4:17, commonly called "the rapture" in present-day prophetic messages, is not God's next move in relationship to the world. It is so vitally linked to the parousia that it would be chopping up the Word of God to separate them by a period of seven years. Furthermore, there is no "secret coming" set forth in this passage. Anything that is accompanied with a shout, the archangel's voice, and the blast of a trumpet can hardly be called a secret coming.

Lack of space has made it impossible to say all that should be said about the time period of the present Dispensation of Grace. The reader can fill this lack by referring to *SEED and BREAD*, Issues No. **SB011**, **SB014**, **SB016**, **SB053**, and **SB064**.

End Issue No. SB129