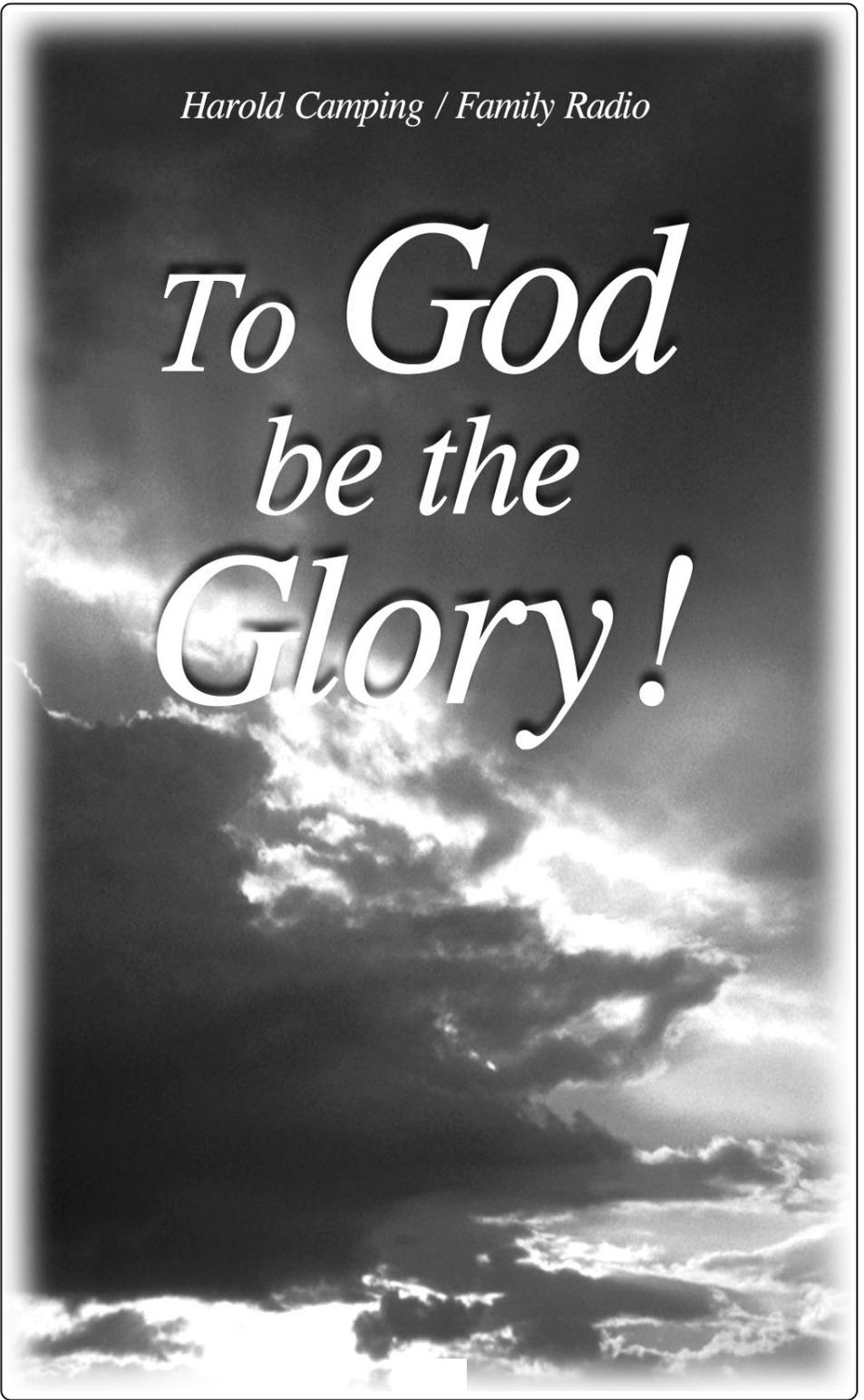


Harold Camping / Family Radio

*To God
be the
Glory!*



To God Be The Glory!

By Harold Camping

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To God Be The Glory!

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Preface

This book is a sequel or a follow-up to the book *We Are Almost There!* In the book *We Are Almost There!*, we were able, by God's mercy, to show that the Bible teaches with absolute certainty that the beginning of the day of judgment, which coincides with the day of the rapture, is May 21, 2011. God has made this startling information available to us precisely as He had promised. In Ecclesiastes 8:5-6, God declared:

... a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment . . . to every purpose there is time and judgment,

Throughout the church age, God had hidden this time information, and an understanding of God's judgment plan, from all of mankind, including the churches. And in addition to that, God placed many statements in the Bible that taught that Christ would come as a thief in the night. This was done to keep the churches focused on sending the Gospel into the world (see Acts 1:6-8).

Because the time information is tightly linked to God's judgment plan, God's judgment plan was also altogether wrongly understood throughout the 1,955 years of the church age. However, it is God's purpose that during these closing years of the earth's existence, the true believers are to warn the world of God's timetable and His intention to destroy this world. He has given the true believers a great amount of precise information concerning the details of the time of the end of the world. Because of the tight link between God's timetable for this awesome event and the judgment, He has also given the true believers a great amount of detailed information concerning His judgment plan. God has given this information to the true believers so that they, like Noah and Jonah, can warn the world of this impending disaster.

This end-time revelation of time and judgment is evidence of the unfathomable love and mercy of God. How many people in the wicked city of Nineveh would have cried to God for mercy if the prophet Jonah had simply told them that someday, the God of Israel would destroy them because of their wickedness? How many people in the churches are crying to God for mercy because they have been taught that someday, Christ will come as a thief in the night?

As a matter of fact, the teaching that Christ will come as a thief in the night is a very comfortable teaching. The church age began over 1,900 years ago, and Christ has not come to end the world's existence. Therefore, people can reasonably believe that it is highly unlikely that He will come in our lifetime. Whether they realize it or not, people in the churches, about two billion persons, have developed a love for this world. Except for things such as warfare and pestilence, this world is a wonderful place to live. It is here that mankind can find friends, happiness, careers, pleasure, purpose, etc. It is not a perfect world, but people would surely rather live in it than die and lose all of that potential. Thus, they do not want to think about this world coming to an end.

And so, except for the true believers, who are aware that God has given a precise time for the end, and who believe with all their heart that it is true and accurate, the rest of the world will insist either that Christ will come as a thief in the night, or that the end of the world will not come as long as mankind continues to solve problems, like global warming, etc.

This book, therefore, will be read and appreciated only by those who truly trust God and realize that it is a great blessing and the mercy of God that He is supplying this information to those who fully trust the Bible. We highly recommend that the reader of this book also read *We Are Almost There!* Both of these books are available free of charge from Family Radio. To request a copy, write to Family Radio, Oakland, California, 94621, USA, or call 1-800-543-1495 toll free. They are also available on the web at www.familyradio.com.

Chapter One.

The Mystery of Coming to Truth

The way each person thinks and believes is a product of the ideas he has accepted to be true and trustworthy. These ideas may have been presented to him in the past or they may be new ideas that are presented today. As additional ideas are presented, they will be filtered and tested in the light of the ideas that he has already accepted to be true and trustworthy.

This is certainly the situation that exists when it comes to religious understanding. Once we have learned certain religious ideas, and we have accepted them as truth, it seems impossible to accept any ideas as truth that are not in agreement with the ideas that we have already accepted as truth.

Thus, the well-trained Roman Catholic ordinarily will remain a Roman Catholic, the Baptist a Baptist, the Buddhist a Buddhist, etc. This is why most of the dear people who are members of a church cannot accept the idea that God is finished with the churches, and He has commanded people to flee from the churches, and that Satan has been installed to rule there, and that the Holy Spirit has abandoned the churches so that no one under the authority of any church can become saved.

These dear people have been taught, and have accepted as truth, that their local church is a divine institution, that God reigns over it, and so, the gates of hell can never prevail against it. That understanding has become locked into their thinking as an undebatable truth. Therefore, any idea presented to them from the Bible is filtered through and tested by their doctrine, which they are absolutely certain is the truth.

When they are presented with new ideas from the Bible that teach that we have come to the end of the church age, they are incapable of examining them with any objectivity. However open they believe they are to the truth of the Bible, in actuality, they are altogether unable to come to new truth. That is why in our day, so few people are leaving the churches in obedience to God's command to flee from them.

This situation has become extremely serious in our day because of at least three very significant reasons. They are as follows.

1. We are living in a world that is very near the end of time. And at the time of the end, God planned to take off the seals that He had placed on a great amount of end-time information in the Bible. Therefore, we should expect that a great amount of information that previously we had considered to be truth from the Bible, now must be restudied.
2. We are in the time period called the great tribulation, when God is testing those who claim to be true believers. The nature of the true believer is that he wishes to be true and obedient to anything and everything in the Bible.

3. By means of these tests, God is separating the wheat, that is, the true believers, from the tares, those who trust that they are true believers, but they have not become saved.

This time of testing encompasses the entire 8,400-day (23-year) period of the great tribulation, which began on May 21, 1988, and continues until May 21, 2011. On that day, the day of judgment begins, and it continues until October 21, 2011.

The Bible is a spiritual book, and the only way that anyone will correctly understand truth from the Bible is if God opens his spiritual eyes. Therefore, knowing that we have accepted as truth some preconceived and false ideas, which we of ourselves will never be able to surrender, we must go to God, pleading for His mercy, praying that He will unlock our minds from any thought or idea that is contrary to His Word.

The problem of our inability to surrender ideas that the Bible presently shows us to be false is very grievous in our day also in connection with another important area of truth, that is, the time information in the Bible. The fact is that a lot of us analyze the problem of time by using the Bible's time information as an illustration.

The 70-page book *We Are Almost There!* is a product of 50 years of earnest Bible study concerning the timeline of history. In addition, the material in that book has been subjected to thousands of hours of discussion on the Family Radio program, the Open Forum. The conclusion of all this study is the truth that Christ will not come as a thief in the night, but on a day, a month, and a year that God has disclosed to His true believers in the Bible.

Now, suppose that the book *We Are Almost There!* is given to an intelligent, devout church member who has always been taught that Christ will come as a thief in the night. He agrees to read this book and give it a fair, honest appraisal. After reading the first few pages, he discovers that it does not teach that Christ will come as a thief in the night. Immediately, his defenses are alerted, and he might think, "This book is heresy. I know too many verses that teach that no one can know the time of Christ's return. It would be wrong for me to read any more of this heretical book." And in his heart, he feels he has made an honest, fair appraisal of this book.

What he fails to realize and cannot realize because of the lock that is on his heart, is that, indeed, throughout the church age, all that God permitted any true believer to know about the end was that Christ was coming as a thief in the night. Already, in Acts 1, the apostles asked the question, as we read in verse 6:

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

They wanted to know when the kingdom of God would be completed. And Jesus answered them, as we read in verses 7 and 8:

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses

unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

In other words, there is a job to be done, which is to bring the Gospel into all the world. That was the task of the church during the church age, and they were not to be preoccupied with wondering about the time of the end.

Therefore, God made it very clear that all that could be known throughout the church age was that He was coming as a thief in the night. No one could know the day or the hour of His return. For approximately 1,900 years, during the time of the church age, there were no clues.

But the true child of God continually reads his Bible and always wants to know more of God's truth. And then he discovers from Ezekiel 3:17 and Ezekiel 33 that he is a watchman who must warn the world of the time of Christ's return. And then time information begins to surface, beginning with the information that the year of creation was 11,013 B.C. Slowly, the timeline of the world's history opens up. He can begin to understand the importance of time information in the Bible.

This is surely a way in which God is helping many people to test themselves, to see whether they are actually serving a god that is their church, their pastor, their creeds, or anything other than the God of the Bible. This, indeed, emphasizes that we are all utterly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth. How wonderful that we can humbly pray, and admit that in our own ability and wisdom, we know nothing. We can beg the Lord to open our eyes to truth.

There is an additional major testing program that God has placed in the Bible that is taking place during these 23 years (8,400 days) of the great tribulation. It has to do with God's judgment process.

Throughout the church age, the normal understanding of God's righteous judgment upon the wicked could be summed up by the idea that on the last day, Christ will sit upon a judgment throne. Each of the wicked who had previously died will be alive again to take their turn, along with all of the wicked who had not died, to be individually judged by Christ. They will be found guilty of innumerable sins and be sentenced to a place called hell, where they will be in torment forevermore.

Basically, that is the locked-in mind set of most of the peoples of the world who have any trust in the Bible at all. It is true whether they are still in a local church or whether they have left the church because they understand that the church age has ended. That has been the basic understanding of most of the churches throughout the church age. These dear people, therefore, believe that they can, in an unbiased, objective way analyze any verse of the Bible that might relate to judgment and come to truth. However, without the Holy Spirit unlocking their minds, they cannot come to truth.

But at this time, when we are so close to the end of time, and God has revealed an exceedingly great amount of new truth about the church age and the timetable of the end, He has also revealed much new truth about the judgment process. In fact, we will discover that the traditional understanding of Christ as Judge on the last day, that He would send the wicked to hell to forever suffer the agony of God's wrath, does not identify with any precision at all with the true teachings of the Bible concerning God's judgment process.

One other problem should be noted as we try to understand, as accurately as possible, the truth of the Bible. It was God's intention to withhold, until very near the time of the end of the world, the revealing of much truth concerning the timetable and nature of God's Judgment process. Therefore God wrote the Bible so that it has many complex verses that are not at all easy to understand.

One method God used to make it very difficult to come to truth was to write verses in such a way that, grammatically, they can be understood to teach two opposing ideas, both a right and a wrong idea. For example, God wrote in 1 Timothy 3:15, **"...which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth."** Grammatically it is altogether correct to understand from this verse that it is the church that is the pillar and ground of truth. This, incidentally, is the way the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed churches teach this verse.

However, it is equally grammatically accurate to understand that this verse is teaching that the living God is the pillar and ground of truth. This verse has been carefully structured by God so that it is a trap. By following God's rule of carefully searching the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can know which of these two understandings is the correct one. If the church is the pillar and ground of Bible truth, any local congregation has the spiritual right to teach, and possibly even to modify, what any verse in the Bible is teaching, because the church is the foundation of truth. On the other hand, if God is the pillar and ground of truth, the only way we can discover what a difficult verse is teaching is by careful searching of the Bible, accompanied by much prayer to God that He might, through His Word, the Bible, reveal the correct truth. Obviously this has to be the only correct teaching of this particular verse.

In the same way God has hidden a great amount of truth in the Bible that relates to God's judgment plan. A number of verses appear to teach very plainly and accurately the traditional view that at the end of the world, God will cause each and every non-elect unsaved dead person to be resurrected to appear before Christ as the Judge. They will be found guilty, and will be sentenced to awful torment, that they will experience in the future in a place called Hell.

These same verses, however, can also be accurately understood to teach the correct understanding that perfectly agrees with the teaching that on October 21, 2011, the entire universe, together with all the non-elect unsaved, will be completely annihilated.

For example, the Bible speaks of "eternal damnation" or "unquenchable fire." These phrases can be understood to mean damnation or fire that is to be experienced continuously for evermore in the future. Or they can also be correctly understood to mean that damnation or the fire is of such a nature that the person subject to this damnation or fire will be completely annihilated, so that throughout any time in the future they will never, never live again.

How can we know which is the correct understanding? The correct understanding should be obvious when we search the Bible and find that the word "life" or "living" is never used in connection with those who have physically died as unsaved persons, and who are resurrected (see "The Resurrection of the Unsaved," pages 49-51). We must remember that a person must be alive in order to endure the suffering of torment.

Moreover, God in His wonderful kindness gives us an example of eternal fire. When Sodom was destroyed, that fire literally burned, at most, a few days. Yet the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah is spoken of as “eternal fire.” We read in Jude 7:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Therefore, we can be assured that for these reasons and other Biblical reasons, we can know that the traditional view of eternal damnation is bankrupt. When a non-elect unsaved person dies, he is forever dead, both in body and soul. This truth will be further developed as we go to the next chapter.

Chapter Two.

The Bankruptcy of the Traditionally Understood Judgment Plan

During the past few years, we have learned that just before the day of judgment there is an 8,400-day (23-year) period called the great tribulation. During this period of time, God is especially testing all the people in the churches, are they true believers or not. That is, are their minds locked into preconceived ideas held by their church, or are they ready to listen to and obey all that the Bible teaches, even though many doctrines are only now being revealed.

