

THE WORD AND WORK

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WHAT LIES AHEAD?

--- What Saith The Lord?

J. R. Clark

Hints For Understanding Prophecy	249
Times of the Gentiles	251
Restoration of Israel	252
David's Throne	255
The Seventy Weeks Prophecy	257
Christ's Coming For and With His Saints	260
The Great Tribulation	262
The Antichrist	264
The Scarlet-Clad Woman	266
The Millennium	269
The Two Resurrections	272
The Judgments	275
The New Jerusalem	279
NEWS AND NOTES	280

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TILL HE COME

"Till He come:" O let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the "little while" between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heav'n and home
Lie beyond that "Till He come."

When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast—
Hush! be every murmur dumb:
It is only "Till He come."

See, the feast of love is spread:
Drink the wine and break the bread—
Sweet memorials—till the Lord
Calls us 'round His heav'nly board:
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only "Till He come."



Hints for Understanding Prophecy

In his commentary on "The Epistle to the Romans" James M. Stiffler says: "The commentator . . . is under solemn obligation not to bear false witness against the sacred penman, not to misrepresent him, not to overlay his thought with personal views; the commentator's work is to follow down the stream of the inspired text, to measure its width and if possible its depth, but not to dig new channels for it and not to divert its flow to water his own garden." This statement is pregnant with meaning, setting forth the only honest way to deal with God's word. It is our purpose to adhere to this principle in examining briefly the great outline of Bible prophecy. We all would do well to reread the above classic statement slowly and thoughtfully.

Prophecy that pertains to the future is history of the future. History of the future should pose no greater difficulty of understanding than history of the past. The little key of faith will work wonders in unlocking the passages that have to do with the future. Some experience a sort of mental block when they face prophetic teaching. Faith in God's word should steady us and quiet our panicky feelings. If God says it we should believe it—even in the dark.

Prophecy is not a dark place, as many sub-consciously think, but it is a lamp shining in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19). Thus it is incorrect to contend that prophecy cannot be understood until fulfilled. In Daniel 10:1 it is said that Daniel understood the vision, which was predictive prophecy. He understood it prior to its becoming history. Prophecy is not a dark place that depends on the light of history for its elucidation and interpretation. Rather prophecy gives meaning and interpretation to history. History verifies prophecy. "Now if we take prophecy aright, we will be throwing true light forward into the womb of unborn events, and the creations of God's providences will be coming forth as the children of that light. . . . The catching phrase, 'History Unveiling Prophecy,' puts the 'candle' of prophecy 'under a bushel.'" —Stevens.

A prophecy may have a nearer and farther fulfillment. One writer says, "It is after the manner of prophecy to begin with things present, or just at hand, and to pass by sudden, or hardly noticeable, transitions to the greater things and events of like sort in the future." Some who have not recognized this rule have become confused. There are some examples of this principle in the Book of Daniel. The dream of the image in Daniel 2 dealt first with a succession of kingdoms, beginning with the one then present, and issued in the setting up of God's kingdom in the latter days. The vision from chapters 10 to 12 dealt first with near events and then jumped to the last days at 11:36, thus attaining its primary purpose (10:14). The prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., in Jesus' Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, widens into the forecast of another like calamity—though more intense—in the end-time, namely, the Great Tribulation, which immediately precedes the Lord's coming in glory (Matt. 24:29). Those who recognize a near or minor fulfillment and a final exhaustive fulfillment of some prophecies will be the richer for so doing. Otherwise the prophecy may become snagged upon a nearer

application in minds of some and fail to carry through to its real issue.

That brings us to a thought about the church. The church is a great institution and infolds many of the predicted blessings of the Old Testament, even though Paul in the Ephesians informs us that the church itself during Old Testament times was a hidden mystery. It was prophesied that the Gentiles would be blessed and that the Jews would be blessed through the coming, suffering Messiah. But the placing of them both together into one body and thus spelling out the church was not done in the Old Testament. That was the mystery.

But some there are who seem to see only the church when they read Old Testament prophecies. They empty all the prophecies they find there into the church. To many of them "Zion" of the O. T. in application is the church; to them the church is spiritual Israel and thus Israel's prophecies are transferred to the church. Further, to them, the "mountain of Jehovah's house" of Isaiah 2 is the church, the swords are beaten into plowshares in the church, the kingdom of God of Dan. 2 is the church, the throne of David is rule over the church, and some even apply second coming passages of Matt. 24 to the church. Examples could be multiplied. To them the church is a key which they use to unlock all the Old Testament prophecies. They have dammed up the prophecies at Pentecost, so that to them, they cannot flow through to their proper haven.

Then there is what is known as the year-day rule for interpreting prophecy, which has no foundation in Scripture and results in confusion. Some reason that since God laid upon Israel a year's punishment for each of the forty days they spied out the land of Canaan and since Ezekiel symbolically enacted Israel's 390 years of iniquity on a day for a year basis, that therefore God sanctioned and put in motion a year for a day method of interpreting prophecy.

The 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 lends no support to this theory, as the word "weeks" there simply means "sevens" in the Hebrew Text, and there it is 70 sevens of years and not days.

When God said "Forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed" He meant forty days. Jeremiah's 70 years' prophecy concerning Israel's captivity was exactly 70 years. In Genesis 6 God's 120 years' prediction meant just that. God's 400 years of Acts 7:6 meant that many years. Even the three days' prediction of Gen. 40:13 turned out to be three days.

It is very important for us to allow God to mean what He says. When He says a time, times and half a time, 42 months, and 1260 days, all applying to the same event, He is impressing upon us that He is talking about a three and one-half year period. How could He put it simpler? Thus a thousand years in prophecy would mean a thousand years, unless the context led one to think otherwise.

As a final word, let us note, in the language of another, that "the revelations God gave to His servants the prophets, were always for practical ends. We do Him small honor when we cast aside any part of His word as unnecessary, or superfluous, or unintelligible."

Desiring to eliminate unnecessary details and to go at once to the heart of the teaching under consideration we have used the question and answer style in this study. Our purpose is to give a broad, sweeping outline of what the Bible teaches on future prophecy.

WHAT LIES AHEAD --- What Saith The Lord?

Times of The Gentiles

What is meant by the "Times of the Gentiles"? When did these times begin and when will they end?

In Luke 21:24b Jesus says, "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." From this text we conclude that the "times of the Gentiles" is a period of time during which Jerusalem, the holy city, is trodden down of the Gentiles, which means that during that period the Gentiles would possess and overrun this Jewish city. The times of the Gentiles therefore began when the Jews were dispossessed of their beloved city and land by the Gentiles. This feat was accomplished by King Nebuchadnezzar in about 606 B. C., at which time he besieged Jerusalem once and again, took it and carried Judah captive into Babylon. God's statement that He would overturn Israel's throne, until He come whose right it is, He thus fulfilled. At this captivity the Jews were set aside and the Gentiles brought into the spotlight. This period of Gentile supremacy is known as the times of the Gentiles (non-Jewish nations).

In Daniel 2 and 7 we have a double prophecy that comprehends the whole run of the times of the Gentiles, from Nebuchadnezzar to the reinstatement of the Jews. In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of an image of four distinct parts: head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toes part of iron and part of miry clay. These are plainly set forth as representing four successive world powers: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. A little stone cut out of the mountain without hands smote the image in its feet and demolished it. The stone then grew and filled the whole earth. It represents the kingdom of God.

In Daniel 7, Daniel tells of his dream of four beasts, which also represent these four world powers. The text is plain. As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so in Daniel's vision the kingdom of God supplants the four kingdoms, Christ and His saints receiving the "kingdoms under the whole heaven." In Daniel's vision the fourth beast has ten horns, answering to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and representing ten kings. A little horn among the ten represents

a wicked ruler, who was over the ten, and who must be destroyed to make way for the kingdom of the Son and the saints.

