

Preacher's Column 2003

Another Chapter Comes to a Close

The time has again arrived for the close of another year. 2003 is almost history, and 2004 is about to become a reality. Although these are mere measures of time invented by man, they do hold some mental significance for us. Each of us will likely pause to reflect on the activities and happenings of the past year in some fashion. Each of us will likely give some thought in some fashion to the possibilities of what the new year will hold. Because of sad events or unfortunate circumstances, some will be happy to see "2003" removed and "2004" take its place. For others, 2003 holds some wonderful memories and will always be held with fondness in their minds.

There are some certainties about this matter as we give the change of the year its due. One is, no one can change anything that happened in 2003. None of us can relive a single moment of time from the past year. None of us can undo an action or "take back" a word. Not one of us can alter anything that has already occurred in 2003. What we can do is learn from mistakes we might have made and prevent their occurrence in the future. We can learn from tragic things that happened, both on an individual and societal level. We can even learn from the mistakes of others.

Just as there are some certainties about 2003, there are some uncertainties about 2004. None of us knows what this year will hold for us. We can (and should) plan for the things we hope will take place. We can dream of possibilities and opportunities for the coming twelve months. We can set goals for ourselves. We should seek to be prepared physically, mentally and emotionally for whatever the year will bring. We should be prepared spiritually in case none of it does.

Of all the preparations we can make for a new year, spiritual preparations are most important. Although you cannot change things you've said or done in 2003, you can be forgiven for them and start afresh in 2004. As you begin this new chapter in your life, shouldn't you begin it with a pure soul, free from the stain of sin? Have you obeyed the gospel? Have you allowed the blood of Christ to wash away your sins in baptism? Do you need to come back home? What better way to begin a new year (an a new chapter) in your life. We pray you will make that decision and anxiously await your return. Eddy

"We Got Him!"

This past Sunday morning most of America awoke to the news of the capture of Saddam Hussein and saw the images of the haggard former dictator of Iraq shortly after he was taken from a hole in the ground where he was attempting to evade his pursuers. The news of his capture quickly spread throughout the world and has been a primary focal point of news programs since. The story surrounding his capture and detention brings to mind

some thoughts from Scripture and lessons for us.

According to news reports the first words of the deposed dictator were to the effect, "I am Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq. I want to negotiate." His words, spoken in the face of his captors, reflect the same kind of thoughts that many will have on the day of judgment. This man thought his position would carry some clout with those who captured him. The mere mention of his name and title should, in his mind, garner respect and special privileges from those who held him. Doubtless, there will be those on the day of judgment who will stand before the Lord proclaiming their former state and positions, hoping they will sway His decision in how they should be judged.

It is also interesting that this man, who has defied international law for years, continually disregarded orders to comply and attempted to withstand coalition forces for months now though he stood in a position to "negotiate". Of some on the day of judgment Jesus said, *"Many will say into 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?"* (Matthew 7:22). Just as Saddam Hussein on the day of his capture, many will think they stand in bargaining position with God. Having defied His law and disregarded His statutes all their lives, they will have no more such position than does the former Iraqi dictator.

The manner of Hussein's surrender also brings to mind a spiritual application. Although he had called on his followers and compatriots to "go down fighting," giving their lives in the "jihad" struggle, he himself surrendered without raising a hand against his enemies. His life, as is being portrayed now, is one of hypocrisy. He called on others to do things he himself was not willing to do. Far too many are in the same boat spiritually. They call on others to live sacrificial lives for the Cause of Christ while all the while merely making pretense of doing the same themselves. Some demand compliance from their children in the spiritual realm and yet fail to exhibit compliance to God's commands in their own lives. Such pretense, as is now being seen in the life of one Saddam Hussein, is a very thin veneer.

One day every knee shall bow before the Lord of Glory. One's former position will not matter. He will be in no bargaining position with the Lord, and every life of hypocrisy will be revealed. Are you ready for that day?
Eddy

"They Gave Him Audience Unto This Word"

Shortly after his return from his third missionary journey Paul was bound and taken outside the temple by the Jews at Jerusalem who intended to kill him (Acts 21). He was rescued by a Roman captain and band of soldiers. As he was being led away to the castle for questioning he requested that he be allowed to speak to the people. His request was granted.

In the Hebrew language he spoke to the assembly of his former life persecuting the church, his conversion and his commission by the Lord (Acts 22:1-21). His final words to them were, *"And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles"* (Acts 22:21). His speech was then abruptly interrupted. The text states, *"And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow*

from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts 22:22). They were willing to listen to that which interested them or to that with which they agreed. However, whenever he mentioned the Gentiles, their interest turned to anger and their willingness to refusal.

Men are still the same today. They will listen to that which interests them and to that which complies with their thoughts. But, inject something that is contrary to their own agenda and, just like those Jerusalem Jews, they will "give audience unto" that word or thought. Consider how some are willing "to give audience unto" some of these words:

God -- More and more our "tolerant" society is becoming intolerant of God. Men are willing to hear about some issue until God is mentioned; then, their willingness and attention are gone.

Responsibility -- Through our failure to take responsibility for our own actions we are fast becoming an irresponsible nation. Men do not want to hear of their responsibilities and demands that are placed on them. Mention such to most, and their attention is suddenly lost.

Sinfulness of Homosexuality -- Mention this politically-charged topic in a way not "politically correct" and men may just go about to kill you as they did Paul! One can speak of homosexuality in a praiseworthy fashion anywhere in society; but say one thing in opposition to it, and your words will be seen as hateful and you as one filled with hate.

Church of Christ -- Just the mention of the Lord's body will cause some to refuse to hear anything else you might say. Although the Bible speaks of the exclusive nature of the church (Ephesians 4:4), man wants to hear that he can attend the church of his choice.

Baptism -- Speak to men about salvation and many will listen to what is said... at least until the requirement to be baptized is mentioned. Although the Bible speaks much of the essentiality of it (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; etc.), men do not like to be told what they have to do.

On and on this list could go. It is strange how men have not changed in 2000 years. truth is still despised by the majority and its spokesmen rejected. Basically, mankind has no desire to hear of his responsibility, nor to be told that that which he wants to do is not acceptable. Do not be surprised when men "give audience unto" such words as these. It is not you, but the truth they reject.

Eddy

Trivial Things

Alexander Pope said, "What mighty contests arise from trivial things." Never was his statement more true concerning anything than the brainchild of Chris Haney and Scott Abbott. Their story began on December 15, 1979, when they sat down to play a game of Scrabble. When they began to play, they discovered that some of the pieces were missing. They began to wonder aloud why they couldn't invent their own board game. They did. The concept for it was launched that very afternoon but took two years and two additional partners before it became a reality in 1981 (at a financial loss to all involved). Since those

humble beginnings their game has been named to the "Games Hall of Fame" (yes, there is such a thing) and has become so popular *Time Magazine* dubbed it "the biggest phenomenon in game history". What did they invent? Trivial Pursuit.

I suppose, to some degree, each of us likes trivia. Whenever a radio station, television show or sporting event announces a trivia question, most of us listen just to see if we know the answer. Indeed, as Pope stated, mighty contests arise from trivial things.

Through the years there have been various trivia written about the Bible. It is of interest, for example, to note that the middle verse of the Bible is Psalm 118:8; the longest verse in the Bible is Esther 8:9 (containing 90 words); the longest word in the Bible is Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah 8:1); all the letters of the alphabet except "j" are found in Ezra 7:21; the middle verse of the New Testament is Acts 17:17; and other such matters.

Like the name of the board game, the problem with trivia is that, all too often, it becomes trivial. If all we know about the Bible are a few insignificant facts regarding its arrangement or a few instances in which the language has created interesting but insignificant combinations, what do we really know? The Bible is not a trivial matter. There is nothing insignificant in it. Its contents are of tremendous importance, both in time and eternity. Do not allow the Bible to become trivial. Far too much is at stake. Eddy

Three Simple Truths about Truth

Truth seems to be such an elusive thing to man. History records so many of his struggles with it. He has arrived at such bizarre conclusions concerning it as: "Truth is unknowable," "Truth is relative," "Truth is what each thinks it to be." The foolishness of such thinking should be self evident. However, such foolish thinking regarding truth has brought grave consequences upon our society. Leave man to his own devices (as our ungodly society desires), and destruction will be the outcome (cf. Jeremiah 10:23).

What does the Bible say about truth? The word itself is found 222 times in the King James Version so, obviously, the Bible has a great deal to say about the subject. Among so many other things, it teaches

that truth can be known (John 8:32). It is not some evasive, pie-in-the-sky concept that can never be grasped by man. It can be known, taught and obeyed (I John 2:20; I Timothy 2:4; Galatians 4:16; 5:7). Notice three very simple truths about truth.

(1) **Truth frees us.** To a group of believing, yet disobedient, Jews Jesus said: "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). These men foolishly thought themselves to be free already (John 8:33). The freedom of which Jesus spoke was true freedom, spiritual freedom, freedom from sin. How is it that truth sets one free? It is only through obedience to it (I Peter 1:22).

(2) **Truth sanctifies us.** In the true "Lord's Prayer" Jesus pleaded that the Father

would *"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). Sanctification means "setting apart". It is only through the knowledge and application of the truth that one can be set apart for God's use and purpose and, thus, become suitable for the Master's use (II Timothy 2:21).

(3) **Truth judges.** Truth will be the ruler by which all men will one day be judged. Jesus said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Only those who have been set free and sanctified by truth will be found approved by truth. All others will be condemned by it. Regardless of whether you have allowed truth to set you free and sanctify you or not, it will one day judge you. Of its being the standard of your judgment you have no say. Whether it will set you free and sanctify you is something over which you have control. Have you been set free from sin through obeying God's Truth? Eddy

"Be Ye Thankful"

The word "thankful" appears three times in the King James Version. These three passages indicate a great deal about how God feels about our being a grateful people. We have the record of Jesus' encounter with the ten lepers, only one of which turned back in appreciation (Luke 17:11-19), to demonstrate to us His thoughts on this matter. During this holiday season, as we pause to give thanks, let us consider this word "thankful" and its uses in the Bible.

The first occurrence of this word is found in the 100th Psalm, the great Psalm of praise of David. Verse 4 reads: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." As His people we should "enter into his gates... and into his courts" regularly through worship. A fundamental component of Biblical prayers is appreciation. We ought to be thankful that we can "enter into His gates and His courts" through worship and stand spiritually before the throne of the great God of the universe. One thing is certain--if we refuse to worship and forsake the assembling of God's people when they worship, we cannot be very "thankful".

The second place in which "thankful" is found is Romans 1:21. Here we read of the great sins of the ancient Gentile world. Prominent among these was their failure to be thankful. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Such an attitude leads to other sinful actions. As the song so eloquently states, we should "count our many blessings" regularly. When we do so, it is difficult not to focus our attention on Him Who is the giver of "every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17).

The final mention of the word "thankful" is found in Paul's instruction to the brethren at Colossae. He said, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). What greater blessing could any hope to have than having the peace of God in his heart along with the knowledge that he is in the

body of Christ? The two go hand-in-hand. It is only through being "in Christ" that one has the hope of salvation (II Timothy 2:10) and the promise of reward (John 14:1-4). With such assurance, obtained through the grace and mercy of God (Ephesians 2:8, 9), the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5) and faithful obedience (Hebrews 5:8, 9), one can have that "peace of God" in his heart. As you look around you this holiday season, do you have these blessings?

God has graciously provided us with all things needful (Ephesians 1:3). Shall we, like the ancient Gentiles, be an ungrateful people as we share in God's bounty every day? "Be ye thankful."
Eddy

2800 Year-Old Wisdom

Amaziah was the ninth king of Judah. He began his reign at age 25 and reigned from 796 B.C. until 767 B.C. A brief glance at his life is found in II Kings 14 and II Chronicles 25. An interesting statement and an age-old nugget of wisdom is made to him after a war in which he had engaged and been successful. This statement continues to echo through the ages and poses the same question for man today.

