

see also [David Ogaga](#) on the rapture

# The Rapture?

We have not written on the rapture before, although we have often spoken on the subject. But recently we have met many people who do not understand how to teach others concerning this great subject. Controversy surrounds the doctrine. Fellowship is broken based on the doctrine. There are fractures within those who do believe in the rapture based on whether the rapture is pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation or post-tribulation. That particular concept is based on the thought that there is a tribulation; however, there are some who do not believe in such. Ah, the rapture is a theology that stirs the heart of many. Someone is right, and most are wrong.

Of the Protestant churches in the United States, the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Disciples of Christ and many of the other major denominations do not believe in the rapture. The theology is found in fundamental and Pentecostal churches as a rule. While the evangelicals would call the other churches "liberal" today, in their day of founding the liberal churches were quite conservative. It is to the roots of the major denominations that we will first turn. The fundamental and Pentecostal churches are in a minority in their belief.

Rapture is a theological term used by many evangelical Christians who believe that they will be taken out of the earth before the second coming of Christ. The basis for this is out of the Gospels where one is taken and one is left as in the Days of Noah. The evangelical churches that believe in rapture teach the saint leaves the earth. But the proof is that Noah remained and the wicked were removed. Besides, the meek inherit the earth, the Scripture also declares.

Some evangelical churches have even integrated two events into a simultaneous occurrence. The merging of the Second Coming of Christ with the rapture is also an untenable position. It cannot be done.

As Alan Campbell has written: *"Such a teaching was unknown to early church fathers as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertulian, who were convinced the Christian church would pass through the great tribulation at the hands of an anti-messiah system before the return of the Saviour. Furthermore the rapture theory was not taught by the great stalwarts of the Reformed Faith - Huss, Wycliffe, Luther (Lutherans), Calvin (Reformed church), Knox (Presbyterians), Crammer or even the Wesleys (Anglican, Episcopal, Methodists) in the 18th century."* The first mention of rapture was not until at least 1812, and most sources seem to point to 1830 or so.

The early church fathers never preached rapture, which is different from the Second Coming of the Lord. The word rapture is not found in the Scriptures. These two statements were the thoughts that caused me over time to investigate the veracity of the Scriptures concerning the doctrine of the rapture and whether or not it was true. I hope this small booklet is helpful to you.

## *Two Schools of Theology: Historical and Futuristic*

The one school believes that most of the Bible has been completed. The other believes that most of the Bible is yet future. The Reformation, which was a movement to change what we today call the Roman Catholic Church, was begun in the 800's by the Waldenese. It culminated with Martin Luther's 96 points of suggested change on a Wittenberg Abbey door in Germany in 1517. He was followed very shortly by other men of great caliber such as Knox and Calvin, not to mention the advent of the printing press by Gutenberg who expedited the explosion of knowledge through the printed page, which never had been done before.

Luther, in his writings, calls the Pope the antichrist and clearly shows why in Scriptures. As one studies the writings of Luther he explains his historical interpretation. If one wants to study secular history you will find that some Popes were women and had children. At one time there were two Popes fighting for supremacy, one in France and one in Rome. If one wishes to study, we suggest the book, Two Babylons - Papal Worship by Alexander Hislop, 1959 or Babylon - Mystery Religion by Ralph Woodrow. These two books give a detailed history of why the Protestant leaders were so against the corrupt church system.

It would shock many evangelical Christians to learn that their theology comes from the Roman Catholic church. A Jesuit, named Ribera (1537-1591) who first taught that Daniel and Revelation were "futuristic" in their fulfillment, began a line of theological thinking that would be expanded upon. The Roman church was losing thousands of people a day from their church as the people heard and agreed with the Reformers. The bleeding Roman Church was trying to staunch the flow of income it was losing and also was trying to distract people from the Roman Church by showing through a new theology that it was not the antichrist but rather it was yet to come. Another priest, Cardinal Bellarmine, helped Ribera in his charade.