At the time Luke 21:24 was spoken the Gentiles were still treading down Jerusalem, for there Jesus says: "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. In Romans 11:25 we have it that "A hardening in part hath befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This refers to the spiritual condition of Israel and the coming in of the Gentiles through acceptance of Christ. But it ties in with the end of the times of the Gentiles and of God's resuming His close relation with restored and humbled Israel.

Jerusalem is yet today being trodden down of the Gentiles, thus those times have not yet run out. The times of the Gentiles end when the little stone of Daniel 7 strikes the image and the kingdom of God takes over, at which time the last Gentile world-ruler, the little horn, is destroyed and the kingdom under the whole heaven is given unto the Son and the saints, marked in Daniel 7 by one like unto the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive the dominion.

Restoration of Israel

Why are the Jews yet with us today? How do we account for their survival in view of their evil treatment? Is there a future restoration of Israel on God's timetable, or were promises made of her restoration all fulfilled under Cyrus?

Frederick the Great asked his chaplain to give in one word proof of the inspiration of the Bible. "Israel," answered the chaplain. J. W. McGarvey wrote on "Why Are the Jews Yet With Us?" Though conquered and dispersed among the nations for thousands of years, yet they retain their Jewish characteristics. America has been the melting pot of the nations, but it has not melted the Jew yet. Nation may come and nation may go, but the Jew goes on forever. Why? The only explanation of this strange fact is that God is preserving them for a purpose. So argued McGarvey. Any other nation would have been extinct by now under such treatment.

When Judah, the southern two-tribe kingdom, was carried into Babylonian captivity, God promised through His prophet Jeremiah that after seventy years she would return to her homeland. "For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10). When the seventy years were completed, that His word by the mouth of Jeremiah might be ac-

complished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to make a proclamation that God had charged Judah to return to their promised land (Ezra 1). About 50,000 in all, a mere fraction of scattered Israel, returned.

The Old Testament abounds in promises of the future restoration and blessing in store for Israel. Many contend that these promises were all fulfilled in the partial restoration in the days of Cyrus. But there are a number of good, sound scriptural reasons why this position cannot be true, reasons that point to a future, more complete restoration, attended by the return of the Lord, and by their return to the Lord. Several of these reasons follow.

I. Daniel's prayer and enlightenment from God in Daniel 9 points to a later blessing for Israel. Daniel understood by the books (Jeremiah in particular) that seventy years were decreed by God for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem. Therefore he set his face unto the Lord to seek by earnest prayer the blessings upon Israel and Jerusalem which God had promised. The angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel in answer to his prayer to give him understanding of God's plans for his people (the Jews), and the holy city (Jerusalem). Gabriel informed him that seventy sevens of years, rather than a mere seventy, were decreed to bring full blessing to his city and to his people. This prophecy of seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27, when rightly understood, runs "unto the full end" and until "everlasting righteousness" is brought in (Dan. 9:24-27). Has that time yet come? To ask the question is to answer it. The prophecy does not state simply that certain blessings were to be made available, but that they would be accomplished.

II. According to the Bible there is to be a *second restoration* of Israel. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people..." (Isa. 11:11). Here we learn of a *second restoration*, not the one under Cyrus. And it is to be "in that day." In what day? The preceding verses point up the righteous reign of Christ when the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea..."

III. The final restoration of Israel will be *complete*, embracing all twelve tribes. In Ezekiel 37 the prophet was told that the restoration of Israel would include "the whole house of Israel" (11-14). In verses 15 to 24 the "whole house of Israel" is graphically portrayed by "two sticks," one for Israel and one for Judah, embracing all the twelve tribes of Israel! It will be noted that under Cyrus only Judah returned (Ezra 1).

Furthermore, every Israelite will be restored in that day. In Ezekiel 39:28b God says: "and I will leave none of them any more there:" None means "not one." Such was not true in the restoration under Cyrus. Only a remnant of the then Jewish population returned. In the first restoration only those who were "minded of their own free will" returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:13), but in this final restoration God "will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back" (Isa. 43:5-7). He will see to it that the restoration is complete. No such restoration has yet taken place.

IV. This final gathering of Israel will be *permanent*. God says: "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them..." (Amos 9:15). In Ezek. 34:28 we read that "they shall no more be a prey to the nations... but that they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid." And so say other passages (Ezek. 34:28; Jer. 23:5-8; 30:10). None of these things were true of restored Israel under Cyrus, and none are true yet today. Israel is still insecure and afraid. But she shall not be so after the final restoration.

V. The final restoration is linked to the time that Christ (the greater David) will be king. "And I will bring you into the land of Israel... And my servant David shall be king over them... and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant... and David my servant shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. 37:12, 24, 25). Again, "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely" (Jer. 23:5-8).

Again in Jer. 30:8-10 we read: "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, ... they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them. ... lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid." The restoration and the reign go together, and they both await the coming of the deliverer (Rom. 11:26).

VI. In the final restoration the Jews will be cleansed from sin. In commenting on this God says: "I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek. 37:23b). Again: "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land.

And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. . . " (Ezek. 36:24, 25). In Romans 11:26, 27 this national cleansing of Israel is seen as yet future: "and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant to them, When I shall take away their sins." Neither has any such national cleansing taken place since these words were spoken. It is yet future!

VII. The Book of Zechariah in the Old Testament is a post-exilic book, meaning that this prophecy was written after the 50,000 returned under Cyrus. Zechariah speaks freely of a restoration of Israel, which was to be future from his day (Zech. 3:9, 10; 8:1-8, 13, 23; 10:8-12; 14:9, 11). This could not have been the restoration that took place after the seventy years.

The reasons listed above point out promises that God has not as yet fulfilled. And we have it from Gabriel, the arch-angel, that no word of God shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37). All that God has promised will He perform. The final regathering of Israel will be accomplished in connection with the second advent of the Lord (Matt. 24:30, 31).

David's Throne

What is the meaning of David's throne? Is Christ now sitting on David's throne, or is this honor reserved for the future?

A good brother wrote a paper on "Jesus on David's Throne at the Right Hand of God." This caption implies that David's throne and God's universal throne are one and the same. This is not true. They are two distinct thrones, one in heaven and the other on earth. Brother Frank Mullins says: "If all would agree on the Bible definition of David's throne the controversy on this subject would be resolved." And he is right.

David's throne means David's rule over all Israel from Dan (the topmost tip of Palestine) to Beersheba (southern tip of Palestine). In proof of this we read 2 Sam. 3:10: "to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba."

The Lord Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of God on God's throne. "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, and 12:2 say the same. In Rev. 3:21

Jesus says: "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne." Thus the throne where Jesus now sits is here called the Father's throne. This throne has always existed. The Lord Jesus occupied it with the Father before coming to earth and resumed this glory at God's right hand when He returned to heaven. God never did give this throne to David, nor did He change its name to David's throne.

On this point J. A. Begg says: "Unless, then, we identify the throne of David with that of the Eternal Father, which would be blasphemy, we must acknowledge that the session of Messiah on his own throne is a distinct event, and belonging to another period" (Mil. Har., 1832).

According to the Scriptures, Christ will occupy David's throne in God's own good time. Only He knows the times and the seasons (Acts 1:7). God promised David that He would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever (2 Sam. 7:13). This promise was backed up with God's oath. It is sin-proof. Nothing will keep God from fulfilling it. "My covenant will I not break, Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness: I will not lie unto David: His seed shall endure for ever, And his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, And as the faithful witness in the sky" (Ps. 89:34-37). God further says in this chapter that if the children of David do iniquity He will punish them, but His lovingkindness He will not utterly take from them, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. God will fulfill His oath-bound covenant!

