

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God."*

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

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## God's Family

W. R. H.

### A CONDENSED VERSION OF THE BIBLE

This morning's *Courier-Journal* reported a news item from New York announcing a new and condensed revision of the Bible, known as the *Reader's Digest Bible*. The labors of seven editors for some seven years, the new version is 40% shorter than the current Revised Standard Version. A few statements in the report are particularly disquieting to me, wherein some of the aims and the reasons for the new volume are set out. I quote:

"It is smoother, more inviting, more readable (than the R.S.V.)"

"It is not possible to quote the streamlined Bible chapter and verse, because it has neither."

"The 23rd psalm has become the 13th psalm, because other psalms have disappeared entirely."

"Hundreds of minor figures, such as Biztha, have been consigned to anonymity."

"Reader's Digest editors cut line by line, excising what it describes as the three R's; repetition, rhetoric and redundancy."

"Some of the Bible's 66 books were substantially reduced, such as Exodus and Deuteronomy, each of which lost about seven out of every ten words."

"Although none of Jesus' New Testament words is changed from the Revised Standard Version, 10 per cent are deleted."

"Mark and Luke were only reduced by 15% and 25% respectively."

"... was amazed to find that even the famous epistles of St. Paul were "loosely expressed" letters that the feisty preacher dictated to a secretary." (comment of the chief scribe of the seven.)

### "FOR WHAT PURPOSE?" MAY I ASK

Whoever undertakes to write a book, must have some purpose in mind, a kind of aim or urgency that sees the end justifying the cost and effort expended. I recall that when E.L. Jorgenson was compiling "Faith of our Fathers," he often told others that he was charged to do the work in the will of Bro. Don Carlos James, and so he must get the task done diligently. Money was bequeathed for the publication of gleanings from the "Fathers" which writings enable us who live in later years to know that those giants of the faith dealt honestly with such themes as the grace of God, the fellowship of all believers, the

gift of the Holy Spirit, the second coming of Christ, the Millennial reign, etc. Surely, all good Christian writings have had similar high purposes.

But why the need to condense the Bible? The argument that the "Average reader" would not get past 1st Chronicles, is no real justification for their effort. The Bible is a library of 66 books. It has never been necessary to read it straight through (although we do well to do so on occasion). Long ago I bought "the Complete Works of Shakespeare." I have never read it straight through. But I have read several of the works, and I do not need to have them abridged for my convenience. There are lines in Macbeth that scribes might call repetitive, but they are part of the metre and part of the beauty of the play. To blue-pencil any passages would only spite the author and impoverish the reader.

### AN HONEST EFFORT

One great feature of the American Standard Version (of 1901) is that where ever they had to add words that were not actually substantiated by Greek words in the original manuscripts, they would put them in Italics. Hence, Italics in the Bible are not for emphasis, but rather for clarity of thought. Ephesians 2:1 gives a good example. Even there, the Italics in verse one have their substance in verse 5. We can thank God that the revision committee that presented its work to us in the year 1901, had the high purpose and integrity to try to give voice to every word in the Greek text. Every word of man is not necessarily important, but when we come to the inspired word of God, every word *is* important. The Lord gave His words to us in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Scribes have been used to preserve the written word for us, and scholars (such as Martin Luther) have given their years in translating it into other tongues. We ought to esteem their work highly and continually thank God for overseeing the publication of His testaments.

### WHAT TO CUT?

To end up with a work 40% shorter, would require an average loss of two chapters out of five; two words out of five. This is a radical treatment for any reason. It will be interesting to see where the axe has actually fallen. I know that some think they could do without Isaiah, Daniel, Song of Solomon, or the Revelation. But the *sum* of God's word is truth. If any complete thoughts (as complete psalms) are deleted, or any major sentence crippled by excising what is "deemed non-essential" how does this help today's lazy readers to really find out the ways of God? The Book of Revelation (22:18) carries a fearful injunction against anyone that adds to or takes from the contents of its prophecy. Who would dare tamper with its text?



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## THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

### “Rejoicing in Tribulation”

*And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.*  
(Romans 5:3-5, ASV)

Paul had closed verse 2 of Romans 5 with the statement that “we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Once we understand that the glory of God shall be manifested to us at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13) and that we have been called to share in that glory (1 Peter 5:10), it is easy to rejoice. But if it stood alone, the next statement would be difficult to grasp—“We also rejoice in our tribulations.” But these three verses we have quoted show the reason for that. We do not rejoice because something about our nature enjoys suffering; we rejoice because we know the results that come from our tribulations.

Now, first of all, what is “tribulation”? The Greek word used here is defined as “pressing, pressing together, pressure, oppression, affliction, distress, straits.” You see that the emphasis is on pressure. Those things that bring pressure to our nature are tribulation. Since it is doubtful that there has been a time when more pressures were put upon people than today (doubtful to us, at least!, though the Middle Ages, many wars and other things may claim priority), we ought to think carefully about Paul’s statement that this should make us among the most joyful people of all times. And it makes these three verses ones that we today should take into our lives each day as we face those pressures that pile upon us. The depression (“economic recession”), communism, the Middle East, constantly rising costs of nearly everything, the continued fall of moral values in almost all the world—and we could go on with hundreds of items that make a great many “long faces” everywhere. Many feel that everything is pressing in upon them and there is no relief. Paul says, then, “rejoice” We need to remind ourselves of what Paul wrote from prison—“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). Paul then in that letter reminds us to let everyone see our gentleness (forbearance,

sweet reasonableness) and reminds us that “The Lord is at hand.” He then tells us how to set anxiety aside: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (New King James Version).

But here in Romans 5 Paul shows another way—Instead of looking at the tribulations or pressures look at the results. And he does not say to do this after the pressures are over, looking backward and forward, but to do so *in our tribulations*, rejoicing while these things are pressing us. He does not think that for a moment we should allow these things to “get to us”, to lower our joy even temporarily. Before they come we are to look at the results that will come from these things and give not only a wonderful witness to others seeing how these things do not “drag us down” but also give true glory to God by believing Him in the midst of these things.

Now notice again the results of these tribulations or pressures: steadfastness (endurance), which works out approvedness (a sense of being approved by God), which then works out hope for time and eternity, and that is a hope that will be realized, it will not “put us to shame” (will not end in disappointment). The great thing that makes all this a reality is that God has given us His Spirit (first mention of Him in Romans) and He has shed abroad in our hearts the love of God. We know that God loves us and consequently we love Him. He proved His love and taught us what love was by Christ dying on the Cross for us. So we can and should “rejoice in our tribulations.”

My fellow Christian, are you rejoicing? I don’t mean that you shouldn’t “weep with those that weep”, for there are many things that call for sincere sympathy, but I do mean that even then those around us should see that we have an inner strength that does not come from ourselves but from God. The long-faced Christian is the worst witness for Christ there is, just as the sinning Christian also drives others away. Think of what God has done for you, what He is doing for you, and, above all, what He will do for you throughout eternity—and rejoice regardless of the conditions around you. And don’t do this to put on a show but to show your real inner state reposing in the Lord.

If you are not a Christian, may I simply remind you that no tribulation of any kind in this world can compare to that you will have for all eternity. I don’t want you to have that. The Holy Spirit doesn’t want you to have that. Christ and the Father don’t want that for you—so trust in Christ and receive His salvation now—and then be able to rejoice in the Lord.

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## Enjoy Your Bible

Frederick Herwaldt, Jr.

I ENJOY reading the Bible, *despite* much of the advice I’ve heard. Following other’s suggestions, I’ve tried keeping a notebook,

outlining passages, diagramming them, reading only short passages, using commentaries, and filling out study guides. Most of these have not worked for me. I might have concluded that Bible-reading wasn't for me; instead, I concluded that *I am different from everyone else*. *If your Bible-reading is dull, try something different.*

You too are different from everyone else. If each of us has a unique personality, schedule, and needs, some Bible-reading techniques that work for others might not work for you. Treat them as suggestions. There is no absolutely right or wrong way to read the Bible. A good rule is: if your Bible-reading is dull, try something different Experiment. The following ideas may give you some help.

*Avoid ruts.* Use a different translation than you normally use to get a fresh look at the Bible. You will find many excellent versions available. If you are used to reading the Bible with a guide or study book and are finding it dull, try reading it without one.

*Find the best time.* Some of us with flexible schedules can arrange things so that a daily time is possible. Others may find this to be more frustrating than practical. Men with regular job schedules and heavy family responsibilities may find that scheduling a one-hour block of time, one night a week or on the weekend, is far more satisfying than trying to spend fifteen minutes each morning before work. Continue, however, your daily time in the Word!

