

-THE LAST TRUMP-

At the sounding of the last of the seven trumpets in Rev. 11:15 the Lord takes over the kingdoms of this world and they become His. This means His own personal return to the earth to set up His kingdom. This same return and the same trumpet are mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:51,52. His return is such a great relief to those who are going thru the tribulation that it is given to them to be caught up in the air to meet Him as He descends to the earth. The Greek word for meet here is the same as used in Acts 28:15 where the Christians came out from Rome to meet Paul. They, of course, accompanied him back as he kept on his way.

-THE TRIBULATION-

The disciples were expecting to go thru the tribulation. Our Lord prepared them for it and warned them that they would know when it had come by the sign of the great abomination in the Holy Place. (See Matt. 24:15). The Church of God at Corinth was expecting to go thru the same tribulation for the Last Trump marks the end of that time. Also Paul gives instructions to prepare them for that period in 1 Cor. 7.. When that time comes some of the churches in Asia will suffer more than others. (See Rev. 2 and 3).

-THE TIME-

Seventy weeks were determined upon ISRAEL AND THE HOLY CITY, (read Dan. 9). Since these weeks that are determined are upon the city as well as the people, then we must begin that period of time from the dedication of the temple in B. C. 405. If the present parenthesis had not intervened, the time determined would have been ended about 85 A.D. The Great Tribulation then would have been from some time in 81 up to the end of 85. That means that the Millennium would have been completed and the New Jerusalem come down by the time Peter the Hermit was stirring up the people for the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

-COMING SOON?-

To the disciples and the church of God, the time was short, the day was at hand, the time was at hand, these things must shortly come to pass, He was to come quickly, and that generation was not to pass till all things had been fulfilled, (see 1 Cor. 7:29; Rom. 13:12; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 22:10; Rev. 1:1; 22:12; 22:20; Matt. 24:34).

The Lord said that some of His disciples would not experience death till they should see Him coming in His kingdom, (Matt. 16:28). He also said that the High Priest who was in office at that time would see Him sitting on the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven, (Matt. 26:24; Mark 14:62).

If the disciples had been led to see it, they could have figured out the time from Dan. 9. But the Spirit had not led them to understand this, and also the Lord as Son of Man chose not to know it, (Mark 13:32).

John, writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, said in Rev. 1:7 that those who pierced Him would see Him coming.

All this could have been fulfilled easily if Israel had accepted the King and His kingdom. But at the end of Acts this program was interrupted and another program which had been hidden in God from ages and generations was ushered in. A period of 1900 years already has intervened and still He has not come. Since there is no prophecy concerning this present age, no dates of any kind can be set. No one has any idea of when it will end. But it will end some day and the former program of the Acts period will again be taken up and finished, (Phil. 1:6). From 21 to 24 years of the determined time must be fulfilled yet, but His Body must be completed first.

The 12 were not to have finished evangelizing the cities of Israel till He should come, yet they are dead and gone and He has not come yet. Why? (See Matt. 10:23).

-WHO ARE WE?-

You may ask, if all these promises of the coming of the Lord were to Israel and the church of God which was made up of Israel and grafted in Gentiles, just who are we and where do we come in? That is a good question and it is the very thing for which this ministry was founded. I want to make clear to you, and all that I can contact, just what is the calling and hope for today. The most important question for us is that concerning our hope, our destiny, and our position before God. That is TRUTH FOR TODAY.

We do not wait till the coming of the Lord, but our hope is to be manifested with Him in Glory (the super-heavens) before He comes to earth (Col. 3:4). Our destiny has nothing to do with the earth and the kingdom set up on earth. It has nothing to do with the heavens and the New Jerusalem which comes down out of the heavens. Our destiny is to enjoy spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). Our destiny is to be seated with Christ at the right hand of God, (Eph. 2:6). Our position is one that is far above all princes, (Eph. 1:21) for we are in Him since we are His Body (Eph. 5:23).

The present calling has as its goal the presence of God, or the Holy of Holies. This is a place where no ordinances of any kind can enter. We are complete in Him (Col. 2:10). Since this is the dispensation of the grace of God, we have nothing to do with any laws or covenants. Neither do we have any part in the promises or blessings of Abraham. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the super-heavens in Christ Jesus, not Abraham (see Eph. 1:3). Israel was set aside at Acts 28:28 and with her setting aside were set aside all the promises also pertaining to her as well as the ordinances which were connected with those promises.

-WATER BAPTISM-

The baptism of John was for

repentant Israel, not for any Gentiles. The baptism of the disciples was for the same purpose. Our Lord identified Himself with His people Israel and was baptized of John for was he not already beginning to bear the sins of His people? Only Jews were baptized up to Acts 10. Then we find Gentiles were also baptized for they were being identified with repentant Israel. They were grafted in; they partook of the promises made to Abraham.

Since we have nothing to do with the promises made to Abraham, nor are we grafted into the nation of Israel, nor do we have anything to do with any of Israel's blessings, we do not partake of water baptism. There is no place for water baptism in the ministry of the MYSTERY. It belongs to a past dispensation and is no part of the WALK that is worthy of the calling of the present dispensation.

