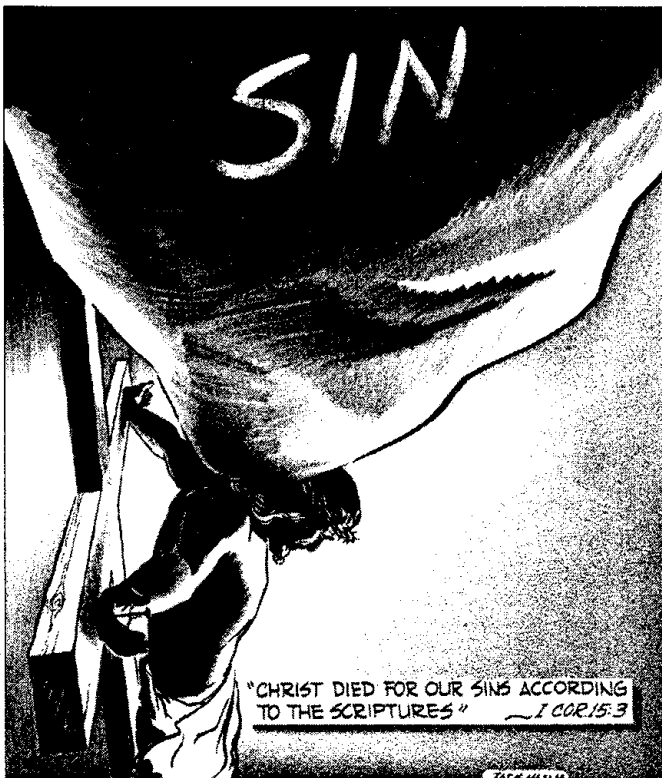


The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2)

The Series "Going on Unto Perfection" will be continued in forthcoming issues of this paper.

CHRISTIANITY, GRACE AND GRACE INVALIDATED



By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 W. Fairfield Drive
Mount Airy, NC 27030 USA

IN THE DECEMBER issue of the *Reader's Digest* there is an article about Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay), former heavyweight boxing champion. The interview was scheduled to take place on September 11, and it did take place, but was on a delayed basis because of the terrible events that were unfolding that morning. The interview covered many things involving the life of Ali, and one of the first dealt with was his religion (as he had years ago converted to Mohammedanism). Mr. Bingham, who was conducting the interview, asked, "What does your faith

mean to you?" Ali replied, "[It] means [a] ticket to heaven. One day we're all going to die, and God's going to judge us, [our] good and bad deeds. [If the] bad outweighs the good, you go to hell; if the good outweighs the bad, you go to heaven."

What Christianity is All About

What Muhammad Ali believes is his business, responsibility and privilege (as a free moral agent). But, in the light of Christianity, what is wrong with this statement? Christianity teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23); that none can be saved by his own righteousness alone (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8,9). Sin is so bad that one sin made the human race a dying race (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12), "For the wages of sin [singular, one sin] is death..." (Romans 6:23). To think that the good can somehow outweigh the bad is not to understand the nature of sin, just how bad it is in the sight of a perfect, all-holy God. All of our righteousness on one side and just even one sin on the other could not tip the scales in our favor. It is like a balloon being punctured by just one hole. That is all that it takes to destroy the balloon. Christianity teaches that the grace factor must enter the picture to accomplish salvation. Grace is what makes the difference. That is what Christianity is all about.

What is Grace?

What is grace? To better understand grace, let us consider grace and mercy together. Grace and mercy are opposite sides of the same coin. Mercy is where punishment is deserved, but has been withheld. Grace is where favor is not deserved, but it has been granted. Grace is God's unmerited favor toward man. Punishment has been withheld and

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THE SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA

E-Mail Address:
JEGibbons@InfoAve.Net

Web Site Address:
<http://jgibbons.8m.com>

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

UNFEIGNED FAITH cannot be feigned.

You must personally accept Christ into your life for him to be your personal Savior.

Hope is the only thing that will sustain us through everything.

The person who through faith has seen the glory of heaven finds the glitter of this world cheap and boring.

It is impossible to be faithful if you are not in the faith.

The spirit is clothed with a body, the body is clothed with garments, and the spiritual man is clothed with Christ

The greater our blessings, whether spiritual or physical, the greater are our responsibilities.

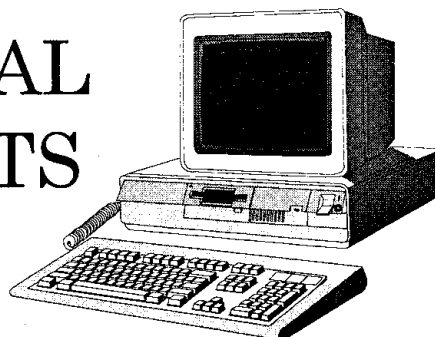
All things are servants to the person who serves God (1 Cor. 3:21-23; Romans 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:17).

Doubt won't help you out when you are down and out; trust is a must.

Saving grace is equally alike for every person (Eph. 2:5-8; Romans 3:24; Acts 15:11), but the grace of spiritual endowment differs from person to person (Eph. 4:7-16; Romans 12:6f; 1 Peter 4:10).

We do not commend ourselves by condemning others. □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

I F WE THINK of religious persecution and martyrdom as something experienced only by the early church in the first century, we are wrong. Such has a long and unhappy history, going all the way back to Adam and Eve. Remember what Cain did to Abel (Genesis 4; Matthew 23:34-36). It was continually experienced by the prophets of the Old Testament. Just read the concluding summary of the heroes of faith in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. Then in anticipation of what was to come in the New Testament age, Christ said to his disciples, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (John 15:20; also 16:1-4). We only have to read the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament to know that this is true. Then in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the voice of the martyrs is heard crying out to God (Revelation 6:9,10).

Now since the centuries have come and gone, what is the situation in which "believers" find themselves today? As the term "Christian" and "believer" is used in the widest of senses, let us consider the following information that was supplied to us. Obviously it is beyond our concept of the simple New Testament church, but it will help us to view the over-all picture. From a page of the book *World Christian Trends* published by William Carey Library (Part 4 Martyrology), copyright 2001, it says that "70 million Christians" were "killed for their faith in 220 countries across 20 centuries." Then another source tells us that there have been more people martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ in the 20th century than all the previous nineteen combined. We are told that according to a study done at Regent University there were close to 156,000 believers martyred around the world in 1998. Then we are told there were 165,000 in the year 2000, with that number increasing by 2,000 to 167,000 by mid-2001. Thirty-six countries are listed where persecution and martyrdom occur today. (Voice of the Martyrs). These figures aren't representative of believers in the New Testament sense, but it does show us the kind of world in which we live. It hasn't changed much from the first century.