*Realize that the Bible was written over a 1,500-year period, by many different men using a great variety of literary forms.* Since the literature of the Bible varies from history and doctrine to poetry and prophecy, the ways we read the Bible must adjust accordingly. You will read the Psalms differently than First and Second Samuel. The Psalms are a collection of 150 Hebrew poems. You can read Psalm 100 without having read Psalm 99. Each chapter is a separate unit. First and Second Samuel, however, are the history of David. You cannot understand Second Samuel 16 without having read Second Samuel 15. Since they tell a story, you need to start from the beginning.

A great way to get excited about the Bible is to read longer sections. When we read a novel or biography, we read it straight through. Its excitement grips us. But somehow many of us have picked up the idea that "blessings" from the Bible come only if we meditate on a few short verses. We have been told that to understand and enjoy the Bible, we must dissect it verse by verse, outline it, and diagram it. Study like this can be helpful, but for me this was the single greatest barrier to enjoying Bible reading. Why let it end my interest in the Bible? Could it be that the key to enjoying the world's holiest book is to give it the same chance I give to a mere novel?

Read straight through the Gospel of Mark. It will not take longer than one hour and you will gain a new perspective on the ministry of Jesus. In fact, certain books of the Bible cannot be understood without reading the entire book. This first 37 chapters of Job are impossible to understand apart from the final five chapters. The Book of Ecclesiastes cannot be understood without reading the final two verses.

*Read the whole in order to understand the parts.* Discipline yourself to read those sections of the Bible you have never read before. Some of us only read "favorite" sections of the Bible. The Bible is meant to be understood in its entirety. Some books cannot be understood without the background that other books provide. For example, the Book of Hebrews cannot be fully understood apart from the Book of Leviticus, and Revelation should be viewed against the backdrop of Daniel.

Establish a goal—and share it. Let another person know what your goal is and how you are doing. Setting aside one hour every week to read the Bible would give you more than enough time to read it completely in two years.

Do not get stalled by problems. When you come across a difficulty, write it down. You can talk to someone or read about the problem at a different time. Keep reading so that you can get the big picture the Bible is trying to present.

*Stop anything that keeps you from reading the Bible.* Often it is recommended that you keep a notebook to write down important ideas. Try this; it may work for you. But if the burden of doing this or anything else takes away from the excitement of reading, drop it.

Enjoy your Bible-reading!

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## *Viewing the News*

Jack Blaes

**YOUTH IN EAST GERMANY ARE DISILLUSIONED BY SOCIALISM.** They say it supplies no satisfactory answers to their questions. According to Dr. Werner Krusche of East Germany's Lutheran Church they are turning to the church and seeking God for help. "Meaningless" is the word they use to describe Socialist propaganda.

**WHO IS FOR PEACE IN TODAY'S WORLD?** All of the TV networks, all of the papers, magazines, etc., all of the nations, all but a very small minority of people everywhere. Even Patrick Henry, I'm sure, if he were with us would be for peace. He was concerned about paying too big a price for it,

and so should we be. If we do not discern what is behind the present day so-called peace movement, we may find that we have given our all for peace and are still without it. M. Stanton Evans tells us: "The hand of the Soviets and their U.S. minions in the current 'peace' commotion is heavy and overt. Non-Communist peaceniks are knowingly cooperating with the communists and their front groups on a systematic basis. This fact is readily documented, although the major media ignore it. Mobilization for Survival for instance has on its official roster not only the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Peace Fellowship, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, but the Communist Party USA. It also includes

the U.S. Peace Council and two other groups identified as Communist fronts!" To go along with the World Peace Council and its allies which are spearheading the current peace furor is not only to be for peace, it is for a complete absence of it.

THE CONNECTICUT MUTUAL LIFE REPORT ON AMERICAN VALUES in the '80s found among other things the following: that many Americans are seeking a new level of spiritual and religious commitment as the solution to our basic societal problems. "Bewildered by the present," the report says, "large numbers of citizens now find solace in the firm convictions of their ancestors." The most religious Americans are more likely to find a sense of dedication to their work. The most religious are more likely to feel that their work contributes to society. They are more likely to find their work interesting and rewarding. They are more likely to believe that financial security can be obtained by hard work. These people are much more likely to say they would reconcile their marital problems at all costs rather than seek divorce. According to the report "... while we need to be alert against religious-political involvements from both right and left, our society and our economy desperately need a revival of spiritual values, particularly faith and individual integrity."

BRITISH SCIENTIST AND ATHEIST FACES FACTS. In the past Dr. Fred Hovel took the position that a Creator is "inconsistent with science." In a book which he has coauthored with Prof. Wickramasinghe, he reveals that he has discovered that the chances of life starting spontaneously were about 10 to the power of 40,000. In the book he says, "At the moment I can't find any rational argument to knock down the view which argues for conversion to God. If I could have found an argument—even a flimsy one—I wouldn't have been party to what we wrote in the book. We used to have open minds; now we realize that the only logical answer to life is creation—and not accidental random shuffling." Thanks, maybe someone needed that!

SOME "FIRM CONVICTIONS" OF OUR ANCESTORS. "Every one shall

consider the main end of his life studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him." —Harvard University Rules and Precepts 1646. "I love Thy kingdom, Lord, The house of Thine abode, The Church our blest Redeemer saved with His own precious blood."—Timothy Dwight, President, Yale University, 1795. "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future upon the capacity of each of us to govern ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."—James Madison. "From the day of the Declaration they (the American people) were bound by the laws of God... and by the laws of the Gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledged as the rules of their conduct."—John Quincy Adams.

SOVIET FORCED LABOR CAMPS ARE AS BRUTAL TODAY AS in the harshest period of Stalinist repression. A former inmate of a Soviet prison camp testified before a U.S. Senate Banking Subcommittee (6-18-82) to the above assertion. He also said that the Soviet Union is planning to use millions of slave laborers to build its natural gas pipeline between Siberia and Western Europe. As many as 500,000 Vietnamese workers are being sent to the USSR to work on the pipeline and other projects. The best information available estimates that the population of the Gulag Archipelago (the Soviet prison system) is from 4 to 17 million.

IF YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND THIS, please talk to your parents or your minister about it. Parents, discuss it with your children. They should know and understand: Forty-nine percent of all syphilis in the U.S. is carried by gays; about twenty percent of all gonorrhoea in the U.S. is carried by gays; gays have a rate of infectious hepatitis eight to twenty-five times higher than heterosexual males; two-thirds of gays have at least one venereal disease; in San Francisco over the past decade infectious hepatitis A increased 100%, infectious hepatitis B increased 300%, amoebic colon infection increased 2500%, the V.D. clinic saw 75,000 patients per year, of which



70-80% were homosexual males, 20% of gays carried rectal gonorrhoea; homosexuality is associated with prostitution about 400 times more frequently for gays; bestiality is at least 300% more frequent among homosexual, both lesbian and gay than their heterosexual counterparts; masochism is at least 800% more frequent among homosexuals; homosexuals are both more frequently suicide and homicide; homosexuals live less happy lives. Homosexual pockets in our communities are cesspools of communicable diseases. In the light of these facts, the hue and cry for "clean air, clean water, etc." coming from those supportive of homosexuality, is quite hollow indeed.

**TIME ON HERPES FREE SEX.** The monogamous now have one more reason to remain so. (8-2-82). For all the distress it has brought, herpes may inadvertently be ushering in a period

in which sex is linked more firmly to commitment and trust. It threatens to undo the "sexual revolution." Al Goldstein says, "It may be there is a god in heaven carving out his pound of flesh for all our joys." At the present time 20 million Americans now have the disease with as many as half a million new cases each year. Sr. Yehudi Felman says, "The increase is exponential after a while." **Time** notes that people are fast becoming disillusioned with free sex and terrified of getting herpes and having it forever.

**SOLZHENITSYN AGAIN.** "The communist ideology is out to destroy American society. This has been their aim for 125 years and has never changed; only the methods have changed a little. When there is detente, peaceful-co-existence, and trade, they will still insist: the ideological war must continue."



## STUDIES ON PRAYER

Jesse Z. Wood

### "Our Abundantly Able God"

Amaziah, the Son of Joash "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah"—(up to a point) "But not with a perfect heart." His Life Story, as King in Judah is told in 2 Chronicles 25.

Amaziah planned to go to war against the nation of Edom, down south of the Dead Sea; but, after numbering his soldiers he discovered that he had only three hundred thousand men. He hired a hundred thousand soldiers from the Northern Ten tribes of Israel, which had ceased worshipping the True God and had gone after Idol Worship.

The Lord sent a Man of God to warn Amaziah against such a move. Amaziah then complained, saying, "What shall we do for the hundred Talents which I have given to the Army of Israel?" The answer from the Man of God came quickly: "Jehovah is able to give you more than this!"

Paul was inspired to write that our God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

Centuries before Amaziah's time, Jehovah led His Man Joshua in victory after victory. The "Prince of the host of Jehovah" introduced

Himself to His servant, Joshua, just before the first great Battle took place at Jericho. Joshua was on "holy ground", in such a presence—Indeed, we stand on "Holy Ground" when we "draw near with Boldness unto the throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace, to help us in time of need" (See both Joshua 5:13-15; and Heb. 4:16).