David's throne was overthrown. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:27). The northern division of the kingdom was taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 B. C. About one hundred years later the southern kingdom of Judah was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Then was David's throne overturned, and so has it continued to be until this day.

Read again Revelation 3:21: He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in His throne." When will we sit down with Jesus on His throne? After we have overcome. What is His throne? The one He fell heir to through promises made to David. It is called David's throne. Examine Acts 2:29-36 carefully and you will find that God raised Jesus from the dead to sit on David's

throne, that is, to make Him eligible to sit on that throne in accordance with His oath. Jesus did not immediately take that throne, for in verse 33 it says that He was exalted at God's right hand, which we have learned is the Father's universal throne—not David's. Revelation 19 and 20 completes this story, but is reserved for a later lesson.

There is an inexcusable inconsistency in the position that the Father's universal throne is David's throne. When was such a transfer made?

The Seventy Weeks Prophecy

How long a period is the 70 weeks of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy? Whom only does this prophecy concern? When did the seventy weeks begin? Do they run consecutively and what marks their end?

Daniel, along with other young nobles, was carried into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar about 606 B. C. In 536 B. C., exactly seventy years later, the thought came to him that the seventy years allotted for the captivity in Jeremiah 29:10-14 were up, or nearly so if God counted the time by a later phase of the captivity. And he noted that Judah was not seeking God and calling upon Him as the prediction said she should. Daniel therefore gave himself to prayer and earnest supplication, confessing the sins of Israel, beseeching God to forgive His people and to let His face shine upon the sanctuary and the holy city.

While Daniel was praying the angel Gabriel appeared to him, announcing that he had come to give him wisdom and understanding concerning the matter that was upon his heart.

Gabriel begins by saying: "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (v. 24). In the Hebrew the "seventy weeks" is literally "seventy sevens." "Sevens" is simply a Hebrew numeral and answers in use to our word "dozen," meaning seven of whatever was in mind, whether days or years. Here the context leaves no doubt but that seventy sevens of years is meant, or 490 years. Furthermore the prophecy concerns "thy people and thy holy city," that is, Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city—the Jews and Jerusalem.

Thus Gabriel was virtually saying: "Daniel, you have been praying that a full blessing come upon your people and your city now

that the seventy years are completed, but God has decreed that seven times seventy years will elapse ere the full promised blessing falls upon Israel and the holy city." Then the angel lists six wonderful blessings that are in store for Israel at the end of the seventy sevens of years (V. 24, quoted above). Daniel had read bits of these glorious predictions from the prophets, here and there, but here the angel gathers them all and presents them to Daniel in one sparkling cluster. We can be sure that it warmed his heart.

The angel continues: "Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times." In Nehemiah 2, Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, gave such a command to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. The date of this proclamation is generally conceded to be 445 B. C. It seems evident that this date marks the beginning of the seventy weeks or 490 years of this prediction.

Let it be noticed that the angel breaks up the seventy weeks into three periods: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and one week. The seven plus the sixty-two, or sixty-nine weeks, were to take "unto the anointed one, the prince." There is no mistaking who this anointed one is—He is the Messiah, the Christ. Thus the sixty-nine sevens (483 years) extend to the Messiah. Counting from 445 B. C. as a starting point and reckoning on the basis of prophetic years of 360 days one calculator arrived at the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19), at which time the Lord Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah. Of course, if our figures do not extend to the Messiah, the fault lies with our figures, and not with the prediction, for we are plainly told that the 69 weeks (Hebrew "Heptads") extend "unto the anointed one, the prince."

The most difficult question remains to be answered: "Do the seventy weeks run consecutively and what marks their end?" It is quite evident that they do not run continuously, but there is a break between the 69th and 70th weeks. The Jewish clock ticks away until the 69th week and suddenly stops. The text says that after the 69th week the Anointed One shall be cut off and shall have nothing. There is time out for a new era—the church age, the calling in of the Gentiles. Then in verse 27 the seventieth week comes into view and continues "even unto the full end." At the beginning of the seventieth week God will again throw the spotlight on the Jews.

If these words sound strange to your ears let us examine the text a little more closely. There are two things that happen *after*, not during the 69th week—One, the Anointed One is cut off (This is

the crucifixion. "He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due." Isa. 53:8). Two, "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. by the Romans, forty years after the crucifixion). These two events could not have taken place during the seventieth week, for they cover a period of forty years and the seventieth week is only seven years! They transpire in a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. The seventieth week simply could not have continued consecutively from the 69th, for even after the destruction of Jerusalem, forty years later, the end was not yet, that is the end of the seventy weeks (v. 26). And desolations continued upon the Jews even after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. When the seventy weeks are ended all such desolations are to give way to everlasting righteousness! Besides, the last week of years comes in for mention and discussion in the following and final verse of the chapter. This verse says "unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate (the Jews). The full end of what? Plainly the full end of the final week of the seventy. The sixfold blessing mentioned in verse 24 as the goal and objective of this Jewish prophecy was, among other things, to finish transgression and bring in everlasting righteousness to the Jews. It was not simply that full provision was to be made through Christ for such blessings, but that it was actually to be accomplished. That is what Daniel prayed for and what God promised. This has not yet taken place. Paul in Romans 11:26, 27 says that such blessings will come to all Israel, that God "shall take away their sins."

The 70th week of Daniel is yet to come. In verse 26 we learn that the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy Jerusalem. It is a matter of history that the people that destroyed Jerusalem were the Romans. Therefore this prince is a Roman prince. Then in verse 27, the next verse, it says, "And he (that is the prince that shall come) * shall make a firm covenant with many for one week" (the seventieth). The "many" here are the Jews, for the prophecy is about Daniel's people (v. 24). This coming prince will turn out to be an enemy of the Jews. He is to break the covenant in the midst of the week, "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," and

* Some say that the one who breaks the covenant in the midst of the week of verse 27 is Christ: that the covenant that he makes is the new covenant sealed with his blood, and that thereby after his $3\frac{1}{2}$ years ministry ("the midst of the week") he caused the Old Testament law sacrifices to cease.

This may seem plausible on the surface, but it does not bear up under an

make desolate the Jewish people. The wrath that is poured out unto the "full end" runs for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, and answers to that period spoken of in Dan. 7 and in Rev. 12 and 13 (i. e., "time, times and half a time," "42 months," or "1260 days"), at the end of which will come the sixfold blessing of sins forgiven, everlasting righteousness, etc., set as the goal and end of the seventy weeks prophecy.

exegesis of the whole passage, and be it remembered that no scripture is of private interpretation. Its weakness lies in the fact that

1. The grammatical structure of the passage demands that the "prince that shall come" of verse 26 be the antecedent of the "he" of verse 27. Thus the one who makes a covenant with the Jews is the "prince that shall come" and not Christ.

2. It cannot be shown that Christ made a covenant with anyone for seven years, the Jews nor any one else.

3. This view does not explain how the destruction of Jerusalem, 40 years after the 69th week, can take place within the 70th week, the last seven years.

4. This view makes the remaining $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of the 70th week pointless. Where does it lead? It is supposed to lead to sins forgiven and everlasting righteousness—to the full end. This view offers an anticlimax at best, for the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years would, if it were true, lead nowhere.

Christ's Coming For and With His Saints

Are there two phases of the second coming of Christ, His coming for His saints and His coming with His saints? Or is the coming of the Lord a single event, bringing simultaneously promised blessings for the righteous and punishment for the wicked?