-THE PASSOVER-

The "cup" at the Passover was to signify the New Covenant (Matt. 26:28 and 1 Cor. 11:25). It was to be observed by His disciples till He should come. This feast of the Passover was observed by the Church of God right up to the end of Acts. It was observed on the 14th of Nisan. That would be April 14 this year and comes on Thursday. The last Passover, observed by the Lord and His disciples was on Tuesday night and the death of the Lord was on Wednesday afternoon.

NOTE: I am not discussing here the so-called Lord's supper which was Baal's supper and was borrowed by the early church from Babylon. Such never had any part in any dispensation of God.

-THE NEW COVENANT-

Since water baptism and the Passover were closely connected with the New Covenant, it might be well to find what it is. The Old Covenant was with Israel, as most will agree. So was the New Covenant. Read Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8-12; Luke 22:20; Mark 14:24; 1 Cor. 10:16.

No covenant was ever made with the Gentiles. They are under grace.

-WIN and ATTAIN-

These two words seem to be the key note of the epistle to the Philippians. We do not find the teaching of doctrine here as we do in Eph. and Col., but rather a working out of salvation. Salvation is received by faith. Membership in the One Body with its attendant blessings also is received by faith. But here in Phil. 3 are some things to be won and attained to outside of mere faith. It is a case of striving.

Also closely related are three great themes which themselves might be developed into books. They are; THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, and CONFORMITY UNTO HIS DEATH.

The content of verses 8 and 9, and 10 and 11 may be outlined thus;

- A. The knowledge of Christ.
- B. Loss of all things (cost).
- C. Win Christ (goal).

- A. The knowing of Him.
- B. Loss of all things (cost).
- C. Attain resurrection (goal).

-KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWING-

A complete knowledge of anyone cannot be had without a fellowship in joys and sufferings. We might have a speaking acquaintance with a person, but not know anything of the mind of that person. If we are to have the mind of Christ in us, then we must have some knowledge and understanding of His life, problems, joys, suffering, and even death. His interests will be our interests. We will love those He loves. We will hate the things He hates. We will pray for those He prays for, and witness to those to whom He would speak.

-LOSS AND SUFFERING-

This means the loss of all things which are the center of our own selfish desires. It does not mean giving things up and yet still hankering after them. When the Lord becomes the center of our affections fully, then everything else is excluded. We have no interest in them. This death to the

things of the world is a very necessary experience if we would come to know the power of His resurrection.

-CONFORMITY-

To win Christ and to attain to an earlier out resurrection from among the dead (see verse 11) requires conformity to the death of Christ. In death, our Lord conformed Himself to the Father's will and did not take the way offered by the tempter. In life He did nothing and spoke nothing of Himself, but only what the Father willed.

To make this conformity requires the loss of the soul. The soul, as used in the Word, stands for all that goes to make up the man, his life, his faculties, and his activities; every possibility of his being. "But I make of no account, nor hold I my SOUL valuable to myself, so that I may finish my course, etc." (Acts 20:24). "For whosoever may will to save his SOUL, shall lose it, and whosoever may lose his SOUL on My account shall find it. For what is a man profited, if the whole world he may gain, and his SOUL he shall forfeit? or what shall a man give in ransom for his SOUL?" (Matt. 16:24-27).

A man can forfeit his soul (I am not speaking of salvation) by taking interest in things of the world and then when it is too late, what would he give as a ransom for what he had so cheaply sold? Remember Esau. He sold out for a very small price. He could not regain what he had lost; there was no repentance for him.

We who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and have a place in the body of Christ may go on to perfection. We may lose our souls for His sake and then find them again in a better resurrection.

Paul was not sure in Phil. 3:12 that he had yet attained the goal, but in his last epistle he was able to say with confidence, "I have finished my course...henceforth a crown." (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

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-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

My brother Joseph and his son Don took me to Muskegon Sunday Feb. 20. It took the DeSoto about 4 hours to make the trip. Had both the morning and evening services. Enjoyed the fellowship very much, and that is what it was, the BIBLE FELLOWSHIP of Muskegon, Mich.

I made the same trip in the old Dodge ('33 model) and taught the morning and evening classes Feb. 27. By going on Saturday night and coming back on Monday morning the trip was not too tiresome. There was special interest in the topic for the evening where we discussed the destiny of those who are saved but will not accept the truth of the MYSTERY, and membership in the Body.

My five broadcasts for the month of March have been paid for by the Muskegon Bible Fellowship. Thanks so much for the help.

I am planning to be with the Rockford Bible Fellowship, of Rockford, Ill., Sunday Mar. 27. Mr. Hershey Julien is their minister.

Beginning with Mar. 20, the Bible class at my home will use half of the period for a study of Genesis and the other half for a study of Acts.

Mr. Otis Q. Sellers of Los Angeles, Cal., is planning to be with the Bremen class Tuesday evening, April 26.

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