The United States is a country that has freedom of religion and freedom of speech, and that is the way it should be. We are free moral agents before God and should have the freedom to exercise that freedom (to make a choice). But all countries don't have that freedom. Many have what is called "laws against proselytizing." The following is from PAKNEWS.com, a Pakistani news web site (December 4, 2001). "In most of the countries situated in this region, including Pakistan, there are laws against proselytising—

trying to convert others to Christianity. In most Muslim countries, asking is allowed, as is answering the question. But passing out Bibles and other literature, worshipping with nationals and showing videos is technically prohibited.” That is putting it mildly, for we are told that in Saudi Arabia churches are not even allowed.

Proselytizing laws seem to be much in evidence around much of the Mediterranean world.

The following happened on a Bible lands tour several years ago with which this writer was personally involved. We were in Jerusalem visiting the Shrine of the Book museum, which houses books of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. We were looking at the Isaiah scroll that was said to be dated 100 B.C. (older than other existing Isaiah manuscripts). And all of it was intact. No one could now say the vivid prophecy of Isaiah chapter 53 was written after the fact, but before. It indeed was prophecy. One of our tour group in excitement blurted out, “That proves Jesus is the Messiah!” A Jewish gentleman, who happened to be close by, threatened to have our fellow tour member arrested for proselytizing Christianity. Upon returning to the States, the one to whom the threat was made, checked out the matter of “proselytizing” and found, he said, that he could have been fined a large sum of money or could have spent several months or even years in jail.

Really, is the situation in Jerusalem and around much of the Mediterranean world little different than it was when Peter and Paul were here in the first century? In the city of Jerusalem, Peter and John were arrested and thrown into jail for publicly preaching Christ. Among the things that Peter had preached was, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12; read all of chapter 4; Acts 5:17-42). And since they wouldn’t shut up, the opposition and persecution got progressively worse. If Peter preached on the streets of Jerusalem in the same way today, indications are that he would again be arrested. What happened to the apostle Paul in the places he visited and preached in the book of Acts probably would be duplicated if he preached there again today. If they had kept their faith to themselves, the no “proselytizing” (evangelizing) laws would not have been violated. But Peter said, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (Acts 4:19) and, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Christians are commissioned to preach the gospel throughout the world. The word “gospel” means good news—the good news that brings salvation; the good news of life, love and hope for all of mankind. Why would the exponents of such a wonderful message

suddenly become the objects of persecution and even martyrdom? Those who are not open to the message feel threatened and intimidated by the messengers and the message. Let us highlight some Scriptures that will help us understand this better.

- The first martyrdom: “...Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12).
- “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).
- “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).
- “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).
- “And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (John 16:3).

Generally speaking, if a person does what is right, minds his own business and does not try to impose his views upon others, there is no friction. Didn’t Paul say that “rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil” (Romans 13:3)? Peter even asked (and said), “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (1 Peter 3:13,14). Normally people do not injure a person for doing good.

But the rub eventually comes when the Christian’s godly life style is brought up close. The world respects holiness off at a distance, but up close it is despised. The very life of the Christian is a strong non-verbal rebuke to the non-Christian. (And who likes to be rebuked?) This becomes more glaringly evident in close association. Along with this the real Christian is disposed toward evangelism. Eventually he will press the claims of the gospel on others. That’s what got Peter and Paul into trouble. Boldness in asserting ones beliefs, along with the way that a Christian lives, is very threatening and intimidating to many sinners. They may try to get back in some way, even persecution. Peter tells Christians how to answer these unbelievers (1 Peter 3:15).

Non-Christian religions feel threatened and endangered by Christianity which claims to be the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Other old established religions with a “Christian” tradition, but stagnated with human traditions, may be dead and degenerate, lacking spiritual life. These systems

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have their vested interests which would make them react adversely beyond just feeling uncomfortable with the message preached. Besides the fact that Christ exposed their sins, the Jewish leaders opposed him, saying, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48). Their conclusion was that he must die. It didn't set well with the masters of the girl at Philippi who used her in fortune telling when Paul cast the demon out of her. "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas..." They were beaten and jailed (Acts 16:16-24). Paul's great success in preaching the gospel at Ephesus brought the hostility of the silversmiths down upon him. So many were turning from the worship of Diana (Artemis) that there was danger of the temple being shut down and them going out of business in making the little images (Acts 19:23-27).

We trust our words in this article have been helpful in understanding this matter of religious persecution and martyrdom. We are thankful to live in a country that stands for freedom of religion and freedom of speech, but all is not well. The founding fathers of this country meant freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. The secular humanists have been successful in getting expressions of religion and prayer out of the public schools, while allowing almost anything else. And "no proselytizing [no evangelizing] laws," while non-existent, have become de facto by the obsession of some with wanting to be politically correct in everything that is said. Christianity is no longer unique and superior to the socially elite who would restructure our society, but one religion among many. And woe be to the man who says that only Christianity is right. He is to be regarded as a bigot.

May we not feel intimidated by those who are intimidated by our message, but using our freedom of speech and exercising our freedom of religion, get the truth out for all to consider. The gospel is God's concluding and final message to man, and we are in good company in presenting it. Amen! □

What Does "ST" Mean?

TWO BROTHERS were convicted of stealing sheep in the old days in England. In accordance with the brutal punishment of those days, they were branded in the forehead with the letters "ST"—Sheep Thief. One brother, unable to bear the stigma, fled to a foreign country where he tried to hide himself. He wandered from place to place, and at last died full of bitterness, and was buried in a forgotten grave. The other brother chose not to run away from home. He said, "I can't get away from the fact that I once stole sheep, but I will remain here and make the best of it.

I'll change my way of living, do what's right and try to get back the respect of my neighbors, as well as my own self-respect."

The years passed, and he gradually established a reputation for his integrity and respectability, his honesty and worth. Then one day a stranger was in town and he happened to notice this old man hobbling along with the letters "ST" branded on his forehead. He asked one of the local people what that meant. After pondering for a while, the villager replied, "It all happened so long ago that I can't remember the particulars. But I really think the letters are an abbreviation for the word SAINT."—*Selected* □

CHRISTIANITY, GRACE AND GRACE INVALIDATED

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merit has been bestowed. That is what the cross of Christ is all about. Christ, the sinless Lamb of God, died in our place. In God's scheme and plan of things, his blood washes away our sins and his righteousness is imputed to us in forgiveness (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 1:5; Acts 2:38). As Christians we avail ourselves of the privilege that the Hebrews writer enjoined upon his readers: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Grace Can Be Invalidated

But, according to the apostle Paul, grace can be invalidated. He wrote in Galatians 2:21, "I do not *frustrate* the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (KJV). This word translated "frustrate," *athetéo*, in more recent translations is rendered "set aside," "make void," and "nullify." It means to invalidate. The Galatians were invalidating the grace of God by going back under the Law of Moses for justification. Paul says that to disallow Christ, and claim to be justified by law, is to put us back in the category of a transgressor (Galatians 2:18). We still are unforgiven sinners. Since all have sinned, and no one is perfect, the only thing the law can do is condemn us.