There was more than one phase of Christ's first coming. When He was born in Bethlehem He came. In 1 John 5:6 we learn that He came by water and blood: not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. Thus at His baptism He came by water, being publicly introduced as the Messiah, and when He died on the cross He came by blood as our Redeemer. In the triumphal entry He came—"Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Even so, the New Testament sets forth the prospects of more than one phase of His second coming: He is said to be coming for His saints and with His saints. Even that might not be thought of as two distinct comings. When Paul was going to Rome as a prisoner the brethren in Rome heard of his coming and met him at the "Three Taverns," a few miles out from Rome, and then together they all completed the journey to Rome. That was only one coming of Paul to Rome—first he met the saints, then He came

with them on into Rome. So it will be with the Lord's coming. He comes for His saints who arise to meet Him in the air; later He comes on down with them.

The Lord's coming with His saints is depicted in 1 Thes. 4:13-18. Beginning with verse 16 we read, "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 shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Where in this passage is there even a hint of the resurrection of the wicked dead? It is not there. This is purely a family affair, the Lord's coming for His bride.

Again in John 14: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." We might think of this as a love letter which we Christians have received from our Great Bridegroom. When some skeptical friend tries to tell us that we are wrong, that the Lord is not really coming for us, that He did not mean He was coming literally and personally, we can open up this old letter and point it out to him. "Here it is. Just read it for yourself. Our Lord is coming for us in person." This is our "gathering together unto him" mentioned in 2 Thes. 2:1. The word "rapture," meaning "catching up," expresses the thought beautifully.

After enumerating some terrible tribulations which are coming upon the earth, the Lord says, "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). On down in verse 36 He is still speaking of "these things": "But watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man." These verses indicate that the coming of Jesus for us will mean redemption and escape from terrible tribulation. To this agrees Rev. 3:10: "I will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world . . ." "If this hour of trial is to come upon the whole world (in a greater way than ever before), then a sure way of escape would be for God's true saints to be caught up out of the world and to "stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36).

In 1 Thes. 3:13 the Bible plainly says that the Lord Jesus will come "with all his saints." The true picture seems to be that in being caught up from the earth we are delivered from the wrath or tribulation which God will pour out on the wicked, "for God appointed us not unto wrath" (1 Thes. 5:9). Then after the great tribulation time He will come on to the earth with His saints. To put it in the language of Scripture: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29-30). In fact, this very coming with His saints is pictured graphically in Rev. 19:11-16. The heaven opened; Christ is seen coming and with Him "the armies which are in heaven . . . clothed in fine linen, white and pure," which is the righteous acts of the saints (v. 8), proving they are saints and not here angels, though angels too will be in His train. In Revelation 17:14 these same saints are mentioned in these words: "And they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful." How did these saints who are to be resurrected bodily get with Him if not caught up beforehand?

Now it is evident that Christ could not come with His saints unless first He came for them. It is much better to adjust our beliefs to the Bible than to seek to bend the Bible to our beliefs. Those who rightly divide the word of truth must "distinguish the things that differ." Let us not confuse His coming *for* His saints in love, with His coming *with* His saints in wrath upon the wicked world.

The Great Tribulation

Will the future bring an unprecedented period of great tribulation? If so, does the Bible give any information as to when it will begin and how long it will last? Will true Christians go through the great tribulation?

"Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be," says Jesus in His Olivet discourse (Matt. 24:21). To this agree the words of Daniel 12:1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be written in the book." In the book of Jeremiah the same event is referred to and called "The time of Jacob's trouble" (30:7): "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Here he further identifies the time by declaring that "in that day"

Israel shall be regathered to their land, loosed from all bonds, placed under their king, David (the Greater David), whom God will raise up to them and they shall be quiet and at ease. In Rev. 3:10 it is spoken of as "the hour of trial" which is to come upon the whole world. "Great tribulation," "time of trouble," "Jacob's trouble," "the hour of trial" — it appears that all of these ominous expressions point out one and the same event.

Has this terrible time of tribulation yet dawned upon the world? We think not. It is to be a time of unprecedented tribulation. It was future from the time Jesus announced it in Matt. 24:21, therefore it could not have happened during the reign of the wicked king, Antiochus Epiphanes, in the second century before Christ. If it is true that John in Rev. 3:10 refers to this event, then the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. cannot be this tribulation, for John wrote in 96 A. D. Those days were times of trouble, but not the unparalleled Great Tribulation.

Matthew 24:29-30 locates the end of this great tribulation as to time: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Thus the great tribulation is to end with the coming of Christ in glory.

But when is it to begin and how long will it last? In verses 15 and 21 of this chapter Christ pin-points the beginning of the great tribulation. He says: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand) . . . then shall be great tribulation . . ." Thus the setting up of "The abomination of desolation" (i.e., an idol) in the holy place (the temple) is a signal for the great tribulation to begin.

Since Jesus said this was spoken by Daniel, we turn back to the Book of Daniel. Such a setting up of an abomination of desolation is mentioned three times in Daniel — chapters 11:31; 12:11; and 9:27. The context identifies the event of 11:31 with the days of the Maccabees in the second century, at which time Antiochus Epiphanes, a wicked king, set up an idol in the temple. As Jesus' reference is to such a desecration future from His time, we conclude that He refers to the other two references. In Daniel 9:27 (taken with 12:11) the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy has come into view, and in the middle of that final seven-year week the abomination (idol) that maketh desolate is to be set up. This, says Jesus, in Matthew 24:15-21, is to herald the beginning of the great tribulation, which is to end with the Lord's coming. *And this period*

according to Daniel 9:27 is to run for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Thus the great tribulation is an event of the last days.

This time measurement is found again in Dan. 7:25. Here a wicked king of the end-time persecutes the saints of God for a "time, times, and half a time"— $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Then he is destroyed and his kingdom taken over by the Son and the saints (Dan. 7:25-27, 13, 14). This time measurement is mentioned also in the Book of Revelation, particularly chapters 12 and 13, and in three ways as follows: time, times and half a time, 1260 days, and 42 months (Rev. 12:6-14; 13:5). This time measure in all these references runs to the full end, to the coming of Christ, and refers to the same period in each case.

Thus the great tribulation awaits the future, is set in motion by the setting up of an idol in the holy place, is preeminently Jacob's trouble, but tries the whole world, and runs to the second coming of the Lord, a period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

And let us add that Jesus, in Luke 21:36 tells His people to watch at every season and pray to the end that they may escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man. In Revelation 3:10 Jesus promises to keep His faithful ones from the hour of trial. Yea, Paul says that we are not appointed unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation.

To all of God's people we say, "Escape the great tribulation!"

The Antichrist

Is the antichrist of Bible prophecy a man or a system? What will be his dominion, what his character, when will he have sway, and what his end?

Three outstanding Bible portraits of this notorious character make it plain that he is a wicked world ruler, that he has sway in the end time during the final seven years of world history, and that he will be destroyed at the coming of Christ.

First, we go to 2 Thes. 2 for a view of this wicked one, where he is called "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," and "the lawless one." He is to oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself up as God, "whom," it is said, "the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming."

Next, in Daniel 7, it is said that a wicked king, represented by the "little horn" of the terrible beast described therein, shall flourish and make war with the saints for "a time, times, and half a time," after which he will be destroyed and his kingdom possessed by the

antichrist received a death-stroke and was healed (Rev. 13:3). Over against the holy trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there is the evil trinity: the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet (Rev. 16:13). Satan does a master job at imitating!

The Scarlet-Clad Woman

Who is the scarlet-clad woman of Revelation 17? How do we distinguish her from the scarlet-colored beast? Why is she called a city?

Symbolic language does not rob a passage of its literal import. A literal truth underlies the symbol and calls it forth. The symbolic woman of Revelation 12 stands for a literal people—Israel. The bride of the Lamb of Revelation 19 stands for the church of the Lord. In Revelation 17 a great harlot is pictured. It can readily be seen that this harlot, as well as the beast that she rides, and the waters upon which she sits, are symbols. But they all stand for something, for something as literal and real as life itself. If one is inclined to dismiss the whole thing or to treat it lightly because it is a symbol, let him know that couched in the symbolic language is stubborn truth that cannot properly be ignored.