Amaziah had obtained the services of some of the men of Ephraim to assist him in a battle against Seir (II Chronicles 25:5-10). He had paid each of these men for their services prior to the engagement. Then a spokesman from God told him not to allow the Ephraimites to go to battle with his men. He acquiesced and made them return home, to their great displeasure (II Chronicles 25:10). He then proceeded to battle against Seir and was victorious (II Chronicles 25:11, 12). Meanwhile, the scorned mercenaries of Ephraim attacked Judah (II Chronicles 25:13). During his battle with Seir, Amaziah took their gods and carried them back to be his gods (II Chronicles 25:14). In His anger, God sent a prophet to him with the following question: *"Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?"* (II Chronicles 25:15).

Why, indeed, would Amaziah seek refuge in gods that could provide none for the enemies from which he took them? But then again, why do men seek refuge in the illicit drugs that have taken the lives of so many? Or the alcohol that has claimed countless homes, minds and souls? Or the tobacco that has caused so much agony? Why do men continue to forsake their spouses to seek for "happiness" in the arms of one who did not bring such to her former mate(s)? Why does man see shelter from "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4) knowing the track record he has? Why, indeed, do men continue to follow those things that have proven to be the downfall of so many? Sadly, the Amaziahs are not all dead.
Eddy

A Very Clever Sophistry

Montgomery is the capitol of my home state, Alabama. There has been a lot going on

there lately with regard to the removal of a monument on which is inscribed the Ten Commandments. This monument was displayed within the capitol rotunda until it was recently removed a short distance away at the order of a federal judge. That action is currently under appeal.

Seventy-seven percent of the people polled (outside Alabama) disagreed with this outrageous ruling which ignored the historical context in which the First Amendment was written. In so doing, the rule of law UNDER GOD was overturned. This nation is further cast into a cauldron stirred by an oligarchy of judges operating on the arrogant premise that "the law is what they say it is". When Congress fails to exercise its oversight responsibility, the courts' authority is supreme. Thus, no prayer in school, abortion on demand and immunity from state law for SODOMITES is perfectly permissible, but the very mention of GOD or JESUS CHRIST in public places is taboo. The Supreme Court to this day has betrayed our heritage by representing it as something it is not. It attacks the authority, the virtue and the federalism upon which the ONE NATION UNDER GOD rests under the pretense that it is upholding the letter of the law. Hogwash!

An intelligent interpretation of the First Amendment concludes that the Founders opposed ALL interference with ANY group's worship of God, and that should not threaten us as New Testament Christians if we pause and consider it. It is further quite clear from numerous sources, not the least of which is the Declaration of Independence, that God--not man or any group of human beings--is esteemed as the very SOURCE of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as well as the SUPREME JUDGE and PROTECTOR of this nation. The Founders did NOT establish or believe in a secular democracy. Somewhere along the way to our present-day sophistication this very obvious point has been overlooked. It should be noted that the "pursuit of happiness" is not what the MTV crowd thinks it is, but involves the cultivation of virtue and the right to the rewards of one's labors as essential to the continuance of this nation.

Opponents and supporters of Judge Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court, the one at the very center of this maelstrom, have repeated the weary and overused phrase that he (Judge Moore) must abide by the "rule of law". As is often the case, a lack of HISTORICAL perspective results in an erroneous conclusion. In its 1974 Everson vs. Board of Education decision, the Supreme Court spawned that specious doctrine known by all today as the "Separation of Church and State", which incidentally is NOT found anywhere in the Constitution. This ruling began our arrogant disregard of legal precedent and the documentary context in which the First Amendment was written.

Unlike state laws regarding sodomy, subsequent Supreme Courts have not seen fit to overturn this fallacious dictate or its rulings on prayer in schools and abortion. On the contrary, in upholding the bedrock position that the Ten Commandments occupies not ONLY in our judicial history, but in the history of Western Civilization, this brave judge in Alabama is AFFIRMING the supreme rule of law under GOD, NOT repudiating it.

Weaken or remove the foundation of anything, such as when my grandson recently attempted to remove an apple from the foundation of a stack of apples, and collapse is sure to follow (which it did). At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin said, "You now have a Republic--if you can keep it." The Supreme Court since World War II

has repeatedly failed to live up to its responsibility.

Is the "government of the PEOPLE, by the PEOPLE, and for the PEOPLE" about to disintegrate for want of wise and brave representatives making decisions consistent with the rule of law under God? Are we too far gone in decadence to do anything about it?

"The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they make: In the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand. The wicked shall be turned into hell, AND ALL THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD" (BJ) (Psalm 9:15-17).

Burt Jones

\$6,862.12 Where Were You?

The figure in the title above is the amount spent to bring Bert Thompson here for the weekend seminar two weeks ago. This amount includes his travel, food, hotel, honorarium and expenses, handout materials, advertising and rental of the Salem Civic Center.

While it is true that the main focus of this series of lectures on Creation/Evolution was toward those not members of the Lord's church, of just as much significance was the emphasis placed upon the benefits for all of us at West Side. We need to be informed concerning new arguments by those who oppose the Bible's truths and be taught evidences that will assist us in our efforts to "be ready always to give an answer to every man" (I Peter 3:15). Our children, especially, need these vital lessons.

Although much was done in the way of preparation (billboards, bus ads, newspaper advertisement, "House to House", individual flyers, etc.) and many public statements were made concerning the importance of our attending and supporting this great event, the attendance by West Siders was deplorable! If the total expense figure is divided by 200 (as an average Sunday morning attendance at West Side), this means that \$34.31 was spent on you for this effort. What benefits did you derive from the money that was spent? If you were not present, you received no benefits--and no one benefited or was encouraged by your presence. Were your children present? Did you insure that they would be the recipients of this wonderful series of lessons?

I commend our elders for their foresight in bringing a man like Bert Thompson to our area (and I hope our lack of involvement will not deter them from doing it again). I also commend each one of them and their wives for their attendance at the seminar. If you were present and appreciate what was done, let these men know. If you were not, perhaps you need to give some thought to your priorities and some consideration to asking God's forgiveness for yours being misplaced.

Our gospel meeting with Burt Jones begins in one week. Where will you be during each service?

A Study of Haggai 7

The prophet Haggai was one of three postexilic (after the captivity) prophets of God (along with Zechariah and Malachi). His message was short and covered a time frame of less than four months (not long at all when one considers the history of the nation). Concerning his messages, thus far we have studied the first three (Consider Your... Ways, Work, Walk). We conclude our study by looking at Haggai's fourth message.

Message 4: Consider Your Warranty (2:20-23). Haggai's fourth prophetic message was delivered on the same day as the third; the 24th day of the ninth month (2:10, 20). It was addressed to the governor Zerubbabel.

This final message begins with a phrase that takes it back to a former message and clarifies it for us. *"I will shake the heavens and the earth"* is a figurative statement that was used previously in reference to the overthrow of nations (2:6). This current statement (2:21) reveals how this would transpire as these pagan nations would destroy each other (*"every one by the sword of his brother"*--2:22). History reveals this to be true in that the Assyrians were destroyed by the Babylonians, who in turn were conquered by the Medes and Persians. The Medo-Persian empire was overthrown by the Grecians, who were destroyed by the Romans (cf. Daniel 2:31-44; 7:1-14).

The promise that had been made to David (II Samuel 7:11-16) is now renewed through his fleshly descendant, Zerubbabel, who would be *"as a signet"* (2:23).

Interestingly, this Zerubbabel was a descendant of David through Coniah/Jeconiah (Matthew 1:11, 12), of whom it was said that *"no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah"* (Jeremiah 22:30). Thus, this honor now bestowed upon him was not realized in him personally, but through his descendant, Jesus. (By the way, if clearly understood as the Scripture presents it, this passage destroys the premillennial position. No descendant of Coniah, including Christ, would ever reign on the literal throne of David in Jerusalem). Key to the understanding of these matters is the phrase *"in that day"* which points to the Messianic age.

Thus, as Haggai's prophecy closes, the people are back in their homeland and the spiritual promise made to David has not been renewed through Zerubbabel, who was at this time the only apparent heir and successor of David. These nations would rise and fall until Jesus the Messiah, the true heir to the throne of David came and established His kingdom, the church.

Eddy

God--Is He, Or Isn't He?

"In the beginning was matter, which begat the amoeba, which begat the worm, which

begat the fish, which begat the amphibian, which begat the monkey, which begat man, who imagined God. This is the genealogy of man." So stated Charles Smith, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, in his booklet, *Godless Evolution*.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So stated Moses in the first chapter, the first verse, the first book of the Bible--Gene

Who is right? Is there a God, or isn't there? Is Exodus 20:11 correct when it asserts, "For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day..."? Or did organic evolution produce all that you see before you today?

There is no middle ground here. Any attempt to remain neutral automatically is synonymous with unbelief. Whatever decision you reach, it is an important one. And who among us makes important decisions without first gathering, sifting, examining, scrutinizing and weighing all the facts of the case? The question then arises, what is the evidence offered for God's existence?

If there is a God, then there is an eternal heaven to be gained and an eternal hell to be avoided. If there is a God, then nothing else really matters; if there is no God, then nothing matters at all. If there is no God, then the atheistic creed of life, with the grave as the end and a life to be lived with pleasures of the moment, is entirely satisfactory. On the other hand, if there is a God, and if the Bible is His inspired Word as it claims to be, then suddenly we come face-to-face with the stark realization that mankind was created with a purpose--and a lifetime to fulfill that purpose. To succeed means joy forever with God in eternity; to fail is to fail throughout eternity.

Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

A Study of Haggai -6

The "minor" prophet Haggai delivered a series of four messages to his postexilic subjects. These messages covered the time from the first day of the sixth month (1:1) to the 24th day of the ninth month (2:2) of the second year of the reign of Darius (520 B.C.). Although the time frame is relatively short, and his writing the second shortest in the Old Testament (only Obadiah is shorter), Haggai's message is powerful and contains many great statements and lessons for us. We continue our study by looking at Haggai's third message.

Message 3 Consider Your Walk (2:10-19). Haggai's third prophetic message was delivered just over two months after the second (2:10) and exactly three months from the time the work began on the temple (1:14, 15). It was delivered in the month Chisleu (equivalent to our December/January) and addressed to the people as a whole.

He began with two questions to the priests that illustrated the point to be made. The first question involved sacrificial meat. If such, being carried by a priest and being holy, were to touch another food item, would that make the item touched holy because it had been so touched by the holy item? The priests correctly answered, "No" (2:12). Being meat intended for sacrifice and prepared according to the precepts of the law did indeed make such holy; but the quality of holiness could not be transferred to another item just by the close proximity of the two.

The second question involved a person made unclean by reason of touching a dead body. If such a person touches these same food items enumerated in Verse 12, would those items be made unclean? The priests again answered correctly, "Yes" (2:13). One made unclean by touching a dead body would make all that

he touched unclean. Haggai concluded that Judah represented both of these (Vs. 14). They were "holy" in the sense that they had carried holy flesh, but they were "unclean" because of disobedience to God.

Haggai invites them to consider their recent history from some 14 years previous and before any temple work was done. They had assumed that their return from captivity would mean abundance from the Lord. They had gone time and again to the fields and wine presses expecting much, but received little. This, Haggai revealed, was further punishment from the Lord for their failure to make themselves clean. Though they were in the "holy" land and were themselves God's chosen ("holy") people, they yet were unclean.

However, Haggai further revealed that "this day" was a turning point (2:19). They had changed and were now obeying God's commands to *"be strong. . . and work"* (2:4). As a consequence, their future would be different from their past, provided they continued in faithful service.