During the great tribulation period, in which we are now living, we discover that God uses many tests that serve to separate the wheat from the tares. This time of testing is decreed in Revelation 3:10, where we read:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

In this verse, the phrase “the hour of temptation,” or trial, identifies with the 8,400-day great tribulation. During this time, many trials or testings are taking place. Some examples of the things we have learned are as follows.

1. The church age has come to its end.
2. The precise date of judgment day.
3. A correct understanding of God’s judgment process.
4. A correct understanding of all that is involved in becoming saved.
5. An understanding that God had hidden many important truths in the Bible that would be revealed only near the end of time.
6. We are to send the message to the world that salvation is still possible today, and will continue to be possible until the last day of the great tribulation, May 21, 2011.
7. We must warn the world that when judgment day comes, there never again will be the possibility of salvation or any aspect of God’s mercy.

The Bible is exactly the same today as it was when it was completed, about 1,900 years ago. However, until our day, no one, regardless of how brilliant and faithful they were, or how humbly they served God as their Savior, no one was able to accurately determine from the Bible the year of creation, the year of the Noachian

flood, or the date of the birth of Jesus. Likewise, no one was able to accurately understand the many details of God's judgment process.

Consequently, as previously noted, throughout the church age the common agreement among the most dedicated theologians and Bible students was that one could not know, with any precision, the time of Christ's return at the end of the world. It was generally agreed upon that the statement in the Bible that Christ would come "as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:2, II Peter 3:10), settled the question of the time of Christ's return.

Likewise, in regard to the nature and character of God's judgment on the unsaved, it was commonly understood that at the end of time, Christ would visibly appear to judge all of the unsaved of the world. Those who had died would be resurrected to conscious existence in order to be judged. And then those who are alive at the end of time and those who were resurrected would be found guilty and sentenced to eternal conscious suffering somewhere in a place called hell. Passages such as II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10-11, and others, appeared to plainly teach that.

But God made a promise in Ecclesiastes 8:5-6, where we read:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

And God declared in Daniel 12:9:

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Since time and judgment are intimately associated with the time of the end, we can therefore expect that because we are so very near the end, we will at this time know much more about the timeline of history and the details of God's judgment process.

Indeed, we have already learned, entirely from the Bible, the precise day, month, and year when the rapture will occur, that is, when all the believers will be caught up into heaven. We also have learned, with great precision, when the universe and the earth and all its works will be completely destroyed by fire.*

In a similar manner, at this time, God has opened up our understanding so that we can know far more about God's judgment program. God has revealed with great clarity the timeline of the events of the end of the world, and that assists us so that we now have a more accurate understanding of His judgment program.

We will discover that God's judgment program began before sin entered the world, and it will be completed when the earth and all of its works are burned up (II Peter 3:10).

*This information is carefully set forth in the book *We Are Almost There!*, which is available free of charge from Family Radio.

As we carefully examine God's judgment plan, we will examine some key words, like "death" and "destruction," and also, things such as shame, loss of inheritance, great physical pain, and finally, annihilation. However, before we do that, we might take note of some of the fallacies and difficulties that are an intrinsic part of the traditional understanding of God's judgment process.

Virtually every church throughout the church age believed that one of its primary tasks was to teach people how to become saved. Therefore, every church developed an altogether unbiblical plan, which they believed was fully in agreement with the Bible, whereby they taught that salvation could be assured to those who followed their plan.

An exceedingly important part of their plan was the stern reminder that the alternative to salvation was eternal damnation. Their usual understanding of eternal damnation was that the unsaved would be tormented under God's wrath forever and ever in a place called hell. They believed that such a horrible consequence of sin should greatly assist and encourage people to understand their great need for salvation.

People were told that they could receive this salvation, and consequently, be guaranteed that they would never have to suffer hell, if they faithfully followed the salvation plan being taught by the church or the evangelist. It might involve things such as water baptism, the sinner's prayer, a profession of faith, church membership, giving of tithes, observance of the Eucharist or the Lord's table, accepting Christ, etc. Once they were assured by the church pastor, priest, elders, or deacons that they had become saved, they also received the enormous comfort that they would never end up in an eternity of hell.

Very early on, a problem arose. Suppose a child died unsaved. Since even one sin makes man as guilty as if he had broken the whole law (James 2:10), then according to that doctrine, the unsaved child who died would suffer in hell forevermore. This would mean that a little child would receive infinite torment for his childish sins.

Is it really true that a merciful, just God would bring that child into such terrible suffering forevermore because he or she had died unsaved? This serious question was faced by the church theologians, and various solutions to this question were developed and became an important part of each church's dogma.

For example, the Roman Catholics developed the idea that if the child was baptized as an infant, that would wipe away any guilt from the original sin of Adam. It would also place the child under the care and security of the church, which, if its rules were carefully followed, would guarantee that God's wrath would never come to that person.

The Reformed churches followed a somewhat similar plan, even though they were far closer to truth than the Roman Catholics. They also believed and taught that the baby that was baptized by the church came into a spiritual covenant relationship with God, so that if the rules of the church were faithfully followed, salvation would be assured.

The churches that followed the Arminian doctrine of free will, such as the Baptist churches, developed an entirely different solution. They decided that the Bible taught that there is an age of accountability. That is, until a child reached a certain age, it was not accountable to God for any sins, and therefore, could not be threatened

by hell until it reached a certain age. Thus, if a child died before he reached that age, he or she would not be punished by God.

All of the above doctrines have no Biblical validation, even though to the present day, they are taught with utmost sincerity in churches throughout the world.

Where Is God's Mercy?

And another problem arose in connection with the conclusion that the punishment for sin is to be tormented forevermore in a place called hell. A great many people who ridiculed the Bible raised a very plausible question, "You say the God of the Bible is merciful and just, so, do you really believe that a merciful and just God would torture a person who has lived a decent, moral life by placing that person in a place called hell, where he or she will intensely suffer forevermore? What kind of God is your God of the Bible? And how does that idea agree with the statement in the Bible that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked?" (Ezekiel 18:23 and 32).

These kinds of questions have been seriously considered by many churches. As a consequence, they have developed another approach to encourage people to accept their do-it-yourself salvation plan. Instead of emphasizing the negative, that is, an eternity of suffering, they changed their salvation presentation to emphasize the positive and said, "God loves you, and He has a wonderful plan for your life. You can be a part of this plan by accepting Jesus." In other words, "Join us, and then you no longer have to worry about the fear that, from time to time, comes into your mind and heart because you know that there is a God, and someday, you must answer to Him." These churches had not abandoned the idea of eternal suffering, but for them, it is simply ignored insofar as being something about which they should be seriously concerned.

We might further note that the Bible teaches that, "**the wages of sin is death** . . ." (Romans 6:23a). The typical, traditional teaching effectively declares, "The 'wages of sin' means that on the last day, any who are not God's elect (those who did not become saved) must come to life so that they can stand before Christ as their Judge. There they will be found guilty, and therefore, sentenced to an eternity of endless pain and agony in a place called hell." Those who hold the traditional position will not admit this, but to be consistent with their understanding of judgment, it also means that because we are conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5), every non-elect baby who is aborted, and every baby who dies, and every non-elect young child who dies, also must be subject to this terrible judgment process.

The horrible man-made traditional idea of God's judgment process is in terrible denial of the law of God. The idea was designed with little or no understanding that the entire Bible, which is the Word of God, is therefore, the law of God. Effectively, statements like "**the wages of sin is death,**" and "**in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,**" are looked upon as instructions from the mouth of God, rather than as the very law of God.

It is absolutely imperative that we understand that the Word of God is completely identified with Christ Himself. God says, "**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**" (John 1:14a). The Word of God is absolutely as authoritative as Christ Himself. Hebrews 4:12-13 declares:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Thus, when God told Adam that in the day he ate of the forbidden tree he would die, God was declaring His law to Adam. That law had the full authority of Christ Himself over Adam, so that when Adam disobeyed that law, Adam instantly was condemned by that law to death.

When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the world of Noah's day, those people did not need to first stand before Christ as the Judge so that they could be sentenced to death. They had broken the law of God, and each time they sinned, the law of God again condemned them to death.

In fact, the moment any unsaved person dies, regardless of how he dies, it is actually the moment that he is being executed as payment for his sins. Because the traditional teaching of God's judgment plan did not take into account that the entire Bible is the law of God, and that each word is as authoritative as Christ Himself, it is a judgment plan designed in the mind of man. Because God's plan was to hide many truths about time and judgment so that they would not be revealed to mankind until very near the end of time, the Bible was written in very complex and confusing language. It was God's intention that no one could understand all that the Bible teaches about time and judgment until our day. It was God's plan that these important truths would not be understood until the world was near the end of time. Thus, God allowed the incorrect traditional understanding of God's judgment process to be taught in the churches, even as He allowed churches to teach a do-it-yourself salvation plan.

So, even today, there are earnest, well-meaning Bible students who continue to try to justify the traditional understanding of God's judgment plan by carefully examining phrase after phrase found in the Bible. However, they filter these phrases through their preconceived traditional and incorrect understanding of God's judgment program that they believe to be correct. It is an impossible and hopeless task because the traditional judgment plan does not recognize the complete authority of each word in the Bible as being the law of God.

In summary, we can certainly say that throughout the church age, there were unresolved issues in connection with a true understanding of the punishment for sin. This is entirely understandable when we remember that a great amount of information concerning the details and character of the end of time had been sealed in the Bible so that it could not be understood. God made the language of the Bible very complex and difficult to understand so that these truths would remain hidden until very near the end of time.

However, as we approach the end of time, it is God's intention that a great amount of information of this nature would become known. Sadly, the truths that are now being revealed will be resisted by the churches, which are trusting altogether in their confessions, dogmas, and theological conclusions. This is especially so because we will find that the idea of suffering eternally in hell as a consequence of sin is not

true. Thus, a major means or cudgel that was used to encourage people to become saved has been removed.

Moreover, churches are very content with their present understanding of the Bible. They do not understand, or wish to understand, that it was God's plan that in these last days, much additional truth would flow from the Bible. For example, we learned earlier in this study that throughout the church age, the churches concluded, based on their careful study of the Bible, that Christ would come as a thief in the night. However, now that we are very near the end of time, God has given the true believers sufficient information, which has come only from the Bible, so that we know with great accuracy the day, the month, and the year of the end of time.

Likewise, we are now learning from the Bible a great amount of more clearly detailed information concerning judgment. Remember what we learned from Ecclesiastes 8:5-6, where God says:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

We should not be surprised that the churches continue to resist the conclusions concerning time, which we have learned from the Bible, and that they will resist the conclusions that concern the character and nature of judgment, which also are a result of careful Bible study. But we should rejoice that since we are so near the end of time, God is revealing to the true believers much Biblical truth that had been hidden in the Bible for the past 1,900 years.

Man's Love for Man

Before we leave our present examination of the traditional understanding of God's judgment process, we will look at one other matter that focuses on this subject. It relates to God's command that we are to love our neighbor.

In Matthew 22:36, Jesus was asked:

Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

In verses 37 to 40, we read Jesus' answer:

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Based on John 14:21, we know that to love God is to keep His commandments. There we read:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

We also know that His commandments are the entire Bible. The saved person, the true believer, therefore, has an intense ongoing desire to be obedient to the entire Bible.

However, in the same setting that God says to love God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, He gives the command that you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Thus, God is singling out one aspect of our love for God by emphasizing the need to love our neighbor. Not only is He calling special attention to our love for our neighbor, but He is also giving us a standard by which we are to measure our love for our neighbor. That is, our love for our neighbor is to be equal to our love for ourselves.

We learn from the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), that our neighbor is anyone who needs help. This, of course, assures us that anyone who is not saved needs spiritual help, and thus, is our neighbor. Therefore, in actuality, our neighbor is anyone in the world. That is why we send the precious Gospel into the world. Anyone who is not saved needs our help. And of course, God utilizes the Bible to save those who are chosen to be saved.

Since we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, we are to truly desire the highest good for them. That highest good is salvation. However, what is the situation if a person dies unsaved? Do we still love him? The Bible answers that question in Matthew 5:44, where we read:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

The likelihood that many of these enemies will become saved is exceedingly remote. And yet, we are to love them. Our love for the unsaved even after their death is demonstrated by David and by Jesus. For approximately the last 15 years of King Saul's life, he tried every way possible to kill David. And yet, when King Saul died, David expressed his sorrow and love in verses such as II Samuel 1:19 and 24, where we read:

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! . . . Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

And in II Samuel 2:5, where we read:

And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

David showed love and respect for his dead enemy, King Saul, but he expressed his love even more greatly for his very wicked son, Absalom. When Absalom was about 25 years of age, he began to plot against his father, David. His desire was to take the throne of Israel away from his father. In fact, his rebellion and the resultant anarchy became so pronounced that David was forced to flee from Jerusalem so that Absalom would not kill him.

However, David's abiding love for his wicked, treacherous son, who finally was killed by a general in David's army, is keenly expressed in II Samuel 18:33, where we read:

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

David's love for Absalom expresses the love we are to have for our neighbor. We are not to rejoice over the death of an enemy, but we are to be saddened that they experienced the punishing wrath of God that comes upon all the unsaved.

Even more dramatically, we see the love of Christ for those who must experience God's wrath. In Luke 19:41-44 we read:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong unto thy peace!* but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

In these verses, we read that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, which in this context represents all the unsaved within national Israel and all those who remain in the churches, who will experience the full measure of God's wrath for their sins. They have been especially blessed because of what they have learned from the Bible. They have learned so much about God's love and mercy. But they have twisted Bible truths into doctrines that are more pleasing to them. They have continued to walk in their pride. We might look upon them as being spiritual anarchists, who most certainly deserve the wrath of God.

But Jesus weeps over them. Imagine, God Himself weeping because He must punish those who are in rebellion against Him. It is no wonder that we read in Ezekiel 33:11:

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;

We are learning that God must bring punishment upon our unsaved loved ones and friends, and upon everyone in the world who remains unsaved, and that fills

us with sorrow and sadness. But that sadness is greatly reduced because we know our friend can no longer suffer once he is dead. However, if the traditional understanding is correct, that is, the unsaved will be eternally tormented in a place called hell, we should indeed be grief-stricken when our unsaved friend dies. If our friend had carelessly lived in this world, enjoying all the fun and pleasures the world provides, but despising the Bible, we would continue to grieve long after his death when we thought of his eternal, continual suffering.

But now, the Bible provides correction to our understanding of judgment. Even though our friend died despising the Bible, even though it is terrible that he has been denied the wonderful inheritance of eternal life and the joy and glory of being joint-heirs with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth, and even though it is terrible to realize that his death is a shameful execution under the curse of God, there is good news. At least we can be absolutely assured that the death of our friend means that he will never again be subject to pain and suffering. For his life, there has been closure.

Sadly, many people who truly believe that they are saved have become exceedingly angry at the teaching set forth in the Bible and described in this book. We cannot help but be puzzled by their angry reaction. We know that there are a great many people who are convinced they are saved, but who are actually not saved. However, because they are fully convinced they are saved, they try their best to live like a saved person. But because they are not saved, it means that both in body and soul, they love this world and all of the joys it can bring. Therefore, to try to live as a saved person is a constant uphill climb. In their hearts, they love the world, and because they believe they are saved, they know they are not to love the world. So, life is quite difficult and unhappy for them. They must live like they do not want this world, and yet, they desperately want this world.

The problem arises when a friend dies, a friend who could not care less about the Bible, and who freely enjoyed all the happiness this world can bring. This friend must pay dearly for the happiness he enjoyed from this world. By the traditional view of judgment, he should be in eternal torment in a place called hell. Has the one we are considering, who believes he is saved but actually is not, considered the terrible thought that if he, himself, is still unsaved, then according to the traditional view, he must be punished forevermore in a place called hell? How terrible that would be.

However, now we learn that the traditional view of God's plan for punishment upon sin is bankrupt. It entirely denies the mercy, the compassion, and the justice of God. It is entirely designed after the wisdom of man. There is no truth in it. The traditional view discloses the inherent cruelty and lack of mercy that is part of the nature of unsaved mankind. It may be appropriate to warn that we must never try to supplant God's plan of mercy and justice with our concept of mercy and justice.

God gives this gracious promise in Ecclesiastes 8:5-6:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

For thousands of years these words have been read by theologians and Bible scholars without understanding. This is because time and judgment have everything to do with the end of time, and it was God's purpose to seal this kind of information, and only reveal it at the time of the end (Daniel 12:4). God assures us of this as we witness how God, at this time in history, when we are so very close to the end of the world, has revealed with many proofs the very day and year when this world will end. Thus, today, every wise man, that is, every true believer, can know from the Bible about God's timetable of history all the way to the last day (see *We Are Almost There!*).