The Bible uses these three symbolic women to portray the outstanding religious movements of human history. They form a three-point outline of the Bible. The core and center of Israel's life was her tabernacle and temple worship, which, in turn, pointed to Christ and the Christian religion. A corruption of the latter is depicted by the harlot.

The third symbolic woman is introduced to us in Revelation 17. She is called "the great harlot that sits upon many waters," and "MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." The red dragon, the scarlet-colored beast, and the scarlet-clad woman are all of the same hue, scarlet, which suggests sin.

This scarlet-colored woman was seen sitting upon the scarlet-colored beast, he who was full of names of blasphemy, and who had seven heads and ten horns. As to this beast, he comes up out of the sea (of humanity); his seven heads suggests, first, the seven-hilled city, Rome, and, secondly, seven successive kings of that city (Rev. 17:9, 10); the ten horns are ten kings which will be federated with the beast in the final stage of his universal rule (Rev. 17:12, 13), for the beast is to be a world ruler (Rev. 13:7, 8).

Daniel, in the second and seventh chapters of his book, informs us with uncanny accuracy, through inspiration of God, that from his

saints and the Son (7:25-27 with verses 13 and 14). As in 2 Thes. 2 he is arrayed against God, "speaking words against the Most High."

Again, in Revelation 13 a terrible beast that comes upon the world scene in the last days is described. He is to blaspheme God (v. 6), is to be worshipped (v. 4), is to be a world ruler (v. 7), is to make war with the saints, and to have sway for 42 months (v. 5), after which he will be destroyed by the coming One (Rev. 19). Even as in Daniel 7, this wicked king is associated with ten kings (Rev. 17:12-14), who war with the Lamb and those that are with Him.

It is in Revelation 19 that John, the Revelator, sees in vision the heaven opened and lo, Christ is seen coming with His holy ones. Awaiting His coming is the beast-ruler, and the kings of the earth and their armies, who think to fight against God's anointed! The beast and his agent, the false prophet, are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire and the rest are killed by the sword of Him who sits on the white horse.

The forty-two months of the beast's career are then up, the earth powers that blocked the way to the throne are judged, and the kingdom of the world will then become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (Rev. 11:15; Rev. 20).

The three instances above focus the light of prophecy on a wicked despot who is to have full sway at the end time. In each instance his career is terminated by the manifestation of the coming Christ. In each case he is a blasphemer of God. In two instances he is said to continue for three years and a half. That this character in the three citations is one and the same could hardly be denied. When these passages are studied in their context one is forced to the conclusion that this wicked one is ruler of a world kingdom, rather than being a religious system or a religious leader.

As a bit of additional light, we read in Daniel 9 about two princes: one, the anointed prince, the Messiah, and the other a coming Roman prince, for it is said, "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary." This was done by the Romans in 70 A. D. Thus the "prince that shall come" is to be a Roman. According to Dan. 9:27 this prince is to figure strongly in the 70th week, or the last seven years, of Jewish history, especially during the last three and one-half years to the "full end." This prince is the antichrist.

Even as God has His Christ, so the Devil has his antichrist. As God's Son was crucified and raised on the third day, so the Devil's

time there would be only four great Gentile world powers and that the last would give way to the kingdom of God. The beast under consideration heads up the fourth world power which embodies characteristics of the three previous world powers, as is plain from Revelation 13:2. At the end of his reign he and his allies are destroyed by the coming King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. 19). Immediately it is noted in Rev. 20 that Christ's kingdom has sway, for the kingdom of the world thus becomes the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ. It is plain from this that the beast of Rev. 13 to 19 is not the Pope of Rome, nor the Roman Catholic Church. He is not papal Rome, but he is a revival of pagan Rome, for he is a *civil ruler*.

Furthermore, it is quite plain that the scarlet-clad woman is papal Rome, and that in itself is sufficient symbolry of the Roman Catholic Church, without our forcing the beast into such a role.

The woman rides the beast (for a time); she is decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having in her hand a cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication; she is drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and sits upon seven hills. She is called "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The best commentaries make this woman the Church of Rome, which is corroborated by her history. And we might add that federated with her is all apostate Christendom. It is thought that papal Rome has killed more human beings than pagan Rome. She is drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

After going into sickening detail in describing the terrible atrocities of the Roman Church in their purge of so-called heretics, I. M. Haldeman says, "Look at the blood flowing like water from the martyred bodies of men and women, whose only crime was that they loved the Lord Jesus Christ, believed in His finished redemption on the cross, refused to buy their salvation by penance or good works, rejected the intercession of a human priest, or a woman, no matter how good, claimed the Lord Jesus as their sin bearer and Savior at the right hand of the Father, owned Him who died for them and rose again. And remember, as you read, that these martyrs were led to agony and to death by the authority and express command of the Roman Catholic Church; a church that did all this in the name of that most fiendish of all inventions, the 'Holy Inquisition.'" *These martyred people were Christians like us, and the Roman*

Church has not to this day repented of or expressed regret for these atrocities!

Also the church at Rome is decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, as can be seen from visiting her great cathedrals. And she is rich in architecture and land.

"The cup full of abominations" suggests idolatry as does the words "fornication" and "harlot." She takes the name of God but she is untrue to that name. Haldeman says, "Go into its wonderful buildings, some of them monuments of the mightiest architectural genius in the world; visit them, and you will find them full of images, images of the virgin mother, images of the saints. . . . It is idolatry pure and simple."

Also she calls herself "the mother of all churches, which ties in with the inscription written on her forehead.

Even as the true church is symbolized by a bride, so the false church is symbolically a great harlot. Even as the true church has a city, New Jerusalem, which also is called the bride, so the false church has a city, and for this reason she is called "the great city." I. M. Haldeman says that the harlot's city is Rome, indicated by the seven hills upon which she sits and the beast which she rides. Others see in these chapters (Rev. 17 and 18) two Babylons, a system (the false church), and the city, Babylon itself, pointing out that the Old Testament prophecies concerning the fall of Babylon has a final and more complete fulfillment in the latter days. In both the case of the true church, and the harlot, the woman is a symbol of a system, while the cities involved are actual cities. The harlot, then, is papal Rome, with apostate Christendom included, and her city is pagan Rome. The term Babylon applied to her indicates her character, even as Jerusalem in Rev. 11:8 is called Egypt and Sodom to indicate her sinful character.

It behooves us even now to heed the admonition of Rev. 18:4: "Come forth my people out of her" . . . that ye receive not her plagues and terrible judgments. For in many churches today there is a trend toward modernism and unfaithfulness to God. It is difficult enough to hold true, even when we take the purest, simplest stand. Why risk anything short of that? why contribute to the development of the harlot church by affiliating with her?

The Millennium

Will the thousand-year reign of Revelation 20 be fulfilled literally or figuratively? What will be the nature of the millennium? Will the millennium precede or follow the Lord's coming?

W. E. Blackstone in his book "Jesus Is Coming" records an enlightening conversation between a Christian minister and a Jew:

Taking a New Testament and opening it at Luke 1:32 the Jew asked: "Do you believe that what is here written shall be literally accomplished — 'the Lord God shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever'?" "I do not," answered the clergyman, "but rather take it to be figurative language, descriptive of Christ's spiritual reign over the church."

"Then," replied the Jew, "neither do I believe literally the words preceding, which say that this Son of David should be born of a virgin; but take them to be merely a figurative manner of describing the remarkable character for purity of Him who is the subject of the prophecy. But why do you refuse to believe literally verses 32 and 33, while you believe implicitly the far more incredible story of verse 31?" "I believe it," replied the clergyman, "because it is a fact." "Ahl!" exclaimed the Jew, with an inexpressible air of scorn and triumph, "You believe Scripture because it is a fact; I believe it because it is the Word of God."