Eddy

A Study of Haggai -5

Our last study focused on the first four messages clearly revealed in the writing of this "minor" prophet. Haggai's message was addressed to the leadership and pointed to the complacency of all involved with the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. His first message ("Consider Your Ways") is dated as being delivered "in the sixth month, in the first day of the month" (1:1). It resulted in renewed respect for God's work and the resumption of the work on the temple (1:12-15). We now turn our attention

Message 2 Consider Your Work (2:1-9) This second message was delivered one month and twenty days after the first (2:1). It came in the month Tisri (equivalent to our October/November) and was delivered to the political leader (Zerubbabel, the governor), the spiritual leader (Joshua, the high priest) and to "the residue of the people" (2:2). After the work had begun there were those who could recall the former grandeur of Solomon's temple who now were discouraged because this current work was nowhere near as magnificent. Haggai's second message was for the purpose of encouraging these disheartened ones to continue in their labors. His message resonates, "Be strong... be strong... be strong... and work" (2:4).

Verses 6-9 reveal the ultimate end of the promise referred to in Verse 5. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise would be the church, "the house of God" (I Timothy 3:15). The shaking of these nations would take place under divine decree until "the fullness of time" was come (Galatians 4:4). Daniel foresaw these events through the interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:31-44). God has always had just one "house," whether in reference to the temple of Solomon, the temple of Zerubbabel or the temple of Christ (the church of Christ). This latter "house of God" would be more glorious, far more glorious, than either the temple of Solomon or the temple currently under construction, the temple of Zerubbabel (Vs. 9). The peaceful nature of this "latter house" is revealed in such passages as Isaiah 2:2-4 and would be built and maintained by "the prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6, 7). Unlike these nations which would be shaken (Haggai 2:7), the kingdom of Christ would not be (Hebrews 12:26-28).

Eddy

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A Study of Haggai 4

Last week we looked at an outline of the four messages delivered by Haggai and

revealed in the two chapters and 38 verses that compose the book bearing his name. This week, let us begin an examination of each of these messages as we study the text of this great Old Testament book.

Message 1 Consider Your Ways (1:1-15)

In this first message, Haggai rebuked the leadership for their indifference toward the work of rebuilding the wall (recall that the work on it had stopped some sixteen years before-- Ezra 4:24; 6:15). As the record reveals, it was the "*second year of Darius*," who reigned from 522 B.C. until 486 B.C. Thus, it would have been 520 B.C., "*in the sixth month*" (Elul, equivalent to our September/October), on the "*first day of the month*" that Haggai delivered his stern rebuke to Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest).

There is quite a contrast between what "*this people say*" (Vs. 2) and "*the word of the LORD*" (Vss. 7, 8). Twice in this first discourse they were told to "*consider your ways*" (Vss. 5, 7). Times may have changed, but people have not. Still today there is a vast difference in what the people say and what the Lord says. There is still complacency and neglect in doing what God commands. Like those of Haggai's day, we must "consider" our ways.

They were chastised for building their own "*ceiled houses*" and trying to live in luxury while the house of the Lord lay in waste (Vs. 4). Far too many who claim the name of Christ today live for the luxuries of life and fail to work for the eternal kingdom (cf., Matthew 6:19-21).

As a consequence of their complacency they did not fare as well as they wanted or as they could have. Their harvests were scanty, their clothing inadequate and the wages they earned seemed to evaporate, as if "*put into a bag with holes*" (Vs. 6).

The remedy for their situation can be summed up in two words--"Get busy!" God reveals to them the reason for their plight: they had not obeyed His Word (Vss. 9-11). As a result, they did "get busy" and "*obeyed the voice of the LORD*" (Vs. 12). Consequently, the Lord said, "*I am with you*" (Vs. 13). Twenty-three days later the work on the temple was well underway (Vss. 14, 15). Eddy

A Study of Haggai 3

The message of Haggai's two-chapter, 38 verse book is actually four messages, each being delivered at a particular time pointed out clearly within the text. The time frame encompasses a three-month period in the second year of the reign of Darius the Mede. To borrow from a now unknown source, these four messages are outlined as follows:

I. Consider Your Ways (1:1-15)

Haggai's first message
Delivered on the 1st day of the 6th month

Roughly equivalent to our September
The message is to Zerubbabel and Joshua
They are exhorted in their work of rebuilding the temple.
The people are reproved for building their own houses and allowing the temple to lie in ruins.

II. Consider Your Work (2:1-9)

Haggai's second message
Delivered on the 21st day of the 7th month
Roughly equivalent to our October
The message is to Zerubbabel, Joshua and the residue of the people.
They are told to recall the glory of the former temple and compare it to the one they see now.

III. Consider Your Walk (2:10-19)

Haggai's third message
Delivered on the 24th day of the 9th month
Roughly equivalent to our December
The message is to the people.
They are told to ask the priests about what makes something holy or unholy.
His point is that their being who they were did not make them holy.

IV. Consider Your Warranty (2:20-23)

Haggai's fourth message
Delivered on the 24th day of the 9th month
The message is to Zerubbabel.
He would be made as "a signet", special in this work and time for the Lord

In our next article we will begin an examination of the text of this grand book.

Eddy

A Study of Haggai - 2

Little is known of the prophet Haggai himself. The scant information concerning him found in the book he wrote provides the limit of our knowledge of him (although he is also mentioned by name in the book of Ezra). Unlike some of the other prophets, there is no mention of Haggai's home, genealogy or other matters regarding his background. However, what we do know of him as revealed in his preaching shows us all that is truly important and all that we really need to know.

Haggai was a postexilic prophet. His work was done long after Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrians (ca. 721 B.C.) and Judah had been ravaged by the Babylonians (beginning in 606 B.C.). As promised by God, revealed by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:10) and recalled by Daniel (Daniel 9:2), the Babylonian captivity of Judah lasted for 70 years. At the end of that period "*the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus*" (II Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1), and he issued a decree allowing those of Judah to return to their land and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1). Under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2), the return from Babylon was made and the temple work begun (Ezra 3). Soon, there was opposition to the work by the enemies of God's people which became so intense that a decree was issued by

King Artaxerxes for the work to be stopped (Ezra 4). The unfinished temple was abandoned for a period of about 15 years. However, the people did not stop working. They worked on their own dwellings, fields and farms, and left off doing the work required for the completion of the temple of God. It was at this time that Haggai began his prophetic work. His message was simple and plain: God's house is still in ruins, and yours are finished and receiving all your attention! Haggai thus becomes God's man at the right time and place to urge the people on to the accomplishing of God's task. His words are simple, but his message is masterful in provoking these complacent Jews to action. His message is as meaningful for us today as it was when it was originally given. The "house of the Lord" (the church - I Timothy 3:15) is in need of our constant attention (cf. Acts 20:28-31). The words of Haggai remind us that the work of the Lord is never finished. It is a work from which we do not "retire" until we inherit that land of eternal rest. Eddy

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A Study of Haggai 1

Perhaps we have done a great injustice to the twelve shorter writings of the Old Testament prophets by labeling them "Minor Prophets". Likely, however, the greater injustice has been done to ourselves because in labeling them thus we have, in our minds, made their writings secondary and of little significance. For this and other reasons they are scarcely studied and their tremendous lessons go unrecognized by the average Christian. To be sure, these men were great men and their writings some of the richest material in the Bible. Over the next few weeks via this column we shall examine some matters regarding these "minor" prophets in general and then look at the book of Haggai in particular.

These writers are labeled as "minor" prophets because of the length of their prophetic time frames and the length of their individual writings. Theirs are shorter than those we term "Major Prophets". These things are true because these men had a particular mission and a specific matter about which they were to speak. One needs only to study the materials of these men to determine that there are some major productions by these Minor Prophets. As a reminder, the Minor Prophets include: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The work of any Bible prophet was primarily "forth telling". His job was to get a message or messages from God to the people. In instances, the prophetic element of "foretelling" was involved in this work as well. However, this was not his primary concern. His message to the people was first and foremost "thus saith the Lord". The book of Haggai serves as a tremendous example of this. Scarcely a sentence in this book is completed without encountering a phrase such as "the word of the Lord," "thus speaketh the Lord" or "thus saith the Lord." Indeed, these noble men served as mouthpieces for God to the people of their day; but their messages and lessons live on, transcending time, to reveal rich thoughts, principles and patterns for our lives as well. Truly, the only thing "minor" about these writings is their length. There is nothing "minor" about their message.

Eddy

Who Cares What God Thinks?

As this is being written, workers at the State Judicial Building in Montgomery, Alabama, are busy removing a 5,300-pound granite monument. On any other day and for any other monument this

would not be newsworthy. However, this monument has been the center of attention since its installation on July 31, 2001. Judge Roy Moore, who was elected as Alabama's chief justice in 2000, was under attack even before he was elected chief justice and before he had the monument placed in the Judicial Building's rotunda, because he displayed a plaque of the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. On Friday, August 22, he was suspended from his elected judicial post on charges of violating canons of judicial ethics for refusing to obey a federal court order to remove the monument.

Judge Roy Moore is "a Baptist layman." While we cannot agree with his doctrinal positions and although the Law of Moses (including the Ten Commandments) was *"taken out of the way"* when it was nailed *"to his cross"* (Colossians 2:14), we must still admire a man who will go to such great lengths to see that God is still given a place in our society. It seems that on every other hand God is being removed at breakneck speed by those bent on reaping the consequences of following the mistakes of cultures past. The importance of this event is not that a monument is being removed, but that the idea of God is being "removed". Illegal immigrants are allowed to remain in this country, pilfering from the pockets of its citizens, but God (the One from whom all blessings flow) is once again given the heave-ho. The vilest criminals in the most secure prisons of our lands are given more rights by our system than the God through whom *"we live, and move, and have our being"* (Acts 17:28). When Pilate said to Jesus, *"Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee,"* Jesus replied, *"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above"* (John 19:10, 11). It is high time that our modern government officials, like our original founding fathers, recognize their fragile positions of power are theirs only because the very God whom they are rejecting allows it to be so (cf. Daniel 4:25, 32; 5:21). No, it is not so important that a stone monument is being misplaced, but that God is being told, "We don't care what you think."

Ours is not the only nation to adopt such a WhoCares-What-God-Thinks policy. Every nation that has done so, however, has suffered greatly. One little nation in particular comes to mind--Edom. The prophet Obadiah addressed them thus: *"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD"* (Obadiah 3, 4). Any nation that thinks it rises above God has likewise been deceived by its own pride. Wake up, America!

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Setting Up Impotent Gods

Amaziah, son of Joash, was the ninth king of Judah. A portion of that which is recorded about him involved his war with the Edomites (children of Seir). He arranged for a hundred thousand mercenaries from Israel (particularly, Ephraim) to assist in the battle. However, a man of God came to him and warned him against allowing the Israelites to go to battle with Judah because God was not with the men of Israel (II Chronicles 25:6, 7). Hearing this, Amaziah sent the men of Ephraim back home. He then proceeded to go to war against

the Edomites with his own army.

Amaziah was successful in this battle against the men of Seir. however, when he conquered the Edomites he did a very peculiar thing. The Bible reveals that he *"brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed himself before them, and burned incense unto them"* (II Chronicles 25:14). Because of this, God was angry with him and sent a prophet to him asking this very piercing question: *"Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?"* (II Chronicles 25:15). He had set up the gods of the people he had just defeated to be his gods, even though these gods could not even deliver those people out of his hands. Later, he would himself be defeated because of this decision (II Chronicles 25:20).

It is amazing to think that a man of such high esteem and office could be so foolish and illogical, setting up gods as his own that were shown to be completely impotent in their ability to deliver their former adherents against him. In essence, he set up gods for himself that were less powerful than himself--certainly a situation destined for defeat.