Aren't we ashamed to ever "worry", when we have available such help from above? Just here, I think of how the early disciples of our Lord Jesus became frantic over the storm that was tossing their little craft on the Sea of Galilee, that night. (Mark 4:35-41) Had they been there alone, it might seem plausible, humanly speaking what might have happened. But with Jesus in the boat with them, even though sound asleep on the cushion in the back of the boat, neither Satan, nor all of his army could sink that tiny vessel! (for our Heavenly Father was watching over that boat and His sleeping Son, and His dear frightened sailors. And, again, imagine the cry of those pitiful men when they asked, "Teacher, carest Thou not that we perish?" "Perish!?" (Look at the word in John 3:16!)

Remember, that nothing can just "happen" without purpose (God's purpose for you and me), while we are "in the same boat with our Saviour and Lord Jesus! He may "allow" things to upset us, to "Happen" to us, if you will, but these are "appointments" set up by Him, for our good, and for His glory. So "Cheer-up": and Praise Him for even those things He allows to take place in our daily walk of Faith-in-Him! (Remember Jobs case?—Job 1 and 2.)

"All things work together for good"—not to the people of the world—but to "select ones"—meaning "You and Me," who have taken that same Lord Jesus, lovingly, into our heart, believing in Him and trusting in Him, while the winds of "circumstance" blow without!

Many times at funerals we hear the sweet song, "Safe in the arms of Jesus", because of a loved one or a friend has passed away. But, Believers in the Lord Jesus are, indeed, now, in this present life-time, daily, "safe in His Arms," as we walk and talk with Him.

Is not our trouble "faithlessness"? (Failing to take Him at His word.) Not accepting His promises! Not realizing that He is right here where we are! Not accepting His assurances that He is watching over us! Remember: "...Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail Thee, neither will I in any wise forsake Thee." (Heb. 13:5b)

Here are a few choice reassurances from the Word:

He is able to "Establish" you.....Romans 16:25  
He is able to strengthen you.....Philippians 4:13  
He is able to "enable" you.....I Timothy 1:12  
He is able to Guard you.....Jude 24  
All things are possible  
to him that believeth.....Mark 9:23

"Latch on to His Promises—believe them—act on them—Trust them! and forsake the sin of "Worry".

Remember, Our God is the Abundantly Able God! And, He will supply every need of yours.

“He maketh the storm a calm, So that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quiet; So He bringeth them unto their desired Haven.” (Psa. 107: 29, 30)

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess. 5:17)

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Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

# PROPHECY

## Matthew 24: History or Prophecy?

Julius M. Hovan

The passage under consideration is described in one commentary as follows: “This discussion contains some of the most difficult of Jesus’ utterances. The apocalyptic nature of the material resembles some of the prophetic discourses of the O.T., where the mingling of historical & typical elements make interpretation difficult.” (Wycliffe Bible Commentary). David Cooper says regarding this Olivet discourse: “it is one of the most important prophetic utterances in the scriptures. If one has a clear understanding of this prediction, one will have an outline into which almost all other subjects of prophecy will fit perfectly.”

We are aware of both of these truths: 1) Matthew 24 is one of the most difficult passages yet one of great importance. 2) An understanding of Matthew 24 will help us fit together all the pieces of God’s prophetic puzzle.

“On no point have good men so entirely disagreed as on the interpretation of prophecy. On no point have the prejudices of one class, the dogmatism of a second, and the extravagance of a third, done so much to rob the church of truths, which God intended to be a blessing. Well says Olshansen, “What does not man see, or fail to see, when it serves to establish his own favorite opinion.”

Our aim should be that what we cannot learn to reconcile we can yet accept upon the authority of God’s Word. There is something greater and better than understanding the Bible and that is believing it.

Our approach is that expressed by Lewis S. Chafer: “Appeal is addressed to the student to observe the literal and physical character of these predictions, and how impossible it is within the bounds of reason to give these prophecies a spiritual interpretation. The first wrong turn in the road which traces Israel’s coming glories is the willingness to misinterpret the meaning of the words employed and beyond that error is the more pernicious method of ignoring these scriptures altogether. The whole field of complexity has by many been found to disappear when terms are taken in their normal, grammatical and natural meaning.”

A fuller understanding of the discourse will come by studying the accounts also found in Mark 13 and Luke 21.

The goal and purpose of this study is to determine—Is Matthew 24 history or prophecy?

Charles E. Brown (who believed it is all history) stated in 1927 regarding verse 21: "Every student of the subject knows these words were amply fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem under Titus." Then he adds: "The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the end of the world."

We contend at the beginning of this study that both history and prophecy are found in Matthew 24 as well as in other passages. Pre-fulfillment in types is one of God's ways of teaching truth. Thus, the events of 70 A.D. are a prophetic type of destruction to come. In the same way the Babylonian captivity and exile is a type of the world-wide dispersion of the Jews. And their return from that captivity is a type of their current regathering.

**SETTING** — This discourse takes place near the end of the earthly life of Jesus. He has pronounced the woes upon the Pharisees and wept over the beloved, capital city of Jerusalem. He has just walked for the last time in the shadow of the magnificent temple and leaves it to go again to the Mount of Olives. The conversation begun on the temple continues on the Olives Mount as his closest followers come to ask Jesus some specific questions.

In verse one they show him the beautiful buildings. No doubt they did so with much pride and possibly to challenge his words about the destruction of such grandeur.

Jesus delivers a terrible blow in verse two. It must have been hard for them to believe such could happen or that God would allow it to happen. The one they thought would be King and would restore glory to Israel by defeating the Romans now speaks forcefully of much the opposite.

A more stunning blow would occur three days later when Jesus is killed and as a result their faith and hope almost destroyed. For their sake and ours Jesus puts forth much effort to show that their hopes would be realized in a far greater way than they had imagined. The assurance they needed is divinely interwoven with the judgment of a righteous God. May we not be guilty of limiting God by our lack of faith, knowledge or understanding. Remember Ephesians 3:20!

The questions of verse three should come as no surprise. Zechariah 14 and other Old Testament passages present ideas about the destruction of the temple, second coming of Christ and the end of the age. The disciples were familiar with such ideas but did not understand the various details.

It was logical for them to want to know the "when" of such important matters. One writer states: "Essential part of Jewish thought was Day of the Lord. The day when God would intervene directly in history and the present age with all its incurable evil beginning to be transformed and recreated into the age to come."

Please keep in mind question three deals with the end of an age not the inhabited earth. We may not be clear about the beginning and ending of this or any other age but we can know God has ordained various ones and He is in control.

Verses 4-8 give a picture of the character of our entire present age. Jesus specifically warns against hasty conclusions regarding wars

and rumors of wars. James explains that fighting is the result of our lusting, covetous spirit, and since such has always been in the heart of man these conditions will mark every age.

Verse 7 indicates an increase in both the number and intensity of war which we have seen fulfilled in our own generation. Such signs to some degree help pin point end times but they more specifically emphasize now badly the world needs deliverance. Its groanings and travail will continue until the Deliverer comes.

These are the beginning of travail (v8) and it is reasonable to conclude that their increase points to the full outbreak of the coming judgment and tribulation of God.

Are verses 4-8 history or prophecy? Clearly, both from the time of Jesus and from our time they contain history as well as prophecy.

Verses 9-14 are much like 4-8, they describe past, present and future happenings. An amazing similarity exists between these predictions (v4-14) and the order of the seals in Revelation 6. To read of false Christs, wars, famine, pestilence, quakes and martyrs as here described, is to see a picture of the first half of the 70th week of Daniel.

If we believe all of Matthew was fulfilled in 70 A.D. and the years just before that, verse 14 poses a problem. First, the gospel of the kingdom was not preached to all the inhabited earth (different Greek word than v2). In a literal sense our preaching today is not the gospel of the kingdom but of grace. Obviously the Son of Man did not return in 70 A.D. (verse 31 tells that at His return Israel will be gathered whereas in 70 A.D. they were dispersed).

Thus, although general terms are used in verse 9-14 to describe the past and the present, our Lord's words combined with the Spirit inspired words of Revelation, cause us to conclude this is a passage not yet literally fulfilled.

We always do well to let scripture explain scripture. As we look at verses 15-28 it is especially important to do so. Note especially the following:

1) The entire passage of Matthew 24 is "very Jewish." Note the emphasis on, the temple, hatred of all nations, gospel of the kingdom, abomination of desolation, Judea, Sabbath and time of tribulation.

2) Jesus knew and used the Old Testament. Is it coincidence that Daniel and Jesus used much the same words to describe this time? Daniel 9:27; 12:1, 11.