Prophecies relating to Christ's first coming, in spite of any spiritualizing done by the Jews, were fulfilled literally; even so, prophecies relating to the Second Coming, notwithstanding widespread figurative interpretation, will be fulfilled literally. God's manner of bringing to pass the first-coming predictions is a *key* to the understanding of second-coming teaching.

Careful Bible students have said a great deal about this point. We quote some of them:

"If such plain verbal prophecies be not fulfilled literally, what is the value of prophecy in proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures?" —Millennial Harbinger, 1867, p. 303.

"It is a cardinal rule, however, that the literal meaning is never to be abandoned without evident reason or necessity." —Dr. J. Jye Smith.

"We think it likely that those who symbolize and figure it (Book of Revelation) all away will not understand much of it, while grand truths sparkle on the very surface unobserved." —T. W. Brents.

"Scripture cannot be understood theologically unless it is understood grammatically." —Melancthon.

"The knowledge of the sense can be derived from nothing but the knowledge of the words."—Luther.

"Prophecy has hitherto been literally fulfilled and there is the same ground as ever for believing it will continue to be so."—Jas. A. Begg.

"About the time of the end, in all probability, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamor and opposition."—Sir Isaac Newton.

As to the nature of the "golden age" the Bible is explicit. It will be a period of one thousand years, during which time Christ will reign with His resurrected and changed saints. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). During this period the devil will be bound in order that he may not deceive the nations. The curse will be lifted from the earth so that all things of nature will be restored to their primeval purity (Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21). Animals shall no longer be carnivorous. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

Longevity of life shall be restored, "for the child shall die a hundred years old, . . . as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:20, 21, 22). "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:7). "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4b).

Can any one point out the fulfillment of even one of these predictions? Does the knowledge of Jehovah cover even one town or city that you know? And it is to cover the earth. Has any such transformation as here described come over the leopard, bear, lion, adder or asp? Has the earth been delivered from its bondage of corruption? Are nations beating their swords into plowshares and

their spears into pruning-hooks? Are they not learning war any more? In short, are any of these things yet fulfilled? A child could answer that question! The answer is no, but you can be sure that the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform these things, to the last word!

That the millennium awaits and follows the Lord's coming is clear for several good, sound, Scriptural reasons.

I. The literal sequence of the events of Revelation 19 and 20 places the thousand years reign after the Lord's coming.

II. Sin is to run rampant and flourish until the Lord's coming. There is to be no let-up to allow for a righteous, peaceful millennium. "And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:12, 13). And so reads other passages.

III. Satan is to be bound during the thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time." In 1 Peter 5:8 it is said that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And so he does today. Furthermore the nations are yet being deceived. Things are no different (unless worse) than they were when Peter wrote. The devil is not yet bound, therefore the millennium is not yet. These two events are to take place at the same time.

IV. Our present age is characterized by tribulation, and will be till Jesus comes. For this reason there can be no millennium before His coming, for the golden age with tribulation is unthinkable. Paul says that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Tribulation never lets up in this age, but rather is to become more intense, ending in great tribulation. "But immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29, 30). Since tribulation continues to Christ's coming, there is no place for a thousand years of peace and joy prior to His coming!

V. According to 2 Thes. 1:4-10 Christians will be persecuted until the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven. There could be no millennium in such an atmosphere, therefore it will not be until after the advent.

VI. The millennium awaits the first resurrection. So says Revelation 20: "They lived (came to life—were raised) and reigned with Christ a thousand years This is the first resurrection." The reigning comes after the resurrection, not before. For that reason Christ's coming precedes the millennium, and thus is premillennial.

VII. Our reigning with Christ awaits our crowning. "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8). This crowning takes place when Jesus comes. Now we bear the cross and suffer with Him; then we shall wear the crown and be glorified with Him.

In view of the foregoing scriptural statements it would be unwise indeed for one to attempt to prove that either the millennium is now on, or that it will be prior to the coming of Christ. According to the teaching of Revelation 19 and 20 it will take place after the coming of the Lord. And this truth beautifully harmonizes with other scripture, as we have shown. Those who so believe are premillennial.

The Two Resurrections

Does the future hold out two distinct resurrections of the dead, one for the righteous and one for the wicked? Or do Scriptures teach that there will be but one general resurrection?

In Isaiah 61:2 we have a comma eighteen centuries long, or more! The sentence reads: "proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God. . . ." In Luke 4:19 the Lord Jesus quotes this passage, but breaks it off at the comma. The year of Jehovah's favor refers to the church age—our present day of grace. "The day of vengeance of our God" is held in abeyance until God's own time. Already the comma has lasted for over eighteen centuries. This serves as an example of how two events far removed one from the other can be placed together in the same sentence or verse of scripture.

In John 5:28, 29 there lies before us a thousand-year sentence: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." One's first impression, upon reading this passage, is that this is a general resurrection of both good and bad at the same time. But, since no prophecy is of

private interpretation, we must view it in the light of other statements from God's word. When we do we see a gap between the resurrection of the good and the resurrection of the evil. The "hour" of verse 28 will allow for this time element, for in the context in verse 25 the same word "hour" is used referring to resurrection to spiritual life of those who are dead in sins, and that particular hour has now lasted 1900 years and is still running. For another example see John 4:23.

Revelation 20 identifies the resurrection of certain of God's saints as the first resurrection and then says: "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power..." (Rev. 20:5-6). It is here we learn that one thousand years intervene between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked.

Paul, in the 1st Corinthian letter, recognizes this division of the resurrection. He says (1 Cor. 15:22-24): "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power." "Each in his own order" is a military term, meaning that the resurrection is in ranks. Christ leads out in the resurrection (and those who were raised at the time of His resurrection); "then they that are Christ's at His coming." This "then" takes in at least 1900 years. Only Christians are to be raised in this resurrection. So it says. Next we have another "then" — "then cometh the end..." If the preceding "then" has lasted 1900 years, this "then" could well last a thousand years. If not, why not? Revelation demands that it last just that long. The 1 Cor. 15 passage extends to the "end." Among the things accomplished at the end is the abolition of death. In Revelation 20 that is done at the end of the thousand years, at which time the wicked dead are raised, judged, and death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. Thus is death destroyed.

1 Thes. 4:13-18 beautifully falls into place as a family scene. No wicked are here: only God's children. It reads (vs. 16-18): "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 shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort

one another with these words." There is no resurrection of the wicked here. That comes later.

Daniel 12:2 harmonizes well with the foregoing New Testament teaching. It reads: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (See Culver's *Daniel and the Latter Days*, p. 172 for scholarly comment on this verse.)

Other passages that become more intelligible in the light of the two resurrections are as follows:

"And thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14).

"but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage . . . and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35, 36).

"Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

"And others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35).

"If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

W. E. Blackstone makes this significant comment: "Now if Christ is coming to raise the righteous a thousand years before the ungodly, it would be natural and imperative that the former should be called a resurrection *from*, or *out of the dead*, the rest of the dead being left until after the thousand years. We rejoice that this is just what is most carefully done in the Word, and in this we believe we have another most comprehensive and definite proof of the premillennial coming of Christ. It consists in the use made, in the Greek text of the words *ek nekron*. These words signify "from the dead" or, out of the dead, implying that the other dead are left.

"The resurrection *nekron* or *ton nekron* (of the dead) is applied to both classes because all will be raised. But the resurrection *ek nekron* (out of the dead) is not once applied to the ungodly." Then he states that this latter phrase is used 49 times, carrying always the idea of *out of the dead*.