As we contemplate this situation and think about its foolishness, how much it reflects the mindset of so many in our modern time. They see the futility of the "god of alcohol," yet they turn to it time and again. They see the impotency of the "god of money," yet they esteem it far greater than anything else. They see the futility in serving "the god of this world," yet they turn to him over and over. They realize how empty it is to serve the "god of pleasure," yet they return to him repeatedly. Amaziah can rightly be condemned for seeking after gods which could not deliver the people from his hands; but he is surely not alone in this mindset. Multitudes of men seek such gods that have been shown time and again to be impotent in their ability to help mankind and, in fact, have been shown to be very powerful in their destruction of man. Certainly, the Amaziahs of the world are not dead.

What about you? Are you serving gods that cannot save? Are there idols in your life? Is the kingdom of God the priority (Matthew 6:33)? If not, you are no better than Amaziah. Are you guilty of seeking *"after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people"*? It's still being done today. Eddy

Forming a New Denomination?

Much has been said (and rightly so) about the decision of the Episcopal Church to install its first homosexual bishop. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire has been allowed to assume that position in that denomination by a 62-45 vote of its bishops. Waves of repercussions are sure to result, not only in the Episcopal Church, but throughout the religious world. One thing is certain from all of this, the homosexual agenda is plodding its way through the ranks of American society.

After this monumental vote by the bishops of the Episcopal Church, Louis P. Sheldon (chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition) spoke out against the decision. He said, "You can't ignore what the Bible says clearly and emphatically. The American Episcopal Church is

inviting confusion by appointing a bishop who advocates a lifestyle choice which is sinful and against natural law. My guess is that a substantial number of faithful Episcopalians will now turn to other denominations or form a new denomination which heeds the Word of God."

To be sure, the decision reached by this group of bishops is deplorable to any who love the Bible; but underneath that decision lays the foundation for an even greater miscarriage of Divine judgment. To say that "the American Episcopal Church is inviting confusion" by its decision is to overlook the fact that the very existence of such a group as the American Episcopal Church (along with the existence of any and all other denominations) is "confusion" (cf. I Corinthians 1:10-13). The devil himself is the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). Since the Bible proclaims there to be only one church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; 5:23; etc.), any denomination is a violation of that Divine truth and an obstacle to unity.

It is of sad interest to note that Mr. Sheldon (and doubtless thousands of others) believes that this or any other group can form "a new denomination which heeds the Word of God". If it is a denomination, it is not "heed[ing] the Word of God." The only thing the Bible knows of denominationalism is that it is sinful. To leave one denomination and form another (regardless of the reason) is to step out of the proverbial frying pan and into the fire. Such a move can never result in greater unity. The only means to Biblical unity is to adhere to Biblical teachings and be one in speaking the same thing and having no division, being of the same mind and judgment (John 17:20, 21; I Corinthians 1:10). "Forming a new denomination" is not the answer because, by its very nature, a denomination does not "heed the Word of God". We certainly agree with these words from Mr. Sheldon-- "You can't ignore what the Bible says clearly and emphatically." Eddy

How Things Have Changed

I suppose we all enjoy history to some degree. Perhaps, like me, you enjoy reading of particular events that occurred on particular days in the past. I receive a couple of e-mails each day that tell of historic events that transpired on that particular date. Some are worthy of little consideration; some are quite interesting, and some are very instructive. One such interesting event caught my eye not long ago.

On June 18, 1903, the first transcontinental automobile trip began in San Francisco, California. It ended in New York City. . . three months later. Can you imagine traveling across the country in an automobile for three months! Today, we can travel across the country in only a matter of hours. Even by automobile it can be accomplished in less than a week. How times have changed since those first crude days of automobile travel.

As I thought about this trip and how it has been shortened so dramatically over the years, I could not help but think of how man has done the same thing with salvation. He has "shortened the trip" if you will. However, unlike the trip across the country, shortening the road to salvation is not a good thing.

The Bible reveals one must obey the gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 1:8) in order to

be saved. Involved in obedience to the Lord of glory (Hebrews 5:8, 9) is faith in Him as the Son of God (John 8:24), repentance of sins (Luke 13:3), verbal confession of one's faith in Him as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10) and baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). There are no shortcuts to salvation, and yet man has invented his own ways, hoping (in vain) to arrive at God's destination. Man has invented the "just ask Jesus into your heart" method of salvation (nowhere found in the Bible). He has invented the "pray the sinner's prayer" philosophy of salvation (nowhere found in the Book). He has concocted the "accept Jesus as your personal Savior" recipe for salvation (nowhere contained in God's Word). In his attempts to make shortcuts in other areas of his life, man has attempted to do the same with God's Word. However, God's Word does not change (Matthew 24:35). Man only shortchanges himself when he tries to cut short what God has commanded of him. Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ?

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Has It Been That Long!?

It hardly seems possible, but another year has come and gone, and I am again writing about another anniversary for the Gilpins at West Side. This week marks the end of our sixth year of service with you. In ways it seems as if we have been here all our lives. In other ways it seems as if it were only a few months ago that we arrived.

Whenever we first considered moving to West Side in 1997 and accepting the work here, Jeanny and I discussed the fact that we wanted to find a place that our two sons could call home. They were both born in Tennessee and had lived in Arkansas, Africa and Alabama; but, where would they call home? Sometime ago we asked them that question. Each of them replied, "Salem, Virginia." We are delighted that they consider Virginia their home and Salem their hometown.

It has been a privilege in every way to serve the Cause with you for these six years. You accepted us as family from day one and have treated us as such ever since. What a joy it is to be a part of this wonderful congregation. We love you all and thank you for allowing us the joy of being a part of your for these six years. We have so many pleasant memories, have made so many great friends and look forward to so many good times yet to come (if the Lord so will).

Thank you, dear family at West Side, for six wonderful years. . . and for the hope of so many more together. You've made it a pleasure in every way.

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*-#45)

In our final installment of this series we again look to the book of Revelation in regards to our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism. As we have already seen, there is no support for this doctrine in this (or any other) book of the Bible. As we have continually maintained throughout this series, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the

Bible is true, Premillennialism is false.

Revelation 22:6 states: *"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."* Revelation 22:10 states: *"And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."*

Previously, in studying from this same book, we noticed that the first three verses of Revelation are sufficient to refute the doctrine of Premillennialism. Verses one and three of chapter one contain the phrases *"must shortly come to pass"* and *"the time is at hand"* respectively speaking of the time element of the matters discussed therein. It is interesting to see that here, at the end of the book, the Lord saw fit again to have John repeat these sentiments. God anticipated every error that would come along. Every erroneous doctrine taught by man is answered in the Bible. The doctrine of Premillennialism is no exception.

As we noticed in our study of Revelation 1:1, 3, the fact that the matters discussed by John were to *"shortly come to pass"* and were *"at hand"* clearly reveals the significance of the events to be discussed to his current audience of the first century. To label these matters as end-of-the-world events (as Premillennialism does) makes John (and thus the Holy Spirit Who inspired him) untrue to his word. If these matters are premillennial in nature, there was nothing of significance to those people of the first century (John's primary audience); and he was completely wrong in indicating to them that these matters were of significance to them.

The same is true of the verse currently under consideration. The same phraseology is used at the end of the book that was used in the beginning. The time for these matters to take place was indeed *"at hand"* and these things would *"shortly be done"*. If Premillennialism is true, these matters have not taken place even to this good hour. Thus, these verses (1:1, 3; 22:6, 10) are all false. We know, however, that it is not the Bible that is false, but the doctrine of Premillennialism.

This concludes our survey of some Bible passages (and we've not looked at them all by any means) that are false if the doctrine of Premillennialism is true. These passages we have considered and this doctrine are completely incompatible. Both cannot be right. This being the case, the false doctrine of Premillennialism must be rejected by any who hold to the truthfulness and integrity of the Bible. Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*-#44

Again we come to look at the book of Revelation in regards to our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism. If there is anywhere in Scripture where this doctrine should be able to go for support, it is the book of Revelation. However, as we have already seen, there is no support for it in this (or any other) book of the Bible. As we have continually maintained throughout this series, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true, Premillennialism is false.

Revelation 1:9 states: *"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God,*

and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." What ! John a member of "the kingdom"? Is it not the case (according to Premillennialism) that John is about to write matters concerning the establishment of Christ's kingdom? How could he possibly be a member of that which is yet to be established?

In one of our previous studies we noticed that the Colossians were said to have been "*translated into the kingdom of His dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13). Paul even included himself in the number of those who had been thus "translated" (through the use of the word "us"). How could Paul, the Colossians and, now, John all be members of the "kingdom" if that kingdom is still not in existence in this the 21st century (as Premillennialism would have us believe? The answer is simple. The kingdom was in existence in the days of Paul, John and the Colossians. Premillennialism is false in its contention that the kingdom is yet to be established.

It is most interesting (not to mention quite telling) that the writer of the very book that is supposed to maintain the doctrine of Premillennialism more so than any other should make the statement that he was already "in the kingdom". As with our previous study of Revelation 1:1-3, this passage also places Premillennialism in a dilemma. If John is correct in stating that he was "in the kingdom," Premillennialism (with its boasts that the kingdom has not yet been established) is proven false. However, if Premillennialists maintain that John was not a member of the kingdom, they make him to be a liar and unworthy of consideration in anything else he might write about that kingdom.

This "dilemma" is easily resolved when one understands the truth of the matter-- Premillennialism is false. John was a member of the kingdom (as were Paul and the Colossians). It was in existence then and still is now. John was correct, and Premillennialism is false.

Eddy

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We're Off to "the Dark Continent"

After much planning, prayer and preparation, Wayne Dixon and I will leave tomorrow for Tanzania, East Africa. We will be joined along the way (in Detroit) by Gene Davis and Clovis (Cotton) Box from Alabama. We plan to return to the States on July 31. We covet your prayers for our families while we are gone, our safety in our travels and our success in preaching and teaching "*the unsearchable riches of Christ*" to the lost of Tanzania.

What a privilege it is to be able to be a part of this effort. I count it a signal honor to be involved in this mission effort with these fine men, all of whom I respect and admire greatly. I look forward to being associated in a very close way with these brethren as well as some old friends from our former stay in Tanzania. It will be good to see so many of them again. I am excited about the prospects of working with our good friends, the Staffords. They love the truth and have committed 18 years of their lives to this mission effort in Tanzania. I know of no one more qualified, or more committed to their work, than Cy and Stephanie.

I thank you for allowing me to be away from the work here at West Side in order that I may participate in this effort. I know I will grow spiritually from this and trust that it will, in turn, help my work among you when I return. You are a most gracious and benevolent people, and I am indeed blessed to be a part of this fine congregation.

Please consider this a personal request to each of you pray for us each day. Although we do not look forward to being away from our families for these 17 days, we do look forward to the opportunities this time will surely afford us. Pray for our families in our absence. Pray for opportunities for us while we are in Tanzania. Pray for those who work there on a continual basis. Pray for those lost souls with whom we will come in contact. Pray for the Lord's Word to have free course. Pray for our safety in travel. As we make this our mission for this short period, please make it your mission to pray for this effort during this time. Indeed, *"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

Thank you again for this opportunity. We look forward to reporting to you of our journey when we return. May God bless you in our absence as well.

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The Word, The Perfect Law of Liberty

As Americans, we treasure our freedom and our freedoms. "Liberty" has been a regular part of our national vocabulary as long as any of us can remember. Memorials, ongoing conflicts, elections, holidays and hearing of peoples who do not enjoy freedom all remind us regularly of the fact that we do.

As Christians, we have a far greater freedom than we do even as Americans, citizens of the greatest and most free of any nation to ever exist. We have freedom from sin, freedom from death, freedom from the terror that accompanies matters that are sinful. We have been made free through truth (John 8:32); not through its mere declaration, but through its application (Romans 6:17; II Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:8, 9).