But this promise of Ecclesiastes 8:5-6 also speaks of "judgment." The word "judgment" is sometimes used as a synonym for the words "law" and "commandments" and "precepts." For example, we read in Psalm 119:106, "...**I will keep thy righteous judgments.**"

However, ordinarily, the word "judgment" or "judgments" is used to signify the consequence of breaking the law of God. This is the way it is used in the verses in Ecclesiastes that we are presently examining, where we read, "**Because to every purpose there is time and judgment.**" That is, to every purpose there is both a time when it will be accomplished and a consequence that results from the accomplishment of that purpose. That consequence is judgment or punishment, if what was done violated the law of God.

We have learned that the major teaching of the time information in the Bible focuses on the end of time, when all of God's judgment activities will be completed. Therefore, we can readily understand why time and judgment are linked together in these verses. All of God's judgment processes will be completed at the end of the world.

We are not surprised that the traditional position that most of the churches have taught throughout the church age (i.e., Christ will come as a thief in the night, II Peter 3:10), has been altogether supplanted by the additional revelation God has given us. Strictly from the Bible alone we have learned that we can know the very day, month, and year of the end-time events. However, throughout the church age, it was God's intention that the churches were to teach that Christ would come as a thief in the night. We know that this is true because of what we read in Acts 1:6:

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

The apostles, who headed up the early church, wanted to know when God would complete the restoration of the kingdom of God. In their minds, they were looking for Him to set up an earthly kingdom. Christ answered them, as we read in Acts 1:7:

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Then Jesus teaches more about the character of the kingdom. Acts 1:8 states:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

These three verses instruct us that during the church age, there would be great curiosity about the timing of the end. However, the church throughout the church age was not to be interested in that question, but they were to focus entirely on the mandate given to them, that is, to send the Gospel into all the world. Therefore, throughout the 1,955 years of the church age, they were to understand that no one could know the time of the end, but that Christ would come as a thief in the night.

However, near the time of the end of the world, the true believers had to be given the precise timing of the end. Therefore, in our day, God has opened our eyes to an accurate understanding of the entire timeline of history so that we can know the precise day, month, and year of the end. This enables the true believers to carry out our responsibility to warn the world. Every believer is a watchman. We read in Ezekiel 33:2-7:

Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

In I Thessalonians 5:2-6, we read about the shift from teaching that Christ is coming as a thief in the night to the teaching that we are watchmen. Therefore God's program called for a knowledge of time and judgment.

Since time and judgment are so closely linked together, does this mean that the traditional teachings on judgment are also to be supplanted by the new teachings from the Bible?

This is precisely what we are finding to be true. The key to this truth is that time is completely interwoven into the fabric of God's judgment processes. Therefore, the secure knowledge of the final timetable of earth's history has necessitated an entire re-analysis of any traditional view of God's judgment processes.

In other words, it was impossible to have a Biblically correct view of judgment until we first learned, strictly from the Bible, an altogether correct view of time. Since God revealed so much new time information, we should not be surprised at the tremendous new truth we will now learn.

When God finally revealed to us the precise timetable of the events of the end of the world, we discovered not only the exact end of the church age (May 21, 1988), and the exact duration of the great tribulation (8,400 days or 23 full years), but also the time of the day of judgment (May 21, 2011 to October 21, 2011). With this precise time information, we also very quickly began to learn more and more about God's entire judgment process. This is not surprising because, as we have already noted, the Bible links time and judgment together.

Before we examine God's judgment process more closely, it would be in order to make a few comments about the great tribulation period, which is so closely tied to the day of judgment. Remember, the church age ended May 21, 1988, which was also the first day of the 8,400-day period of great tribulation. In turn, the great tribulation is to end on May 21, 2011, which is the first day of the 153-day period of the day of judgment.

There are two verses in the Bible that appear to make the great tribulation period a part of the day of judgment. The first is Luke 21:22, where we read:

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

The second is I Peter 4:17:

For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The "house of God" is a reference to all the local congregations, which have been abandoned by the Holy Spirit and placed under the rulership of Satan. They are being punished because they have departed greatly from the true Gospel. Thus, they are under judgment. But that is far different from the day of judgment, the five-month period from May 21, 2011 to October 21, 2011, when each and every human being all over the entire earth will receive the final punishment for his sins. This punishment, of course, will not come upon the true believers, who will be raptured, or caught up in the air to meet Christ, on May 21, 2011.

The great tribulation is a time of testing, particularly in the churches, but also in all the world, when God is separating the wheat (the true believers) from the tares (those who believe they are saved, but in actuality, are not).

Revelation 3:10 describes this period as "the hour of temptation." The word "temptation" can also be translated "trial" or "testing." We have learned of many tests that God has caused to be in evidence during the last few years. They include important doctrinal subjects and questions such as the following.

1. Can a church show someone how to become saved?
2. Do we understand that at this time God is revealing a great amount of new information from the Bible?

3. Do we clearly understand that every word in the original languages of the Bible came from the mouth of God?
4. The entire Bible is God's law book to the human race, and it will bring condemnation if not obeyed.
5. The church age ended in 1988, so, no one can become saved while under the authority of a local congregation. In fact, God has placed Satan in the churches to rule there. Thus, God has commanded those who desire to be obedient to God to come out of the local congregations.
6. Throughout the church age, it was God's intention that the true believers should think that Christ would come as a thief in the night. But now, the true believers should know the precise day, month, and year of His coming. This allows them to faithfully warn the world of the time of the end. If people continue with the idea that He is coming as a thief in the night, it will only lock them in to a path that leads to sudden destruction coming upon them (I Thessalonians 5:1-4).
7. Throughout the church age, God allowed the traditional and completely wrong idea of God's judgment process to prevail. But now, God is giving us far more insight into the true nature of God's judgment process. It is also a testing arena, do we truly love our enemies?
8. The whole world is being tested in that they are being warned of the impending end of the world. Will they continue in a state of denial, as did the world in Noah's day, or will some individuals react to the warning, as did the Ninevites when Jonah warned them of impending destruction?

God declares in Revelation 3:10 that He will keep the true believers from this hour of trial. For the true believers, who dearly wish to obey all of God's commands, the tests listed above are not a trial because the believers have a desire to be obedient. But for non-believers in the churches and in the world, each one of these tests or trials should tell them that if they refuse to obey, then they are in deep trouble with God.

Wonderfully, the last 6,100 days of the 8,400-day great tribulation period is a time when a great multitude, which no man could number, is being saved.

However, we should now return to the study of a more accurate understanding of God's judgment process. In the next chapter, we will take a close look at God as the Judge of all the world.

Chapter Three.

God, The Judge of All the Earth

In this study, we are trying to learn as accurately as possible God's judgment plan for this world. A judgment plan obviously must include a judge. That Judge is God Himself. In our minds, we immediately picture a judge before whom an accused person stands. The judge carefully listens and considers testimony from various witnesses and from the accused so that he can determine the guilt or innocence of the accused person, and then assign the appropriate legal sentence if the accused is found guilty.

That is very similar to the traditional view of the Biblical judgment process. In that view, the Judge will be Christ. The accused will be each and every unsaved person. The time will be the end of the world. The sentence will be torment forevermore in a place called hell.

We are now learning that the traditional view is utterly bankrupt. While that view was held by almost all churches throughout the church age, it is founded on man's understanding of justice rather than the truth of the Bible.

In fairness to those who have held the traditional position, we must realize that it was fostered by the way God carefully wrote the Bible. We have learned that it was not God's intention to reveal the details of God's plans for the end of the world until the world had almost come to its end. Therefore, because we are at that time, when the end of the world is very imminent, we now know the precise time of the end. Likewise, it is only now that God is revealing in an accurate way the details of His judgment plan. Therefore, at this time, when God is opening our eyes to Biblical truth that was never revealed in the past, we should learn about the Biblical role of the Judge.

In the Old Testament Book of Judges, we learn about the activities of judges like Joshua, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, etc. We find that their chief occupation was to destroy the enemies of Israel. That is, they were expected to provide peace and safety to the nation.

In I Samuel 8:20, we read that Israel asked for a king:

That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

And in Judges 2:16, God declared:

Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled [plundered] them.

We see this also in statements such as the following.

Psalm 7:8: **The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,**

Psalm 7:11: **God judgeth the righteous,**

Psalm 9:19: **Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.**

Psalm 26:1: **Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.**

Psalm 67:4: **O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.**

Psalm 72:1-4: **Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. . . . He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.**

Psalm 103:6: **The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.**

Romans 14:10-11: . . . we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

II Corinthians 5:10: **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;**

Revelation 20:12: **And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**

From these verses we learn that the judge has the task of ruling, or governing, the people. Of course, it includes the task of ascertaining guilt or innocence in the event of a trial. We are already learning that God, as the Judge of all the earth, has given the law of God, the whole Bible, to carry out the task of finding people guilty and sentencing them to the condemnation of hell. (Later we will learn that hell is death.)

However, it should be clear that as God rules the world, every human being throughout his lifetime is standing before God as the Judge of the world. It is God who protects the poor and the fatherless, spiritually speaking, and through His Word brings condemnation each time a sin is committed. As God reigns as the Judge over all the earth, He takes many actions to carry out His Kingly desires. Some examples are as follows.

1. God judged the elect before the foundation of the earth. He put their punishment on Christ who is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the

world (Revelation 13:8).

2. God wrote the law of God (the Bible), identifying it altogether with God Himself (the Word became flesh, John 1:14), thus giving the Word of God equal authority with God so that the Word of God condemns.
3. He established the law that Jesus Christ was to be the High Priest who offered the Lamb, and He was also to be the Lamb that was offered.
4. He established the awesome fact that the shame and the curse that Jesus the Lamb of God endured, as He paid for the sins of the elect, were to be viewed in the sight of all the peoples of the earth. God records details of this demonstration in the Bible so that the entire world can read about it.
5. He has decreed that the result of the obedience of the true believers, particularly as shown in the rapture, is a judgment on the unsaved, particularly on those who have had the Bible.
6. He puts down kings and raises up kings.
7. He governs all the affairs of each human being.
8. He determined the timeline of history and established the full judgment process.
9. There is nothing that happens anywhere in the world, at any time in the history of the world, that is outside of His complete knowledge and authority.
10. We will learn that the focus of all the activity of Christ as the Judge of all the earth on the day of judgment will be to deliver all of the true believers safely into heaven, and also to cause the completion of His punishment upon all of the unsaved of the world.
11. As Judge and Ruler of the world, He gave Satan certain ruling responsibilities and allowed him access into heaven during the first 11,000 years of history. Christ also cast Satan out of heaven and took away many of his ruling activities, giving him a deathblow, etc., at the time of the cross.
12. God also installed Satan in the churches to rule over each and every church during the 8,400-day great tribulation and during the 153 days of the day of judgment.

Indeed, in God's role as Judge and Ruler, His task is far greater and wider than that of a human judge who is assigned the task of discovering the guilt or innocence of the accused.

God's Judgment Process

Now that we have learned about the wide range of activities that are included under the heading of God as the King, as the Governor, and as the Judge of all the earth, we should now determine the punishment God has decreed for sin. We learn from the Bible that there are five major aspects of that awful punishment. They are as follows.

1. The death of "life in Christ." Mankind was created with life in Christ, which we call spiritual life. It was the spiritual life with which Adam, and therefore, all mankind, was created. However, it was given to mankind conditionally. If they sinned they would lose this life and become spiritually dead. It is the same kind of life we receive at the moment God gives us a new resurrected soul, except then it is called eternal life because all of our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ. But when Adam disobeyed, he became spiritually dead. He no longer had any life in Christ. He and all mankind who were in his loins became spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins.
2. Death of body and soul, which we can call physical death.
3. Enormous shame.
4. Loss of the inheritance of the kingdom of God, in which we would have lived eternally with Christ.
5. Destruction that guarantees that the person judged could never again come to either spiritual or physical life.

In Revelation 20:11-13, we read:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

This is a tableau (a three-dimensional picture), of the non-elect (those whom God never intended to save), standing before God. There is a great white throne, which can identify only with God as the Ruler, the Judge of all the earth. The One who sits (rules) upon the throne can be only God, who as the supreme Ruler will bring an end to this universe, from whose face heaven and earth fled away.

The dead are standing there before God. Each and every person in the human race, throughout his lifetime, stands before God. In this context, they are all the non-

elect who are spiritually dead from the time they were in Adam (in Adam all die, I Corinthians 15:22). This means that though they are physically alive for a time, from the moment of conception they have no life in Christ. They are spiritually dead. In this tableau we see opened books that obviously have a record of their sins. These people are condemned each time they commit a sin. This is so because the law of God, which is the whole Bible, is used by God to bring condemnation. They are judged by the law of God each time they commit the sins that have been recorded in these books.

There is also a book of life. Their names are not found in the book of life. Therefore, it is not God's intention to save them. They are all under the sentence of death, and eventually, it will become absolutely certain that they can never become alive again as they are cast into the lake of fire. In Revelation 20, in both verses 12 and 13 the verb "were judged" is in the aorist passive indicative tense, which means they were subject to the continuous past action of being judged. Thus, verse 13 is teaching that in this tableau, the unsaved who have already died and are in the grave, in their lifetime had been continuously under the judgment of God as the Word of God condemned them. As a final part of God's continuing judgment process in the day of judgment, they will be thrown out of the graves to receive the final shame, and then their remains will be destroyed forever.

In Revelation 20:13 we read about those in the sea. This could be a reference to the spiritually dead who are physically alive and typified by the waves of the sea (Isaiah 57:20; Jude 13). Or it could refer to those who perished in the sea, like those who perished in the flood of Noah's day. In addition, those in death and hell, or in death and the grave (that is, those who are still physically alive but spiritually dead, together with those who had previously died and had been buried), are also brought to final shame before God during the day of judgment.*

Finally, death and hell, or death and the grave, are thrown into the lake of fire. In I Corinthians 15:26, we read:

The last enemy *that shall be destroyed is death.*

Later we will learn that the lake of fire is called the second death, and it emphasizes that the unsaved will never, never again come to any conscious existence or life. They will have ceased to exist.

What Is Hell?

The word that is most often associated with the judgment of God upon sin is the word "hell." What can we learn from the Bible about this word? In the Old

*There are two verses that must be looked at more carefully. Both of these verses appear to teach that for certain, every human being must appear before the judgment throne of God to give an account of their sins. These are Matthew 12:36 and Romans 14:12. In our King James Bible we read, "**But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,**" and "**So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**" In both verses the teaching should be "to give or make payment." The payment is the wrath of God, which is death. At the end of time, the unsaved receive punishment as payment for their sins. The condemnation that calls for this punishment occurs with each and every sin.

Testament it can be found more than 30 times and is always the Hebrew word “*sheol*.” The word “*sheol*” is also translated more than 30 times as the word “grave” and three times as the word “pit.”

In the New Testament, the Greek word “*hades*” is usually translated “hell” but also can be translated “grave.” Additionally, a few times, the word “hell” comes from the Greek word “*gehenna*” and once from the Greek word “*tartaroo*.”

The Hebrew word “*sheol*” and the Greek word “*hades*” can be translated as the word “hell” or as the word “grave,” depending upon the context. At times the context will permit either translation, which indicates the close relationship of the words “grave” and “hell.” Both words are intimately associated with death. This is very understandable when we read, “**For the wages of sin is death**” (Romans 6:23), and “**The soul that sinneth, it shall die...**” (Ezekiel 18:20). It agrees with the concept given in I Corinthians 15:26, “**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**” It also makes Revelation 21:1 understandable, and there we read:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

The word “sea” in the Bible is frequently used as a picture or representation of “hell.” For example, the 2,000 pigs, into which the evil spirits entered, were destroyed in the sea (Mark 5:13). When God’s judgment plan is finished there will be no more death, no more hell. Death and hell will no longer exist.

Thus, we must understand that hell is the same as the grave, in that the grave is entirely identified with death. This brings us to the next question: What is the lake of fire?

The Lake of Fire

In five verses of the Bible, reference is made to the lake of fire. They are as follows.

Revelation 19:20: **And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

Revelation 20:10: **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

Revelation 20:14-15: **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Revelation 21:8: **But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and**

all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Significantly, Revelation 20:14 declares that death and hell (or death and the grave) were cast into the lake of fire. Remember we learned from I Corinthians 15:26 that **“the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”** But in these verses we learn that death is cast into the lake of fire, which in turn is called the second death (Revelation 20:14). Moreover, we have learned from Revelation 21:1 that when the new heavens and the new earth come into existence, the sea (hell and death) is no more. Thus, the lake of fire emphasizes a total end.