Really, grace can be invalidated in two ways: (1) *By thinking that we can be good enough to be saved,* and (2) *By thinking that we can be saved without being good.*

By Thinking That We Can Be Good Enough to Be Saved

To think that we can be good enough to be saved by ourselves is to negate the whole New Testament system. It is to say that God made a mistake, that the death of Christ upon the cross was unnecessary. The status quo should have remained. But we have noticed the seriousness of sin. To break one law is to

be guilty of all, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10; also, Galatians 3:10,22). Paul said to the Galatians, who were returning to the law mentality, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). But we assert, again, with the apostle Paul, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38,39). Then the apostle Peter even made a more universal statement when he declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

**By Thinking That We Can
Be Saved Without Being Good**

Some might think that since we can't be good enough to be saved that we can be saved without being good. But this is not true; it equally invalidates grace. Remember that the angel in the announcement of the coming birth of Christ said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people *from* [not *in*] their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Paul wrote to Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:10,11). This is even made more emphatic as he wrote to the Romans, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1,2). We are brought into the grace of God to "grow in grace and the knowledge" of the Lord (2 Peter 3:17,18; 1:1-11). But we are to beware, "Looking diligently lest any man fail [footnote: fall from] of the grace of God..." (Hebrews 12:15). "For if we sin willfully [keep right on sinning] after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin" (Hebrews 10:26) because we "have trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath [have] counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was [we were] sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath [have] done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (12:29). "Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" is an awful thing (Jude, verse 4; 2 Peter, chapter 2). And to say that we all sin more or less anyway, being indifferent to the awfulness of sin and not trying to do better, is to be guilty of the same thing. We are not saved by our goodness, but to think that we can be saved without being good invalidates grace.

Closing and Appendage Thought

As closing and appendage thought, let us go back to the September 11 date already mentioned. This day of infamy will long be remembered. On September 23, several days after the terrorists' attack, the political leaders and leaders of several different religions conducted a prayer service in New York's Yankee Stadium in behalf of the victims and families. The religious leaders were representative of several different faiths. On a video tape of this gathering, one participant was seen standing and reading the last part of the 8th chapter of Romans, a potentially powerful portion of Scripture. He read, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God..." and he stopped there! What did he leave out? "*which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Was this left out because it would have been offensive to the non-Christian participants? But the love of God is stripped of its meaning if Christ is not in the picture. John 3:16 still reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That alone is the hope (and comfort) of a sinful, lost and dying world. God's grace is needed. □.



A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...

**The "Millennium"
Is Not...**

● By DAVID VAUGHN ELLIOTT
36 Oakland Ave, Apt 8
Methuen, MA 01844-3783

THE VERY THOUGHT of a thousand-year reign of Christ excites the imagination. Usually this period is termed "the millennium" from the Latin meaning "one thousand years." This much-talked-about thousand years, or millennium, is named only six times in Scripture. Moreover, all six times are in the same text: Revelation 20:1-7. With such scant mention in the Bible, students should be very careful in trying to reach a conclusion regarding the meaning of this period of time.

What Revelation 20:1-7 Does NOT Say

Before examining what Revelation 20 *does* say, it is very enlightening to notice what it does *not* say:

- 1 - It does *not* say where Christ is during this period, whether in heaven or on earth.
- 2 - It does *not* say where the martyrs are during this period.
- 3 - Although it does mention "the first resurrection"

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The “Millennium” Is *Not*...

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and “the second death,” it does *not* mention “the second resurrection.”

4 - It does *not* say that Satan is powerless during the thousand years.

5 - It does *not* say that the thousand years is a period of great peace with no persecution.

6 - It does *not* even mention the Jews, Jerusalem or any temple.

7 - It does *not* say that everyone on earth is in subjection to Christ during the thousand years.

8 - It does *not* offer any “second opportunity” for salvation.

9 - It does *not* say that the “reign” is a physical, earthly one, like David’s reign.

There is so much that Revelation 20 does *not* say, one wonders where all the ideas about “the millennium” come from. The reply is simple: they come by connecting other texts to Revelation 20 (not to mention the addition of ideas that are not found anywhere in the Bible). However, before proceeding to other texts, there are further considerations to keep in mind.

No One Interprets It All Literally

The claim is made that the “thousand” years, and what is connected to the thousand years, must be understood literally. However, the text is admittedly filled with symbols, thereby placing in question a literal interpretation of those parts of the text that are not as clear.

No one understands that the dragon/serpent is literal. In fact, the book itself very specifically and very clearly says otherwise. In both 20:2 and 12:9, the inspired writer says that the dragon, the “serpent of old” is Satan, the Devil.

No one understands “the beast” mentioned in 20:4 as a literal four-legged animal. The reference, of course, is to chapter 13, which in turn is based on Daniel 7. Daniel 7:23 says, “The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth.” Most interpreters

recognize that the beast represents Rome at some time in history. Even those who do not apply it to Rome understand that the beast is a symbol of some anti-Christian power.

Then there is the chain, the key and the seal. Does anyone see them as literal? Is not Satan a spirit being, albeit an evil spirit? Can a physical chain bind an evil spirit? Would a literal, physical seal be any deterrent to him?

The book of Revelation is a highly symbolical book. Jesus himself explains that the seven lampstands are the seven churches and the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (1:20). Whether one understands “angels” here as heavenly beings or earthly “messengers,” Jesus confirms what is seen in other Bible prophecies—namely, that stars in prophecy often represent outstanding individuals, just like “Olympic stars” today.

Symbols continue throughout Revelation to the very last chapter, where Jesus calls himself “the Bright and Morning Star” (22:16). The next verse speaks of “the bride,” a reference to Christ’s church. With all this figurative language throughout the book and in chapter 20 itself, there is no inherent necessity that other elements in the chapter be interpreted literally.

“Thousand” in the Bible

English dictionaries give these definitions for “thousand”: “a very large number,” “a great number or amount.” This use is very common in our daily language. Mom says, “I told you a thousand times to clean up your room.” Or consider the “Thousand Islands” in the Saint Lawrence River, which include more than 1,500 islands.

There are several prophecies in Daniel and Revelation with numerical values: 3½, 42, 62, 69, 1260, 1290, 1335. Such numbers are quite definite and specific. The number “1,000,” however, is a very “round number,” frequently used to express an indefinitely large amount, whether in English, or Spanish or Russian—or in the Bible.

In Deuteronomy 1:11, Moses expresses to Israel: “May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are.” Israel at that time consisted of 600,000 men of war, not counting women and children. A very conservative estimate would be that, with women and children, they totaled two million. A thousand times two million is two billion! Was Moses literally wishing they would number two billion? Or was he simply using “thousand” like we often do?

In Psalms 50:10, God says: “Every beast of the forest is Mine, *And* the cattle on a thousand hills.” How about the rest of the hills? Would anyone dare limit God’s ownership to a strict 1,000 count? Certainly not.