As American citizens, we have the Constitution that insures our liberties. As citizens of the kingdom of God, we have an even greater document that directs us in the path of liberty. In James 1:22-25, the Bible states, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."* The underlined phrases all refer to the same item, the Bible. Simply stated, it is "the word". Nothing more need really be said. However, in order to clarify his meaning and further highlight its value, James refers to it as *"the perfect law of liberty"*.

Politicians, media personalities, historians and many others often refer to the majestic and unique nature of the Constitution. To be sure, it is a masterful, magnificent document; but, it is not perfect. One need only to look at the amendments to see that changes in it had to be made along the way. Additionally, changes are constantly being proposed for various reasons--some occasionally accepted, many rejected. However, when we examine the "Christian's Constitution," there is no need for any change to be made. It is perfect in every way. It is a *"lamp unto [our] feet and a light unto [our] path"* (Psalm 119:105). Examine this "perfect law". Let it lead you and guide you into freedom beyond compare. For truly, *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). This He can and will do through *"the truth"* (John 8:32), *"the perfect law of liberty"*--through its

application, not just its declaration.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*) #43

In our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism we come now to the book of Revelation, the book on which the doctrine of Premillennialism hinges. All Premillennialists turn to the highly figurative book of Revelation in support of their doctrine. Sufficient information has already been given to demonstrate that this doctrine

is not in agreement with the Bible. However, in order to expose it completely, we must engage in at least a brief study of John's Revelation. As we have noted continually throughout this series, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true, Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

Revelation 1:1-3 states: *"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

The Premillennial concept of the book of Revelation is that it is a book detailing "the last days" (as defined by Premillennialism) prior to "the Rapture," "the battle of Armageddon" and the return of Christ to earth to establish His kingdom and reign on the literal throne of David in the literal city of Jerusalem. As we have already seen in our study, none of these matters is in agreement with the Bible. However, the advocates of Premillennialism maintain that these matters are indeed taught in the book of Revelation. But, to the contrary, the first three verses of Revelation are enough to devastate this false doctrine.

At the outset of this book its inspired writer states to his audience (not to an audience two millennia down the road) that the particulars of this book concern *"things which must shortly come to pass"* (Vs. 1) and that for these matters *"the time is at hand"* (Vs. 3). Thus, whatever the particulars of this book address, it is very obvious that they were addressed to the people of John's day and not to 21st century man. What possible good could have been accomplished in addressing matters concerning 21st (or later) century man to the people of the first century? Why would the Holy Spirit lead a man to write to a particular group of people that things were "at hand" and to "shortly come to pass" knowing full well that those things were not "at hand" and would not "shortly come to pass," knowing also that the matters addressed in the book would not affect them in any fashion?

If Revelation 1:1-3 is correct, Premillennialism dies at the very outset of the book that is supposed to give it life. If Premillennialism is true, the first three verses of Revelation are false. Thus, for Premillennialism, this is a dilemma. To maintain that the first three verses are true is to deal a deathblow to the doctrine. To say that they are false would cast doubt on the remainder of the book. After all, if the first three verses cannot be trusted, what reason is

there to believe the remainder of the book can be?

Rest assured that Revelation 1:1-3 is correct. it is the doctrine of Premillennialism that is false. Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*) #42

We turn our attention to the book of First John as we continue our look at various passages regarding the doctrine of Premillennialism. As we have noted, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, since the Bible is true in its every facet, Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

First John 2:18 states: *"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."* The Greek word translated time is *hora* (hour). The definite article "the" is not found in the original. John thus states, *"it is last hour"* at the beginning of this verse and *"we know that it is last hour"* at the end of this verse. This Greek word is used at times to indicate the whole of the Christian dispensation (cf. John 4:21). "Last days," "last times," "last hour" and "these last days" are used interchangeably (i.e. Isaiah 2:2; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:21) in reference to the Christian dispensation, the last dispensation of time.

Premillennialism maintains that the "last days" (times, hour, etc.) is a reference to the final days just prior to the Lord's "return to earth" to establish His kingdom. As we have seen time and again, the Lord's kingdom is spiritual and not earthly in nature (John 18:36), and it is already in existence (Colossians 1:13, 14; etc.). When John penned these words (over 1900 years ago), he said, *"it IS the last time."* To further demonstrate this point he made it clear that the presence (at that time) of "antichrists" proved that it was "the last time." Only in the writings of John (I John 2:18, 22; 4:3; II John 7) does this word appear. He defines what he means by it (I John 2:22). The existence of these "antichrists" proved John's contention that the "last times" had already begun; and also disproves the premillennial contention that the "last times" are in reference to a time yet future.

Once again it is seen that the Scriptures will not support the premises of Premillennialism. It is a false system of thought. We now live in the "last days" and have ever since Pentecost of Acts 2. The "last days" (time, hour) is simply a reference to the Christian dispensation, the last dispensation of time. Eddy

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"I Know Him"

There are four occasions in the Bible (KJV) when the phrase "I know him" is used. Two of these instances involve Jesus' confession of His Father (John 7:29; 8:55). Another is used in reference to anyone who would make such a claim but who, in reality, does not obey Him (I John 2:4). The only other use of this phrase is found in reference to Abraham. It is the only time God Himself employed a statement in speaking of a man. Notice what He said about Abraham: *"For I know him, that he will*

command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

God has complete knowledge of each of us (I John 3:20). He knows our weaknesses and our strengths, our talents and our insufficiencies, our needs and our desires. He has not called upon us to do that which we are not able. Abraham was well suited for the task he had been given and the knowledge that was about to be revealed to him.

As He did for Abraham, what if God were to say of you, "I know him"? How would He complete that sentence? Would He be able to say of you, Christian father, "*that he will command his children and his household after him*"? Fatherhood has taken a beating over the past generation or so. Modernism has attempted to eat away at the role that fatherhood plays in our society. However, make no mistake, the home is incomplete that does not have a father willing to "*command his children and his household after him.*" Dads, you play a tremendous role in the lives of your children. They desperately need your guidance. They also need you to be guided by God.

To all the faithful fathers here at West Side we say, "Thank You," for leading and directing your children, for bringing them up "*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). Thanks for loving their mothers and loving your Lord. As was the case with Abraham, truly God has knowledge of you as well.

Thanks, Dads, for being active participants in the lives of your children. The world is made a better place because you do.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*) #41

We continue our series of studies of the doctrine of Premillennialism by looking to the book of Second Peter. As we have noted, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true (and it certainly is), Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

Second Peter 3:10, 11 state: "*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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*"

That "*the day of the Lord*" in this passage is a reference to the second coming of Christ there can be no doubt. Of the time in which that day and these occurrences will take place, Jesus said neither angel, men, nor He Himself knew (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). As Peter states, it would be "*as a thief in the night.*" Notice closely what will transpire when He comes again: 1) the heavens (atmosphere) will pass with a great noise; 2) the elements will melt with fervent heat; 3) the earth and all its works will be destroyed by fire. These matters being true, there is no room for the premillennial concept of an earthly kingdom. Simply put, there will be no earth on which to have an "earthly kingdom." Peter was dead wrong in that which he states here if Premillennialism is true. However, Peter is right on target with his statement. It is Premillennialism that is dead wrong.

At least one other point should be noticed from this passage. Verse 11 states, "*seeing then that*

all these things shall be dissolved...." The word for "dissolved" is the same Greek word found in Acts 13:43. Paul had preached to the occupants of a synagogue in Athens. His speech being completed, the Bible states, *"Now when the con gregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."* The phrase "broken up" is this same Greek word used in II Peter 3:11, where it is translated "dissolved." Thus, the heavens and the earth will be "broken up" just as the assembly in Acts 13:43. This being the case, there will be no place for the supposed earthly kingdom of Pre millennialism. Thus, this one word of this one verse is enough to refute this false doctrine in the mind of anyone who is rational. Once again the Bible is seen to be true, and the doctrine of Premillennialism is seen to be false.

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Our Special Summer Series

For some time we have contemplated having area preachers here at West Side for a special event. This year those plans come to fruition. During the Summer quarter (June-August), we will have a special Summer Series. During our Wednesday evening Bible class hour for this quarter we will have a guest speaker from the area. Our theme is "My Favorite Sermon." It will be a special treat for us, not only to have these very talented men preach to us, but also to have each one preach his favorite sermon. It promises to be a very uplifting event for us throughout the Summer. Below is a list of our speakers for this Summer Series. -- Eddy

Summer Series Speakers

- Glann Lee (Ft. Chiswell). June 4
- Neil Richey (Seven Hills). June 11
- Matthew Pitrucha (Collinsville). June 18
- Larry Phillips (Radford). June 25
- Clifford Newell (East Bristol). July 2
- Skip Francis (Suffolk). July 9
- Mitchell Floyd (Floyd). July 16
- Steve Smith (Wytheville). July 23
- Michael Carter (Dale Ridge). July 30
- Carnace Mannon (Laurel Hill). August 6
- Dennis Curd (Christiansburg). August 13

Clint Harper (Southside). August 20

Tommy Blewett (Lake Drive). August 27

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That Jewel Called "Consistency"

Perhaps the most illogical and inconsistent arguments being posed in the political realm today are those concerning abortion. This is certainly to be expected since there is no way one can justify murder and be consistent with moral and civil laws. And, abortion is just that--murder. The abortion issue has been a staple in the news since it was made legal in 1973. It will likely continue to be a headline issue for the foreseeable future.

The most highly publicized murder investigation currently in the news is the Laci Peterson case. Laci Peterson, who was in the last stages of her pregnancy with her son, Connor, was murdered in December of 2002. Her body and the body of her son were discovered when they washed ashore in California. Prosecutors have charged her husband, Scott, with two counts of murder in the first degree (a capital offense in California). The charges against Scott concerning his son has pro-abortionists up in arms since, at the time of the murders, the child had not yet been born.

Recently, an old case has had some additional exposure along these same lines. Terry Nichols, co-conspirator of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, awaits trial on 160 first-degree murder charges in connection with the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building (a crime for which Timothy McVeigh has already been put to death). Last week (May 14) Nichols was charged with two additional counts of murder in the deaths of two pregnant women.

Robbin Huff and Carrie Ann Lenz. However, he has already been charged with the murders of Huff and Lenz. The new charges are for the murders of the unborn babies these two ladies were carrying. In each of the now 162 counts of murder, the state of Oklahoma is seeking the death penalty.

In light of these cases it is right, consistent and logical for us to ask, "Which way is it going to be?" We have been told time and again by pro-abortion factions, liberal legislators and ungodly judges in this country that an unborn child is just an appendage of the mother, is not "viable" and has no rights. Now, this same government is in the process of trying two men for the deaths of unborn babies. The majority (27) of the states have fetal homicide laws. Ironic, isn't it, that a government bent on giving free reign to a mother to kill her baby in the womb because it is just so much tissue, will so quickly turn on a father (in the case of Peterson) who does the same thing! Again and again it is clearly seen that those who support abortion have "unequal legs" (Proverbs 26:7). Consistency is not on their side. So, too, with any who would claim to be a Christian while sup- porting (with their money or their vote) legislators who are pro-abortion. The way of truth is the way of consistency.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Primillennialism Is True*) - #40

In our continuing series of studies of the doctrine of Premillennialism we look again to the book of First Peter. As we have noted, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true (and it certainly is), Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

First Peter 2:5, 9 states, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

As demonstrated in several articles in this series, if what Premillennialism maintains is true, Jesus is not now serving as High Priest. In fact, if the Premillennial tenet is right, it would be an impossibility for Him to be so serving. The Bible reveals that He was to be/is a King and Priest at the same time (Zechariah 6:13, 14). However, He cannot serve as a Priest on earth (Hebrews 8:4). Further, if Premillennialism is true, He is not now a King; thus not now a High Priest either (since both occur simultaneously). This being the case, since by Premillennial standards Jesus is not currently a High Priest, the Christians cannot now be priests as maintained in these verses of First Peter. In order for a priesthood to be in place, there must be a High Priest. That High Priest in this arrangement is Jesus. Since, again according to Premillennialism, Jesus is not now King, neither is He currently High Priest. Thus, there is no system in place that will support the fact that Christians are priests as Peter declares.