Later in this study, we will learn that the Lord Jesus Christ died twice in connection with the atonement. He died before the foundation of the world as the Lamb that was slain (Revelation 13:8). He also died when He was on the cross, demonstrating to us and the world how He paid for our sins. The doubling of His punishment agrees with the principle set forth in Genesis 41:32, that is, that which is doubled is established by God.

Likewise, God speaks of doubling the punishment of the unsaved in Jeremiah 17:18, and in Revelation 18:6, where we read:

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

God declares in Revelation 18:8:

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

In this verse, God teaches us that in one day, which would have to be judgment day, there shall be death and famine, and she shall be burned with fire. Burned with fire identifies with II Peter 3:10, where we read:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The burning with fire, which is the second death, links the second death with the lake of fire. It is the final end that guarantees that never, never again will there be any possibility of life. It links up with the Greek work “*gehenna*,” which is found in a few places in the Bible, and has been translated as the word “hell.” For example, we read in Mark 9:43-44:

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell [Greek, *gehenna*], into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The fire that shall never be quenched is the lake of fire. References to fire in the Bible identify with Hebrews 12:29, where God is called “a consuming fire.” When a person is consumed by the fire of God, that person can never exist again.

Later, we will learn that in the phrase “worm dieth not,” the word “worm” is completely identified with shame. That it dieth not simply means that the unsaved are shamefully executed, and it is never possible for that shame to be removed. Likewise, the phrase “the fire is not quenched” signifies that he can never, never become alive again.

We must remember that in Adam, mankind was created to live forever, although that was conditional. However, because of sin, mankind became subject to death. But inasmuch as he was created in the image of God to live forever, is it possible that at some time in the future, after having paid for his sins, he could come to life again? The answer is no! To emphasize this solemn fact, God speaks of a lake of fire, of fire that cannot be quenched, of everlasting damnation, of the worm that dieth not, and of the smoke of their torment ascending up forever. All of these phrases relate to the second death, the lake of fire. The fire, the damnation, the smoke, and the worm are eternal, in that never, never again will there be life.

These phrases indicate that it is absolutely guaranteed that there never again shall be life for the unsaved people. The fact is that they are completely burned up, so that in no sense do they exist any longer. The concept of the cessation of existence of the unsaved is emphasized in many verses of the Bible. For example, in the following passages.

Nahum 1:6, 8: Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. . . . But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

Malachi 4:1: For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Isaiah 10:23: For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

The Hebrew word that is translated as “consumption” is also translated as “consume” or “full end.” In Jeremiah 46:28, we read:

Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

Moreover, the word “perish” is used about 100 times in the Old Testament

and about 30 times in the New Testament. In each verse, it emphasizes a cessation of existence. For example, Job 4:20 declares:

They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Furthermore, forms of the words “destroy” and “destruction” are used more than 500 times in the Bible.

On the other hand, the word “torment” is not found at all in the Old Testament, and only 22 times in the New Testament. We discover that the context in which this word “torment” is used can range anywhere from among the following.

1. The torment of the unsaved as they hear the true Gospel (Revelation 11:10).
2. The torment of suffering from illness (Matthew 8:6; Matthew 4:24).
3. The torment of stinging scorpions (Revelation 9:5).
4. The Greek word usually translated “torment” is also translated “vexed,” when the Bible speaks of Lot’s righteous soul being “vexed” by the sins of Sodom (II Peter 2:8).
5. The Greek word that is translated “torment” is also translated “sorrowing” (Luke 2:48; Acts 20:38).
6. Torment with fire (Revelation 14:10; Luke 16:24).

We have learned that the final end of God’s judgment process is death. This concept is thoroughly supported by the Bible’s generous use of words like “perish,” “destroy,” and “destruction.” Incidentally, it might be noted that words like “death,” “dead,” and “die” can be found more than 1,300 times in the Bible. It is no wonder then that the Bible declares that the last enemy to be destroyed is death (I Corinthians 15:26).

The Rich Man and Lazarus

We will now review the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that is recorded in Luke 16. Improper understanding of this parable has resulted in a wrong understanding of God’s judgment process.

The parable describes two individuals. The rich man has all of the joys and comforts this present world can bring, but he is not saved. The poor man, Lazarus, has none of the good things of this world, but he is a saved man. Finally, both men die. The rich man is buried, and Lazarus is carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22). To be in the bosom of Abraham is a picture of being in the highest blessing in the presence of God. To be buried is to be placed in a grave.

The parable then continues with a conversation between the dead rich man and Abraham (God), who is in heaven. Remember we learned that the grave and death are the same as hell. Therefore, it is not incorrect to say that the rich man was in hell (Luke 16:23). But we must understand that lifting up his eyes and seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and speaking to Abraham, are all hypothetical. That is, God has set up a completely imaginary tableau, or three-dimensional picture, in order to convey spiritual truth. These truths include important doctrines such as the following.

1. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus with a drop of water to cool his tongue (Luke 16:24). There is no mercy or grace to those who have died unsaved.
2. There is a great gulf between heaven and hell. Heaven is eternal life. Hell is death forevermore. Never, never will those who are dead ever come to life again.
3. The rich man wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers because he thought that such a miracle will cause them to become believers. The truth is, they have Moses and the prophets, the Bible. If they will not believe the Bible, then they will not believe even if they witness some great miracle.
4. The rich man is tormented in this flame. The Greek word that is translated "tormented" is used only in verse 24, in verse 25 ("thou art tormented"), in Luke 2:48, and in Acts 20:38. The word "flame" emphasizes the rich man is being punished by God, who is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). The word "torment," which is defined by its usage in Acts 20:38 and Luke 2:48, indicates the nature and character of the torment he is experiencing. Therefore, we will look carefully at this word as it is used in these two other verses.

Acts 20:38: Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Luke 2:48: And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

In both of these verses, the word that is translated as "tormented" in Luke 16 is translated as "sorrowing." This sorrowing has nothing to do with physical pain. It is the sorrow of not seeing a loved one again. The rich man was in torment because he was sorrowing that he could never again have the joys and comforts he had experienced in his life on earth, while Lazarus was safe and secure with the greatest blessings forevermore.

In other words, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us nothing at all about eternal pain in a place called hell. It is teaching us about the penalty of losing all the blessings of this life, and gaining none of the blessings of eternal life. This parable helps us to understand the experience of Esau. He was the firstborn. Therefore, he owned the birthright, which included the right of the double inheritance. Yet he despised his birthright and traded it for a bowl of soup (Genesis 25:29-34).

In Adam, every human being had the right of the firstborn, the birthright. Jesus explains this in the parable of the prodigal son. The elder son was told in Luke 15:31, “**Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.**” The birthright included the double inheritance of the firstborn (Deuteronomy 21:17). And “**all that I have is thine**” includes eternal life and being joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

Because of our sin, which is typified by the bowl of soup, we have lost our birthright. We have lost the right to life in Christ, which we call spiritual life, and which for the saved is eternal life. We have lost the right to be co-inheritors with Christ of the new heavens and the new earth. That is an integral part of the enormous penalty that we must pay for our sin.

Words cannot adequately describe the stupendous loss the unsaved person experiences when, because of his sin, he loses eternal life with Christ, and he will not reign with Christ throughout eternity, and he will not be joint-heirs with Him of the new heavens and the new earth. That will certainly be a large part of the torment that those who enter into the final five months of the earth’s existence will experience. And they will realize that because they were left behind when the rapture occurred, they will never receive any part of their birthright.

The torment of the sorrowing of the rich man in the grave, which also can be called hell, surely gives us some idea of the great torment (sorrowing) that will be present amongst the millions of church people who had been convinced that they were saved, but at the time of the rapture, they are left behind. No wonder, as we will presently learn, they are weeping and gnashing their teeth and blaspheming God. We are learning that the main reaction of those who realize they are eternally outside of the kingdom of God is a reaction of intense sorrow. This is also taught by the reaction of Esau who despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for a bowl of soup. In Hebrews 12:16-17 we read:

Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

About two billion people living today call themselves “Christian,” and most of them are identified in some manner with a local church. As we look at the local churches all around us, almost all of these church people fail to believe the Bible’s admonishment to leave the church because God is finished using the churches to send forth the Gospel. Most of them still believe that Christ is coming as a thief in the night, and that we cannot know the precise date of the end of time. Most of them trust in a man-made do-it-yourself gospel, and they have no true understanding of the principle that Christ has done all the work required to save us. Most of them still

believe in the traditional understanding of God's judgment process, which wrongly teaches that on the last day, the unsaved will be sentenced to terrible torment that they will experience continually forever in a place called hell.

Nearly two billion of these church people will discover on May 21, 2011, that they have been left behind. The Bible records that their sorrowing will be as the sorrows (torments) of the rich man in the parable we have just examined. We read in Luke 13:28:

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

When the day of judgment begins on May 21, 2011, all over the world, millions of true believers will be changed instantly into their eternal, spiritual bodies and caught up into heaven, in full view of those who are left behind. Additionally, all over the world, graves will be thrown open, and the bodies of the true believers will be changed, and they also will be caught up into heaven. This includes the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The church people who are left behind will be in shock as they realize they are still completely under the wrath of God. In their great sorrow, they will be weeping, and yet, also, they will be gnashing their teeth, showing their great anger at God. It will indeed be a time of immense sorrow for all of the church people.

God records this in a number of verses, for example, Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 13:49-50; Matthew 13:41-42; Matthew 25:30. Some of these verses emphasize that where the weeping and gnashing of teeth take place, it is called a furnace of fire, "**And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth** (Matthew 13:50). This is parallel to the rich man's complaint in Luke 16:24: "**...I am tormented [sorrowing] in this flame.**" Remember, God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12: 29). To be under His wrath is like being in a burning furnace.

Thus, we learn that by means of this parable, in which a dead man is pictured speaking to God in heaven (Abraham), we are given much information about the seriousness of the wrath of God.

The most shameful, horrible punishment for any crime is capital punishment. There may be virtually no physical pain of any kind associated with execution, and yet, it is regarded by mankind as the ultimate punishment. Why is this so?

This is so because the person who has been executed has shamefully had his right to life taken from him. He can decide to take his own life by suicide. He can risk his life on the battlefield or by engaging in mountain climbing. He can pay for his crimes by spending years in prison. But the moment his fellow humans decree that shamefully, his life is to be taken from him, he is subject to what is regarded as the most terrible and shameful punishment.

We may not be aware of this, but this earthly execution is an echo or reflection of the punishment God has decreed for sin. In fact, God records in the Bible the most shameful execution we can ever imagine, and that execution has everything to do with our salvation. Of course, we are speaking of the death of our blessed Lord and

Savior. Therefore, we should very carefully look at His death because from it, we will learn not only how shame fits into the judgment process, but we will also learn much more about God's entire judgment upon sin.

Chapter Four.

When Did Christ Die?

The first surprising information that we learn as we carefully study all that God teaches us in the Bible about the atonement is that it was completely finished before God created mankind. In Revelation 13:8, we read of “...**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**” We read in Hebrews 4:3:

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

And we read in Matthew 25:34:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

These verses clearly teach us that all the work required to save was finished from the foundation of the world.

Now we can understand the verses that speak of Him as the “only begotten Son.” To be begotten requires a beginning. But Christ is from everlasting (Colossians 1:17). Therefore, He had no beginning. However, in Romans 1:4 we read:

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

And in Colossians 1:18, we read that He “... **is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.**”

According to these verses, Christ must have been raised from the dead. And since He was the Lamb slain (put to death) from the foundation of the world, He must have also arisen from the dead from the foundation of the world. “From the foundation” must be understood as “before the foundation” because we read in Hebrews 1:2:

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Since the resurrection of Christ from the dead was the final act of the atonement, we know, even as we read in Hebrews 1:2, that since Christ as the Son made the worlds, the entire action of the atonement preceded Creation. Christ could not be called the Son until He arose from death. How all of this was accomplished is God’s business, but it definitely has to be true because the Bible is absolutely true. Thus, we now can understand verses such as the following:

2 Timothy 1:9-10 declares: **Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:**

Hebrews 1:5: **For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?**

John 1:18: **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.**

Matthew 3:17: **And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Christ Demonstrates What He Did to Save Us

However, if Christ had done all of the work to save those whom He had chosen to save (the elect) before He created the world, why did He have to die again on the cross? God answers that question. In Luke 3:6 God declares:

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

In I Peter 1:20 He further states:

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

To be manifested means to be seen, to be shown, to be demonstrated. God provided for our salvation in an act of love that is beyond our human comprehension. He sent Jesus to this earth to physically and literally demonstrate to the world what He had already done to pay for the sins of the elect.

Christ spoke in parables. At times the parables were like great tableaux, or three-dimensional pictures, illustrating Bible truth.* Remember the tableau of the rich man in the grave, which was called hell, speaking to Abraham, who represented God. He was sorrowing because he had lost everything and because he experienced the wrath of God, while Lazarus, being in Abraham's bosom had everything, that is, eternal life. He was secure, and he was a joint-heir with Christ.

That tableau was tiny compared with the living tableau wherein the main character, the Lord Jesus Christ, represented Himself. In this tableau, we see Him

*A living tableau is a three-dimensional picture made up of people and/or objects representing some historical action or scene. It is of the same nature as a parable in that it is not the actual event but is a representation of that event.

receiving a natural, physical body like ours by being born of the virgin Mary. God describes this in Hebrews 10:4-7, where we read:

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Please note the shift from sacrifices and offerings to Jesus Himself, who is the body prepared to demonstrate what had happened before the foundation of the world.

Thus, when Jesus went to the cross, He was not there to pay for our sins. That payment was fully made more than 11,000 years earlier. But in His great love, He was willing to go through all the agony of bearing God's wrath on behalf of those He had come to save so that we would see with our own eyes (through the Bible), the enormous payment that was required.

Now we can better understand why He said, "**O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt**" (Matthew 26:39), and asked, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" (Matthew 27:46). God's justice did not require that the payment for the sins of the elect be paid twice. This was an extra, unnecessary act of magnificent love by God. It was anticipated by God. Moses (the law of God) struck the rock (Christ) twice (Numbers 20:11) when only one strike was necessary to bring forth water (Exodus 17:6). Isaiah 40:2 declares:

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

Now we understand that Christ suffered once to pay for our sins, and He suffered a second time to demonstrate how He paid for our sins. Now we can understand why Pilate, the Roman governor, repeated again and again, "I find no fault in him" (Luke 23:4, 22; John 19:4, 6; also see Matthew 27:19, 24). Christ stood before him absolutely sinless. Yet He had to be punished as if He were still laden with all of the sins of those who were elected to become saved in order to demonstrate how He suffered for those sins. Curiously, it was the chief priest who condemned Jesus. Matthew 20:18 declares:

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death.

John 11:50-51 states:

Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of

himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.

And in John 19:7 we read:

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

Throughout the Bible, the high priest was a type of Jesus the High Priest. It was the task of the high priest to kill the lamb.

So, Pilate, the governor, who had the legal right to have Jesus executed, in order to please the Jews, gave the command that Jesus was to be executed by crucifixion. Crucifixion was, in all likelihood, the most shameful execution ever designed by man. In the crucifixion of Christ, we learn three very important lessons regarding the following.

1. The shame, the curse, and the agony that Christ endured in making the payment for our sins.
2. The shame and the curse that must be placed on those who do not become saved, and the additional agony that will be endured by those who enter alive into the day of judgment.
3. The wonder of an eleventh hour pardon.

When Christ was hanged on the cross, He became a public display of someone who has come under the curse of God. To understand the significance of being cursed, we should look at the fig tree, which Jesus cursed (Mark 11:14). The fig tree, which represented national Israel throughout the Old Testament, was cursed when Christ said, **“No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.”** Thus, the cursing of the fig tree teaches that, effectively, national Israel was eternally destroyed, insofar as ever being used again of God as a source of spiritual blessing.

In similar fashion, when mankind was cursed because of their sins, it meant that they must be subject to the full punishment demanded by the law of God, the punishment which ends with eternal destruction. We read in Deuteronomy 28:20:

The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

Furthermore, we read in Deuteronomy 28:45:

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee.

This was the curse that was placed upon Jesus when He made payment for our sins before the foundation of the world. Later, He demonstrated this curse when He was nailed to the cross, even as Galatians 3:13 declares:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

Thus, we can know, as we look at Jesus on the cross under the curse of God, that it means that every unsaved person will end up with eternal destruction.