The historical school shows how the book of Revelation is and was completed many years ago. The futuristic school looks for a physical antichrist, one man, a seven or at least a three and one-half year tribulation and a millennial reign of Christ. These concepts all came out of the works of Jesuits who wrote to confound and redirect Protestant ire. We are not going to write on those subjects but it is interesting to note that John states that the antichrist was already there in the first century!

Two books which explain why there is no seven year or even three and one-half year tribulation are What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation by William Kimball and The Parousia by Stuart Russell. John Bray has written a pamphlet showing why the pre-tribulation rapture is wrong entitled The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching. These men refer to Ribera and a Jesuit priest, Lacunza, who did substantial writing in the 1800's to foster the development of a futuristic theology.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia has a book entitled The Coming Messiah written by Rabbi Ben Ezra which was the pen name of Emanuel Lacunza. This book had a major impact on the Protestant move. The Protestants believed that from the Dark Ages (4th century) to the Reformation was the reign of the antichrist. The Roman church held the idea that from 1580-1830 the antichrist was a person yet to come.

Unfortunately, present day Protestants (any one that is not a Roman Catholic) have preached such silly things as Mussolini as the antichrist, then Hitler, then Kissinger, then Gorbachev (some even said he had the mark on his forehead!). Some thought and preached the social security system was the mark of the beast in the 1930's. Then we have heard the evangelicals state that the ten toes of the man in Daniel are represented by the common market members. As of 1998 there are 16 members and more applying. So goes carnal theology.

The teaching of the futuristic theology entered evangelical Christianity in the 1800's. Lacunza, a Jesuit priest wrote his showing that Jesus must return twice not once as Scripture states. This secret coming was a rapture. This way the saints could escape the coming "tribulation" and the "antichrist." The archbishop of Canterbury in England read the book and the idea became prevalent in the Anglican church (USA counterpart Episcopal). However, recent research by Rev. John Bray indicates that Morgan Edwards was the first in 1788 (Morgan Edwards and the Pre-Tribulation Rapture by John Bray).

Secondly, Bill Britton brings out in his pamphlet The Rapture of the Church 'what is it'? that Edward Irving, who was the founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church, preached the idea of a rapture. This man was a Scottish Presbyterian minister who had accepted the idea of Lacunza and then was filled with the "baptism of the Spirit" and left the church to formulate a Pentecostal church. He, unfortunately, brought with him some of the theology of the Roman church. His church was in London. During a service there a young Scottish woman named Margaret Macdonald spoke in prophecy concerning a secret rapture, although others believe it was another person (according to MacPherson's study).

Another source was J. N. Darby, a Christian man who was considered perhaps as the founder of the Brethren Movement. He was an Anglican and attended meetings in Ireland concerning the secret rapture. Some sources indicate that he was involved with McDonald in some way. Scofield incorporated in his Bible the notes of Darby on various verses, without consideration of his thoughts. Scofield's Bible became very popular since many people could read it and study his footnotes. People read the Bible and footnotes and were greatly influenced in their teaching by the notes -as they are today.

These three men - Lacunza, Irving, Darby - are responsible for the premise of a rapture. But if one has such an idea then other factors have to come into play.

#### *The Tribulation, What About it?*

John 17:15 truly answers that - *"I pray not that you (disciples) should be taken out of the world, but that you (Father) should keep them from evil."* Or consider Matthew 5 which states: "the meek shall inherit the earth," or even the Lord's Prayer which states in Matthew 6: *"Your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* There are many more verses that show the saints remain, even if there is a tribulation.