Consider also Psalm 105:8,9: "He remembers His covenant [to Abraham] forever, The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations." A generation is the average span of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring, about 30 years. A thousand generations would be 30,000 years! Literally, the text says that God commanded (or remembers) His covenant for 30,000 years. But wait. There are no "generations" in eternity. Thus, if we force 1,000 here to be an exact number, the world must continue for 30,000 years from the time of Abraham, which is 26,000 years into our future. Unless you can accept that Jesus will not return for 26,000 years, you are forced to understand "thousand" in Psalm 105 as an unspecified large number.

In short, in the Bible, just as in common-everyday English, 1,000 is often used as an indefinitely large number. There is no reason why the same cannot be true in Revelation 20.

Other Scripture Must Be Studied

From all the above, it is very clear that Revelation 20:1-7 cannot possibly be understood by itself. It raises too many questions. Everyone's explanation is based more on other Scriptures than on Revelation 20 itself.

There are at least two major views of the matter. On the one hand, there are those who connect "the millennium" to all the Old Testament kingdom prophecies. They say that Jesus did not fulfill those prophecies at His first coming. They say that because the Jews rejected the kingdom, Jesus had to postpone the kingdom's arrival. They believe in a literal future one-thousand-year reign, in which all the Old Testament prophecies will be literally fulfilled via an earthly kingdom centering around Israel, Jerusalem and a rebuilt temple.

On the other hand, there are those who also say that the "thousand years" is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom. However, they say that those prophecies are not something yet to be fulfilled in our future. They say that Jesus was not a failure—that He accomplished the work He came on earth to do. They say that God set up His kingdom on schedule just as Daniel and Jesus had prophesied. They say the kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom, nor a Jewish kingdom. They say the kingdom is spiritual, it is for Jew and Gentile alike and it is here now. They say that the expression "a thousand years" is a general term expressing an indefinitely long period of time.

It is clear that a person's understanding of "the millennium" is very much influenced by his understanding of the kingdom prophecies and their fulfillment. That is why the present article is not the

first, but rather the sixth, in a series. A consideration of many facts about the kingdom, as examined in the previous five articles, is absolutely necessary as a prerequisite to delving into something as difficult as Revelation 20.

**Two Future Resurrections?
What Did Jesus Say?**

A superficial glance at Revelation 20 would appear to uphold the idea that there are two future resurrections, separated by one thousand years. It seems to say that there will be a "first resurrection," that of the righteous, *before* the thousand years, followed by a "second resurrection," that of the wicked, *after* the thousand years.

Such a concept, however, does not harmonize with Jesus' teaching on the subject. For example, Jesus taught that on "the last day," the righteous will be raised from the dead and the wicked will be judged. It will be the end. There is no room in Jesus' "last day" teaching for one thousand years to follow the resurrection of the righteous. Likewise, in the parable of the tares, Jesus clearly taught that saints and sinners must live together in this world until the end. Not only so, but He adds, "First gather together the tares." There is no way to harmonize this parable with the concept of taking the wheat out first, allowing the tares to continue in the world after that. (*For greater detail on Jesus' teaching regarding "the last day" and the parable of the tares, see a previous article: "The Rapture."*)

The Judgment, as taught by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46, leaves no room for two resurrections separated by a thousand-year reign. Verses 31 and 32 clearly identify the time of the judgment as taking place when Christ returns: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats." This judgment pronounces who will enter the kingdom (in its future phase) and who will not. "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'...Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (verses 34,41).

What did Jesus mean by "inherit the kingdom"? Not a mere thousand years. Listen to His final words regarding both goats and sheep: "These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (verse 46). No millennium

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here. According to Jesus, the judgment is followed by *eternity*. According to Jesus, the future phase of the kingdom is equated to “eternal life.”

A Recognition of What Jesus Said

In the January, 1999, issue of *Midnight Call*, Norbert Lieth offered an amazing admission of what has just been said. Discussing the writing of 1 Thessalonians 4, he says, “Until then, the doctrine of the first resurrection had been a mystery. It wasn’t taught in the Old Testament, nor in the Gospels.” Referring to the writing of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, he says, “Only in them was the mystery of the Rapture revealed (1st Corinthians 15:51-53). Until then, it was believed that the resurrection of all the dead would take place on the last day (Daniel 12:2 and 13, John 5:25-29 and 11:24).” Mr. Lieth thus admits Jesus taught “the resurrection of all the dead would take place on the last day”!

According to the *Midnight Call*, the Rapture was a new doctrine revealed 20 or more years after Jesus’ ascension. There is no inherent problem with that—the Spirit was leading the apostles into all truth (John 16:12,13). The problem is that the supposed new revelation *contradicts* the clear teaching of Jesus. Mr. Lieth admits the contradiction. He admits that Jesus taught the *opposite* of two future resurrections. When Mr. Lieth says, “it was believed,” according to his own context, he is saying, “Jesus believed.” In other words, Jesus did not believe Mr. Lieth’s doctrine.

It is plain for all to see that Jesus’ doctrine says all the dead will be resurrected the same time, on “the last day.” Therefore, the doctrine of two future resurrections, separated by “the millennium,” is a doctrine that opposes the clear teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom in Revelation

Previous articles offered detailed evidence of the existence of the kingdom of God in the first century A.D.—evidence in the four Gospels, in the book of Acts and in the epistles of Peter and Paul. Now it is time to examine the book of Revelation, outside of chapter 20.

In the opening verses of the book (1:9), John says: “I, John, both your brother and **companion in the tribulation and kingdom** and patience of Jesus Christ” (bold emphasis supplied). John was already “in the tribulation”! John was already “in the kingdom”!

In 1:5,6, John speaks of “Jesus Christ...who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His

God and Father.” Some Greek manuscripts read “kings” while others read “kingdom.” There is little difference in ultimate meaning. Revelation 20:6 says, “they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” “Priests and reign.” That is practically a repeat of 1:6 “kingdom and priests” or “kings and priests.” Moreover, 1:6 reads, “has made us.” That is past tense. It expresses an accomplished fact, a present reality. We are reigning now!