We should look closely at the awful spectacle of Jesus being crucified. As we have noted, execution by crucifixion is probably the most cruel, the most vicious, the most horrible, and the most shameful way by which a person's right to life is taken from him. There is the intense agony of the nails driven through his hands and his feet. There is the intense shame of having his clothes taken from him so that he hangs there naked. There is the fact of being a public spectacle, where multitudes of his fellow citizens and indeed anyone in the world can see his shame. There is the fact that for hours he must publicly endure the taunts and the reviling and mocking of those who wanted him killed. Truly, no execution plan is more gross or shameful than crucifixion.

When we look at Golgotha where Jesus was crucified, we see three crosses. On two of them are criminals who are being executed in this horrible, shameful way. In between them, on a third cross, each and every person Jesus came to save is hanging. No, we are not there personally. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is hanging there showing us that He was our stand-in, our substitute. This is the death we should have endured as payment for our sins. The Bible plainly declares in Galatians 2:20, **"I am crucified with Christ."**

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:28). It was the purpose of God to show us, in a dramatic way, God's judgment plan. First of all, remember that to be crucified was to be cursed of God. The whole drama of Golgotha, where those crosses stood, was overshadowed by God's curse upon us, whereby we are subject to being destroyed forever. The most shameful death we can imagine was in full view. Two criminals, representing all the peoples of the world, were about to experience the punishment prescribed by the law, **"For the wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23). They were under the curse of the law. The law condemned them to be executed by a most shameful and cursed death. People die in thousands of different ways, but none is as shameful as crucifixion. When they are dead, they will never again come to life. Therefore, they will have lost the inheritance of eternal life and the inheritance of the new heavens and the new earth. They will have paid an enormous price for the pleasures they experienced, the sins they committed, in this life.

We have learned that a great part of the penalty for sin is the loss of the joys and blessings of this life, together with loss of the inheritance of the kingdom of God, which includes both eternal life and the inheritance of the new heavens and the new earth. It is true, of course, that those who die before the time of the rapture are not aware of this. But it is a fact, as taught by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. When the rich man saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, which spiritually

directs our eyes to the eternal inheritance of the believer, he compared that with his own sorry existence in which never again would he enjoy any of the pleasures of his former life, nor would he ever come into the highest bliss and happiness of the spiritual inheritance. Indeed, he was greatly sorrowing because of this part of the wrath of God.

As we have learned, the knowledge of this terrible loss of the inheritance will be literally experienced by the billions of people who will enter into the day of judgment, the final five months. While still alive, they will see the true believers as they are raptured into the highest glory, while they themselves remain on earth in this horrible valley of death. Indeed, this proves that an integral part of the punishment for sin is the loss of the inheritance. The fact that some people die without knowing they are to lose the inheritance does not change the fact that because of their sins, as part of the penalty, they lost this incredibly valuable inheritance.

It Is Finished

The living tableau that showed how Jesus bore the wrath of God for our sins ended when Jesus cried out, **“It is finished.”** It was a terrible agony Christ had to experience for a second time. However, the second time was not as an effort to pay for our sins, but to show us and the principalities and powers how He suffered, before the world was created, in order to make the full payment.

The three hours of darkness, after which Christ cried out, **“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** had to include the awesome fact that, when at the beginning of time, Christ made full payment for our sins, He had died and had risen again. This truth was plainly stated in Psalm 16:10, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.”** Hell is death. Thus, before the payment for sin was complete, Christ had to arise from death. This is why from that time, Christ could be and would be called the Son of God, even as we read in Romans 1:4. When He cried on the cross, **“It is finished,”** it had to mean that the tableau, the demonstration of Christ’s suffering, was complete.

However, another demonstration immediately follows. True, the mystery of the three hours when Christ was forsaken by God had to include His death and resurrection because immediately after that experience of the three hours of darkness, Christ in His soul existence went to heaven (Luke 23:46). That could happen only after His soul was resurrected from hell (death).

Therefore, to make more visible the fact that He had died and was resurrected to life, God provided another tableau or demonstration that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. It actually was a two-part tableau. The first part was the demonstration of the graves being thrown open. After Jesus’ resurrection on Sunday morning, many bodies came out of graves and went into the holy city (Matthew 27:51-53). This holy city would have to be heaven because once the veil of the temple was rent, when Christ was still on the cross, the temple was no longer the holy place. Therefore, Jerusalem was no longer the holy city. The new Jerusalem was the holy city, and that is a heavenly city. Thus, those resurrected bodies are actually a demonstration of the rapture. But as God repeatedly points out in I Corinthians 15, if Christ had not been raised from the dead there could not be the resurrection of anyone from the dead.

Thus, the resurrection of these bodies on Sunday morning demonstrated that indeed Christ had been resurrected from the dead.

But there was another part to this tableau, which was given to assure that Christ indeed arose from the dead. In His soul, Christ went to heaven. His body without His soul was placed in a grave. While in the grave, His body did not corrupt. It could not corrupt because if it did, it would show that the work of Christ, as He paid for the sins of the elect before the creation of the world, was not completely finished. Therefore, Christ's resurrection from the grave could only be a demonstration.

The fact is, when His body was placed in the grave, in His soul existence He was in heaven. Thus, in this tableau God foreshadows the rapture by having an actual rising of His body from a very literal grave, and very literal bodies rising from the graves that were thrown open when the veil of the temple was rent.

Before we leave this tableau of Christ suffering as a shameful, cursed criminal, we must look at one other part of this demonstration.

The Wonderful Pardon

When a criminal is to be punished for his crimes, he can be sentenced to a shameful execution. There is no hope of setting aside the sentence of death except by executive pardon. In many countries, including the U.S.A., the highest ruler has the right to pardon the convict who has been sentenced to die. And so, until the execution, the friends of the convicted man make every effort they can so that he might receive a pardon, and thus be saved from the shameful death that was planned for him. Indeed, sometimes a convicted person may receive a pardon in the eleventh hour, that is, just moments before he was to be executed.

God has provided such a pardon for all whom He came to save. It is beautifully set forth in the Book of Isaiah. In Isaiah 54:7-8 God declares:

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

Then in Isaiah 55:7-8 He says:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

In the eleventh hour, one of the thieves who was being crucified with Christ heard the gracious words from the lips of Jesus, "**To day shalt thou be with me in paradise**" (Luke 23:43). How wonderful! That day, which for him began as a shameful execution of a criminal, ended with the glorious home-going of a child of God. This is the pardon that each and every one of God's elect people receives.

Chapter Five.

God's Judgment Plan

Now that we have been enabled, by the mercy of God, to know more clearly the judgment plan of God, as well as the timeline of history, we should attempt to set it forth as lucidly as possible. We must be sure that all of our conclusions have come from the Bible and are entirely harmonious with all that is taught in the Bible.

In the year 11,013 B.C., Christ, as the Son of God, created this universe. Because the Bible tells us that the Son is the Creator, we can know that Christ's death, as the Lamb from the foundation of the earth, definitely occurred before creation. He created our first parents, Adam and Eve, in God's image and likeness to rule over the creation. They were perfect in every way. They and their descendants, as sons of God, were to be with God forevermore in the highest glory and happiness. They were created with a body, with the breath of life, and with a soul or spirit essence.

And God began to give them laws by which they were to live in the greatest happiness, and also, He began to test their faithfulness to God. One of the first laws that was given to them was that if they ever disobeyed God, they would die (Genesis 2:17).

God is infinite God who knows in the most minute detail the future of anything and everything. God knew that soon after creation, mankind would disobey Him. Therefore, even before that happened, God made provision for a portion of the human race, that eventually would come forth from our first parents, Adam and Eve, to be rescued from death, the penalty for sin, which was demanded by God's law.

In the process of carrying out this rescue program, God Himself would be wonderfully glorified as all of His matchless attributes and characteristics would be displayed. They would be displayed not only to mankind, but also to all the principalities and powers, of which we know nothing, but are in existence because of God's efforts throughout eternity past (Ephesians 3:10-11). We read in II Thessalonians 1:10:

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Shortly after having been created as perfect beings, our first parents (in whose loins the entire human race existed), disobeyed God. Therefore, they and the whole human race that was to come from them should instantly have been executed as payment for sin. However, because God had already paid for the sins of many of the descendants of Adam and Eve, physical death could not be instant. They had to remain alive long enough to bear children. These children had to live long enough to bear children, etc., until all the individuals that God had elected had been born and rescued from the sentence of death that was the result of their sins. Since many of the persons elected to be saved from their sins would not be born until as late as 13,000 years after creation, the world had to continue for that time.

Therefore, it is true that our first parents, and the whole human race that would eventually come from their bodies, died in that we no longer had life in Christ, which we call spiritual life. And also, we received the sentence of physical death at the moment Adam and Eve sinned. And yet, God provided for the fact that all were to remain physically alive and have a functioning soul or spirit essence for a length of time that ended anywhere from immediately after conception to after more than 900 years of physical existence. But spiritually, all were dead. Life in Christ, which becomes eternal life when the elect person is saved, is not a part of the existence of the unsaved. The infection of sin that entered the human race when Adam and Eve sinned was passed on to each and every one of their descendants. Both in their body and in their soul, sin reigns.

The Bible insists that the human race is dead in sin. The evidence of this spiritual death is that there is no person who has not sinned except Jesus (Romans 5:12; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:22). Each sin causes the sentence of physical death to be more firmly pronounced against the sinner.

We use the term “spiritual death” in speaking about the unsaved; the Bible refers to them as being “dead in sins” (Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13). They, both in body and soul, have been cut off from the life in God, which was the spiritual life they had at the beginning, before Adam sinned. Remember, each and every human being was in the loins of Adam, so that when he sinned, we all sinned (I Corinthians 15:22). Even though they have been cut off from life in God, they can continue to have physical life (a conscious existence), in body and soul. Physical life comes to an end when the person dies, so that if he had not become saved, both in body and soul, he is eternally dead. To have life in Christ, or eternal life, man must be given a new soul and a new body.

This life in Christ is given to each and every person that God had elected to become saved. It is given to an elect person at the moment God applies the Word of God to the person’s life. At that moment, the person’s old dead soul is replaced with an eternally alive new soul in which he will never again want to sin (I John 3:9). He continues to live in his spiritually dead physical body, but he has been guaranteed that at the time of the rapture, his spiritually dead body will be instantly changed into an eternally alive “in Christ” body (I Thessalonians 4:13-17, I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Both the elect person, who may or may not have yet experienced the blessing of a new resurrected soul, and the non-elect person, who is physically alive with a functioning soul, are taught, by means of the Bible, many things about their sinful situation, and also, about the glorious nature and characteristics of God. We live in a beautiful world that is filled with an innumerable number of plants, animals, etc., which were created by God and greatly display His majestic and glorious creation powers.

Furthermore, by means of the Bible, God gives mankind all of the details of His merciful plan to rescue those whom He has elected to salvation. Because we are living very near the end of time, God is now revealing many details that describe His plan for the closing years and the final days of history. In the book *We Are Almost There!* we have set forth, strictly from the Bible, the precise timetable of each closing event.

We have learned that the local congregations were the external representation of the kingdom of God throughout the world for 1,955 years (A.D. 33 to 1988 A.D.), and then, on May 21, 1988, God was finished with that aspect of His salvation program, and He began to prepare the churches and the world for the end-time events.

On that date, God placed Satan in all the churches, and He allowed him to rule in all the churches throughout the world. At the same time, God abandoned the churches insofar as salvation is concerned. He also began to give those who remained in the churches a strong delusion, so that they would believe a lie (II Thessalonians 2:11). Moreover, true believers were silenced in the churches as they were driven out or as they obeyed God's command to come out of them.

These are some of the means that God began to use in the churches as He prepares the people in the churches to be recipients of God's judgment. The Bible warns in I Peter 4:17 that **"judgment must begin at the house of God."**

At the same time, beginning on May 21, 1988, Satan was given much more freedom to help cause sin to multiply, not only in the churches, but also in the non-church world. We read in Revelation 13:7:

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power [authority] was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Actually, May 21, 1988, was the beginning of a very significant end-time event that is to last a full 23 years (8,400 days), ending on May 21, 2011. The Bible calls this 8,400-day period a time of "great tribulation" (see pages 50-51 of this study). This 8,400-day great tribulation period, in which we are now living, is a time when God is preparing the churches all over the world, and the world itself, for the end of the world.

During the first 2,300 days (May 21, 1988, to September 7, 1994), virtually no one became saved. However, because there were still numerous elect persons that God had not yet saved, on September 7, 1994, God began a huge salvation program whereby He will save all those elect individuals (Matthew 24:22). This harvest of believers is being brought in entirely outside of the churches. It will continue for 6,100 days, the remaining days of the 8,400-day great tribulation period. Throughout this 6,100-day period, the churches and the world are becoming increasingly sinful as God continues to prepare those who had not been elected to salvation for their final end.

Then on May 21, 2011, God's salvation plan for the world will come to an abrupt end. All of those who had become true believers during the previous 13,000 years and had died will have their bodies resurrected as a glorified spiritual body. They will be caught up (raptured) in the sight of all the unsaved who are on the earth at that time. At the same time, all of the true believers living at that time will be simultaneously changed and caught up to be with Christ forevermore. They, too, will be caught up in the sight of the unsaved. At the same time, the bones, or whatever remains in the tombs or in the oceans, or wherever the unsaved were buried, will arise (be thrown out of burial places), and be all over the earth in preparation for being entirely destroyed on October 21, 2011, when the entire universe will be

destroyed by fire (see pages 42-43 of this study). Moreover, the desecration of their remains will be a final shame against them in the eyes of God and the heavenly principalities and powers.

Beginning on May 21, 2011, and continuing for 153 days, the situation on earth will be horrible. The Bible says there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:11-12, 13:42; Luke 13:28). There no longer will be any possibility of salvation. Thus, there will be no mercy. The Bible describes this time in such lurid language (Deuteronomy 28:16-68; Revelation 9:1-21), that it may be describing nuclear fallout or something equivalent to nuclear fallout. In any case, death will be in evidence everywhere.

And then will come the final day of the earth's existence. We read in II Peter 3:10:

. . . the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The Bible tells us that at the end, death and hell are cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). Moreover, God describes the end of this world and gives mankind some insights into the glorious eternal future that awaits those whom God has rescued. At the same time, by means of the Bible, God describes the finality of death that will come to each and every person that God had not planned to rescue from the death that absolutely must come upon them because of sin.

As God has taught us more and more clearly the details of God's rescue plan, we have learned from the Bible that the peoples of the world can be divided into several different groups. These groups are as follows.

1. Those who are not elect, that is, those who were not chosen to be saved, and will never become saved, and have died before judgment day.
2. Those who are elect, those whom God must save because they were chosen to be saved, and who are living, but have not yet become saved.
3. Those who are elect and have become saved and are presently living in this world.
4. Those who are not elect and have not died.
5. Those who are elect and have died.

The Non-Elect Who Die Before the Day of Judgment

A great many people, before the beginning of time, were not elected by God to become saved. Only God knows who they are. They live in this world for a period of time, and then they die. They die without realizing that their death was a shameful execution in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the heavenly principalities and powers.

Each time they sinned, they shamed God and brought themselves further under the curse of God.

Moreover, when they died, they may have had some sorrow that they could no longer enjoy the good things of this world. However, if they died in an accident or in their sleep, they did not even experience their loss. They did not realize that their death meant that it was absolutely impossible that they would ever receive the magnificent inheritance that could have been theirs because they were created to be sons of God. Because each and every person was in Adam, our first parent, when he was created, we were created with the birthright of the firstborn. That birthright included the inheritance of eternal life. But it was conditional. It is parallel to the situation with Esau. If Esau had not sinned by rejecting his birthright, which was his by the right of having been physically the firstborn, it would have remained his. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would have forever retained the birthright. That is, they would never have been removed from the kingdom of God. Like Esau, the individuals who die unsaved have traded their birthright for a bowl of soup. We can look at the bowl of soup as representing the instant gratification that sin can bring. It began already with the sin of Adam.

Thus, even though these people died without any awareness of the huge penalty that they paid for their sins, it did not change the fact that they did pay that penalty. That penalty was the loss of their birthright, that is, the kingdom of God. This vividly demonstrates the magnificent mercy of God.

However, even though they are dead and never again will have conscious existence, God is not yet finished with them. Their bones, or whatever remains of their dead bodies, will be raised from their place of burial on May 21, 2011, the date of the rapture, which is also the first day of the Day of Judgment. Their remains will be scattered as filth or manure on the ground, so that they will be exposed to a most shameful desecration by vultures, dogs, worms, etc. One last time, they will be grossly shamed in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the heavenly principalities and powers.