The Bible Verses Millennial Teachings by George C. Lubbers on page 237 states the following: *"We desire the reader to keep in mind that we are not interested in giving a history of Dr. Scofield's work, dating about 1843 (which incidentally was a time when such heresies as Christian Science, Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism appeared) but we are interested in some of the basic teachings and constructions, which are today the structural teaching of Dispensationalism in America."* There are two points here. First, the point that Scofield's ideas of futuristic thought were new with dispensational ideas (dispensational meaning the Bible is divided up into certain time elements as to eschatology [study of final things]). Secondly, there was much paganism that had been created with a "Christian flavor" - Mormonism, Christian Science and now also Scofield's ideas which had come from Lacunza.

It is important to note that each of these other movements created or were looking for some future kingdom to come. Mormonism looked for the kingdom to come. The Reorganized Latter Day Saints church and Mormons have purchased a lot of land around the Kansas City, Missouri, area for the expectation that the kingdom will be set up there. The Seventh Day Adventists were noted in 1844 for going to the mountains and selling all they had for the literal return of Jesus. Unfortunately, the same thing happened in Korea in 1988 and it was false, as was the book that was printed in the USA proclaiming such. Christian Science taught that this life was unreal and that if you were active in your mind, you could deny sickness saying that it didn't exist. Quite metaphysical. While it is true that some sickness is psychosomatic or mind-induced, you cannot deny its effect.

Lubbers goes on to expose the error of dispensationalism as Scofield presents it. Scofield said there was no grace until Christ. But Noah found, as the scripture declares, "grace" in the eyes of the Lord. Scofield limits 'the "Promise" to the chronological time between Abraham and Mount Sinai, the time of the 'Law giving', he has made it impossible for himself (Scofield) to do justice to the great "Promise" as given already by God Himself in Paradise to Adam and Eve at the very dawn of History."(pg. 244).

Rev. Lubbers was of the Reformed Church and preached over 50 years in the USA. His research is highly regarded and expresses the thought of the Reformers rather than the Jesuit's teachings. There are many that will and can expose Dr. Scofield's notes for their errors. Again most of his notes came from his relationship with Darby and the Irving Movement.

The futuristic school of theology propounds the theology which includes the following: a return of Christ personally, a secret rapture (either before the tribulation, in mid-tribulation or after the tribulation), a tribulation of seven or a time period of two three and one-half years, an antichrist who will rule until overthrown, a literal millennial (meaning 1,000 year) reign of Christ, followed by the release of Satan to rule the world and delude it again and then the lake of fire, the end of time with people either in the new Jerusalem, seen as a literal place, and the wicked outside the city burning. While there may be some variation along these lines of thought, these come from the major theology of the Lacunza and Tractarian societies and the Roman Church.

The historical theological viewpoint is that the book of Revelation is spiritual and not literal since the actual literal fulfillment has already occurred. Secondly, the historical generally expresses the point that the numbers found in the book of Revelation and other places are allegorical or symbolical and are not for literal interpretation. The futuristic school would contend this otherwise.

#### *A Third View of Theology*

Then there is the third school that is neither historical nor futuristic but believes that the historical probably did occur and that the futuristic probably will not occur. The reason for such an idea is that these people look for a spiritual fulfillment within people. They look to find Christ fully formed in the individual. Secondly these people believe that the antichrist, the man of sin, and the false prophet are found within each person because of the fallen nature and that each must be removed. The antichrist spirit is the spirit of a man. The false prophet is the soul of a man. The man of sin is the actions of the body.

One of these schools is correct. Generally in the evangelical churches today there is a preponderance of the futuristic school and little credence is given to the historical school. Even less credence is given to the belief that both the man of sin and Christ can dwell in a person. Many saints are not aware that there are other views and believe what is taught without any question. Most saints are not Bereans who study to show themselves approved daily (Acts 17, 2 Timothy 2:15).

It is not our purpose to establish the viewpoints of theologians. An interested student can find a wealth of information on the first two diametrically opposing viewpoints. Our purpose is to discuss the concept of the rapture from the spiritual, which has historical roots from the 1830's as we have shown. While some of the futuristic school would indicate that 1 Thessalonians 4:15-20 shows a rapture as was taught by Paul, this verse has to do with Christ's second coming and not a secret rapture.