(Continued on Page 12)

BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Who was the first man called a “Hebrew” in the Bible?
2. With how many chariots did Pharaoh pursue the children of Israel when they left Egypt?
3. What were the two different names the Mount was called before which the children of Israel camped and Moses received the O. T. Law?
4. Where did Israel encamp during the conquest of Canaan?
5. Which tribe of Israel had part of its possession on the east side of the Jordan river and part on the west side?
6. What was the context in the Bible that the words “be sure that your sins will find you out” were spoken?
7. What were the names of the six cities of refuge, three on the west side and three on the east side of the Jordan river?
8. What expression came to be used to show the extent of the land of Israel?
9. Who in the Bible called man a worm?
10. Who in the Bible cursed the day wherein he was born?
11. How many years did Job live after his trials?
12. What Jewish prophet in Babylonian Captivity was of royal lineage?
13. By what other designation was the Jewish “feast of unleavened bread” known?
14. What else was called “the passover” besides the feast of unleavened bread?
15. In how many of the gospel accounts is the feeding of the 5000 by Christ mentioned?
16. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, where did they first take him?
17. In the process of the “trial” of Jesus, why was Herod glad when Pilate turned Jesus over to him?
18. Where is the only place the man Job is mentioned in the New Testament?
19. In the book of Revelation, who alone was found to open the book with the seven seals?
20. When the seventh seal was opened, what was the first thing that happened?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper)

READERS'

...Response

APOLOGY: Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. □

FLORIDA:

■ "...I do appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF* in the fact that only the Truth is taught. It's wonderful to see how many more subscriptions are being sent out since I first became familiar with the magazine. Thank you for the work you do for our Father."

TENNESSEE:

- "Please take my name off your mailing list."
- "I just read your article on 'Three Religions Considered in Relation to the Sword' and found it interesting and helpful. I believe the worst is yet to come from Islam..." (E-mail).
- "Here is a small donation to your ministry. Please keep up the much needed good work. I wish we could send more, but we are retired and on a fixed income. We share with others the wonderful messages you give."

VIRGINIA:

- "I am able to glean many treasures from your paper. Thanks." (E-mail)
- "Thank God for you. You are a blessing to many people by your *SWORD AND STAFF*..."
- "I enjoy your paper so much. Enclosed is a contribution. Please continue my subscription."
- "Thank God for your health and knowledge to keep God's Word published. May the New Year bring God's blessings to you and all."
- "Please send me the 1999-2000 bound volume of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Also please send two books of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. Enclosed is my contribution for these books and also to help in publishing *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I have been receiving your paper for 2 years and enjoy it very

much. Thanks for your work and may God richly bless you always."

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "Enclosed is a check to help keep this wonderful paper going. I sure appreciate it very much. Keep up this good work. And thanks for the pamphlets on 'Our Great and Glorious God'."

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "I'm very much convicted and edified by your publication, always...Please keep up the 'good work'..."

OHIO:

■ "How much I enjoy reading *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...I can hardly believe I have been receiving it since February, 1987. Each issue has been so great for me to read..."

■ "Please send me volume 1999-2000 and 2 copies of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. Please include what volumes that are available. I presently have volumes 1987-1998. I would like to purchase more. These are very good and all Bible-based. Thanks...May God bless you."

INDIANA:

■ "I enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF* very much. I read every word in it. I know everything is from our Bible or I wouldn't support it. I am sending some money. I would like to have the bound volumes 1999-2000."

■ "Just a note to thank you for your good work in the Lord. I wish you a good New Year. I pray you will be able to [continue to] print *THE SWORD AND STAFF*... I'm sending a gift check so it will help some, I'm sure."

■ "I appreciate your efforts in your fine publication. The absolutes taught from God's Word are necessary for our society to survive. I would like one copy of your *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. May God bless your efforts."

■ "Just a few lines to encourage you in your ministry. May God continue to bless you and provide the funds for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I received the bound volumes (1987-2000) and have been devouring the teachings and powerful articles...Continue in what God has enabled you to do...Enclosed find a contribution to your much-needed work. Also, you are daily in my prayers."

ILLINOIS:

- "Please continue this important work."
- "Please find enclosed a check...for the bound volumes 1997-1998 and 1999-2000; please accept the difference as a gift for your very enjoyable and enriching paper..."
- "I was just thinking that it has been some time since I have sent you any money to help with your publication, *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I am sending...for that purpose.

"I am thankful to God that we have people like you who are willing to 'tell it like it *was*,' 'tell it like it *is*,' and 'tell it like it *will be*.' Keep up the good work.

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

"Your article concerning the Koran and other issues was interesting and helpful in the last issue."

IOWA:

■ *"Just a note to let you know we do appreciate the work you are doing in sending out God's Word. We get so much from the articles, sermons, etc., in each edition. Enclosed is a check to help you in the expenses."*

NEBRASKA:

■ *"Thank you for your excellent publication."*
■ *"Glad for 'The Three Religions Considered in Relation to the Sword' [article]. So many believe they have found the true religion in the Koran. Keep up the good work."*

LOUISIANA:

■ *"I really appreciate all the work you do in putting out THE SWORD AND STAFF. We thank you for the hours of good reading of articles based on the Word of God..."*

ARIZONIA:

■ *"What a wonderful article in THE SWORD AND STAFF, volume 39, number 4! Thank you."*

CALIFORNIA:

■ *"Thank you for publishing a 'True to the Bible' Publication. I give your articles a little more mileage by using them in my monthly publication to the senior saints."*

■ *"Enclosed is a check...to help with the paper being mailed to various parts of the country. We enjoy the paper so much. It can do nothing but good, if people would read it and obey..."*

OREGON:

■ *"I'm sorry this took so long—but here's a little help. I do enjoy and benefit from your paper."*

IDAHO:

■ *"Your web site appears to be wonderfully informative. I'll be spending quite some time pouring over it. Thank you for making this information available. May God continue to bless you in your work in the kingdom!" (E-mail)*

UNITED STATES:

■ *"I just wanted to drop a line and let you know that I enjoy your web site. Enjoyed your articles and poems" (E-mail, Web Page response).*

■ *"Would you please give me Scripture to back the fact that God is not pleased with our selling dinner plates to help...our church? Thank you." (E-mail)*

Selling Dinners to Help Church

Answer: Perhaps it would be better to turn your request or question around the other way: *Please give me Scripture to back that God IS PLEASED with our selling dinner plates to help...our church.* We know that God tells us to give liberally (it is even in the class with worship as worship) and that He is very pleased when we give ("for God loveth a cheerful giver," 2 Corinthians

9:7). If all were giving, as they should, why would we even think about falling back on the idea of selling? To me it cheapens the spirituality of the church and what the church is all about. It does not speak well of the church that would do this.—J.E.G. □



■ *"Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!*

"Can you explain to me what really took place in the following verses which happened when Paul was on his way to Damascus and a voice called him? In Acts 9:7, it says, 'And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, HEARING A VOICE and seeing no man' while in Acts 22:9 we can read, 'And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they HEARD NOT THE VOICE of him that spake to me.' Please help.