3) This Time of Jacob's Trouble is clearly a time of judgment on Israel. It is not a time for Christians who have been delivered from such judgment and already taken out of the world. (John 5:24, I Thesalonians 4:13-18; 5:9).

4) As verses 9-14 picture the first half of the seven year period of tribulation, so these verses echo what Daniel and John had to say about a period of time having 1,290 days.

5) Luke's account of coming destruction (21:20-24) is not as severe as the one we are considering. A key phrase in Luke is, "Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The end of the times of Gentiles signals the begin-

ning of times of Israel—the very time described in Matthew 24. If language means what it says this has not been all literally fulfilled but is indeed yet future.

6) Verses 21-22 limit these events to the greatest of all tribulations—yet future. All periods of the past have had such both for Israel and for Christians. But none like this one: “Think of it! It is to be the worst time the world has ever known, or ever will know. A worse time than the flood; a worse time than the bondage of Egypt, and a worse time than the destruction of Jerusalem, when women and children were torn in pieces, and the very name of mercy was unknown.

A worse time than the reign of Nero; worse than during the Spanish inquisition; worse than when Cortes destroyed the Aztecs; worse than during the French revolution and the commune, and worse than during the Dark Ages.

A worse time than when men were skinned alive; worse than when they were pulled asunder by horses; worse than when men, women and children were thrown to hungry lions, and worse than when they were dipped in pitch and burned as torches.” (Billy Sunday)

7) False Christs enter the scene in verses 23-26. Deliverance will be needed because of the great distress of nations. Many will present themselves as the deliverer. This is why the anti-Christ will be so successful. But we will not need to hunt or wonder when the Messiah returns if it is really Him. His coming will not be secret but visible. This time it will not be by birth but in power and great glory. None will need wonder if this one is the “same Jesus.”

8) What could be more impressed upon the Jewish mind than the “abomination of desolation?” Such a thing had happened in 170 B.C. under Antiochus Epiphanes. Jesus says it has happened and will happen again. As indeed it did in 70 A.D. when Roman armies captured 97,000 and killed a million people.

Even though history confirms such desolation has happened more than once (including the slaughters of Hitler.) Jesus predicts that a greater abomination will take place in the latter days.

The next paragraph (verses 29-31) deal with what happens “immediately after the tribulation of those days.” It is most difficult to say these events have occurred. It logically follows if they have not then neither have some of the other events predicted.

It is this Second Coming of the Son of Man that terminates the tribulation as he: 1) destroys the man of sin (II Thessalonians 2:8). 2) crushes the armies who have followed Satan and 3) is acknowledged as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His power and authority are evident and openly acknowledged.

In this paragraph are at least four major events that are difficult to find in history: 1) great tribulation, 2) signs in heaven, 3) appearance of Son of Man in such visible glory, 4) such gathering by the angels. The book of Revelation provides a more complete picture of such events.

What is “the sign?” Some have suggested it will be a cross in the sky. Most likely it will be the Shekinah cloud so familiar to a

Jew who knew the Old Testament. (Daniel 7:13-14; II Thessalonians 1:7, 9)

When they see Him, having acknowledged and received Him as the pierced One, Matthew 23:39 will be fulfilled also (Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10, Jeremiah 23:7-8).

Our study concludes with a look at verses 32-36. I consider them crucial to determining the facts about Matthew 24.

First, we see the fig tree which here and elsewhere is a sign or type of Israel. We could easily take this to mean any normal fig tree which is able by putting forth leaves to tell summer is nigh. Thus, "these things" tells us of the nearness of the Lord's return. Luke gives an indication the tree does not necessarily indicate Israel when he says: "and all the other trees."

As always let us use caution in interpreting signs. Even leaves can fool us about the nearness of warm weather. Be careful to note any sign and insist it is a specific event in God's plan. How good to know He is in perfect control and on time!

To explain "this generation" (v34) as the lifetime of those then living obligates us to believe all these events took place around 70 A.D. That is impossible to do unless we spiritualize the Second Coming of Christ. One thing made clear and emphasized by Jesus, the angels and New Testament is that this "same Jesus will so come in like manner."

This confirms the certainty of His personal, visible return.

How do we deal with what is to some a real dilemma? Some suggest the generation referred to is the one alive when all these final, age-ending events begin to happen. Although I see this as a possibility it may cause us to do what God clearly tells us we must not do—set dates. If World War II (or some other such recent event) is the beginning of the end then we simply count ahead 40-50 years and insist that God must do certain things He has predicted.

Instead of this interpretation let us seek some clarity from the Greek lexicon which tells us "generation" has a primary meaning of "race or family or stock" (in this case of Israel.) This promise of the preservation of Israel is confirmed over and over in the Old Testament and emphasized and taught by the inspired Apostle Paul in Romans 11.

The surety of all this is the surety that all of God's Word will be fulfilled (Matthew 24:35)

It is this verse (v34) which really reinforces the fact that a complete fulfillment of this chapter is yet future. Read it! "All these things" carries us to and through end time events and the final victory of Jesus Christ—whatever we may believe about the how and when of its occurrence. If all this, including the end, has happened, where are we now in the revealed plan of God?

### *Conclusion*

From the beginning of this article we have recognized both the difficulty of interpreting prophecy and the importance of consistent and proper interpretation. Using this approach we have tried to dis-

cover if Matthew 24 is completely fulfilled or does it contain prophecy or does it contain history and prophecy?

It should come as no surprise that men would disagree on conclusions especially in answering the three questions proposed by the disciples. There is even disagreement among those who use the same method of interpretation, much less among those using different methods.

It is my contention that a literal, normal interpretation of what language means forces us to conclude that all of Matthew 24 has not taken place. We suggest these specifics:

- 1) Gospel preached to whole world, followed by the end (v14).
- 2) Great time of tribulation like no other (v21-22).
- 3) Coming of Jesus Christ as described in verses 27, 30.
- 4) The events of verses 29-31.
- 5) God's preservation of Israel as a race, a nation. The generation Jesus said would last has indeed lasted.

Why would one refuse to believe literally what God has said regarding such matters? Any other interpretation means I believe God does not mean exactly what He says. Let us allow God to do all He promised, for indeed His desire is to do even more and greater things!

I would remind us all that Jesus turns from the certainty of His return to the uncertainty of the time of that return. He tells His followers that their task is to watch, be ready and to be faithful, loving servants until He comes. We will then be able to share in His glory, power and rule. Let us remember that such sharing does not depend on an ability to interpret difficult passages of scripture or to out argue someone or to draw a better prophecy chart. It rather depends on a daily faith relationship to God through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do well to copy the humble, believing spirit of the unknown negro poet who wrote:

There's a king and a captain high,  
And he's coming by and by,  
And he'll find me hoeing cotton when he comes.  
You can hear his legions charging in the regions of the sky,  
And he'll find me hoeing cotton when he comes.  
There's a man they thrust aside,  
Who was tortured till he died,  
And he'll find me hoeing cotton when he comes.  
He was hated and rejected,  
He was scorned and crucified,  
And he'll find me hoeing cotton when he comes.  
When he comes! When he comes!  
He'll be crowned by saints and angels when he comes  
They'll be shouting out Hosanna!  
To the man that men denied,  
And I'll kneel among my cotton when he comes.



# GLEANINGS

Larry Miles

## WHO IS SECTARIAN?

Are all persons who live in sectarian churches equally under the influence of sectism? NO! There are probably some in all the sects who, mind and heart, are converted to Christ, and who so reverence His word that they will bow to its teachings just in proportion as they become acquainted therewith. All such are in mind and heart not sectarians, though outwardly living in connection with sectarianism. Just as people can outwardly live in connection with the Church of Christ without being Christians so it is true that persons can outwardly live in connection with sectarian churches without being sectarians. "For they are not all Israel who are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6), and so they are not all sectarians who are of sectarian churches.

What shall we say of those preachers who denounce all persons who happen to hold membership in a sectarian denomination with a sentence of sweeping impeachment, as though they were all under the influence of sectism? *We should say that they are probably more sectarian than some they denounce. Their manner shows they are unscripturally exclusive and this is one of the elements of sectarianism.* (UNDERLINED EMPHASIS by the Compiler.)

—Daniel Sommer in "Religious Sectism Defined"

**NOTE:** The words that are to follow are the thoughts and beliefs of the compiler of this series. They are not necessarily the opinions of the editor of the *Word & Work*.

## A STATEMENT OF FACT

I want to take this time to commend our late Bro. Sommer for some poignant thinking. For one who was considered to be the spokesman among the ultra-conservative among the acapella brethren, to write with such openness must have given many hope for a divided movement.

I am indebted in many ways to such brethren as Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside for some of my views on fellowship. In the 1957 volume of *Mission Messenger*, Bro. Carl gave us this reprint from the pen of Bro. Sommer. As you will recall from my series in the *Word & Work* on the Restoration Movement, which ran from 1978-1980, Bro. Ketcherside was the successor to Bro. Sommer as the spokesman of the ultra-conservative brethren who opposed such things as the one-man-pastor system, that has even plagued us in the Pre-Mil wing, as well as opposing Bible Colleges.