*The Historical View of the "Man of Sin"  
Found in 2 Thessalonians 2*

The word "antichrist" is found five times in the Bible and each word is the same Greek word. In the Greek it is "antichristos." Anti means: instead of, in place of, in opposition to. Christos means anointed one. Placing the two together we have the phrase instead of Christ, in place of Christ, or in opposition to Christ. We can conclude that it means to place one in a higher position than Jesus Christ.

There are many deceivers in the land today as well as when the early disciples lived. Generally, there is thought to be one person who will be The antichrist. Spurgeon, Finney, Guinness, Hudson Taylor, Tyndale, Calvin, Luther, Isaac Newton, Bunyan, Huss and Wycliffe all agreed who the antichrist was. These men lived from the 1300's to the present day. They all, after careful study, reached the same conclusion that the Pope was the antichrist.

The Pope's title in Latin is VICARIUS FILII DEI. "Vicar of the Son of God" is the interpretation. Vicar means in place of. The Latin letters of his title carry numeric meaning. Latin Roman numerals come from the letters of their alphabet.

Adding the totals of the three columns we come up with the number 666. This is the number of fallen man, corrupted Adam who tried to place himself as god. How fitting that the number of the beast has religious significance. A man places himself as the religious head of the world and declares that he is the leader above Christ.

V = 5 F = 0 D = 500

I = 1 I = 1 E = 0

C = 100 L = 50 I = 1

A = 0 I = 1

R = 0 I = 1 total of all three

I = 1 columns is : 666

V = 5

S = 0

There are, however, many theologians who discount the idea that the Pope is the antichrist. Nero's name also equals 666. These leaders in the evangelical field are futuristic rather than historical in their interpretations of prophecy. They believe that the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation are for the future and yet to happen. To them only Revelation chapters one through three have been fulfilled.

The men who were listed earlier in this article belong to the historical school of interpretation and believe that most of the book of Revelation has occurred with HISTORICAL fulfillment and that the SPIRITUAL fulfillment is yet to be revealed.

Let's look at some of the facts available. The Waldenese people of northern Italy revolted from popish rule in the 1200's. Their reason was simple - they believed in being saved by faith. Huss picked up the same train of thought a little later, but it wasn't until the 1500's and Martin Luther that the time of reform became ripe. By that time Huss was dead and the Waldenese were practically exterminated by the Pope's soldiers in various torturous ways too ugly to describe. Luther's advantage was that he had a strong king who would hide him from the Pope's forces. Luther himself declared, "*If the Pope will not recall and condemn this Bull (popish edict of 1520) then no one should doubt that the Pope is the enemy of God...the true antichrist.*"

The spirit of truth and light inspired Luther and the others to realize the Pope was the antichrist. When papal Rome realized it could not eliminate the truth, it decided to propagate another gospel, no matter how long it took for its lies to be accepted. This ploy was learned from the emperor Constantine who stopped the growth of Christianity by making it a state religion. Subterfuge was a good policy.

The son of perdition is found in two places in Scripture: II Thess. 2:3, John 17:12. Perdition means: damnation, destruction and to perish. John 17:12 strictly refers to Judas Iscariot when the spirit of Satan entered him. Judas was a disciple, one of the twelve, called by Jesus. He was a member of the faith until his falling away. The law of first occurrence uses the phrase "son of perdition" first here in reference to Judas. It is a pattern that will be followed.

Paul's letter to the Thessalonians uses the same phrase. Who like Judas was in the faith and then became an enemy? Who appeared to show Christian love but denied the power thereof and turned against the truth? Would it not have to have been one who had an apostolic office like Judas who then fell from the faith? The popes of the Roman church fit the pattern as an enemy from within. Each vicar of Christ considers himself to be God in the earth.