"Thank you very much for your continuous service in the Lord." (E-mail)

HEARING A VOICE BUT NOT DISTINGUISHING WHAT WAS SAID

Answer: Perhaps the answer is simple. The men with Paul on the Damascus road heard the voice but didn't distinguish what was said. Even today many times we say that we can't hear a person, meaning that we can't hear exactly what is being said (not that we can't hear them at all). B. W. Johnson in his notes on the New Testament, writing in the 1800's, said that he once heard Abraham Lincoln address a large crowd. Some in the back of the crowd cried out, "We cannot hear." Yes, they heard the president's voice, otherwise they wouldn't have cried out at all, but they couldn't distinguish what he said. Apparently it was also like this when God audibly spoke from heaven in response to the words Christ uttered in Jerusalem, "Father, glorify thy name." "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The

people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him" (John 12:28,29). To some who heard the voice, it was as indistinguishable as thunder, although it says they heard it. Others thought it must have been an angel. Evidently this is the explanation of the Scriptures in Acts. The New American Standard translation fittingly renders Acts 22:9 in this way: "And those who were with me beheld the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me".—J.E.G. □

■ "...I write to you today advising that you can remove us from your mailing list. Our congregation has undergone some extreme changes in membership over the last couple of years and we find fewer people picking up the editions of the paper. I will continue to visit your web site and share with others what I learn. Thank you for your continued efforts to proclaim the gospel message. I pray God's blessing on your ministry." (E-mail)

■ "As I was trying to get more useful commentaries for ACTS 15 over the Internet, I found your web site. I praise God for He uses you for His Glory and to speak the Truth of Salvation. Hopefully we will see each other face to face in the near future. May the Holy Spirit bless and guide us and fill our minds as CHRIST'S Mind..." (E-mail, Web Page response).

INDIA:

■ "Greetings to you in the name of CHRIST. I have browsed your articles [on your web site]. I noticed there [material]...on the 70 weeks of Daniel prophecy. If you could send this I shall make use of the same in our congregational study and print and publish it in our native tongue. Please let us know if you can permit us to do so." (E-mail, Web Page response)

PAKISTAN:

■ "Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. Hope it will find you in excellent shape...Remember us in your prayers...May God bless you and your esteemed ministry abundantly. United with you in all you do." (E-mail, Web Page response)

GHANA:

■ "Your spiritual family here is very sorry to hear and see the terrorist attacks in your country. It is our sincere hope and prayer that America will triumph over the work of terrorists.

"I was indeed happy to receive THE SWORD AND STAFF, 'How Faith is Acquired, Increased and Perfected.' Your continuing sending me THE SWORD AND STAFF for many years makes my heart sing. May God bless you. It is always a blessing to use THE SWORD AND STAFF for teaching and Bible classes. I told the brethren that you have really helped me a lot through THE SWORD AND STAFF to grow much in the knowledge of the Word of God..."

SPAIN:

■ "Please send me the 1995-1996 volumen encuadernado de 'La Espada y El Cayado' (en Español). Also 1997,1998.

"I also want to renew my subscription to 'La Espada y El Cayado' en Español..." □

**The Alleged Story Behind
Leonardo Da Vinci's Painting
of the Last Supper**

THE STORY behind the painting of The Last Supper is extremely interesting and instructive. Two incidents connected with this painting afford a most convincing lesson on the effect of thought in the life of a boy or girl, or of a man or woman. The Last Supper was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, a noted Italian artist. The time engaged for its completion was seven years. The figures representing the twelve apostles and Christ himself were painted from living persons. The live model for the painting of the figure of Jesus was chosen first. When it was decided that Da Vinci would paint this great picture, hundreds and hundreds of young men were carefully viewed in an endeavor to find a face and personality unaffected by sin. Finally, after weeks of laborious searching a young man, nineteen years of age, was selected as the model for the portrayal of Christ. For six months Da Vinci worked on the production of this leading character of the famous painting. During the next six years Da Vinci continued his labors on this sublime work of art. One by one fitting persons were chosen to represent each of the eleven apostles, space being left for the painting of Judas Iscariot at the final task of the masterpiece. This was the apostle, you remember, who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. For weeks Da Vinci searched for a man with a callous face, with a countenance marked by scars of avarice, deceit, who would betray his best friend. After many discouraging experiences in searching for the type of person required to represent Judas, word came to Da Vinci that a man whose appearance fully met the requirements had been found. He was in a dungeon in Rome, sentenced to die for a life of crime and murder. Da Vinci made the trip to Rome at once, and this man was brought out from his imprisonment in the dungeon and led into the light of the sun. There Da Vinci saw

(Continued on Next Page)

Answers to:
BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 14:13; 2. Exodus 14:6,7; 3. Horeb and Sinai: Exodus 3:1,12 (19:1-3,17-20); Exodus 19:18-21; 31:18 (Deuteronomy 4:10-13); Leviticus 26:46 (Deuteronomy 29:1; II Chronicles 5:10); 4. Joshua 4:19; 5:10; 9:6; 10:6-9,15,43; 14:6; 5. Joshua 22:7; ; 6. Numbers 32:23 (read the 32nd chapter); 7. Joshua 20:7-9; 8. Judges 20:1; 1 Samuel 3:20; 2 Samuel 3:10; 17:11; 24:2,15; 1 Kings 4:25; 9. Job 25:1,6; Psalms 22:6; Isaiah 41:13,14; 10. Job 3:1-3; Jeremiah 20:14-18; 11. Job 42:16,17; 12. Daniel-Daniel 1:3-8; 13. Luke 22:1; 14. Luke 22:7,8; 15. In all of them: Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14; 16. Luke 22:54; Matthew 26:57; 17. Luke 23:1-8; 18. James 5:11; 19. Revelation 5-8; 20. Revelation 8:1.□

The Alleged Story Behind Leonardo Da Vinci's Painting of the Last Supper

(Continued from Previous Page)

before him a dark, swarthy man, his long shaggy and unkempt hair sprawled over his face, a face which portrayed a character of viciousness and complete ruin. At last the painter had found the person he wanted to represent the character of Judas in his painting. By special permission from the king, this prisoner was carried to Milan where the fresco was being painted.

For six months the prisoner sat before Da Vinci, at appointed hours each day, as the gifted artist diligently continued his task of transmitting to his painting this base character in the picture representing the traitor and betrayer of the Savior. As he finished his last stroke, he turned to the guards and said, "I have finished, you may take the prisoner away." Suddenly the man broke loose from their control and rushed up to Da Vinci, crying as he did so, "Oh, Da Vince, look at me! Do you not know who I am?" Da Vinci, with the trained eye of a great character student, carefully scrutinized the man upon whose face he had constantly gazed for six months and replied, "No, I have never seen you in my life until you were brought before me out of the dungeon in Rome." Then lifting his eyes toward heaven, the prisoner said, "Oh God, have I fallen so low?" Then turning his face to the painter he cried, "Leonardo Da Vinci, look at me again, for I am the same man you painted just seven years ago as the figure of Christ!" This is the true story of the painting of The Last Supper that teaches so strongly the lesson of the effects of right and wrong thinking of an individual. He was a young man whose character was so pure and unspoiled by the sins of the world, that he represented a countenance and innocence and beauty fit to be used for the painting of the representation of Christ. But during the next seven years, following a life of sin and crime, he was changed into a perfect picture of the most notorious character ever known in the history of the world.—*Selected* (and submitted by William T. McLaughlin) □

The "Millennium" Is Not...