As you will also recall, I related to you that after many years as a factional leader, who would not accept anyone as a fellow believer unless that one agreed with the party 100%, he was freed from the shackles of sectarian bondage and is now pleading for the unity of all believers in Christ. Remember where God has a child, you or I have a brother or sister no matter how much some of us like to deny it.

The Lord has some children behind some odd sign boards. And brethren, all those signboards don't say Church of Christ on them. As Bro. Carl has said, "We're not saved by a signboard, but by a cross."

You have probably wondered what brought on this editorial. I believe with all my heart that the Lord Jesus Christ founded but one church. That church was founded on the Day of Pentecost and was a fulfillment of Matt. 16:18. All who are in Christ are in this church. This church did not cease to exist after the first century. There have been, since the beginning, faithful believers on the earth. Men such as Alexander Campbell and Barton Warren Stone did not reestablish a lost church although some of the second generation pioneers could be found guilty of starting sectarian groups. Our pioneers only sought to unite the Christians in all the sects. Yes my friends I am afraid there are still some in the sects.

Jesus Christ did not die for any denomination or sect. He did not die for just the Church of Christ either. He died for all of fallen mankind. The church that our Lord founded nearly 1950 years ago is comprised of all the saved.

The term "restoration movement" is really a misnomer, as our pioneers called it a reformation movement. A denomination is a group that admits that the Lord founded but one church and that they are striving to be a part of that one church. A sect says that they are the one true and holy apostolic church to the exclusion of all others. A sect says that if you don't agree with us in our interpretations you're at best a brother in error. A sect says that if you're not identified with us you're outside the veil of salvation. We must be open to learn new truth. Let us be together on essentials and allow liberty and freedom on non-essentials.

A few years ago Bro. Julius Hovan, minister of the Main St. Church of Christ in Gallatin, Tenn. wrote an article in *Mission Magazine*. It was titled "Why The Pre-Mil Sect Is less Sectarian Than The Rest." It was an outstanding article. It must have given hope to a splintered movement that there were those among the non-instrumental churches that truly believed in the unity of all believers in Christ. It gave hope that there are those among us that truly believe that salvation was completely through the grace of God.

What has happened to us? Are we reverting back (perhaps some never left) to the practices of some of our A-Mil brothers who tend to be legalistic? We in the Pre-Mil Acapella Church of Christ have been known over the years as an open group stressing the grace of God. Although I have only been associated with this group for a few years, it will be 10 years this September that Bro. Robert Heid immersed me into Christ that Lord's Day morning.

Many great preachers and teachers have been associated with "us" in the past and present. Most of those in the past have gone on to meet the Lord. They lived and ministered before my time. But I have read their writings and have talked with those who knew them. I have been a student of our history. Thus, it is my opinion, and I welcome criticism, that those whom we call "our" pioneers would agree in substance with the ideas set forth by Bro. Sommer in the

article quoted above. It was not because men like Bro.'s Boll and Jorgenson were legalistic that they were driven out of what has evolved into the Mainline Church of Christ Denomination. It was rather because they, like many more brethren, would not tow the party line. They were free men in Christ. They were not shackled with the chains of sectarian bondage. Are there those among us who are? They were excluded because they pled for the unity of all believers in Christ. They pleaded that salvation was truly by the grace of God. Many of them had a very irenic spirit and were willing to recognize others as Christians even if they did not line up with "us" on the issues. It was not because Bro. Boll was teaching premillennialism that he was shunned—it was because he was not a party man.

I wish I could say that there is not a Pre-Mil party, but brethren I'm afraid there is. There are those among us who would exclude some of God's faithful followers from the faithful. Have we become so legalistic that there is no difference between us and some of our more legalistic a-mil brothers? We're known as ones who are long on grace. Let's prove it and accept all God's children as our fellow believers.

Let us continue to preach and teach the Word of God. Let us continue to uphold the noble teachings that are dear to our heritage. But let us be willing to allow brethren with divergent views the opportunity to disagree. Let us reason together in the Word. Just because a person does not join himself with us does not mean he has been rejected by Jesus. The Pre-Millennial Acapella Church of Christ is not the Body of Christ to the exclusion of other. All who strive to obey Christ and adhere to His Word are our fellow Christians. Let us be willing to give God the final say on the matter.

I want this letter to state publically that I want to accept all of God's children as my brethren. It is known by some and most likely not by others that the congregation where I worship here in Ohio uses instrumental music in their corporate praise to the Father. Let me state here that I am a non-instrumentalist but I am not an anti-instrumentalist. The reason I worship with the Mason Church of Christ is because they allow me the freedom to believe certain things without threat of censure. They also accept me as a full brother in the Lord. I still believe the same things basically as I did when I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. Notice I did not say when I was baptized although I believe that baptism is the door to the church. Paul said that if you want to be in Christ you must be immersed into the Lord of Glory. I still hold dear the beliefs that we, in the Pre-Mil heritage, hold dear. I honestly believe that we're a part of the Body but not the whole Body. I hope that I am wrong but I can see us evolving, some may be ahead of others, into a denomination. I can hear the uproar that this will bring. People will say that Larry Miles has gone liberal, he has espoused the Ketcherside-Garrett unity position, he has gone charismatic, or he has joined the interdenominationalists. Brethren, the church that I was added to that September day in 1972 has no name. It is non-denominational. I pray that the earthly body I am identified with is not a denomination or a sect. Jesus

died for all including the Churches of Christ. The Body of Christ is bigger than all movements including the Restoration Movement. I pray that we in the Pre-Mil Churches never become a denomination.

May the day come when we can call all God's children our brethren despite what their signboards say. May the Lord haste the day. Just because brethren are not identified with "us" does not put them outside the veil of salvation. Let us avoid being legalistic and critical of those we disagree with. Remember, agreement on every doctrine is not a prerequisite for fellowship.

Let us ever oppose sectarianism and let us be willing to face the fact that we may be, as Bro. Leroy Garrett has said, a denomination in protest (or worse-off, a sect) condemning some of God's children to Hell. May God forgive us if the latter be the case.

MARANATHA!

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P.S. If there is any response to this article, I would like to request that Bro. Heid print it in the *W & W*. Let us be open with each other.

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Alex Wilson is a missionary in the Philippines.



## It Takes All Kinds of People To Make A Church

Alex V. Wilson

When I was small I read a story about a little girl named Nancy, who didn't like to brush her teeth. She neglected them so much that one night they decided to run away. When she woke up the next morning, she was shocked to discover she was totally toothless.

She soon found them swimming and washing themselves in the sink. "Oh, pleethe, little teef," Nancy lisped, "come back where you belong." But they didn't want to, since she never cared for them properly. So she begged and coaxed and promised and cried until finally they felt sorry for her, and decided to go "home," if she would brush them twice every day without fail.

That story impressed me with the importance of coordination in the body. Real trouble occurs if any part of our body decides to go on strike! But long before Nancy, the apostle Paul made the same point.

Christ is like a *single* body with its *many limbs* and organs, which, *many* as they are, together make up *one* body . . . Suppose the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it does belong to the body none the less. Suppose the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the

body," it does still belong to the body. If the body were all eye, how could it hear? If the body were all ear, how could it smell? . . . If the whole were one single organ, there would not be a body at all; in fact, however, there are *many different* organs, but *one* body. (1 Corinthians 12:12ff.)

Paul stresses two points here: unity and diversity. He wants us to remember that our diversity springs from untiy, and our unity expresses itself in diversity.

### *Unity*

Repeatedly the New Testament teaches the unity that exists among Christians. We have the same Father, so we are one family. We have the same Savior, so we are one redeemed people with one common salvation. We have the same indwelling Holy Spirit, so we share one new birth and new life. We have the same Bible to follow, the same holiness of conduct to seek, the same enemy to fight, and the same destiny to hope for.

Remember all this. Apply it. Live it out. "We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord . . . and they'll know we are Christians by our love."

### *Diversity*

In spite of our untiy, we come from different races and nations. we have various temperaments, and various degrees of wealth and of education. We have distinct interests and abilities. We come from differing backgrounds, and have been taught sometimes-conflicting interpretations.

Thus we have various strengths and weaknesses. Your eye is good for looking at things, but useless for holding a spoon. Your ear is suited for hearing, but not for chewing or digesting (if you don't believe it, try putting your rice into your ear the next time you eat).

The New Testament gives several striking examples of the rich diversity among Jesus' earliest followers. Consider the brothers Peter and Andrew—the former a natural leader, noisy and impulsive, always the center of attention; the latter a follower, quiet and often unnoticed.