II Thessalonians 2:4 has been fulfilled naturally. The popes opposed God and they do sit down exalted above God. According to the historical school the temple that is in the scripture of 2 Thessalonians 2 is not a Jewish temple but refers to the church. The Pope sits in the church and assumes headship. The Pope sits above the "Host" (bread and wine) which is the physical representation of Christ which reveals he is over Christ, according to the historical school.

The futuristic school has been greatly influenced by Scofield's ideas. Not all of the futuristic ideas should be discounted, but the futuristic interpretation of Scripture needs to be separated from Scofield's thoughts. The futurist school, as compared to the historical school, would teach that the temple applies to the Jewish temple; hence they still look for the son of perdition. This idea of the Jewish temple being the actual seat of the antichrist is accepted as truth in evangelical circles, the denominational daughters

of the harlot, but the idea was brought forth and developed by the Jesuits. The antichrist will not profane the Jewish temple (there will not be one), rather the antichrist must profane Christianity and come against Christ.

The futurists base their ideas on Daniel 9:25-28. Here they interpret the antichrist as the man in the middle of the week sitting in the temple. They believe that the seventieth week of prophecy is separated from the other sixty-nine weeks and is placed in Revelation for the seven year tribulation. This is Daniel 9:24 from the Amplified Bible:

*"Seventy weeks (of years or 490 years) are decreed upon your people and upon your holy city Jerusalem to finish and put an end to transgression, to seal up and make full the measure of sin to purge away and make expiation and reconciliation for sin and to bring everlasting righteousness and to seal up vision and prophecy and prophet and to anoint a holy of holies."*

We can clearly see that this decree is going to take place in 490 years. From the time the people were freed from Babylon to return and build again the city of Jerusalem to the time of the coming of Christ would be 490 years. The only one who could "purge away sin" is most assuredly Jesus Christ.

Dan.9:25 states: *"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks: the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublesome times."* (KJV) This coming of Christ accounts for His life up to the time of His ministry. This 69 weeks is fulfilled up to the baptism by John when Jesus begins His ministry. Now we are ready for the 70th week. Please note that Prince is capitalized here. This refers to the Messiah. Another prince is mentioned later on that does not refer to Christ. The final place that the word prince is used should be capitalized, again referring to the Messiah.

Dan.9:26 states in the KJV: *"And after 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."* *"And after 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."* Jesus was cut off upon His birth, for Herod tried to kill Him at that time. Yet, Christ lived. The prince here is not capitalized and this refers to Vespasian who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This completed the prophecy here and in Matthew 24 where our Lord said judgment would come to the Jews for crucifying Him and rejecting Him.

Dan.9:27 states: *"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice to cease and for the overspreading of the abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."* *"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice to cease and for the overspreading of the abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."* The "he" refers to Christ. For when His ministry came forth, he did make a covenant with many for He spoke to 5000 twice, and untold numbers believed and followed Him. In the midst of the 70th week He was cut off, for after 3 1/2 years of ministry Jesus was slain.

*The Jews, who had rejected the Father, now had rejected the Son. Jesus caused sacrifices to cease for He was the one and only sacrifice needed. This is why the temple curtain was rent in twain, to show the end of the law and its fulfilling in Christ. He did make the temple desolate, for He destroyed all the customs, traditions and teachings that were false. No wonder the priestly caste came against Him. The consummation of the judgment occurred in 70 A.D. with Titus' destruction of the temple.*

*When was the 70th week completed? It was completed with the stoning of Stephen. This showed the rejection of the administration of the Holy Ghost by the Jews. Thus, the 490 year period is complete by the rejection of the Father (69 weeks), the Son (1/2 week of the 70th week) and the Holy Spirit testimony through Stephen (1/2 week of the 70th week). As Jesus said in Matthew 12:32, the Jews would be cut off for blaspheming the Holy Spirit for that age (when He was on the earth) and the age to come (the church age), but would be brought back in later as Romans 9, 10, 11 reveals. (Matthew 12:32 "world" in KJV is Greek "aion" meaning age).*