(Continued from Page 8)

Revelation 2:11 promises, "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." Avoiding the second death is thus a blessing for all faithful Christians. Therefore, Revelation 20:6 is neither stating a new truth nor a truth reserved for a special group of Christians when it says, "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power." This is speaking of all Christians.

Verse 1:5 also says, "Jesus Christ...the ruler over the kings of the earth." Jesus is ruler now! We all know what type of ruler He is: a King. Jesus is king

now! In 3:21, Jesus says of himself, "I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Jesus is on the throne now! Under the seventh trumpet (11:15), there are "loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" Whatever historical date one places on the fulfillment of the seventh trumpet, notice that Jesus' reign is "forever and ever." It is eternal, as Daniel 2:44 prophesied. Any interpretation of Revelation 20 that limits the kingdom of God and Christ to one thousand years is simply not in harmony with the rest of Scripture.

Relationship of Chapters 12 and 20

Revelation 12, regarding the woman, the dragon, the male child and war in heaven, is not without its difficulties; but consider verses 10 and 11:

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.'"

First, note that salvation and the kingdom arrive at the same time—at the time Satan is "cast down" out of heaven. What is the *earliest* possible point in history for the arrival of salvation and the kingdom of God? Verse 11 says that the war was won "by the blood of the Lamb." So all of this must necessarily have taken place after Calvary.

A more difficult question: what is the *latest* possible point in history for the arrival of salvation, the kingdom and the casting down of Satan? Verses 13 and 14 say that, after Satan was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman and she fled into the wilderness, where she remained for "time and times and half a time." Therefore, salvation and the kingdom had to arrive some time *before* the persecution of the woman for "time and times and half a time."

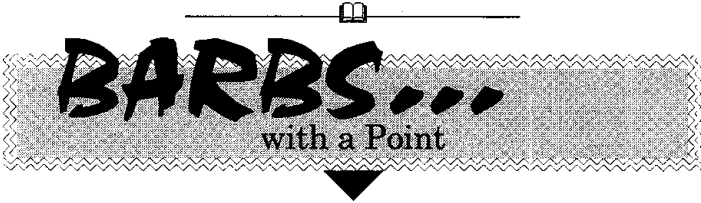
It is generally understood by all that the "time and times and half a time" is a reference to 3½ years, or 1260 days as stated in 12:6. Whether this is 1260 literal days, or a figurative day-for-a-year interpretation, is a question for another study.

The prevailing view among futurists is that the 3½ prophetic years refers to the second half of "the tribulation," which is followed by the arrival of the kingdom in "the millennium." However, this does not agree with Revelation 12. Revelation 12 says that at the moment Satan is cast out of heaven, a loud voice in heaven declares, "Now salvation...and

(Continued on Page 14)

Self-Evident Truths

IN THE BEGINNING God created Adam and Eve, just one man and one woman. This should tell us something. (1) Obviously God intended that one man have one wife, not many. (He did not create one man and several women). And, (2) Marriage is between man and woman, not two people of the same sex. (God did not create two men or just two women). These truths are self-evident. How strange to think otherwise. □



IT TAKES patience to be a real Christian.
A lot of kneeling keeps us in good standing with God.
When stripped naked of the things of the world, like Job, we see who we really are.
Repentance is the key to solving most church problems, if we would only admit it.
The man aware of his sinfulness and shortcomings is less inclined to complain when everything is not going his way.
There is a difference between being a saving person and being stingy.
The person who says there are contradictions in the Bible has contradictions in his life and is trying to discredit the Bible because it says that he has contradictions in his life.
What is gotten without effort usually is worth about what it cost.
Many professed Christians may not have entered into a personal relationship with Christ because their faith is in baptism instead of the person of Christ.
You will leave no footprints on the sands of time standing still.
Those children that are the most indulged by their parents are the most likely to indulge in things that they shouldn't.
Your experiences in life will either make you better or make you bitter (it is all up to you).
Christianity is an inclusive and exclusive religion; it includes "whosoever will" and excludes "whosoever won't."
The person who is always ready to tell another just what he thinks is not thinking.
If your life seems to be coming apart, just remember that true religion is the cement that holds life together (if indeed it is not life itself).
Good manners and being polite, for the most part, are simply practicing unselfishness.
If your life is not put within the framework of purpose, it does not make a very good picture.

People without a leader are about like a body without a head.

There is no deceiver more dangerous than the deceiver who has first deceived himself into believing his deceptive doctrine.

When you smoke tobacco, your health and money go up in smoke.

Religious liberals are a strange breed; they are down on conservative Christian believers, but come to the defense of Islam, which is perhaps the most illiberal religion in the world.

You cannot willfully continue in sin and be right with God.

If pain and sorrow were not anticipated to be a part of our lives, why did God create us with the capacity to weep and shed tears?

The status quo is usually not the way to go (Matthew 7:13,14).

The backwaters of traditional thought (really lack of thought) and mental stagnation are not suitable waters upon which to sail the old ship of Zion (for they lead to nowhere).

It is easy for people who smoke "pot" to become a "crackpot."

When you make an "idol" out of mere human beings, and then find they have feet of clay, it really leaves you in dismay.

Those bound by the Word of God are bound for heaven.

Lying is an underlying and fatal flaw of character that undercuts and makes havoc of all virtue.

The wages of sin have not changed (Rom. 6:23). □

THE ANVIL OF GOD'S WORD

Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vespers chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

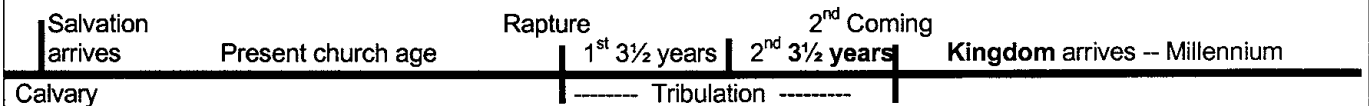
"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammer out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "The Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

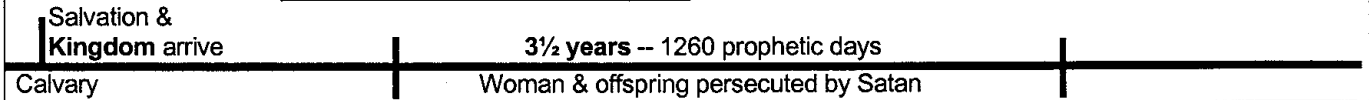
—Anonymous

Two Views on Arrival of Kingdom—

1 - POPULAR FUTURISM SAYS:



2 - REVELATION 12 SAYS:



The “Millennium” Is *Not*...

(Continued from Page 12)

the kingdom of our God...have come.” The persecution of the woman for 3½ years comes after Satan is cast down, thus after the arrival of the kingdom. Futurists, however, teach that the 3½ years take place *before* the arrival of the kingdom in “the millennium.” Such an interpretation of Revelation 20, that places the 3½ years *before* the arrival of the kingdom cannot harmonize with Revelation 12.