As clearly seen by so many of the passages we have studied thus far, Premillennialism is a false doctrine. If it were true, passages like I Peter 2:5, 9 would be false. It would be impossible for it to be otherwise. However, since passages like I Peter 2:5, 9 are true, Premillennialism is that which is false in this instance.

Eddy

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Mother

The Bible contains the word "mother" 226 times. It is used in both the literal and figurative senses. It is used of both good and bad women. It is used as a term of endearment and as a term of treachery (cf. Revelation 17:5).

"Mother" is a word that can strike the heart- strings of the vilest of men. It, like "home," is a word that naturally invokes pleasant thoughts to most people. It is no wonder that we have set aside a day to honor and pay tribute to motherhood. Where would our world be without the influence of good mothers? Many a poet has been inspired by her; many a painter has tried to capture her essence; many a statesman has addressed her worth; many a man, while drawing his last breath, has thought and spoken of her. Indeed, she is worthy of our respect and honor on this and every day.

To the mothers of West Side we say, "Thank You" for your vigilance over your children, your loving, patient care of them, for they are the future. Truly, as Napoleon stated so long ago, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." If that is indeed the case, in the hands of Christian mothers, the world is in good shape for the future. Thank you, dear ladies, for your dedication to your families. We love you, one and all.

Eddy

Honor Thy Mother

God sought to give the sweetest thing
In His Almighty power
To earth; and deeply pondering
What is should be, one hour
In fondest joy and love of heart
Outweighing every other,
He moved the gates of heaven apart
And gave to earth a Mother.

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We're So Glad You Are Here!

If you are visiting with us at West Side today, be assured that it is an honor to have you with us. Annually we host our Introduce-A-Friend- Day for the express purpose of having visitors like you who are interested (or perhaps just curious) about the church of Christ in general, or West Side in particular. Whether you have come because of some advertisement, as a result of personal invitation or because you have thought about attending for some time and just chose today to do so, we are thrilled that you are a part of our services today.

As we worship the Lord this morning we will do the things the Bible directs us to do, engaging in the matters of worship specified in the Word of God. Worship must be directed toward God in the fashion which He directs (John 4:24). We will sing together, without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) and without being entertained by an individual or group. Also, we will pray together, being led in that public prayer by a Christian man (I Timothy 2:8). We will give as we have been prospered, as instructed by God (I Corinthians 16:1, 2). We will commune with our Savior in the Lord's Supper as we are instructed by example to do each Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-29). We will engage in a period of preaching (Acts 20:7). Today, in particular, this period will find us engaged in a study of worship in general, and these various articles in particular. We hope you will study along with us as we let the Bible direct us in what God requires of all men in worship.

Following our worship this morning we will eat together in our fellowship room and enjoy each other's company. We hope you will choose to stay and be a part as well. We promise you some good food in an enjoyable, wholesome atmosphere.

As our guest today, if you have any questions about the things that are done or said, please feel free to ask. You might want to ask someone with whom you are familiar (perhaps the person who invited you), or one of our elders, or our preacher, or perhaps our visiting evangelist, Glenn Colley. You might prefer to write your question(s) and have someone provide you with an answer. Whatever you choose to do, we assure you that we appreciate your concern and inquiry.

Again, thank you for coming our way today. We are so grateful to have you with us. We trust you will find us friendly and that you will want to visit again. It is truly an honor to have you.
Eddy

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A Meeting At West Side!

Next week we will begin our Gospel Meeting, and I am excited! Lord willing, all four Colleys will be here. It is so important that you decide today not to miss a *single* service. The West Side church needs 100% of her members actively participating. No member can consider himself faithful who chooses to absent himself from this effort.

Consider what some call the first Gospel meeting as Peter comes to teach the household of Cornelius, and what Cornelius said as Peter arrived. Peter questioned, "*I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me*" (Acts 10:29)? Cornelius responded, "*...and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*" (Acts 10:33).

"Thou has well done that thou art come..."

In the Greek this means literally, "you have done something very excellent" to come to us. Implied is an excitement about the Gospel he would preach. Romans 10:15 exclaims, "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*" The idea is of a house during war time, cowering in fear that they would be killed, only to hear the footsteps of the messenger coming to say, "The war is over! We are free!" Or perhaps of a doctor's footsteps coming down a hospital corridor to tell an anxious family that the surgery was successful. That's how we are about a man who comes to tell us the good news of Jesus Christ. Our sins are forgiven! We're going to go to heaven instead of hell!

"We are all here..."

Cornelius saw to that. In Acts 10:24 we read that upon hearing that Peter would preach, he called together his kinsmen and friends. This week we will have the opportunity to hear the good news preached. If we place the proper value on what is happening this week we will want others to know about it. Think. Who can you invite to come? Someone at work? A neighbor? One or two of your relatives?

"To hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Cornelius did not know the gospel of Jesus Christ yet, but had become convinced that there was a God, and that He had a will which had to be obeyed. Do we believe that with real conviction? Listen to James: "*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness (or, "abundance of wrongdoing", gc), and receive with meekness the engrafted word (engrafted means we put it deep into our hearts so it may take root and grow there, gc) which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was*" (Ja. 1:21-23).

I promise to do my best to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and I am counting

on you to be present with others to hear the things commanded of God.
Glenn Colley

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Falsehoods In The Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*)- # 39

In our continuing series of studies of the doctrine of Premillennialism we turn our attention to the book of First Peter. As we have noted, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true (and certainly it is), Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

First Peter 1:18-20 states: *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."*

Redemption's price was paid by the Son of God. His death on the cross assures man of the hope of eternal life for those obedient to His Will (Heb. 5:8,9). There is prophecy in Scripture concerning basically every facet of His life and death. In this particular instance, Peter speaks of His death as being something ordained before the world ever began. Let's look at this statement in relation to the modern ideas of Premillennialism.

As we have seen again and again, Premillennialism maintains that the death of Jesus was not a matter of certainty with God. In fact, the doctrine of Premillennialism maintains that the death of Jesus was not something on which God had planned. His original plan was for Jesus to establish His kingdom on earth. However, the Jews rejected Him as said king and put Him to death. When this occurred, God implemented the "church age" until such time when the Jews will receive Him. When that time comes, He will return to earth and establish His kingdom. As we have also seen many times, this doctrine contains much error.

In order for the Premillennial idea that Jesus' death was an unplanned and unexpected event to be true, we must reject the words of Peter in this verse under consideration (as well as numerous other passages of Scripture). Peter states that the death of Jesus (as with all other facets of His life) was an event planned before the world was ever established.

Is it not strange that those who espouse the Premillennial doctrine want to hold tenaciously to the blood that was shed on Calvary yet want to reject the eternal plan of God that brought it about. Isn't it indeed strange that this doctrine holds that a rejection by man (which had no place in the plan of God) brought about man's redemption (to use Peter's words). Indeed, the Premillennialist has plenty for which to answer.

Premillennialism is a false doctrine. These passages are true.

Eddy

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What a Great Group of People You Are!

So very often in so many ways I am reminded of what a wonderful congregation West

Side is. It is such a joy to be a part of this church! I was once again reminded of just how dear you are during the trials and death of our dear brother, Ron Doss. So much attention was given to the needs of this good family by so many of you. Your concern, compassion and love for them were overwhelmingly evident. There were so many tremendous comments by family and friends concerning the way West Side had taken care of this matter. Your outpouring of love during the funeral was especially evident with your presence in support of the family and food preparations to provide for their needs. The dinner following the funeral was wonderful and so deeply appreciated. There were numerous family members who were either not affiliated with the Lord's church at all or who were not associated with West Side who expressed their amazement at your demonstration of genuine love and concern. Once again, West Side comes through in a grand way! Thank you, one and all, for the atmosphere of love you have built and maintain.

As Charlie so often says, "There's no side like West Side." If you are reading this, and you are not a part of the West Side family, let us encourage you to investigate this congregation of the Lord's people. You will not find a friendlier or more caring group anywhere. We are always looking for folks who want to be a part of the Lord's army and serve in His ranks. Can we help you in your search for the truth and in your search for a great group of loving people with which to serve? If this is your desire, remember, "There's no side like West Side."

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (*If Premillennialism Is True*) -#38

In our continuing series of studies of the doctrine of Premillennialism we look once again to the book of Hebrews. As we have noted, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true (and certainly it is), Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

Hebrews 12:28 states: *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* In this context there is a contrast drawn between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion, symbolizing the contrast between Judaism and the Law of Christ. One of the prominent features of this contrast is *"the church of the firstborn"* (Hebrews 12:23). It is the same institution referred to as *"a kingdom which cannot be moved"* (Hebrews 12:28). As you will recall, the Lord had earlier spoken of these two as being one and the same (Matthew 16:18, 19). It is that Divine institution against which *"the gates of hell shall not prevail"* (Matthew 16:18). It is that kingdom (that would "stand forever") pictured by Daniel in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:44). It is that kingdom *"which cannot be moved"* (Hebrews 12:28). It is the church of our Lord, the church of Christ (cf. Romans 16:16; Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47).

In this particular Hebrews passage under consideration, the word "receiving" is a present active participle. The Holy Spirit could have chosen the future tense without any problem (and would have, had this kingdom been something future in its nature). Since He chose the present tense, this means that this kingdom was (at that time) something they were able to "receive". This being the case, it is not possible for this kingdom to be something yet

future in our day (as Premillennialism maintains).

Taken in conjunction with several other passages that speak of the kingdom as being present in that first century period, this text is devastating to the Premillennial doctrine. Some of these other passages include:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13).

"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:7).

"I John, who am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9).

Premillennialism is a false doctrine. These passages are true.

Eddy

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Faith Only. . . Again

While driving down the road not long ago I noticed a church marquee that read, "Faith can move mountains; put down that shovel." Such a saying sounds good on the surface, but is in contradiction to what the Bible teaches for our day and time.

Yes, I realize the Bible makes the statement, *"If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done"* (Matthew 21:21). I know also that this is the statement upon which this marquee was based. However, like so many other Bible statements, this is removed from its setting (both contextually and chronologically) and applied to individuals and times to which it should not be.

In the context of Matthew 21:21, Jesus had just cursed the barren fig tree. The tree immediately dried up (from the roots--Mark 11:20), and occurrence that caused great wonder among the apostles. To these men Jesus then made the statement concerning their faith, Clayton Gregory, Levi & Essie Graves, Rick Guard, Steve Harrah, Adrian Hopper, Betty Jenkins, Joe & statements as Matthew 21:21 are taken out of their settings and often made the be-all-and-end-all of one's duty to God. Faith (or, rather mere mental assent, which is not Biblical faith at all) alone is lauded as all sufficient, "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort" (Methodist Discipline, p.6). However, the Bible reveals that faith alone is dead (James 2:17, 20, 24, 26). Contrary to the idea of laying one's shovel aside, James reveals quite the opposite for those not having the miraculous abilities that the apostles possessed. In reading James 2 one is impressed with the truth that faith and works (obedience) go hand-

in-hand. One without the other is useless.

To be Scriptural, and thus of true value to men, the marquee should have said, "Faith can move mountains; So pick up that shovel." However, in their quest to establish a false doctrine, men all too often run squarely over the truth in their way. Faith alone will save no man (James 2:24); but it is a doctrine that will cause many to be lost.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True)#37

We continue in our series of studies of the doctrine of Premillennialism by looking again at the book of Hebrews. As stated all along in our study, if Premillennialism is true, these passages are false. However, if the Bible is true (and certainly it is), Premillennialism is a false doctrine.