Finally, on October 21, 2011, the last day of the Day of Judgment, their remains, together with the earth and the entire universe, will be burned with fire and destroyed forever.

The Elect Who Have Not Yet Become Saved

There are people living on this earth who were elected to become saved, but at this moment, they are still unsaved. Because they are elect of God, and Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the penalty for the sins of this group of people was paid long before they were born. God, therefore, cannot destroy them. They are still spiritually dead, but they are physically alive with a functioning soul, just like the situation with those who are not elect of God, and who eventually, will be destroyed forevermore.

However, because the sins of all the elect have been covered by the death of Jesus, God must save them (must pardon them), before they die physically or before the rapture, which will occur on May 21, 2011. At the moment they are saved, they become a part of the group of saved people that will be caught up to God on May 21, 2011.

Those Who Are Saved and Are Presently Living in this World

This group of people continues to grow larger because God is presently saving a great multitude that cannot be numbered. They have already been given a new, eternal, resurrected soul. If they die before May 21, 2011, in their eternally alive soul existence, they instantly will be reigning in heaven with Christ. On May 21, 2011, their dead bodies will come out of the tombs as an eternal spiritual body, and their bodies will be caught up (raptured) to be with Christ. Thus, throughout eternity future, they will be a whole personality, body and soul, that will live and reign with Christ.

If they are still alive on May 21, 2011, instantly they will be given a new eternally alive body. And they will be caught up to be eternally with Christ.

The Non-Elect Who Are Still Alive on May 21, 2011

This group of people, which is very large, normally would have heard the warning that the end of the world is almost here. Yet they paid no attention to it. They paid no attention to it because they did not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Or they paid no attention to the warning because they implicitly trusted the teachings of their church, that is, Christ would come as a thief in the night, and therefore, they need not be concerned with what they believed were false teachings about the return of Christ. Or more likely, in their love for this world, they paid no attention to the warning because they did not want this world to end.

For more than 1,900 years, the Bible taught that Christ would come as a thief in the night, and He has not come. Therefore, many people think it is reasonable to believe that He will not come to end this world for at least another 100 years or more. Thus, they can be assured that they will continue to enjoy this world throughout their normally expected lifetime. But when an exact date is given, a date that is only a few years in the future, that is completely unacceptable to them. Therefore, they absolutely do not want to listen to the information we have now received from the Bible.

As additional punishment for the people who have heard the warning and refused to heed it, this group of people will enter, physically alive, into the horrible five-month period called the Day of Judgment, which begins with the rapture of the true believers on May 21, 2011. They will see people being raptured while they are left behind. They will be weeping and gnashing their teeth at God in anger. Moreover, for a period of five months, they will be subject to grievous pain caused by plagues that will begin with a huge earthquake that will occur on the first day. If they die during this five-month period, and a great many probably will, their dead bodies will litter the ground. Finally, on October 21, 2011, the whole universe, including the earth and all its works, will be burned up, and they will never again become alive.

The Resurrection of the Unsaved Dead

We have learned that when a non-elect person dies, he is dead both in body and in soul. Moreover, he will never again come to life. The Bible nowhere speaks of the unsaved who have died as ever living again. But there are a few verses that at

least infer that they will live again so that they can further experience the wrath of God. We should carefully examine these verses. We will learn that these verses show us how shame on the unsaved continues all the way to the last day of this world's existence. We read in Acts 24:15:

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

And in John 5:28-29, we read:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

In Daniel 12:2 God says:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

These verses speak of dead people who are not saved becoming awake and hearing the voice of God. How is that possible, if that person has not first been made alive so he can hear God's voice?

The answer can be found in Ezekiel 37, where in both parabolic language and in literal, earthly language, God addresses this question. In verses 4 and 5, God declares:

Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

In these verses, God is saying that before the breath of life has entered into them, these dry bones can hear the Word of the Lord. Spiritually, God is declaring that those whom He plans to save are like dry bones with no life within them. They are spiritually dead, even though they are physically alive. But God can give these spiritually dead people spiritual ears to hear, which He does as He raises them from spiritual death to eternal life.

And God speaks in a literal, earthly way when He further declares in Ezekiel 37:12-13:

Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

These verses can be understood spiritually, but they are also teaching a literal, earthly truth. At the time of the rapture, the dead bodies of the elect will hear His voice and will come forth. Their bodies will be given eternal life because they will be raised with an eternal, spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:44).

However, even as the dead bodies of the elect individuals heard the Word of God before they were given breath (Ezekiel 37:4-5), the bones or remains of those who were not saved, while equally dead, can hear the Word of God. The principle that God establishes in Ezekiel 37 is that He can command anything to obey His will, as He wishes. Remember, for example, Mark 4:39 and 41, where we read:

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. . . . And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

In order for the wind and the waves to obey the command of Jesus, they had to be awake to hear His voice. Likewise, the dead bones and the remains of the unsaved can be awakened to hear the voice of God without becoming literally alive. That is what will occur when God brings the remains of the unsaved dead out of the graves at the time the day of judgment begins. These remains will be like litter or filth on the ground.

We should be aware of how carefully God wrote these three verses that speak of a rising or a resurrection of the dead. In Acts 24:15 God declares that there will be a resurrection of the unjust. It appears to indicate that the resurrection of the unsaved is identical to the resurrection of the believers. However, in John 5:29 God stipulates that the unsaved are resurrected to damnation. The word “damnation” signifies some aspect of the punishment the unsaved receive for their sins. What part of the punishment does God have in mind?

The third verse, Daniel 12:2, tell us what God has in mind. It is a resurrection to shame and contempt. This will occur when their bodies and bones are raised from the graves and thrown all over the ground, so that they will be shamed before those who are still living at the beginning of the day of judgment, and before God, and before the principalities in the heavens. This sad event is described in Jeremiah 7:33 through 8:2, where we read:

And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate. At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they

have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

In Nahum 3:5-6 God says:

Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.

Believers Judging the Unsaved

At the beginning of the Day of Judgment, May 21, 2011, when the dead bodies of the Ninevites are seen being caught up (raptured) into the clouds to be with Christ, it will be a judgment and condemnation upon those left behind. The Ninevites recognized their wickedness and very humbly repented, and cried to God for mercy, hoping that maybe God would not destroy them. The Bible informs us that God in His mercy did save them.

The fact of the Ninevites' resurrected spiritual bodies being raptured emphasizes the sin of those left behind. This condemnation is especially true for those who had believed they were saved but whose trust was in their church or their baptism, etc. In that sense, they will receive greater judgment than those who have not known the Bible. The rapture of the Ninevites, which clearly will show that they had become saved, is huge evidence that those left behind had not become saved and definitely will be under the wrath of God. This explains passages such as the following.

Mathew 12:41: The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

Revelation 2:26: And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

Revelation 3:9: Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

I Corinthians 6:2-3: Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

We are reminded of I Peter 2:12, where we read:

Having your conversation [conduct] honest among the Gentiles: that,

whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

In this context, the phrase “**glorify God in the day of visitation**” relates to those who are to be punished for their sins, even as Achan was told to give God the glory as he was about to be executed for his sin (Joshua 7:18-26).

Thus, we can understand that when the unsaved recognize that someone has truly become saved (as evidenced by the rapture of that person) it brings judgment and condemnation on those who thought they had become saved, but now know they were not saved because they were left behind at the time of the rapture. They are being condemned by the true believers who have been raptured.

Actually, that will be the situation in the entire world on May 21, 2011, when the bodies of the true believers who had previously died, together with all of the true believers living at that time, are caught up to be with Christ. This will be an enormous condemnation on the world, and especially on those who are in the churches all over the world, who during the church age were represented by the 12 tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8; Matthew 19:28). It will be the proof that all of those who are left behind are under the eternal judgment of God.

The fullness (No. 12) of all believers who reign with Christ will judge both the world and the churches (12 tribes, see Matthew 19:28) by the fact that they are eternally with Christ, and the world and the churches are rightfully to be forever destroyed in everlasting fire.

The Battle of Armageddon

The battle of Armageddon, spoken of in Revelation, is what we are presently describing. The army of the true believers, which is safe and secure at this time with Christ, does not actually engage in any kind of literal battle with the unsaved. However, the enormous evidence that they indeed had become saved will be seen throughout the world at the time of the rapture. This will be a great judgment and condemnation on the armies of the unsaved who are left behind at the time of the rapture.

The Word of God itself brings judgment upon the sinner, and so, too, the certain evidence of salvation in the lives of those who have been raptured is a judgment on the unsaved. We read in Hebrews 11:7:

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

The fact that the ark brought safety to Noah when the flood waters came was a judgment on the unsaved who perished in the flood, even as the Word of God itself brings condemnation on those who violate it.

How will the armies of the unsaved fight in the battle of Armageddon? God says in Joel 3:9-16:

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Like the ten virgins spoken of in Matthew 25, who were awakened when the Bridegroom (Christ) came, so, at the beginning of judgment day, the unsaved are to be ready to do battle with those who have become saved. Their battle is one of intense frustration and great anger as they weep and gnash their teeth at God for leaving them behind.

Matthew 7:22-23: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 8:11-12: And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13: 49-50: So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 13:26-28: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all *ye* workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

Revelation 16:10-11: And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

In Revelation 17:14 God speaks of this war, and there we read:

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

The end of the war is described, for example, in Revelation 19:19-21:

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

We will learn that the end of this war will be when God destroys the entire universe.

Summary

We should now summarize what we have learned in connection with God's judgment process as it relates to the end-time events of this world.

1. The traditional view, which teaches that each and every unsaved person will literally stand before Christ as the Judge, and be found guilty, and be sentenced to be forever grievously tormented in a place called hell, is bankrupt.
2. The church age ended on May 21, 1988. The next period of time, which is precisely 8,400 days in duration, ends on May 21, 2011. It is called the great tribulation.
3. The great tribulation is divided into two periods of time. The first period runs from May 21, 1988, to September 7, 1994. During this time, virtually no one in the entire world became saved. The second period is 6,100 days, which runs from September 7, 1994, to May 21, 2011. During this period, no one is becoming saved inside the churches, but outside the churches a great multitude do become saved. The Bible particularly emphasizes that there will be many coming to salvation who identify with Ishmael, the son of Abraham. Moreover, it emphasizes that many of those who are the last to become acquainted with the Bible will be coming into the kingdom of God.

4. The entire 8,400-day period of the great tribulation will be a time when God is separating the true believers (the elect) from those who claim to be believers, but are not. God is making this separation by setting forth a number of tests, such as those that are found in the following principles.
 - a. Every word in the original languages in which the Bible was written came from the mouth of God.
 - b. Every word in the Bible is the law of God that has the same authority as God Himself.
 - c. Believing is a work that we do, so no one can believe in such a way that he will become saved. All the work that had to be done to save someone was done by Christ, long before that person was born.
 - d. Even though the Bible is about 1,900 years old, and since it was completed, no words have been added to it. In our day, when we are very near to the end of time, a great amount of new truth is being revealed by the Holy Spirit.
 - e. The church age is finished and God commands people to leave the churches. Satan rules there, and God is no longer saving people within the churches.
 - f. Christ has now revealed that He will not come as a thief in the night.
 - g. God has given the true believers the exact day, month, and year of His return so that the world can be warned.
 - h. God has given the true believers much new information from the Bible concerning the details of God's judgment process.
 - i. God is giving the entire world the precise time of the end of the world so that they have an opportunity to repent and cry to God for mercy, as did the Ninevites when Jonah warned them of impending destruction. Those who are true believers are earnestly concerned about what the Bible teaches, and they recognize it as their only authority. They will carefully check these teachings and believe them. For those who trust their churches, or their church creeds, or their own thinking, these teachings are a severe test. Those who are not elected to salvation will have great difficulty with them.
5. The great tribulation will end on May 21, 2011, which is also the date of the beginning of the Day of Judgment, which is also called "The Day of the Lord". The Day of Judgment will continue for 153 days, until October 21, 2011, at which time the world will end.
6. May 21, 2011, will mark the end of God's salvation program. On that day, the catching up (the rapture) of all the elect (those who are truly saved) will occur. The bodies of those who were saved will be resurrected as glorious spiritual bodies. The believers who are still living on that day will instantly receive new spiritual bodies, and they also will be caught up to be forever with Christ.

7. Almost seven billion people will be on earth at that time, and they will witness the rapture of the true believers. Those left behind will be divided into two groups. About one-third of them, or about two billion of them, will be church people. They have had some knowledge of Bible truth and believed they were Christians. The remaining group will consist of all of the rest of the peoples of the world who were left behind.
8. That awesome day, May 21, 2011, will be preceded by very ordinary days, during which time, all over the world, it will be business as usual.
9. However, on that day, there will be a super enormous earthquake, so that all over the world, every grave, every burial place will be thrown open. And the remains of people that had been buried there will be thrown out on the ground. (Except for the remains of the true believers because their remains will become a glorious body that is raptured.)
10. This earthquake will create great destruction over all the world, resulting in tsunamis, destroyed water systems and power plants, etc. Thus, there will be great plagues.
11. This will be a time of horrible sorrow for the church people. They had thought that they were the ones who were to be raptured. Suddenly, they will realize that they have been left behind and are under the full wrath of God. They will dramatically realize that they can no longer enjoy the comforts and desires of living in this present world. Much worse, they will know that they are forever cut off from eternal life with Christ and of being inheritors of the new heavens and the new earth. In addition, they will be in great shame in the eyes of those who knew nothing of the Bible but who now see that their Christianity was totally false and hypocritical. More than that, they will be in great shame in the eyes of God and the heavenly principalities and powers. In God's eyes, their death will be a shameful execution because they were completely under the curse of God. And they will experience physical pain, which results from the plagues that will occur all over the world. All of them will die (be shamefully executed in God's eyes) on or before the last day, October 21, 2011.
12. The remaining group of people who never claimed to be Christians, and who were left behind when the believers were raptured, will also experience the sorrow of knowing that they have been cut off from the joys and aspirations of the life they were living on this earth. They, too, will endure great physical suffering, which will result from the plagues they are enduring. They, too, will be shamed in the eyes of God and the heavenly principalities and powers. They, too, will die on or before the last day, October 21, 2011. Their deaths, too, will be a shameful execution in the eyes of God and the heavenly principalities and powers.

13. At the time of the rapture, all the graves will be thrown open, and all the corpses, bones, ashes, dust, or whatever remains of people that were in them, and which had not been raptured, will be scattered like manure on the earth. The vultures, dogs, and worms will feed on the dead bodies. These people, at the time of their death, had no idea how great a penalty they had paid for their sins. Many of them were buried with great honor, but in God's sight, their death was a shameful execution. Most of them realized their death would deprive them of the joys and hopes for this life, but none realized how great a penalty they paid in losing the birthright, the inheritance of eternal life and the new heavens and the new earth.
14. By having their remains thrown out of the tombs, it is one more shame those people must endure, even though they, themselves, will have been long dead and will not be aware of it. God emphasizes the shame of sin by throwing open all the burial places of those individuals so that their remains can be desecrated. Their remains are being shamed in the eyes of God, in the eyes of the principalities and powers in the heavens, and in the eyes of those left behind who are to experience the day of judgment. The greater their knowledge of the law of God, the greater will be their shame in the eyes of God and the heavenly creatures.
15. At the end of the 153 days of this great horror, which is called Judgment Day (May 21 to October 21, 2011), the end of this world will come. The earth and all of its works will be burned up, even as the whole universe will be destroyed. The 13,023-year history of the world and all that has transpired here will be remembered no more.
16. The true believers, who will be raptured, will live forever in the highest joy and happiness as the bride of Christ, and will reign with Him forevermore.
17. The usual means by which God brings judgment on sin, and condemns the sinner to endure all of the punishments for sin, as described in the Bible, is the law of God. But God also uses the lives of the true believers to be a condemnation on the sinner. This will be especially true on the day of the rapture. All the believers being raptured before the eyes of the church people who are left behind will be a tremendous witness that the Word of God, as followed by those who are raptured, is absolutely true and trustworthy. It will be a vivid demonstration and proof that the church people and the others left behind had not obeyed the Word of God.