Chapter 12 clearly points to three events as simultaneous: the casting down of Satan, the arrival of salvation and the arrival of the kingdom. If the kingdom is not here yet, then salvation is not here yet. By the same token, if salvation is here now, the kingdom is here now! All this agrees exactly with what John had already affirmed in 1:9: “I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom.” John, in 95 A.D. declared that he was already in the kingdom.

The Millennium is *Not*...

Most of the beliefs that anyone has about “the millennium” are not based on Revelation 20. Beliefs about the millennium are derived from other sources.

Based on other Scripture, it has been shown that:

1 - The millennium is *not* a period of time between the bodily resurrection of the righteous and the bodily resurrection of the wicked.

2 - The millennium is *not* a yet future arrival of Jesus’ kingdom in which he will fulfill what He failed to fulfill when He first came.

3 - The millennium is *not* some time yet future when Jesus for the first time will sit on His throne and reign as King.

4 - The millennium is *not* a period of time that will arrive 2,000 years after salvation arrived in the world.

What then *is* the millennium of Revelation 20? The next article, Lord willing, will explore how the expressions of Revelation 20 can be harmonized with the rest of the New Testament. In particular,

there will be a study of what the rest of the New Testament teaches about the binding of Satan and the first resurrection. □

Note by author: *This is the sixth article regarding prophecies of the Messianic kingdom and their fulfillment. Look for more in future issues.*

(Scripture in the preceding article is taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)



**News Items and Quotations
from Secular Sources**

● A wealthy Egyptian businessman has been sentenced to seven years hard labour for having more wives than his religion allows.

Ragab al-Suweirki, a devout Muslim, was found guilty in a court in Cairo of having five wives at one time—one more than permitted—and to have done so on several occasions... [BBCi, January 22, 2002]

(Note: How strange that a religion would allow its founder to have many times more than four wives, and even a six year old bride, and then such a sentence would be passed on this man for what he has done. God initially created one man and one woman to be his wife. That is His plan for humanity).

● ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Calling Muslim countries backward and weak, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf called Saturday on Islamic governments to invest more in science and technology.

Addressing the opening session of a three-day international conference on science and technology, Musharraf said the Muslim world was beset by internal conflicts and perceived by outsiders as terrorists.

“The Muslim umma (community) is one-forth of humanity, but we are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most backward, the most unhealthy and indeed the most deprived and weakest of the human race,” Musharraf said...[February 16, 2002]

(Note: President Musharraf of Pakistan bravely said some truthful things here that our politically correct, so-called, society would hesitate to say. Then going one step further, it might be asked if there is not a relationship between the backwardness in these countries and their religion.) □

Printing Errors in the Bible

IN A 1631 EDITION of the King James Bible, in Exodus 20 verse 14, the word "not" was left out. This changed the 7th commandment to read, "Thou shalt commit adultery." Most of the copies were recalled immediately and destroyed on the orders of Charles I. But there are 11 copies still remaining. They are known as the "Wicked Bible." (The Bible museum in Branson, Missouri has one on display.) The printer was fined 300 pounds.

The word "not" was also left out in the 1653 edition. In 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9 it was printed: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God" instead of "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Again it was recalled immediately (dashing the hopes of many!). It is known as the "Unrighteous Bible."

The "Murderer's Bible," printed in 1801, declared: "these are murderers" (instead of "murmurers," Jude 16) and continued, "let the children first be killed" (instead of "filled," Mark 7:27) Perhaps the error in Psalm 119 verse 161 in a 1702 version summed it all up: instead of "princes" it read, "printers have persecuted me." It is known as the "Printer's Bible."

The first book that Johannes Gutenberg printed in 1454 was the Bible. It is thought that he printed about 180 copies, known as the 42-line Bible, of which significant parts of 48 copies still survive. Gutenberg did not make any printing errors.—*Didyouknow.Com* □

"Will I Die Right Away?"

MANY YEARS AGO at Stanford Hospital there was a little girl named Liza who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. He hesitated for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save Liza."

As the transfusion progressed, he lay in a bed next to his sister and smiled, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I die right away?" □

You Will Not Regret It

WHEN YOU ARE TOLD by the attending physician that you have only a little while left to live, you will not regret one moment you have spent in the study of your Bible, that you are a Christian. After all other books are laid aside, this Word will still face you in God's judgment! We plead with you to carefully pe-

ruse and use this sacred volume in this life! It is God's personal message to you. Don't ignore or neglect it! (Read Acts 20:32).—*Adapted* □

Have You Quit the Church?

ONE "MEMBER" OF THE CHURCH said to another, "John, we are sorry that you have quit the church."

"I have not quit," was the quick reply. "I just haven't been coming."

His friend then said, "Well, in that case, John, what would you do if you were going to quit?"

Remember. The church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18), and in particular it is the assembly (Colossians 4:16). Therefore, to forsake the assembly is to forsake Christ (Hebrews 10:25). □

Four Sobering Facts

Introduction:

There are four facts that every unsaved person should consider with serious concern.

- I. Every unsaved person is a condemned sinner (Romans 3:23).
- II. Every human faces two inescapable experiences: physical death and Divine judgment (Hebrews 9:27).
- III. Jesus is the one and only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- IV. Now is the only guaranteed time for decision time (2 Corinthians 6:2).
 - A. The past cannot be returned.
 - B. The future may not give another opportunity.
 - a. Death may come unannounced
 - b. The Holy Spirit may not call
 - c. The brain may not function
 - d. Jesus may return.

Conclusion:

What is your answer to this question: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3)

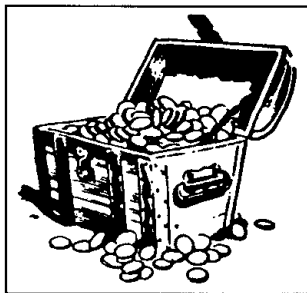
Mistakes to Avoid:

REMORSE over yesterday's failures,
ANXIETY over today's problems,
WORRY over tomorrow's uncertainty,
WASTE of the moment's opportunity,
PROCRASTINATION with one's present duty,
RESENTMENT of another's success,
CRITICISM of a neighbor's imperfection,
IMPATIENCE with youth's immaturity and
UNBELIEF in God's providence.

—Selected

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A Timely Suggestion

THIS IS NOT a solicitation, but a suggestion. If you have been considering making a contribution for the ongoing and continuation of this paper, now as we enter another year of writing and printing would be a good time to do it. As this help is needed, this would be very much appreciated as we seek to promote the truth of God's Word and glorify His Holy Name in this ungodly age. Thank you very much.—*Editor* ☐

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THE SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mt. Airy, NC 27030 USA
Telephone: (336) 789-1044

To Addressee or Current Resident

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