Two other apostles show even greater contrast. Matthew had been a tax-collector, an agent of the I.R.S. Such tax-collectors were hated by the Jews as traitors, willing to milk their countrymen in order to help the Roman imperialists. When Mark and Luke wrote their lists of the twelve apostles, they omitted any mention of Matthew's former occupation. Probably they felt, "Why remind our readers of that embarrassing fact? Why stigmatize our brother?" But Matthew himself mentioned it! He never ceased to be amazed that a social outcast like himself was selected by King Jesus to be not only saved but even an apostle.

On the other hand, another apostle was Simon the Zealot (or "the Patriot" or "the nationalist," as some modern translations put it). The Zealots were the party of Jews who favored armed rebellion against Rome. They opposed paying taxes to a foreign, pagan emperor because that was treason against the Lord, Israel's true king. A man named Judas had founded the Zealots about twenty-five years before Jesus' public ministry. Though the revolution he led was squashed

and he himself was killed, the movement lived on until 73 A.D., when it ended with mass suicides at Masada.

The *zealots* were *zealous*: today we would call them activists. Their most fanatical members always carried daggers, hidden under their robes. If a good chance arose to assassinate any Roman soldier or Jewish traitor (such as a tax-collector), they put their daggers to work. These men were the first century's P.L.O.—*terrorists!*

Formerly, Matthew probably had some choice names for men like Simon: "Dirty rebel! Left-winger! Radical destroyer of peace and order! And who knows—maybe he's an arsonist, and an assassin!" And formerly, Simon probably spat with contempt whenever he thought about guys like Matthew: "Double-crosser! Filthy capitalist pig! Stuck-in-the-mud reactionary!"

But now, since each of them had been captivated by Jesus and joined His band of followers, that new loyalty to Him replaced and transformed their former loyalties. Imagine the impact on the audience if ever in open-air evangelistic meetings, first Matthew would speak, and then Simon. Some of the hearers might jeer and boo as Matthew gave his testimony, but then listen with astonishment to Simon. Others might react just the opposite, and be turned off by Simon but deeply impressed by Matthew's witness. But *all* would sit up and take notice at the sight of an ex-Zealot and an ex-tax-collector living together in love.

#### *Antioch's Teams of Pastors*

The church leaders in Antioch provide another example of unity-amid-diversity (Acts 13:1). Manaen had grown up in court as a boyhood friend of Herod Antipas. He had been invited to the high society parties given by the Lodges, Rockefellers, and Kennedys. Simeon "called the Black" (GNB) was almost certainly a Negro from Africa (Acts 11:19, 20). Lucius too was from the North African city of Cyrene, hundreds of miles west of Egypt. Barnabas was originally from the island of Cyprus. And Saul had come from Tarsus to the north but had gotten his seminary training in Jerusalem under the famous Professor Gamaliel.

What differences! *Geographically*, they sprang from far-distant regions. *Racially*, Simeon was a black. *Socially and economically*, Manaen was an aristocrat. *Academically*, Saul was a Ph.D. and Th.D. *Politically*, Manaen came from a Herodian-party background. *Theologically*, Saul had been a Pharisee. And by *gifts*, it seems that Barnabas, Simeon and Lucius were prophets, while Manaen and Saul were teachers.

Yet despite all the differences, they harmonized in serving Christ and leading His church. What a challenge for us today. We should be seeing the same sort of thing—modern-day Simons and Matthews, Sauls and Simeons and Manaens, all in coordination under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

#### *Insights from the Fourth Century*

A fascinating analogy is found in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, a Christian leader during the 300's. He raises the question, Why did Christ use *water* as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (in John 7:37-

39, for example)? Then he answers. First, because water is so *important*. “Plants and animals need water for their life,” just as we need God’s Spirit. Second, because like the Holy Spirit, “water comes *down from heaven*, as rain.” And third, because water “comes down in *one form* (rain), but then works in *many different ways*.”

“One and the same rain falls on the whole world. But then it becomes white in the lily, red in the rose, yellow in the hyacinth. It takes one form in the palm tree, quite another in the vine. In each it is different, although in itself it is always the same. So it is also with the Holy Spirit, who is one and undivided but yet gives Himself to each as He will. Although the Holy Spirit is of one kind, He nevertheless works every variety of virtue. He helps one to speak, gives to another the power to drive out demons, enlightens another to prophesy, bestows on another the gift of interpreting divine scripture. In one He works in this way, in another in that way, although He Himself remains the same.”

As the Holy Spirit is one but delights in variety, so the Church is both one and diverse. Because of our *oneness*, we need each other. An individual Christian neglecting fellowship with other believers is about like an amputated arm—useless. Because of our *diversity*, we need each other. You can do for me what I cannot do for myself, and I can do for you what you cannot do for yourself. And this is the way our God means for it to be. Let’s bloom together as one garden of the Holy Spirit. Let’s work together as one body of Jesus Christ.

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## The New King James Version Bible

Ernest E. Lyon

Seven years ago a large body of evangelical New Testament and Old Testament scholars began work on a new translation of the Bible. They decided that the Received Text that Tyndale and the old King James Bible used was the most accurate, but they show in the footnotes the differences between the Received Text and later texts that have been used over the past several decades.

The New Testament of this version was published in 1979 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. The Old Testament came out this summer. I had ordered a copy before publication and it arrived in Louisville on July 29, in spite of an August release date advertised in advance. I have read the New Testament through a number of times and have started reading the Old Testament, which should take a few months still. But I am so enthusiastic about this new translation that I would like to share my enthusiasm with the *Word and Work* readers. You will find no difficulty buying it, for the WORD AND WORK bookstore can order it for you or send it from their stock.

This is the first translation I have read that I really prefer to the 1903 American Standard Version, which I have used for over 40 years. I am not a Greek or Hebrew scholar, and I hope someone who is will give us a technical review of the NKJ, but I have a good library of language helps, have read all the popular translations and many others,

and I believe that the NKJ is beautiful in language and very fine in its devotion to giving us a translation that is as accurate as humanly possible in bringing to us what God would have us know from the Word that He inspired men to write.

As always, one can find words that are not translated as you might want. The only one that bothers me at all among those I have noticed so far is the keeping of the Received Text "day of Christ" in place of "day of the Lord" in 2 Thessalonians 2:2. My objection there is because the subject is obvious the day of wrath described so often in the Old Testament, not the day of Christ's wonderful reign over us. The NKJ does, as always, give the alternate reading in a footnote, of course.

The NKJ is available in three bindings: a burgundy hardcover at \$12.95, a genuine leather binding in black, burgundy or brown at \$29.95 and an aniline gloss pigskin at \$39.95. Don't forget to specify what binding and color you want. I forgot to say that the pigskin is a blend of burgundy and brown.

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Larry Miles, a member of the Portland Avenue congregation, is working in Cincinnati and has taken classes at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.



## **Studies in the Book of Acts**

Larry Miles

### **Trouble From Within And Without**

Acts 5:1-42

#### ***THE CASE OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA: ACTS 5:1-11***

We are told that Ananias and Sapphira sold their property and gave the proceeds to the apostles. But there was one difference in their case that was not present in the case of Barnabas. They sold the property for a certain amount and then tried to deceive the apostles by only giving a portion of the amount received. It was their money to use as they saw fit. There was no sin in keeping back a portion of the money. The sin came when they tried to deceive. The sin was in lying to the Holy Spirit. Lying not to men but to God. The Holy Spirit is God. Peter tells us that it was Satan who filled Ananias's heart. Peter had foreknowledge of this sin.

Verse 4 tells us that the practice of selling ones land and then giving the proceeds to the church was voluntary. After Peter had told Ananias that he had not lied to man but to God, Ananias fell dead on the spot. God had decided that his sin was so great that death was the sentence. We are told that he was buried the same hour. Three hours later Sapphira came on the scene. Peter asked her if the price that Ananias had mentioned was the full amount



received for the sale of the land. After she answered in the affirmative, she too was struck dead on the spot for lying to the Holy Spirit.

There is a question that needs to be asked. I am not sure there is an answer. Were Ananias and Sapphira believers who sinned or were they hypocrites who were never saved? If they were Christians, were they lost because of their sin? It would seem that they were, at one time, sincere believers who let Satan tempt them to lie to the Holy Spirit. Remember that lying to the Holy Spirit is not the unpardonable sin. I do not have the answer to the question of whether they were saved or lost. We'll just have to trust that God has made the right decision.

#### *THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE CHURCH: ACTS 5:12-16*

Verse 12 tells us that the twelve continued to do signs and wonders. The people held the church in high esteem. The Record tells us that many were being saved. The twelve were healing the sick. People were coming from all around the city to be healed.