The traditional understanding of God's judgment plan, which teaches that the sinner will forevermore be in a place called hell, suffering fearful torment, is completely contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

Every Eye Shall See Him

About 2,000 years ago our Lord Jesus Christ personally came to this world. He came very literally and physically as the Son of God and as the Son of man. Thousands of people in the nation of Israel had the privilege of seeing Him during a time period of almost 40 years. He then went back to heaven, but promised He would come again. At the time He went back into heaven, two angels told the apostles, as we read in Acts 1:11:

... why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

To come “in like manner” is a very ambiguous term. It could mean that He will come again looking exactly like He did when He went into heaven. When He came the first time, He came as the Son of God and as the Son of man. And “in like manner” could mean, for example, that He will come again as the Son of God but in great glory. We must search the Bible to learn more about this awesome event, the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

We have already learned that the time of the second coming of Jesus must coincide with the time of the rapture, which in turn coincides with the first day of the 153 days of the day of judgment. That date is May 21, 2011. On that day, the graves will be opened, and all the dead bodies of those who previously had become saved will be resurrected as glorified spiritual bodies. At the same time, the carcasses, bones, etc., of all the unsaved who had previously died will be thrown out of the graves as filth on the ground. Those who are still living and are true believers will be instantly changed into their heavenly bodies, and will be caught up to heaven in the sight of all those who are left behind. Indeed, about 6½ billion people who are left behind will also know that Jesus has come. And we can be very certain that it is at the time of the rapture that everyone will see Jesus in His second coming.

Thus, we can be sure that the coming of Christ, when every eye shall see Him, identifies with the rapture. That is why He will come “with clouds” (Revelation 1:7), and “with clouds” indicates that He has come to punish. Remember, the day of the rapture is also the first day of the 153-day period that is the day of judgment.

However, nowhere does the Bible teach that on the day of the rapture the unsaved of the world will literally, physically see Jesus. And yet, Revelation 1:7 declares that “**every eye shall see him.**”

The solution to this puzzle is found, for example, in John 1:51, where we read that Jesus told Nathanael:

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Do we read anywhere in the Bible that Nathanael ever literally saw heaven open, and angels literally climbing up and down into heaven on the Lord Jesus? Of

course the Bible records nothing like that. However, if we remember that the word “angel” can be translated “messenger,” and every true believer is a messenger of the Gospel, then we know what Nathanael was to see. As people become saved, they are made to spiritually ascend into heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). In other words, when we are given salvation, we are spiritually in heaven with Christ because we have been given new resurrected souls. Instantly, as it were, we came into heaven altogether by what Jesus did for us. And therefore, we must get busy on this earth serving as ambassadors of Christ.

In other words, Jesus was telling Nathanael that he would see people becoming saved, and then they would be used of Christ to send out the Gospel. The same idea of seeing Christ in the future, by being a witness to Christ’s present actions, is seen in the statement Jesus made to the wicked high priest, Caiaphas, in Matthew 26:63-64, where we read:

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Caiaphas died about 2,000 years ago and will never live again. Caiaphas witnessed Jesus on the cross, and he became fully aware that Jesus arose from the dead. He was well enough acquainted with the Bible of his day (the Old Testament), to know that Jesus met all the requirements to be the Messiah. As the high priest, Caiaphas would have known Psalm 16:10, where we read:

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

See also Matthew 27:62-66, Matthew 28:11-15, and Daniel 7:13-14.

Many supernatural things were going on at the time of the cross, supernatural things that identified with Bible prophesy. Caiaphas, the high priest, would have been well acquainted with Old Testament prophecies relating to the coming Messiah, and so, he should have been able to see that, indeed, Jesus is the Christ who is coming as the supreme Ruler of the earth and who would complete the entire judgment process.

Returning now to the prophecy that every eye shall see Jesus, we can know that because of the enormous events of the rapture, and the events that cause the opening of all the graves, every person will know that Christ has come. He will have come to complete the salvation of the believers and He will have come to complete the judgment process on those who were not saved.

Because of the great importance of the day of the rapture, we will now examine two other passages that speak of everyone seeing the coming of Jesus. We will examine Matthew 24:27-31, where we read:

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the

carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

These verses very clearly teach that Christ's coming will be worldwide. That is, the evidence that He has come will be seen everywhere in the world. The fact that the tribes of the earth mourn (vs. 30) coincides with phrases like "weeping and gnashing of teeth" that we find elsewhere in the Bible. Indeed, all of the language of these verses identifies altogether with what we have learned concerning the day of the rapture.

But why is verse 28 inserted in this passage? It is teaching that there will be corpses, which will bring together the eagles. Obviously, these eagles are there to feed on the dead bodies that have been thrown out of the graves. The presence of corpses clearly teaches that when the Bible speaks of the resurrection of the just and the unjust, it definitely is not implying that the unsaved will be resurrected to some kind of conscious existence. Instead, it is teaching that the unsaved will be raised (thrown out of the graves) to be desecrated. They will be further shamed in the eyes of God and other heavenly creatures.

The more a person knows God's Word without becoming saved, the greater his shame will be in the eyes of God. This is part of his punishment. That is why Jesus indicated that Capernaum, a city in which Jesus had ministered a long time and yet almost none had become saved, would be under more punishment than Sodom. Sodom knew very little of God's Word. We read in Matthew 11:23-24:

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Likewise, an unsaved preacher or Bible teacher who is still alive in the Day of Judgment, depending on how much he knew of the Bible, will be shamed in the eyes of God and the world, and as a corpse when he dies, as part of his punishment.

Another passage we should look at is Luke 17:36-37, where we read:

Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Two individuals are in the field. One is taken. He is a true believer and he is caught up to be with Christ. The other person is not saved, and so, he is left. Then came the question, where is he left? The answer is that he is left where the body is, and the eagles are gathered together. When the Bible speaks of an eagle (singular), normally, it is speaking of God coming in judgment, or God's compassionate love for His people (Deuteronomy 33:11). But when the word "eagle" is plural, it is used to signify that they are feeding like vultures or buzzards on corpses (Matthew 24:28). Thus, we can understand that those who are left behind at the time of the rapture are companions of the corpses that have been thrown out of the graves.

Chapter Six.

A Kingdom Created to Demonstrate the Glory and Wisdom of Christ

We have been earnestly searching the Bible so that we might know, as accurately as possible, God's judgment process. But there is a very important question we have not tried to answer. Yet it is such an important question that we must search the Bible to see if indeed it does provide an answer. The question is: **WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATING THIS WORLD, AND THEN AFTER 13,023 YEARS, DESTROYING IT?**

To begin to find an answer to this very important question, we must learn what God has to say about the principalities and powers that He has created in the heavens, and so, we will look at the following verses.

Colossians 1:16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

Ephesians 3:10: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Colossians 2:10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

The Bible also speaks of future principalities and powers in Ephesians 1:21:

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Additionally, there are a few verses that speak of principalities as they may relate to man's government on earth and Satan's rule on earth.

Romans 8:38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come...
Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Colossians 2:15: *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Titus 3:1: Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work...

Ephesians 6:12 uses the term “high *places*” because it refers to church members trying to serve God, throughout the church age, while under the influence of Satan. In reviewing all of these verses it is very obvious that in eternity past, God has been very active in establishing heavenly principalities and powers, which are all adjuncts or parts of God’s total heavenly kingdom. This has been true not only of the past, but it will continue in the future (Ephesians 1:21).

When we search the Bible to learn what to expect in these individual principalities, which all together make up the entire kingdom of God, we would expect the following.

1. God alone is the supreme Ruler of each and every principality that is part of God’s kingdom (Ephesians 1:19-23).
2. The purpose of every citizen of the kingdom of God is to glorify God.
3. Sin is not a part of the kingdom of God, and therefore, has no place in these kingdoms.
4. Citizens of God’s kingdom do not marry nor are they given in marriage (Matthew 22:30).
5. God’s kingdom is an eternal kingdom that will never be destroyed (Daniel 6:26).

Having learned some fundamental principles upon which the kingdom of God is built, we look with amazement upon the kingdom of God as presently found on planet earth. It appears to violate every characteristic of what a principality ought to be that is ruled by God.

When we carefully examine this kingdom that identifies with planet earth, we see that in its earliest infancy, many strange things appear that do not seem to agree with our normal expectation of the kingdom of God. First, when God created this beautiful world, He put within it the Garden of Eden. Why would God do this? A garden (the Garden of Eden) in a world that is perfectly lovely appears to be pointing to a time when the kingdom of God (represented by the Garden of Eden), would be in some kind of sinful world.

Secondly, why did God create this world requiring marrying and giving in marriage? This would bring about a multiplication of the human race, so that there would be literally billions of people who would be infected with sin because they were all present in the body of Adam.

Thirdly, since God knows the intents of the heart before the desire to sin has developed (Hebrews 4:12), He therefore would have known of the angel Lucifer’s desire to be a king (Isaiah 14:13-14). Why would He allow Lucifer access into the Garden of Eden?

Finally, why would God, in this perfect new world, give a tree the intriguing and exotic name, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” and make Adam and Eve aware of it by commanding them not to eat of it, and also, make Lucifer aware of it and of this command? The solution is found in God’s declaration of Ephesians 3:10:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

In this verse, God discloses to us that throughout eternity past, God had been creating heavenly organizations of various kinds. All those in these organizations are to be treated to a 13,023-year spectacle that will demonstrate the wisdom and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To accomplish this, about 13,000 years ago, God created one more heavenly organization, which is our world. It was an unusual organization because it was to have people in it marrying and bearing children. We are told by the Bible that in heaven, people do not marry. Yet it was God’s purpose that this organization that began with two people, Adam and Eve, would grow to be billions of people. It was different in that it had come under the curse of God because sin reigned everywhere. It was different in that it was on display to all of the other heavenly organizations that God had created throughout eternity past. It was different in that God named a precise day, month, and year when it would cease to exist. It was different in that at the end of its existence, 200 million of its inhabitants would be taken into heaven as the bride of Christ, to reign with Christ forevermore.

It was also different in that during most of its existence, it was ruled over by a wicked fallen angel named Lucifer or Satan. By right of conquest, Lucifer had conquered mankind by getting first Eve and then Adam to disobey God. In our judgment, God should have instantly destroyed Lucifer for that outrageous act. But God allowed him to become the head ruler of the earth and its inhabitants for the first 11,000 years of its existence. It is in this kind of world that God began to build the kingdom of God on earth.

All of these questions and observations are valid because Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. This assures us that God absolutely designed the principality of this world knowing that it would become a principality of sin. It would become, and was designed to become, a kingdom very much unlike those God had created throughout eternity past.

But why? Why was it created so unlike all of the other principalities and powers in the heavenlies?

Significantly, a great many angels were accomplices of Lucifer in his scheme to become king, so that they, under the curse of God, became demons or devils or evil spirits (Jude 6). However, there is no Biblical record of another rebellion against the authority of God, just this one, thus indicating that God allowed this one to further God’s desires for the purpose of this earth.

The fact that God placed Lucifer in the Garden of Eden, even before Lucifer himself knew that to be king was the intent of his heart (see Isaiah 14:13-14 and Hebrews 4:12), is typical of the way God sometimes uses those who are evil to

accomplish His own purposes. Two examples are Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the ten brothers who sold Joseph into slavery (Genesis 50:15, 20).

God knew full well that billions of people were in the loins of Adam (Hebrews 7:9-10, I Corinthians 15:22). When Adam rebelled, each and every one of these billions of people would be sentenced to die, but God had already made provision to save 200 million of these people. To accomplish this, God first prepared two books. The first book named every person who would become a descendant of Adam. The second book, which is called the Lamb's book of life, had 200 million names in it. These individuals were to be saved by God Himself being their Savior. God Himself, then, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, was laden with each and every sin of these 200 million individuals. And being found guilty of all these sins, He was put to shameful death on behalf of each of these people. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Actually, this terrible punishment came upon Christ before this world was created. We read in I Peter 1:20:

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

And in Matthew 25:34, we read:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

And in 2 Timothy 1:9-10, we read:

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

See also Hebrews 4:3.

Hell means to be dead. To be dead means all life is gone forever. Jesus said, for example, in Psalm 16:10:

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Because He was victorious over hell, His soul did arise from the dead. This is proven by Romans 1:4, where we read:

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

This verse also teaches us that only because Christ arose from the grave (Hell) can He be called the Son of God. Christ has no beginning. He is eternal God

from everlasting past. A son has a beginning. This is emphasized by the declaration of God in John 3:16 "... **He gave his only begotten Son**". To be begotten implies a beginning. How can God speak of Christ having a beginning? He had a beginning in that He became dead and then became alive again. Thus, once He arose from the dead, He could be called the Son of God. Even though Christ is Eternal God, before He could create this world, He had to rise from the dead. This is proven by Hebrews 1:2:

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

This, in turn, proves that the full payment for the sins of the elect was made before the creation of the universe.

Therefore, the question may be asked: "Was it necessary that Christ die twice in order to fully pay for our sins?" Remember the historical parable of Exodus 17:6:

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The rock represented Christ. Moses represented the law of God. The water represents the Gospel of Salvation which became available because Christ was punished to satisfy the demands of the law. In this citation, we learn that Christ, the rock, was struck but once by Moses, the law; and the water (salvation) flowed from the rock.

However, in Numbers 20:10-11, Moses struck the rock twice and water came forth. But in so doing, Moses went beyond what God had commanded him to do, and so Moses was denied the privilege of leading Israel across the Jordan river into the Promised Land.

In other words, the rock was struck twice when all that was required was that it be struck once. Jesus was punished twice even though full payment for our sin demanded that He be punished only once.

Therefore, we are certain that the second time He was punished, at which time He physically hung on the cross, was not a payment for sin. As we are learning, it was a demonstration of how He had made payment for our sins before this world was created.

The Elect: 200 Million People

Curiously, God in His wisdom gives us the number of people whom He has elected to become saved.

We can be quite certain that the total accurate number of people that God plans to save is 200 million people. This includes every person who will be raptured on May 21, 2011. On that awesome day, the body of every true believer who has lived and subsequently died will be raised from the dead and caught up to be with Christ. At the same moment, every living true believer will be given his eternal resurrected body and caught up as a whole personality into heaven.

In Revelation 9:14 they (the true believers) are spoken of as four angels bound in the River Euphrates. While the River Euphrates flowed through Babylon, in the Bible, God normally associates it with the promised land, the land of Israel (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7, 11:24; Joshua 1:4, etc.). It was the river that typified the farthest extent of the kingdom of God, which was typified by the land of Israel.

All the elect, that is, all those who will be raptured, are presently identified by the kingdom of God but are bound at the edge (the Euphrates River) of the kingdom of God. This is because they become fully identified with the kingdom of God when their salvation is completed at the time they receive their resurrected bodies. They are called four angels, or four messengers, because the number four signifies the fullest extent. The number four emphasizes that they are to be found throughout the entire world and are to include the last one who becomes saved.

We must learn and understand that this magnificent demonstration of the glory and wisdom of God stands forever, so that it will never happen again. We read in Revelation 1:18:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The words “**I am alive for evermore**” guarantee that this kind of demonstration will never happen again.

The number 200 million is effectively given twice. In Revelation 9:16 the number that is given is “**200 thousand thousand**” (200 million). The Bible then says, “**...and I heard the number of them.**” This language assures us that this is established by God and will shortly come to pass (Genesis 41:32).*

They are mounted on horses, thus identifying them with the armies of heaven described in Revelation 19:11-16, where we read:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

*The Bible gives the precise number of those who escaped the destruction of the world at the time of the flood: eight. The Bible gives the precise number of those who escaped the destruction of Nineveh in Jonah's day: 120,000 (Jonah 4:11). Therefore, we should not be surprised that God gives us the precise number of those who are saved: 200 million.

God indicates their special target is the third part of men, as we read in Revelation 9:15:

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

In the Bible, the third part originally identified with the true believers, who were to be found especially in the churches throughout the world. We read of them in Zechariah 13:9:

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, the LORD is my God.

However, because the churches quickly became so apostate, God speaks of them, particularly in the Book of Revelation, as the third part that is to be destroyed by God.

God principally makes people subject to the wrath of God at the time they break His law. Breaking the law of God condemns people to death. But also, there will be condemnation of those who claimed obedience to the Bible. It will be proven that they were not obedient by the fact that they were not raptured. They are the third part. Thus, those who are not raptured are pictured in Revelation 9:17-18, where we read:

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

Those who claimed to be believers but were left behind at the time of the rapture will be further condemned by the fact that they are enduring God's wrath as it is being poured out at judgment day. This is what God is teaching in the following passages.

Matthew 12:41-42: The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

Luke 22:30: That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

All of the foregoing is in view when theologians speak of the battle of Armageddon. The armies of the righteous will have been raptured. The peoples of the churches will be weeping and gnashing their teeth (Matthew 8:11-12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28), because they have been left behind.