On Philippians 3:11, Blackstone says: "And in Phil. 3:11, it is used in a manner remarkably significant. Our version renders it, "resurrection of the dead," which is especially wrong, for the Greek preposition *ek* occurs here in duplicate form. . . . The phrase is *teen*

exanastasin teen ek nekron, and the literal translation is *the out resurrection from among the dead*, which peculiar construction of language gives a special emphasis to the idea that this is a resurrection *out from among the dead.*"

On Revelation 20:4-6 Dean Alford, an eminent scholar of years past, says: "If in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end of a specified period after the first — if in such a passage, the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave; then there is an end of all significance of language, and the Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose no one will be hardy enough to maintain. But if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain and receive as an article of faith and hope."

The Judgments

What is the significance of the Scriptures that say: "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life;" and "know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" Is there one general judgment or are there more?

A story has it that a group of people were walking through a prairie when they saw an oncoming fire in the distance. They were in a dangerous situation! What would they do? One in their company suggested that they set fire to the grass near them and burn out a place as a haven from the oncoming conflagration. This they did. They took refuge in the burned-out place and were unharmed by the fire. They were standing where the fire had been!

Out on Calvary when the Lord Jesus died in our place He felt the fires of judgment. If we take refuge in Him His death is our death, and His judgment is our judgment. Those who are standing at Calvary are standing where the fires of wrath have already burned. Says Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

In Hebrews 9:27, 28 is a significant statement: "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait

for him, unto salvation." Herein is set forth two heavy dates that await man—*death* and after that the *judgment*. This indeed presents a gloomy prospect. And these are hard, fast appointments that man cannot cancel. Only God could do something about them, and He did. As to death, Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many." "One died for all, therefore all died," that is, all who avail themselves of the benefits of that death. Thus, for the Christian, the heavy appointment of death in all its significance is canceled. Furthermore, over against the word "judgment" in verse 27 of our passage is the word "salvation" in verse 28. "Christ . . . shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." To the sinner the future holds out *judgment*, to the saint, *salvation*. The saint has had his death and judgment on Calvary, as far as spiritual death and judgment for sin goes.

A woman on a ship was nervously watching some angry storm clouds. Finally she approached the captain about them. He said, "Lady, do not let those clouds worry you. They have already passed us and are headed in the other direction." Even so, we, as Christians, need have no forebodings about coming into judgment for our sins as long as we cling to our Captain and ride His ship. Judgment is already passed for us.

All of us believe that before the world is judged the Lord Jesus will come for His bride. Is it reasonable that the King will arraign His queen with the great host of the wicked to be judged along with murderers, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, and such, and that after she has already been approved to be caught up to meet the Lord? Oh, no, she will sit with Him in judgment, for Paul plainly says: "Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) It would be difficult to explain away this passage! Still, some may try to do it!

But does not the Bible say, "For we must all be manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad"? (2 Cor. 5:10.) But notice that in this paragraph from verses 1 to 10, Paul is talking to Christians and about Christians, and no others. The pronoun "we" is used in this paragraph thirteen times, "our" three times, and "us" twice. Then he closes the paragraph with "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. . . ." This, on the face of it, is a family affair. This is an exclusive judgment of Christians as to their works.

It ties in with 1 Cor. 3:11-15: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation, gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire." I used to try to argue this passage away, but eventually I decided to let it stand as it reads and just believe it. At commencement exercises those who miss out on awards nevertheless graduate. The thought that one who loses out on special awards may yet be saved, is not strange.

Then the Bible speaks of a judgment of the nations. In Revelation 19 that judgment is put in its chronological setting. In verses 11 to 16 the coming of the Lord with His holy ones is depicted. Awaiting His coming, for no good purpose, is the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies. There is no real struggle. What is to happen there amounts to a judgment. The coming One is complete Master of the situation. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the Lake of fire and the kings and their armies destroyed.

Matthew 25:31-46 speaks of such a judgment of nations: "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. . . ." There is more to this passage, but it is more or less familiar to all.

In this passage nothing is said about resurrection, as we would expect in the final judgment. Also in this passage men are judged in accordance with the way they treat Christ's brethren — "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (v. 40). If "nations" above means the Gentiles, then "these my brethren" could well mean the Jews. At least, these are living nations that are to be judged. When? At the time that Christ "shall come in his glory." But the great white throne judgment is to take place a thousand years later, after the millennium.

This judgment of the nations is vividly described in Joel 3 and in Zechariah 14. The judgment of the nations and of their wicked king clears the way for the righteous reign of Christ. This is part of the clean-up before He takes over.

Then there is the great white throne judgment spoken of in Rev. 20 and other places in the Bible.

Says Paul in his speech at Mars Hill: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30, 31).

Some people do not relish attending religious meetings, but here is a meeting from which none of the wicked will be excused. Pilate will be there. Judas will be there. The murderer, the adulterer, the thief — all who fail to heed the Gospel, will be there.

After speaking of the "first resurrection" in Rev. 20, the Lord says: "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished." Then from verses 11 to 15 He describes this resurrection and its accompanying judgment — the great white throne judgment. The dead, the great and the small, are then raised and stand before the throne. "And books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." This is plainly a judgment of the wicked dead.

Besides the judgments mentioned, there is chastening of the Lord, which is called judgment in 1 Cor. 11:32. There we read: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." Then it seems there is a judgment during the millennium comparable to that performed by the Judges in the Old Testament, before Saul became king, for in Rev. 20:4 we read, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them;" Also the Apostles were given a promise that they would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

To sum up, there is first, the believers' judgment for sins, which took place on Calvary; then the believers' judgment for rewards based on their works when Jesus comes; chastening judgment of the Lord that His own might not be condemned with the world; the judgment of the nations just before the millennium; the judgment exercised by those who sit on thrones during the thousand years; and finally, the great white throne judgment of the wicked dead after the thousand years.

The New Jerusalem

Will the New Jerusalem be a real city? What will it be like, how long shall it continue, and who shall dwell therein?

In various passages of the New Testament we get glimpses of the New Jerusalem which John at the end of his Revelation vision, sees in a burst of glory!

This holy city which John saw and which he describes in Revelation 21 and 22 will be (1) A New City; (2) A Literal City; (3) An Eternal City; (4) A Blessed City.

First, the New Jerusalem will be a fresh creation of God — out-and-out new. From a mountain height John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed in a radiance of glory. It is interesting to note that there is a country as well as a city in our future, for John also saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and the sea is no more.

The New Jerusalem is to be a literal city. Abraham looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Abraham was not looking for a state of mind! As we read from Revelation 21 we visualize the splendor and glory of this heavenly city. Our finest cities of today fade into insignificance before it. Walls of sparkling jasper, gates of huge pearls, streets of pure gold, like unto pure glass (the texture suggests a special kind of gold, which we have never seen. It is none the less literal for all that), foundations of twelve precious stones, the fiery throne of God and the Lamb, the crystal river, the tree of life with its healing leaves and sustaining fruit, symmetrical in dimensions, ample in size — all of this lighted up by the actual presence of God and the Lamb! Its beauty and its glory is breath-taking!

The blessedness of the city lies most of all in the fact that at long last God will actually dwell among His people, and they shall see His face and bask in the glory of His presence! He shall wipe away every tear, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city."

And, praise the Lord, this blessedness shall continue unto the ages of ages. We have only dipped into it in this study. It is too good for us or our friends to miss! It is worth any and every sacrifice! "Onward to the prize before us! Soon His beauty we'll behold; Soon the pearly gates will open — We shall tread the streets of gold."

NEWS AND NOTES

SIXTY PREACHERS PRESENT

Sixty preachers, young and old, were present for Louisville Fellowship Week. Around fifty per cent of these attended all week. It is true that fewer attended from distant points, though we did have one or more from Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, California, Missouri, and Tennessee. It was for the most part a Kentucky-Indiana fellowship.