#### *TROUBLE FROM WITHOUT, THE TWELVE ARRESTED:*

##### *ACTS 5:17-26*

Again the persecution came from the High Priest and his Sadduceean allies. This time they put the twelve in jail. During the night, God performed a miracle. They were released by an angel who told them to go to the temple and teach the people the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

At daybreak, the apostles entered into the temple to teach the people. When the Sanhedrin was called to order, they sent word to have the twelve brought before them. In verse 22-23 the officers found the cells locked, the guards at their posts, but when they opened the cells there was no one to be found. The captain of the temple guard and the chief priests couldn't figure out what had happened. Then someone came and told them that the twelve were teaching in the temple.

The captain of the temple guard, himself, went to arrest the twelve. They brought them back peacefully to the Sanhedrin because they were afraid of the multitudes.

#### *THE TWELVE ON TRIAL: ACTS 5:27-40*

The High Priest, who was a member of the Sadducees, presided over the Sanhedrin. He wanted to know why the apostles had defied his orders not to speak about Jesus. He was also upset that the twelve were putting the blame for the death of Jesus on the Council. The twelve told him that they must obey God rather than man. The Bible teaches that when there is a conflict between God's law and man's laws, God's must take precedence.

Again the apostles take the opportunity to testify of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Sanhedrin is told that it was the "God of our Fathers" who raised Jesus from the depths of the grave. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince or Author of our salvation (Heb. 12:2). Jesus was at the right hand of the Father, ready to grant the nation of Israel forgiveness of her sins if only she would accept His Messiahship.

Again the twelve testify of the resurrection of Jesus, which they were witnesses. They preached the same message. It is here that the Word tells us that God gives the Holy Spirit to all who obey. This was more than the Sanhedrin could take. The High Priest and his allies were ready to condemn the twelve to death.

In verse 34 we see the apostles found, somewhat of an ally, in the person of the Pharisee Gamaliel. This is not to say that Gamaliel was on their side, but he was willing to let God judge the movement. What were some of the facts about this man? We are told that he was a Pharisee, a Teacher of the Law, and that he was respected by all the people. He was also the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, who later became Paul the Apostle. He then ordered that the twelve be taken out of the Council chambers for a short time while the Council decided what to do with them.

In verse 35, he warns the Sanhedrin not to act in haste. In verses 36-37 he reminds them of two others who led revolts or claimed to be the Messiah or advocated new movements. He tells them that the actions of these men were not rooted in God. They were killed and their followers scattered. It was only a passing fad. In verse 38, Gamaliel tells them that if Christianity is from men it will pass away. But if it is from God it will endure and we will be found fighting against God Himself. Verse 40 tells us that they ordered the twelve to be brought back in the room. We are told that they beat them and again ordered them not to preach or teach in the name of Jesus. Then they released them.

*THE TWELVE RELEASED: ACTS 5:41-42*

The record tells us that the twelve went away from the Sanhedrin rejoicing in the fact that they had been worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake. Verse 42 informs us that everyday they continued to uplift the name of Jesus Christ and preach the resurrection of Jesus to the people.

Please read the 6th chapter of the Book of Acts. Some have said that the first church election is in the chapter. The lesson will be titled, "The Choosing Of Fellow-Workers." Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

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Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

## **MATTHEW:**

# **A Treasure, a Pearl, and a Fisherman's Net**

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.

*Matthew 13:44-50*

The parables we study in this message are among the most difficult of the entire collection of parables in the teaching of our Lord. The the first two, The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price, are certainly the most difficult and controversial of the parables of Matthew thirteen. I hope some light will be shed upon them in this exposition.

What are some of the things that the Lord Jesus has been emphasizing in His unfolding of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (13:11)?

First, the age between the first and second advents of the Lord will be an age of the sowing of the seed of the Word of God, but there will be only a limited fruitfulness developed from it.

Second, in order to counteract this limited fruitfulness, the Evil One, Satan, will intermingle his "sons" among the sons of the kingdom. This he will do craftily and cleverly. This condition shall persist throughout the entire age.

Third, the outward form of the Kingdom of God in this age, or the profession of the truth of God, will expand and develop from a lowly organism into a giant organization, which will be, according to one commentator, "a visible and comfortable sphere of operations for wicked spirits." The society of professors of Christ will be stealthily corrupted from the simplicity and purity of the life in Christ.

Fourth, this mixed and confused state shall continue until the consummation of the age. Then the Son of Man, by means of the agency of the angelic hosts, will bring the age to its close in a separation of the true sons from the sons of the Devil, of the wheat from the tares.

It is a disturbing picture, but it is true to the course of the age to this point in history. It, therefore, provides great comfort and assurance that the remainder of the revelation will find its fulfillment, too.

We look now at several parables that provide further interesting insights into the divine program for the age.

### THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

*The parable expounded* (13:44). Again, the parable itself in its unfolding is very simple. A man comes unexpectedly upon a treasure hidden in a field. Having found it, he hides it again, and then out of joy over the treasure he sells all his possessions and purchases the field. An artless and straightforward story it is, indeed. Its meaning is not so simple.

The details of the story were very natural to the people of Palestine. It was common for men and women in the land to use the ground for their precious possessions (cf. 25:25). According to Barclay, "There was a rabbinic saying that there was only one safe repository for money—the earth." The ground was the bank.

It is not the intent of the Lord to glorify the actions of the man who found the treasure, that is, to praise him for hiding the treasure from the owner of the land until he bought the land. As a matter of fact, Jewish law made it quite clear that, when someone found money such as this, it belonged to the finder.

*The parable explained* (13:44). There are differing interpretations of this parable. We shall notice a few of them.

First, to some the church is the treasure, and the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, is the one who found it and gave His all to acquire it. He did this by buying the world in which it lay hidden.

The difficulties with the interpretation are these: first, it is hard to see how the church could be “found” when she was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. How could He be ignorant of her existence? Second, what is meant by the second hiding of the treasure?

Second, others have suggested that Israel is the treasure in the field, in the light of Exodus 19:5, where it is said that she would be “a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.” The interpretation has some appeal, of course, but it too, seems to confuse the kingdom with a diverse entity, this time the nation Israel.

Third, G. Campbell Morgan believed that the hidden treasure was “the latent possibility in the world of the realization of the Kingship and government of God.” That is a little vague, but he seems to mean by the treasure the coming Kingdom of God upon the earth, or the Messianic Kingdom. There was no accidental discovery of this, but the King came to the field knowing that the treasure was there. The King is the Lord Jesus and the selling of everything that He had was the redemptive work of the cross. One is reminded of His joy in this work and the sufferings involved by the text in Hebrews 12:2, which states that He, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The price that was paid was the precious blood, which He offered after He sold all that He had by “emptying Himself” and taking upon Himself the form of a servant (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Phil. 2:5-11). Thus, the Lord Jesus purchased the world to obtain the treasure of the Kingdom.

This interpretation has much to commend it, although it is difficult to understand what is meant by the second hiding of the treasure. It can hardly be the shutting of the door of the Kingdom against the nation, as Morgan suggests, for that would make the nation the treasure, and he has already given that a different interpretation.

Fourth, a more common view claims that the parable presents these features:

- a. The Kingdom of heaven is the treasure.
- b. It is a hidden treasure.
- c. It may be found unexpectedly.
- d. It gives the finder great joy when found.
- e. To acquire it will cost all that a man has.

The present aspect of the Messianic Kingdom is, then, in view, but the present aspect is an anticipation of the future. The treasure may be found unexpectedly. It will give great joy to the finder, but it will cost all that a man has to acquire it.

The principal points made, then, would seem to be:

First, the Kingdom is hidden treasure of great value, although the blindness of men causes many to fail to see it.

Second, the kingdom may be found unexpectedly. The man was not looking for it, but a chance glance or a momentary stumbling revealed it to him. He beautifully illustrates the text, “I was found of them that sought me not” (cf. Isa. 65:1). And one is reminded of

Saul on the Damascus road, Philip the apostle, Nathaniel, and the woman of Samaria.

Third, to possess the kingdom demands the decision of faith, and that decision involves a forsaking of all self-reliance and self-righteousness. The great apostle was speaking of this when he said, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, and do count them but refuse, that I may WIN CHRIST, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (cf. Phil. 3:8-9). "We buy the kingdom," Maclaren claims, "when we give away rags for a robe, sin for righteousness, ourselves for Christ." This is the self-renunciation of biblical faith produced by the Holy Spirit and moved by the joy of the greatness of the treasure of Jesus Christ and His person and work.

"That behind this accidental finding of the treasure there lies an activity of the Divine grace and guidance is blessedly true," Lang says, "but this potent factor is not introduced into the parable, because the Teacher wished to emphasize the human and outward aspect of the kingdom."

#### THE PARABLE OF THE PRECIOUS PEARL

*The parable expounded* (13:45-46). It has been said by some that the Jews set small store by pearls, in comparison with the way Gentiles felt about them. I cannot find any real support for this. We do know that the ancient world considered the pearl to be one of the most valuable of jewels. It was desired for its beauty, as well as its value. It was not surprising, then, that the Lord should create a parable around the pearl.