Hebrews 10:17-22 states: *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

Several things should be noted from this passage. First, it should be noted that there would come a time when *"their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"* (Vs. 17). At the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews that time had already come. Paul was quoting from Jeremiah and shows from that quotation that the promised time of remission had been fulfilled.

Second, the writer states, *"where remission of these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin"* (Vs. 18). Naturally, if sins are remitted, there is no need for further remission. The means of sin remission in actuality had come (Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice). Since this was true, there was no need for further sacrifice. However, keep in mind that Premillennialism maintains a reestablishing of the Old Testament law (together with its sacrificial system) when Jesus returns. Such is incompatible with numerous Bible verses.

Third, Verse 19 begins with an interesting word--"having". As the context goes to show, the matters about which the author writes are in place. Verse 19 notes that we now have "boldness" because of His sacrifice. Verse 20 continues the thought by showing that the way is "new and living" and that it was made possible by His sacrifice.

Fourth, in Verse 21 the word "having" is used again (another assurance that the object under consideration is already in place). What is this object? Paul states that we now have *"an high priest over the house of God."* This is a very significant statement for two reasons. One, it reveals that the Lord is (at that moment and this) a "high priest". As we noticed in an earlier study, Jesus would be both priest and king simultaneously (Zechariah 6:13, 14). Therefore, since He is now a priest, He is also now a king. (Recall that He could not be both if He were on earth Hebrews 8:4). Two, it reveals that the Lord is (at that moment and this) over "the house of God". What is "the house of God"? It is His church (I Timothy 3:15), His

kingdom (Matthew 6:18, 19). So then, if Premillennialism is true and Jesus has not yet established His kingdom, how can the inspired writer of Hebrews state that He is now over that which does not exist?

The answer is simple. His kingdom is in existence. He is over it as both priest and king. Thus, Premillennialism is false. Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True)- #36

In our continuing study of the doctrine of Premillennialism we turn again to the book of Hebrews. There is much that is repetitive concerning this doctrine as we examine it through this book; however, in such repetition is demonstrated the ridiculous nature of the doctrine for, as we have stated many times, if Premillennialism is true, these passages cannot be. Likewise, if these passages are true, Premillennialism fails that test and should be rejected.

Hebrews 10:8-12 states: *"Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."*

As we study this passage, remember that Premillennialism maintains that the Old Testament system will be reinstated upon Jesus' "return to earth" (an event that will not happen). With this in mind, notice that the writer states that God had no pleasure in those sacrifices of the Old Testament (Vs. 8). God had ordained that system and those sacrifices. How is it that He had no pleasure in those things? They did not sanctify man. They did not pay redemption's price. It took something far greater to do that (the death of Jesus). Question: Why would God (as Premillennialism maintains) reinstate that in which He had no pleasure for the system His Son established (the Son in whom He was "well pleased" - Matthew 3:17; 17:5)?

The next verse (9) connects the Lord's doing the will of God with His taking away the law with its sacrificial system. Such had to be done in order for the second (the New Testament) to be established. Forgetting the numerous Scriptural references that refute Premillennialism for a moment, does it make any sense for God to send His Son to die in order that He might, through His death, revoke a system that He will later return to instate again? Not only does this doctrine violate numerous passages of Scripture, it violates principles of logic and common sense.

Verse 10 begins with the phrase *"by the which will"*. Which will would that be? None other than "the second" (from the end of Verse 9), the New Testament of Christ. Notice that it is through this will that man is sanctified. That being the case, the establishment (or even re-establishment) of another would nullify man's ability to be "sanctified". What does such a change say about the wisdom and integrity of God?

Verse 11 reveals that the offerings of that first covenant could "*never take away sins*". Never included the time when that law was effectual, and would certainly include any time after that. What good would it do for God to reinstate a system that, even when it was formerly in practice, could "never" take away man's sins?

The final verse of this passage reveals that Christ "*offered one sacrifice for sins for ever*". It would be no less than a slap in the face of the Savior to reinstate a system that could "never take away sins" to replace the one for which He died and which could take away sins.

Time and again Premillennialism fails the test.

The doctrine is false to the core. It relegates the role of Christ and His will (the New Testament) to temporary status and second place. These Hebrews passages are true; therefore, Premillennialism is false.

Eddy

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Whatever You Do. . . DO NOT MISS THIS!!!!

A very special weekend is scheduled for West Side April 12 and 13. Geoffrey Rowe will be here to present a series of lessons on "*The Bible & Science Versus Evolution*." Set aside these dates on your calendar. You do not want to miss this! If you have children or grandchildren, both you and they need to hear these lessons and see these presentations. Our children are being told on a daily basis that evolution is a fact and that there is no God responsible for the world we see around us.

There is no evidence supporting evolution! All evidence supports creationism! They need to see this!

On Saturday, April 12, Geoff will speak on "*Dinosaurs on Noah's Ark?*" (2:00-3:00pm). He will follow this with the subject, "*Just How Old Is the Earth?*" (3:30-4:30pm). These are both vital subjects and set the stage for this very crucial study. Following these lessons will be a *Question and Answer* period. Whatever you do, do not miss these lessons!

On Sunday, April 13, Geoff will speak on the subject, "*Why Are We Losing Our Children?*" during the Bible class hour (9:30-10:15am). During the worship hour he will present the lesson, "*Do Bible Believers Do Better Science?*" (10:30am). Sunday evening's lesson will be "*God's 'Big Bang'*" (6:00pm). Mark your calendar today! Do not miss this lesson

series!

Familiar to the vast majority of West Siders, Geoffrey Rowe is the son of our own Lacy and the late Mabel Rowe. He is an engineer with NASA and has worked at the Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station since 1981. Having been taught (and, at one point accepted) that evolution is fact, Geoff began to study and analyze the theory for himself. His studies have led him to the inescapable conclusion that the Bible and science are both in opposition to evolution. He is passionate about this subject and spends a great deal of his time either researching it or speaking about it. He is abundantly prepared to present the evidence concerning it. He uses PowerPoint to present the evidences in a very graphic and unforgettable fashion. You need to be here! Whatever you do, do not miss this series of lessons!

Reserve these dates now! Begin a list of young people, educators, friends and work associates you can invite to hear these lessons. They will hear the truth about evolution. They will walk away with more evidence in this short time that they have likely heard and seen in all their lives. They need to hear this message! You need to be here with them! **WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT MISS THIS!!!!** Eddy

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Do Not Opine What God Has Made Factual

The primary definition of the word "opine" is to "hold as an opinion." There is a current radio commercial that illustrates the point of this article and bears out the meaning of its title. The commercial is sponsored by Verizon and addresses their long-distance services. It opens with a spokesman saying to a group, "All long distance is not the same." To this, one in the group responds that it is not and then proceeds to talk about Verizon's long-distance plan. The spokesman then retorts, "Well, it seems as if we all have an opinion about long distance." Another of the group replies, "We don't have an opinion. We have the facts."

In the religious world today (and sadly, even within the church in some circles) men have tried to make that which is factual into mere opinion. It matters little about what long-distance carrier you use, but the idea the commercial presents is certainly true. If one has the facts about a subject, he has authority and truth; thus, opinion holds no sway. When God has spoken regarding a matter, those are the facts. There is no room in such areas for the opinions of man.

There are hundreds of Bible examples illustrating this point, but only a few will be noted here. In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" If this were the only verse in all the Bible speaking of either baptism or salvation, one thing would be certain--baptism is essential to salvation. This is not an area where there can be opinion, because the Bible reveals it as fact. Other verses bear this truth out as well (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:27, etc.).

Acts 2:38 states, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" This verse states as fact that baptism is "for (Greek word *eis*--in order to) the remission of sins." This is not a matter open to opinion. It is a fact. Baptism is essential for the remission of sins. The statement makes this matter one of fact and forever removes it from the possibility of the mere opinion of any man.

In Ephesians 4:4, inspiration reveals: "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.*" Since "the body" is the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18), there is but one church. This is a matter of fact. This being the case, it is not subject to man's opinion. The Bible is clear--there is but one church (the church of Christ). Regardless of how much man might attempt to wrangle over this matter or wrest the Scriptures regarding it, it will forever stand as a Bible fact and thus, will never be subject to man's

opining. The Bible doesn't have an opinion. It has the facts.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #35 Bulletin 02/23/03

We continue our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism by looking at additional passages from the book of Hebrews. As with others we have examined, if Premillennialism is true, these passages cannot be. Likewise, if these passages are true, Premillennialism fails that test and should be rejected.

Hebrews 10:1-6 states: *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 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 wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure."*

Recall from past studies that Premillennialism maintains that the Old Testament system will be reinstated upon Jesus' "return to earth." As we have seen, however, this is not in accordance with what the Bible teaches. If the premillennial teachings regarding this matter are true, passages like Hebrews 10:1-6 hold no meaning whatsoever.

This passage reveals a "never" about the Old Testament system of sacrifice. It can *"never... make the comers thereunto perfect."* Therein lays the "fault" of the first covenant (Hebrews 8:7). It was superseded by that which could make man complete -- the New Testament of Christ (Hebrews 7:19; 8:6). If the Old Testament system had been able to accomplish this, it would never have ceased (the thought conveyed in Paul's question of Verse 2). This being the case, why would God ever reinstate such an inferior system? The answer, of course, is that He would not and will not.

This passage also reveals an impossibility -- *"it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"* (Vs. 4). Since this is true, why should God set aside that sacrifice (Jesus) which could accomplish this for man to reestablish a system far inferior that could never accomplish this task? Again, the answer is obvious.

This passage teaches the very reason for the Lord's coming into the world (Vs. 5). *"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not."* Why? Because they were insufficient to satisfy the justice of God. After all, they can never take away sin (Vs. 4). *"But,"* he states, *"a body hast thou prepared me."* What kind of body? A body intended for sacrifice; the kind of sacrifice that those bulls and goats of the Old Testament could never be. Thus, Jesus came into the world, not

to establish an earthly kingdom, but to die a sacrificial death. (Remember that Premillennialism maintains that the death of Jesus was unexpected and unplanned for by

God.)

Finally, if, as Verse 6 states, "*in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure,*" why would He then seek to reestablish such a system? To ask is to answer. He would not. He will not. He could not. To do so would be to turn His back on all the redemptive work accomplished by the death of Jesus.

As stated previously in this study, the New Testament is God's will for man today and will be until time is no more (Hebrews 1:2; James 1:25). This being the case, Premillennialism is false. These passages are true.

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #34

Bulletin 03/16/03

We continue our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism by looking at additional passages from the book of Hebrews. As with others, we have examined, if Premillennialism is true, these passages cannot be. Likewise, if these passages are true, Premillennialism fails that test and should be rejected.

Hebrews 9:15-17 states: "*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*" As has been stated already in this study, Premillennialism maintains that the Old Testament system will be reinstated upon Jesus' return to the earth when He established His Kingdom. Neither the reinstatement nor the establishment of an earthly kingdom have any basis in reality. None of these will ever happen.

This passage demonstrates that Jesus is "the mediator of the new testament." Being the mediator of the New Testament (which is far superior--Hebrews 8:6), why would He ever seek to reinstate the Old Testament? The Premillennial supposition that He will come back to the earth and reign over some reinstated Old Testament Judaism is without merit and nullifies the New Testament which His blood ratified (Matthew 26:28).

Further, this passage maintains that for a testament to be of force, there must first be "the death of the testator." Just who is it that is going to die and make the Old Testament "of force" again? Jesus died to make the New Testament "of force," and in so doing sealed it for all time as the covenant God recognizes and requires His people to follow.

Finally, the passage teaches that a testament is in force only after its testator is dead. (Those who place more trust in the thief on the cross than the cross of Christ for their salvation would do well to understand this point.) At His death, the will (testament) of Christ (the New Testament) became effective. It, and it alone, provides that man needs in order to be saved eternally (cf. Vs. 15); something the Old Testament with its accompanying sacrifices could never do (Hebrews 10:4).