The Portland auditorium was packed each night. The day crowds ranged upward to a hundred. Twenty-six speakers were on the program, besides chairmen and song leaders. All who wished expressed themselves during panel discussion. The speeches were very good, some of them superfine. Missionary night ranked high in the meetings with an address on the Great Commission by Winston Allen. He also showed pictures of his recent trip to Alaska. The missionary offering came to \$327.62.

As usual, some felt that this was the best yet. Those who missed, missed a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. —J. R. C.

Louisville, Ky.: The 1958 Fellowship Meeting has been most excellent. It gave proof of the ability, spirituality, and leadership of the younger generation of preachers and Christian workers in the church today. They have shown themselves worthy to wear the mantle of the Elijahs who have been called to serve in glory. The Lord be praised. —Claude Neal.

Gallatin, Tenn.: To those of us who are somewhat removed, in miles, from the opportunity of sharing thoughts and prayers with like-minded brethren, these fellowship sessions are a real blessing. Each year I return to the local work with renewed zeal, and a deeper appreciation of the Lord's grace in leading me to this fellowship. —Hall C. Crowder.

Hapeville, Ga.: The Hapeville church is grateful to the Lord for the arrival of Brother Bob Ross to work with us. We covet your prayers on our behalf that we may be used of the Lord to extend the work to other cities and counties in the State of Georgia. We believe that God will use us to do this.

I would feel a great loss as I have in the past, if I had not been able to attend the Fellowship Week in Louisville this year. It was a refreshing experience to me after not being able to

come for several years.

In our somewhat isolated location, we lack such fellowship as is enjoyed in the Louisville area. Therefore the contacts we enjoy during the Louisville Fellowship week are a special blessing to us. In keeping with our need of fellowship, we urge those who pass through Atlanta to stop with the church at Hapeville. —Bill Cook.

Louisville, Ky.: I just finished five weeks of meetings—at Waterford, Salem, near Cynthia, and at Nelsonville—with good interest everywhere and with several making the good confession and being baptized. But this week (August 25-29) was the climax. I believe this has been the best Fellowship Meeting in Louisville that I have ever attended—at least from the standpoint of practical teaching. —H. E. Schreiner.

Nelsonville, Ky.: We have just concluded thirteen days of Gospel meeting with Brother Edward Schreiner as the evangelist. There were no responses during the meeting, but one came forward for baptism the following week. The deeply spiritual messages were especially helpful to the church, we feel. A basket dinner and song rally were enjoyed the middle Sunday of the meeting.

It was again a pleasure to attend the Fellowship Week this year. Although familiar faces were missed, the over-all attendance seemed to be average, and the selection and development of subject matter was especially good and stirring. Brother Chambers' Friday session was surely a climax for the week. —Robert Heid.

Abilene, Texas: The Lord seems to be giving evidence that our change of location was in His will, seeing that Hapeville was supplied with a fine man and that the work here seems to be off to a good start. One was baptized two weeks ago and another made confession of unfaithfulness. Brother Frank Gill and Brother Wiley have both left an imprint of much good on the church.

I hope the Fellowship Week will be a blessing to all and certainly wish we could attend. But after a move halfway across the States, we hardly feel up to it. —Carl Kitzmiller.

Dallas, Texas: I do wish I were able to be with you during the Fellowship Week, but I fear I've been away too

much to have the time to spare. May the Lord make it a wonderful blessing to all of you who are privileged to be there. —Gordon R. Linscott.

OUR ANSWER AND AN APPEAL

If our Lord so wills, we'll be responding to invitations to visit churches in Louisiana by the time this is being read.

Send a 3-cent stamp for copies of "Our Answer and An Appeal" (occasioned by the injection of new matter in last negative of Chambers-Jones Discussion). —Stanford Chambers, 4519 Jewell Ave., Louisville 12, Kentucky.

Tell City, Ind.: "A new spark for the Lord." This is my description of the good I received from the Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. —Delmer F. Browning.

Louisville, Ky.: Work at Shawnee has held up very well through the summer. Some things discourage, but others encourage. Our summer meeting with Brother John H. Adams, of Jacksonville, Fla., resulted externally in five baptisms and one transfer of fellowship. Now that vacations are about over, we enter the fall months with courage, faith, and hope for greater things.

The "Fellowship Week" was a season of great spiritual refreshing. Every session was full of good things. Each speaker handled his subject ably, and brought great challenges to us all. The theme of "Practical Christianity In Our Day" was never lost sight of. Altogether, we consider it among the best, if not the best, of these annual meetings that have been held during the past eleven years.

We regretted the absence of a number of our distant preachers and others who have been regular attendants in past meetings. They, too, would have been richly blessed could they have been present.

We look forward to another such week in 1959, if the Lord tarries. —Willis H. Allen.

Mitchell, Ind.: I received a great blessing from the Fellowship Meeting. All the messages were inspiring and the spirit of God was present in every session. I believe everyone present will have more love and zeal to do the work of Him who redeemed us with His own precious blood. If the Lord should delay His coming I hope to attend next year. —Bob Morrow.

Parkville, Ky.: Our fall meeting with Herman Fox, Jr., as evangelist is scheduled for October 5-15. Christians from the surrounding congregations

and all who have the opportunity are urged to attend as much as possible. —Frank Gill.

RALLY DAY AT S. C. C.

A good crowd attended rally day at Southeastern Christian College. Brother N. Wilson Burks delivered an inspiring address. The offering came to over \$2200. Offerings received through the mail were around \$2800, bringing the total to a bit under \$5000. This was about \$800 short of the amount needed to clear the mortgage payment. The dinner and fellowship after the meeting were a blessing to body and soul.

Nashville, Tenn.: I closed my work (at least for the present) with the East Jackson Street church of Christ, Sullivan, Indiana. Our new address will be 1107 Caldwell Lane, Nashville, Tennessee. —E. Gaston Collins.

BROTHER TOMMY GABHART

I was saddened by a call from Mackville Kentucky, recently, because it brought the news of the death of Brother Tommy Gabhart. Having known him all my life, part of the time living on the same farm, I learned to love him from my early childhood. Brother Tommy and several other brothers and sisters, including my mother, were responsible for the beginning of the Mackville church.

Brother Tommy was the best Christian I have ever known. His loving manner of doing things as a Christian gave him the ability to correct a man or a child and to help them see their mistakes and wrongs.

Once, in telling of the finest Christian I ever knew, as an illustration in a Sunday school class, a brother in the class said, "I know whom you are talking about. It is Brother Tommy Gabhart of Mackville." Truly our loss is heaven's gain! —Estel Hobbs.

ABOUT BROTHER JORGENSEN

On the first day of Louisville Christian Fellowship Week our senior editor, Brother E. L. Jorgenson, suffered a heart attack. He was taken to St. Anthony Hospital, here in Louisville, where he seems to be responding favorably to treatment.

He requests that I thank all of his friends who have showered him with love and kindness in this trying hour. He has received letters, cards, telegrams, long distance calls, and innumerable calls from local friends. He hopes to be at home before the middle of September. He is appreciative of the many prayers that have gone and are going up in his behalf. —J. R. C.

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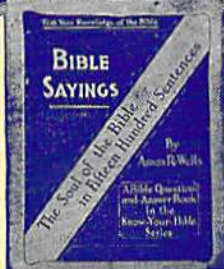
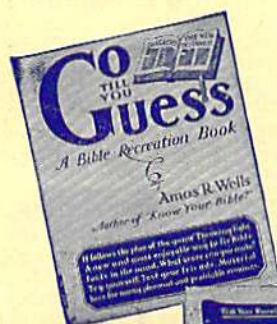
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