Again, the story is simple enough. A merchant seeks fine pearls and, finding one of great value, he sold all his possessions and bought it.

*The parable explained* (13:45-46). What is the meaning of the parable?

First, it has been said that the pearl is the church of Jesus Christ, but it is not an impressive picture to see the Lord Jesus wandering about the world looking for the church!

It has often been pointed out that the pearl is the direct product of a living organism, a fact that is true of no other stone. It is the result of injury done to the life that produces it. A grain of sand, or something that injures and harms, is the root principle of the pearl, which is the answer of the injured to the injury done to it. The pearl is formed in the shell of the oyster, the response of the injured life to that which injures it. The injury becomes, then, a thing of great beauty, a triumph of purity over impurity. So the church, for she is the product of the injury of the cross done to the Savior (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4, 7). "How has the change been wrought?" Morgan asks. "We came to him worthless, and it was in our approach to Him that He was wounded and harmed, injured and bruised. Yet the answer of the injured One to that which harmed, was that He made over to us in the

mystery of His harming, all the virtues and glories of His own character. As the pearl is the outcome of a hurtful thing transformed into beauty and innocence by the communication of the life it hurt, so the Church of Jesus Christ in its entirety consists of such as wounded Him, and yet from that very wounding, and because of it, there has been, and is being communicated to them His virtue, His grace, His glory, His beauty." It is a beautiful thought, but is it the truth of the parable?

It is doubtful that the church is in Matthew thirteen at all. The subject is the kingdom, not the church, and it is better, it seems to me, to keep that before us. The church will come before us later.

The parable pictures a merchant. He is seeking pearls. He finds one of exceptional value. He parts with all he has and obtains it.

What are the lessons?

First, the kingdom is like a pearl, one of the loveliest of possessions, and is of great value.

Second, the entrance into the kingdom, by which is meant the appropriation of the blessings of it through personal relationship to the King, may come after a search that leads to the new birth (cf. Isa. 55:1, 6).

We are reminded of the fact that it is the experience of many that they find Christ and the kingdom after a search, initiated by the Holy Spirit of God. A beautiful illustration of this is the Ethiopian Eunuch who "had come to Jerusalem *to worship*" (Acts 8:27). And, although he did not find Him in the religious observances of Judaism, he did find Him through the reading of the Scriptures and the help of the evangelist Philip.

Cornelius (cf. Acts 10:1-8, 30-33), Lydia (16:14), and the Philippian jailor may also illustrate the success of the search (cf. 16:29-34).

Third, the appropriation of the blessing of the kingdom involves great personal self-renunciation. It involves the abandonment of trust in self for trust in the Savior. The lesson is the same as that of the hidden treasure.

### THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

*The parable expounded* (13:47-50). This parable, too, is one that is true to the life of the land of Palestine. And it was particularly true to those to whom He was talking, for many of them were fishermen and, no doubt, all fished.

There were two ways of fishing in Palestine, one with the casting-net, and the other with the dragnet. The latter would be similar to our trawling, and it is to this method that the Lord refers in His parable.

Again, the parable is a very simple one, the kingdom being likened to a dragnet cast into the sea. When full, it is hauled to shore, and a separation of the edible and salable fish is made. Thus shall it be at the end of the age, and at this point the parable becomes almost identical to that of The Wheat and the Tares.

*The parable explained* (13:49-50). It should be noted that the net is just cast once, and it is hauled to shore only once. The beginning and the end of the age is the stress of the illustration.

The fact that a dragnet, a large net, was used may point to the world-wide sweep of the influence of the kingdom.

What are the lessons of the parable?

First, the kingdom contains a mixture of citizens. The reference to the good and bad among the contents of the net suggests that, and it is a point confirmed by the preceding parables, too.

Second, just as in The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, there is a separating judgment which concludes the age. From this we learn the necessity of moral purity, which arises only from genuine faith in the King, in the kingdom.

The fact that the age culminates in a judgment, supervised by the angels, supports the contention of both amillennialists and premillennialists, as over against the postmillennialists, that the age will not end in triumph through the preaching of the gospel.

The parables stress again two important truths.

First, this age, while an age of great expansion of the testimony to Jesus Christ, shall end in a severe and separating judgment, a judgment in which the eternal punishment of the lost is not only mentioned, but emphasized. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth in the furnace of fire.

Second, how urgent, then, is the invitation of the Lord, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (11:28). May the Lord enable you to come and find the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price.

## NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

September 3, 1982

As you are aware, Brother Carl Kitzmiller recently had a severe heart attack and subsequent surgery to help correct that problem. When the need was made known to other Christians, the response was heartwarming. To date, Christians (including many of you) have contributed \$12,000.00 to help with Brother Carl's medical expenses. However, there is more. Since the date of the heart attack, the total medical expenses for Brother Carl have exceeded \$60,000.00. After all insurance payments, savings, and other cash, there is still a balance owing on medical bills of approximately \$15,500.00. We, with your help and the help of the Lord, would like to eliminate this medical debt.

Our congregation requested and was given approval to coordinate a drive outside of the Louisiana area to defray these medical expenses.

Southeast Church of Christ will function as a collection point for any and all funds that you may wish to give to help in this effort. Please make all checks to Southeast Church of Christ and mark them for "Carl Kitzmiller Fund". Gifts should be mailed to:

Southeast Church of Christ

P. O. Box 43083

Louisville, Kentucky 40243

—Elders & Deacons,

Southeast Church of Christ

The Missionary Project went over the top: a Cashier's Check for \$1200.00 was mailed to Alex Wilson for the purchase of a Motorcycle with side-car for Nemesio and Myrna Auxtero, graduates of Central Bible Institute and now Missionaries in their home town of Talibon, on the Isle of Bohol - Philippines.

This machine is called a "Tricycle" by the Filipinos, and will be a great help in going into places cars cannot

go in this rugged Island of Bohol. The Auxteros are "elated" at getting this needed vehicle!

Thanks to all who had a part in this drive.

Jesse Z. Wood

How faithfully this **Word & Work** has gone out! I can remember my Mother & Father receiving it years ago when I was just a child.

Thank you — Betty Wetton

I love the **W & W**. I really do, but my seeing is getting less all the time. Hope I will be able to read as long as I live. The magazine has meant so much to me thru these many years. God bless all of you.

—Vilma Kitterman

I have prayed to God to show me the truth in all matters. One of my concerns is to know the truth about spiritual gifts. A specific gift I am interested in is healing. My belief in this affects

my belief in all spiritual gifts.

I know so many who are physically sick I would like see healed. Will any of you who have the Spiritual gift of healing go with me to some of these that through you the Lord will heal? I will be glad to abide by any restrictions you may have—they must be Christians, must have faith, etc. My only requirements are that the physical disability be outwardly evident and that the healing be immediate. I will not expect all to be healed, but I think it reasonable to expect some to be. I will pay all your expenses.

I am hoping the editor of the **Word and Work** will publish the results of this effort for the consideration of both those who believe in spiritual gifts today and those who do not.

Prayerfully and sincerely,  
Charles E. Kranz  
RR 3, Box 389  
Brookville, Indiana 47012  
Tel. 317-647-4809

## CENTRAL LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

### THEME — IN THE LAST DAYS

November 15 - 18

#### Monday Night

Chairman: Jack Thompson

Song Leader: Robert Johnson

Topic: What are the Last Days

Robert Boyd

Tuesday: The Nations in the Last Days

Chairman: David McReynolds

10:00 a.m. As were the Days of Noah

Antoine Valdetero

11:10 a.m. Zechariah Expositions

Dale Offutt

1:30 p.m. Salvation for the Nations

Victor Broaddus

2:40 a.m. Sovereignty over the Nations, Past & Future

Dr. Forcade

7:00 p.m. Song Leader: Herbert Ingalls

Topic: God's Controversy with the Nation

E. C. Ringer

Wednesday: Israel in the Last Days

Chairman: Stan Broussard

10:00 a.m. Regathering & Restoration

Nathan Burks

11:10 a.m. Zechariah Expositions

Dale Offutt

1:30 p.m. Israel Today

T. Y. Clark

2:40 p.m. The Temple: Past, Present, Future

Vernon Lawyer

7:00 p.m. Song Leader: Joe Stone

Topic: Christ on David's Throne

John Burgess

Thursday: The Church in the Last Days

Chairman: Carl Kitzmiller

10:00 a.m. Contending for the Faith

Dick Lewis

11:10 a.m. Zechariah Expositions

Dale Offutt

1:30 p.m. The Rapture of the Church

Paul Kitzmiller

2:40 p.m. Reigning with Christ

Robert Gill

7:00 p.m.

Topic: Witness of the Church in the Last Days

Ben Rake, Jr.

Housing provided in Christian homes in the area. For more information write or call Bob Morrow, Box 406, Glenmora, La. 71433. Phone: 318-748-4243