Millions of Unsaved People Have Died Unaware of the Wrath of God

To our great surprise, we learn that most unsaved people who have died, or will die prior to May 21, 2011, never feel or are conscious of God's wrath upon them because of their sins. How can this be? We have learned that the wrath of God is multilayered. It consists of the following.

1. Great shame.
2. Execution (death, hell).
3. Loss of privileges of this life.
4. Loss of the inheritance of eternal life, together with the loss of the inheritance of the new heavens and the new earth.
5. Eternal destruction, never to exist again.

While all of these punishments come upon the unsaved person, ordinarily, the person dies with no awareness that his death was a result of sin in his life. If he is a church member, he probably believes in the traditional view that sinners go to hell where they are eternally tormented. But this is no problem to him because he is certain that he is a born-again, confessing member of that church.

In fact, in the lives of most church people, and frequently in the lives of people outside the church, the belief is that death is a marvelous moment of going to a better land. Thus, death is looked upon as a time of victory, even though it is tinged with sorrow because of the separation from loved ones and from the good things the person enjoyed in this life.

However, the unsaved person who has died is now eternally dead. Never will he have consciously experienced the wrath of God. True, at the time of the rapture, the remains of his body that have been placed in a grave will be shamefully thrown out of the grave, to be shamed by God and by the heavenly spectators. But the unsaved dead person will have no conscious knowledge of this. True, he has lost his birthright of eternal life and the inheritance of the new heavens and the new earth, but he is not at all aware of it.

Moreover, during the lifetime of these individuals, often there has been great enjoyment and happiness. They have experienced things such as the love of family and the enjoyments of living in a beautiful world. Thus, life and death are all good, even though they never became saved. Where, then, is the wrath of God upon these individuals who never became saved? Somehow, it seems we have lost our way in our understanding of the judgment process of God.

But we have not lost our way. Instead, we are learning that the supreme focus of this world is not upon God's salvation program or upon God's judgment plan. It is upon the wisdom and glory of God. Remember we learned that the purpose of God in creating mankind and placing him in this world was to provide an enormous tableau by which all of the principalities and powers in the heavenlies could see the enormous wisdom and glory of God, as God worked out His salvation plan through more than 13,000 years of sin.

Therefore, we find, for example, that while God hates the sinner (Psalm 5:5), in that His divine wrath is upon him, He nevertheless has enormous compassion and tenderness toward His entire creation, including sinners. In Matthew 5:45 we read:

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Think about the great blessings that flow from the beautiful sunshine and the benevolent rains that water the earth. Those who were not elected to salvation can enjoy these blessings every bit as much as those who are saved.

Christ's compassionate concern for the whole human race is demonstrated in the two places in the Bible where we read that Jesus wept. In John 11:33-35, we read these emotional words:

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

Eternal God, the Lord Jesus, shows His empathetic distress that death has entered this world. In Luke 19:41-44, we read:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

The Jerusalem that the Bible has in view here consists of all of Israel and all of the churches, which have externally represented the kingdom of God, and have become apostate. Thus, their members are headed for hell. They have mocked God. They have set up their own salvation plans. They have twisted the Bible, etc. Yet Christ is weeping because He must bring His full wrath upon them. Can we see how glorious Christ is, as He, by weeping over Jerusalem, demonstrates His compassion

to us and to the principalities and powers in the heavens? No wonder God says, as we read in Ezekiel 33:11, **“I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”**

This is all being witnessed by the principalities and powers throughout the reaches of heaven. They see a world that for 11,000 years is ruled over by a wicked angel named Satan. They see how few became saved, eight people, when God warned the world of the impending destruction in the days of Noah. They view the faithfulness of Abraham, and the unfaithfulness of the nation of Israel, which perished in the wilderness because of unbelief. They witness the nation of Israel being destroyed for its wickedness by the Assyrians, and the nation of Judah by the Babylonians.

How will Christ manage a world of billions of spiritually dead people who are ruled over by Satan?

How will Christ manage a world wherein every citizen starts out spiritually dead, being a slave of sin and Satan?

How can God manage a cursed universe in which live a cursed people, out of which a few are to be extracted to become God’s people?

The final focus is on the eternal church, the 200 million people whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life. How can they live among and then be brought out from amongst billions of wicked people ruled over by Satan, who is at enmity with Christ?

How can God manage a world in which there are mostly spiritually dead people ruled over by Satan, but in that same world there are a small number of people who have been named to be saved and yet are not saved, and some who indeed have become saved?

Our planet was created to show the wisdom and glory of God in the most difficult and impossible situation. The fullest manifestation of His glory is seen in the fact that God Himself became the Savior.

Throughout all this, the principalities and powers witness the tenderness, the kindness, the forgiveness, the mercy, and the patience of God. And then they witness the incarnation. God took on a human nature and came personally to this world to literally demonstrate how He had suffered before the foundation of the world on behalf of the 200 million people He had come to save.

They saw Him as the humble teacher who never ceased to be almighty God. They saw Him despised and rejected of men. They saw Him endure the most shameful, cursed execution as He hung on the cross.

They saw, too, His wonderful mercy as a thief on an adjacent cross first reviles Jesus in his teeth, and then pleads, **“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom”** (Luke 23:42). And right there in the eleventh hour of this man’s vile life, they witnessed him being given a full pardon.

They witnessed the glorious tableau of the resurrection of Christ, followed by the salvation of about 3,000 at the time the Holy Spirit was poured out. How glorious God is, and they see His glory as they see Him in all of these actions.

And mankind, too, who are residents of planet earth have had the privilege of witnessing Christ’s wisdom and glory by carefully reading the Bible.

But then the world will come to the date of the beginning of the day of judgment, May 21, 2011. More than 6.5 billion people will be living at that time, and they will enter the 153-day period of judgment, and they will know without any

question that they are under the wrath of God because of their sins. Most of them will consciously experience the wrath of God.

Why is there this sudden change? They are the same kinds of people who for 13,000 years have been peacefully living out their lives here on earth. But if they are alive on May 21, 2011, suddenly, there will be a huge earthquake that will kill many of them (Revelation 16:18). Death will be everywhere. Great pain and suffering will be everywhere.

The difference for these people is described in what we read in Luke 12:45-48:

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

We are living in a day when God has given us, with great precision, the timing of the end. This information is given to the world, and it is increasingly being known by the peoples of the world, so that the unsaved can cry for mercy. Hopefully, a great many people, like the Ninevites of Jonah's day, will experience the mercy of God.

True, there have been times in the past when the teaching has gone forth that on such and such a day, it will be the end. And of course, those dates have all been incorrect. But today, the warning of the time of Christ's return and judgment day is far different from ever before. The above verses show the tremendous importance of giving heed to the end-time warnings of the Bible. For example, the following principles are integrated into the warning.

1. The entire Bible is the law of God, and every word in the original languages is directly from the mouth of God. Thus, the church and the world should know that the Bible is the ultimate authority, far greater than ever recognized before. It must be listened to and obeyed.
2. The time information from the Bible that shows the dates May 21, 2011, and October 21, 2011, has many proofs, in the Bible, that guarantee the accuracy of these dates. This is enormous information that the world has never before known, and of course, it effects the whole world.
3. This time information is available throughout the world on the Internet and shortwave radio. It is available free and postpaid in many languages to anyone who writes or calls for it. Everyone should become aware of it.

4. Typically, people ridicule and scoff at this time information, and many people remain in complete denial.
5. Those who are not raptured on May 21, 2011, will die on that date or at some moment on or before October 21, 2011, at which time the entire universe will be consumed by fire. When death occurs, there is no further awareness of the wrath of God.

However, until death occurs, there will be a great awareness of the wrath of God, as those who are living continue to be under the pain of the plagues that overwhelm the world during the Day of Judgment, the 153 days from May 21, 2011 to October 21, 2011. They very acutely will experience the following.

1. The shame and curse of being under the wrath of God.
2. The knowledge that the joys and comforts, etc., of this world are all over.
3. The knowledge that they have no future inheritance. Only death awaits them, and that will come no later than October 21, 2011.
4. The pain and physical suffering that will be the situation for all of those living at that time.
5. The knowledge that there cannot be any mercy of God.

The destruction of this universe will be the final historical event witnessed by the principalities and powers in the heavens. It all shows the glory and wisdom of God.

This presentation of the wrath of God is indeed dreadfully sorrowful. It is especially sorrowful and dreadful when we remember that it is all going to happen in just a few months. And there is no possibility of a delay. It will happen.

But think how merciful God is. He could bring the rapture and judgment day by coming as a thief in the night, and then most people of the earth would have no warning whatsoever. But God in His wonderful mercy is giving us time to get the warning of impending doom out into all the world. Sadly, for those who are in denial because they do not want this world to end, He will come as a thief in the night.

Moreover, God gives the example of the ancient wicked city of Nineveh in the Book of Jonah. They knew virtually nothing of the Bible, and they had 40 days or less to react to the warning. We might take a lesson from them.

1. They implicitly believed God. They did not argue with God.
2. They looked at themselves honestly, recognizing that they were sinners and deserved the wrath of God.
3. They publicly showed their great humility by sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

This was true of the most lowly servant and of the highest and most glamorous official, the king.

4. They turned from their sins and immediately tried to live a life that was pleasing to God.
5. They made no demands upon God, but they pleaded with God that maybe God would change His mind and not destroy them.

We should pay serious attention to the reaction of the people in Noah's day as they were warned that destruction was about to occur. It is frightening to read that the typical reaction to the end of the world, the destruction of our day, is identical to that of the people of Noah's day. We read in Matthew 24:37-39:

But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

One thing is certain. The only safe and proper reaction to the news of this impending destruction should be a great change in my goals, my aspirations, my plans, my purpose, my hopes in this world. Suddenly, I should realize that the only important matter that I should be focused on is the fact that in a few months, this world will be at its end. In these remaining few months, what is important for my life and the life of my family? It surely has nothing to do with making my life more comfortable in this world.

In fact, if I am a true believer, I must know that I, as a watchman, should have a great concern that not only my family but the whole world must receive the terrible news of the impending destruction of the world.

In other words, if the facts of the nearness of the end do not seriously cause a great change in my immediate conduct and in my goals, I had better honestly answer the question: Do I really believe the Biblical truth that May 21, 2011, is the date of the rapture and the beginning of the day of judgment? Remember the warning of Luke 12:47.

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

The Ninevites show us the path, and we should be following that path now that we know without any question that Judgment Day is so near. God has indicated with great certainty that today, a great multitude, which no man could number, is being saved (Revelation 7:9-14). God insists that He is not a respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). Thus, there is a great hope for you. You have just as great a possibility as anyone else in the world of being one of God's elect.

Start reading the Bible and praying that God might help you to become more and more obedient to it. Beg God to humble you. Just because you are a pastor or have been a faithful church member for many years, that does not put you in a favored position to become saved. There are no favored positions. And your church or your

pastor or your creeds may have been your god because a god is whatever we have placed our trust in. Our trust should be in the Bible alone. Even though there is much in the Bible we do not understand, we still must understand that it is all from the mouth of God.

Never cease crying to God for His mercy. But do so remembering that not one of us is worthy of God's mercy. Therefore, we go to Him pleading, begging, beseeching, "Oh, Lord, is it possible that I, too, might become saved?"

Chapter Seven.

Salvation

Who or where are the sinners who cannot be sent to hell? Nobody knows. The only time we can truly know we are one of God's chosen people is when we receive from God a new resurrected soul. When that occurs, we will know it happened only because God had elected us to become saved, and He had completely provided for our salvation. We will know that our salvation is altogether the grace and mercy of God, and that we had nothing at all to do with our becoming saved.

When God gives a person a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26), God is preparing that person to live eternally with Him. The new heart, or new spirit, which we also call a new resurrected soul, transforms our life so that we have an intense ongoing desire to do the will of God. Moreover, we are deeply troubled when we sin, but it is still possible to sin because we are living in an unsaved body. Therefore, before we become eternal citizens of the new heavens and the new earth, we also will be given a new spiritual, resurrected body. God can give a new soul to anyone whom God had elected, at any time in an elect person's life. It can be before birth or a minute before death. It is an action entirely programmed by God.

However, it will take place while that elect person is under the hearing of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). That is why we try to encourage everyone in the world to hear the Bible. In fact, we are commanded by God to send the Word of God into the whole world, so that everyone may be under the hearing of the Bible.

To place people in the environment of hearing the Word of God is to place them under God's commands to mankind to obey the Bible. To obey the Bible requires that we read or listen to the Bible. We are commanded to become saved. We are commanded to repent of our sins. We are commanded to pray for God's mercy. The unsaved person is commanded to strive to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 13:24). The word "strive" is from a Greek word that means to agonize. It is like a runner who agonizes or strives to be the winner of a race.

This is where the mystery of salvation exists. Because God created man in His image and His likeness, even though man is spiritually dead, he is to attempt with all his strength to follow the commands of God. He therefore carefully listens to the Word of God, trying to be obedient to the commands of God. How God interrelates with this striving is a mystery. Certainly, we must never believe that my striving to enter into the kingdom of God is meritorious in any way. Nor does my striving in any way guarantee that I will become saved.

It is true that in my striving, I will become better acquainted with God's law book, the Bible. It is true that in my striving, I will increasingly seek God's will, rather than my will. It is true that in my striving, I will find myself humbly crying to God for His mercy. It is true that in my striving, I will increasingly realize that I must wait entirely upon the Lord, if indeed it is His plan to save me. It is true that in my striving, I have a great hope that I, too, could possibly be one of God's elect. It is true that today, God is saving a great multitude, which no man could number, and I, too, might possibly be included in that number.

It is also true that God rules over the unsaved as well as the saved. That is, ultimately, God can cause an unsaved person to do His will from time to time, even though God has no plan to save that person. Likewise, as an unsaved individual is striving to enter the kingdom of God, anything that he does that is obedient to God may be God working in him, even though he is not one of God's elect. Or it may be that individual's own attempt, altogether by his own efforts, to obey God. Or it may be a combination of both God's action and man's action. Only God knows precisely what is going on in a person's life.

But all of the above is God's business. The unsaved person does not have to determine whether it is God's action or his own action that is occurring in his life. All he knows for sure is that if he becomes saved, it will be entirely by the work of Christ. In Joel 2:12-13, we read:

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

If an unsaved person finds that, increasingly, he hates sin and is far happier when he is doing the will of God, and that he has an eager, ongoing desire to be obedient to all the commandments of the Bible, it may be that God's Spirit is witnessing with his spirit that he has become saved.

We must remember that God has a legal right to command mankind to obey His laws. Because mankind was created in the image and likeness of God, mankind, like God Himself, is completely subject to the law of God, the Bible. If a person lives in this world and has not heard anything from the Bible, God must arrange for that person to come under the hearing of the Bible if the person is one of God's elect. That can happen at any time in the lifetime of that person.

However, the Bible is greatly concerned about those who read the Bible, or who hear God's commands with their physical ears, but are not hearing the Bible. How can that be? In Deuteronomy 28:45 we read:

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

And in Jeremiah 29:17-19, we read:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations

whither I have driven them: Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.

The word “hearken” in these two warnings, which are typical of many similar warnings recorded in the Bible, means to listen and obey. God is teaching that if we hear the words of the Bible with our physical ears, but do not try to obey that which we are hearing, it is equivalent to not hearing the Word of God. Such people have deliberately placed themselves outside of an environment in which God is saving. Their preconceived ideas concerning salvation or any other teaching of the Bible prevent them from humbly listening to, and desiring to obey, the commands and truths of the Bible.

However, there is hope, wonderful hope, for those who now humbly admit their sins and who turn away from their preconceived ideas, who earnestly strive to be obedient to all of the Bible, and who humbly cry to God for His mercy.

It is true that the Bible teaches that God’s wrath is now on every one of the churches that are found throughout the world. For 1,955 years, churches had been God’s official external representatives of the kingdom of God. Sadly, in the name of God, and while claiming that the Bible was their authority, they taught, and continue to teach, many doctrines that are contrary to the Bible. Moreover, Satan rather than Christ is now their spiritual ruler. Today, there is no hope for any of the churches that exist throughout the world. Those who remain within them are being prepared for their entrance into judgment day.

Only by turning away from the condition of spiritually serving Satan, and by fleeing from the local churches, and going with spiritually broken hearts to the God of the Bible, and being under the hearing of the Word of God, is there hope for anyone.

MAY GOD HAVE MERCY.

To God Be The Glory

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