The New Testament is God's will for man today, and will be until time is no more

(Hebrews 1:2; James 1:25). There will not be another dispensation following this one as it encompasses "the last days" (cf. Acts 2:17). The truth of this matter is that Premillennialism is false to the very core. It denies that Christ is now reigning, annuls the gospel dispensation, makes the first coming of Christ a failure and denies the Scriptures which teach that the Second Coming will also be the end of the world. God's Word is true. Therefore, Premillennialism is false. Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #33 Bulletin 03/09/03

In our continuing study of the doctrine of Premillennialism, we look further into the book of Hebrews, a veritable gold mine of passages dealing with this subject. As has been the case all along, if Premillennialism is true, these New Testament passages must be false. However, if these New Testament passages are correct, then Premillennialism is wrong.

Hebrews 9:11, 12 states: *"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* In the preceding verses of this chapter, Paul goes to great lengths to describe that first tabernacle (the one built by Moses). He details some of the sacrifices that were offered and some of the activities of the priests in the process. He then concludes that the tabernacle and all these matters surrounding it were figures that obviously pointed to the true substances, which were (at the time of the tabernacle) yet to be revealed.

Verse 11 begins with the word "but." It reveals an obvious contrast. The contrast is between the tabernacle of Moses (the figure) and the tabernacle (church) of Jesus (true substance). The tabernacle of Jesus is "not made with hands." As we have seen many times in this study, it is not material in nature (cf. John 18:36). Again, in contrast to the annual trek of the high priest into the Most Holy Place of Moses' tabernacle, Jesus *"entered once into the [Most] holy place."* Having done so, he accomplished eternal redemption for those who would obey Him (cf. Hebrews 5:8, 9). He thus finished His work (John 19:30). That being the case, He has no further work to accomplish on this earth. He will return "in the clouds" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17) to collect His own, but the Scriptures nowhere teach that He will ever set foot on earth again. Why would He? His work here has been accomplished. His "tabernacle" has been established. Redemption's price has been paid. However, if Premillennialism is true, these are fabrications and not facts; thus, the Hebrews writer was wrong. On the other hand, if the Holy Spirit's record is correct, Premillennialism suffers yet another defeat. Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #32

Bulletin 02/02/03

We continue our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism by examining New Testament passages that are made false if Premillennialism is true. We have been in the book of Hebrews for several weeks because of the nature of the book and its rich supply of passages that refute this false doctrine.

Hebrews 8:4 states: *"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."* This passage has been referred to several times already in this study. However, it is such a notable passage that it could not be overlooked as we approached it in our survey of the book of Hebrews. We have noticed several times in our study the fact that Jesus was prophesied to be a high priest and a king (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:21; II Samuel 7:12, 13; Psalm 132:11). We have also noted that He was to hold both these positions at the same time (Zechariah 6:13, 14). This current passage reveals the truth that Jesus could never be a priest on earth. He could not because such would be a violation of the law of Moses, the very law which supplied the requirements for the priesthood (Hebrews 7:14). Since He could not and cannot serve as high priest on earth, the same is true of His being a king on earth (which, of course, Premillennialism maintains He must). Stated plainly in syllogistic form, the argument is this:

- 1) Jesus was to serve as both king and priest at the same time (Zechariah 6:13, 14).
- 2) Jesus could never serve as a priest on earth (Hebrews 8:4).
- 3) Therefore, Jesus could never serve as king on earth.

The conclusion is irrefutable. Jesus will never serve as king on earth because He can never serve as a priest on earth.

How then is He to be king and high priest? He is such now--not over a physical kingdom, but over a spiritual kingdom. Paul spoke of His being (presently) a high priest (Hebrews 8:1). He has been serving as king over His kingdom since Pentecost (Acts 2:29-36; esp. Vss. 31, 33) and will continue to do so until "the end" (I Corinthians 15:23, 24). Jesus Himself stated that He was never intended to be a king over a physical kingdom (John 18:36).

We currently have a high priest and a king-- Jesus the Christ. He reigns from heaven at God's right hand (Acts 2:33; 5:31; Hebrews 10:11-13) over His kingdom, the church (Matthew 16:18, 19). However, if one is to believe Premillennial doctrine, he must reject all of these Bible truths. The two are not compatible.

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Premillennialism Is True) #31

Bulletin 1/26/03

In our continued study of the false doctrine of Premillennialism, we continue to examine the book of Hebrews, a rich volume, containing much material about this subject. Last week we looked at Hebrews 7:23-25 and noted the use of the present tense in speaking of the priesthood of Jesus. We continue on this same thought in this week's article.

Hebrews 8:1, 2 states, *"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."* One is immediately impressed with the fact that Paul states, "we have" (currently) "an high priest." He also states that He "is set" (currently) "on the right hand of the throne of

the Majesty in the heavens." This is in perfect accord with Peter's statements on Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:30-36). Peter states, "*Therefore being [currently] by the right hand of God exalted*" (Acts 2:33). Also, Peter ties this fact with the promise made to David that Christ would sit on His throne (Acts 2:30). Thus, at that time on that Pentecost day Jesus was sitting on the right hand of God, on David's throne, ruling over His kingdom. As Paul states in the verse of Hebrews currently under consideration, "*we have [currently] such an high priest.*" Not only is He sitting as High Priest, but also as King. As we have seen numerous times in this study, these two must be done simultaneously (Zechariah 6:13, 14).

Paul also states that He (Jesus) is "*a minister in the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*" This "true tabernacle" is the church, the antetype of the tabernacle of old. It is the kingdom (Matthew 16:18, 19). Men are added to it by Him upon their obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:47).

What, then, do we determine concerning the Pre-millennial theory as we study these passages? We note that we currently have a High Priest. We also know that we currently have a King. That High Priest and that King are one and the same -- Jesus, the Christ. We know that he reigns as High Priest over His kingdom (something he could never do on earth). Thus, we determine that He reigns (currently) as High Priest over His spiritual kingdom, the church. This being the case, we should not look for a future fulfillment of these matters since they have already been fulfilled and are in existence at this present time. Premillennialism is in opposition to these passages. Both cannot be true.

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The Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #30

1/19/03

We turn again to the book of Hebrews in our study of the doctrine of Premillennialism. As stated before, this book contains an abundance of information that refutes this doctrine.

Hebrews 7:23-25 states: "*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" The contrast between the Old Testament priesthood and the New is evident yet again. The priests of the Old Testament ceased to serve as priests when they died. However, because He ever lives, Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood. This is an indication that the first priesthood changed and, because of the death of the priests, was in a continual state of change. These are not characteristic of the priesthood of Jesus.

Notice carefully the tense of the words used in these passages. Of those Levitical priests of the Old Testament, Verse 23 states that they "were" (past). Of the priesthood of Jesus, Verse 24 states that He "hath" (present) an "unchangeable priesthood". Verse 25 continues the use of the present tense in stating that He "is able" and that He "ever liveth". There is a definite contrast between these two. However, there is another very vital point to be made here. If (as Premillennialism suggests) Jesus is not yet serving as King, neither can

He currently be serving as Priest (Zechariah 6:13, 14). Since He is not now serving as King (again, according to Premillennialism), we have no High Priest. Quite to the contrary, however, the Hebrews writer states that we do have such--Jesus "hath" (currently) such an office. That being the case, He also currently has a Kingdom and serves as a King.

If Premillennialism is to be believed, we currently have neither a High Priest nor a King. The Bible states that we currently have both. One can accept the Bible as truth, or Premillennialism. However, he cannot accept both. If Premillennialism is correct on this issue, the Bible is wrong. If the Bible is right about this matter, Premillennialism is wrong. Which will you choose? Eddy

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the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #29

1/12/03

Since it involves so many matters pertaining to the doctrine of Premillennialism, the book of Hebrews is a vital resource in demonstrating the falsehoods contained in this doctrine. Virtually every chapter contains statements that deal a deathblow to this false system. The author's purpose in writing the book of Hebrews was to stem the tide of those who were turning back to the law of Moses and the Levitical system. One of the primary planks in the system of Premillennialism is the reinstatement of this Levitical system upon the return of Jesus to earth and the establishment of His earthly kingdom. If this Levitical system cannot be so reinstated, one of the primary pillars of Premillennialism is taken away. In light of these thoughts, let us examine another passage from Hebrews.

Hebrews 7:11-14 states: *"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."*

First, Paul (the likely author of Hebrews) is quick to point out the imperfect nature of the Levitical system and the law of Moses. If that system had been complete, there would have been no need for "another priest" (Jesus) who would *"rise after the order of Melchisedec"*. However, the fact that Jesus did so rise after such order indicates the insufficiency of the law of Moses and the institution of a better plan (the New Testament).

Second, such a change in the priesthood necessitated a change in the law. The law that governed the former priesthood (the Old Testament) would have forbidden the high priesthood of Jesus (as Paul goes on to show in Verses 13 and 14). Thus, another law had to be implemented -- one that would allow His priesthood. That law is the New Testament. That law allows His priesthood; but it also supersedes the former law that forbade such a priesthood. Why would God again reinstate a law that He had determined to be inadequate and that would forbid His Son from serving as High Priest? However, if Premillennialism is

true, that is exactly what He must do.

Third, the lineage of the Lord came through Judah, not Levi. Thus, as Paul so eloquently states in these verses, Jesus could never serve as a priest on earth under the Levitical system (cf. Hebrews 8:4). It would be a violation of that law. Also, as we have noted several times in this study, Jesus was to serve as both king and priest simultaneously (Zechariah 6:13, 14). Thus, if He were to be a king on earth (as Premillennialism would make Him), He must also serve as High Priest on earth (which thing Hebrews 7:11-14 and Hebrews 8:4 forbid).

Again it becomes very evident. Either Pre-millennialism is true and the Bible is wrong, or the Bible is true and Premillennialism is wrong. Jesus currently serves as both King and Priest (as the Bible says He would). he will not (yea, He cannot) serve in these capacities on earth (cf. John 18:36). His kingdom is in existence now. It is spiritual in nature. . . and you can be a part of it.

Eddy

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Falsehoods in the Bible (If Premillennialism Is True) #28

Bulletin 01/05/03

We continue to examine passages from the book of Hebrews in our look at Premillennialism. Hebrews has a great deal to say about Jesus and His mission in coming to this earth. It demonstrates that Christ came to die for the sins of man, not to establish an earthly kingdom. Let us examine some additional passages from Hebrews.

Hebrews 6:19, 20 states: *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* Two things of note concerning this subject can be seen in this passage. First, Jesus "is entered" within the veil. That is, He has entered into the eternal realm (heaven) "for us." Second, He has been made "an high priest for ever." Let's look at these two matters in greater detail.

The fact that Jesus has entered into heaven says a great deal. It reveals that His mission on earth is complete, as He Himself stated (John 17:4; 19:30). It shows He has taken the position prophesied about Him (II Samuel 7:12, 13; Psalm 132:11; Daniel 7:13, 14; Acts 2:29-33). It demonstrates that He is seated on His throne with earth His footstool (Acts 2:34-36).

The fact that He has been "made an high priest for ever" shows that He will not relinquish that position. However if, as Premillennialists maintain, He will one day return to earth as a king, He must relinquish His position as a priest, since He cannot so serve "on earth" (Hebrews 8:4). As we noticed from a previous installment, Zechariah reveals that His service as priest and king would be simultaneous (Zechariah 6:13, 14). So, if He should return to earth, He could not be a priest. Likewise, He could not be a king, since He must serve as both at the same time. His priestly and kingly thrones are in heaven where He is and has been reigning since his ascension. As you might imagine, these facts cause

Premillennialists no small problem.

Therefore, once again, we must make a choice. One can believe Premillennialism, or he can believe the Bible. He cannot hold to both. If Premillennialism is true, the Bible is wrong.

Eddy

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