*There is a seven-year prophetic period in the book of Revelation. The futurists try to tie it into an antichrist reign based on Daniel 9 which we have just talked about. The two are not related although they are similar. We do not wish to digress and discuss or compare these two points of view at this time. Personal study with sources in the bibliography of this booklet will assist in such study.*

#### *Who is the "Man of Sin" really?*

*It is not really important if the "man of sin" is in Jerusalem or if the "man of sin" is in the church, ie. the Pope. Both schools direct their theology to an outward fulfillment. There is a deeper truth here that needs to be discussed. The concern is to delineate the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. The man of sin in 2 Thessalonians is not a literal man who will appear.*

*The word "temple" is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 3:16, where it states that your body is the "temple" of the Holy Spirit. The word in the Greek is "naos." The word in the Greek used for a physical structure such as a building is the word "heiron." The difference between these two is important.*

*Paul is not writing about some literal man of sin who will appear or had appeared. I am sure there could be cases made for many men to fulfill that role in each generational thinking - Nero, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler etc. Paul is writing a spiritual word. The man of sin is located in a person - each of us individually. We are the Lord's temple. Within us is the fallen adamic nature, it is dead (Romans 6:1-10), but some of us struggle with the corpse (Romans 7:14-16). Perhaps we should stop playing with the dead (necromancy - Deuteronomy 18:11).*

*The man of sin is who causes us to do idolatrous things. The man of sin causes us to divorce ourselves from the one we love, God, and follow after the fleshly desires of self, setting oneself up as god. The man of sin is not some literal person who leads us away like a Pied Piper, but the man of sin is the lustful carnal mind, the adamic man, who is at enmity with God.*

*Who other than Adam has set himself up in the temple of God as god? Was not Adam's sin religious? Not wanting to have God be over him, Adam decided to become like God in his own understanding. Thus, to accomplish his purpose Adam placed himself in the seat of authority to rule, failing to realize that he already was in the image of God. Not realizing that, Adam dethroned his*

union with God, caused a spiritual divorce from God and then proceeded to set himself up over woman and himself as god. The man of sin is the fallen nature within the person.

The mark of the beast is the fallen nature that you had until you were saved. Now, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, Revelation 7:3). Now, your life is hid in God through Christ. The sin nature no longer continues in you (1 John 5:18, Romans 6:6).

We do not have to look very far to find the man of sin. But it is far easier to call someone else the man of sin because then you or I do not have to deal with the man of sin within ourselves. Religion keeps the person from dealing with the real problem - self. Religion offers solutions that make the adamic man feel good - do good things, so many Hail Mary's, evangelism outreach, speaking in tongues, etc. Christianity, true Christianity, deals with the removal of the man of sin in the person by identification with Christ and making God the God of the temple of God.

Religion focuses on the sin nature. Christianity focuses on the life of God in the individual. Religion offers traditions, rituals, legalism. Christianity offers life and grace. Religion sets man up as the judge. Christianity offers no condemnation. Religion offers salvation to a select few. Christianity is the faith in the world that dies to self so others can live. Religion focuses on the outer man and his needs or as the Hindus do - the deprivation of the outer needs. Christianity focuses on no needs but empowers by the resurrection to rise above the natural desires or deprivations. Unfortunately those who are religious (not necessarily Christian) think they have to go to heaven (some literal place!) before Jesus can come to perfect them. True Christianity teaches otherwise. True Christianity is not religious.

#### *The Second Coming - is it the Same as the Rapture?*

As evangelical doctrine has evolved in the area of eschatology, the last 100 years (1883-present) has had a rapid development. The doctrine of Pentecostalism was not a prominent truth readily available to the saints. While there has been an historical remnant that always has walked in this experience of the second feast of the Old Testament, the majority of Christendom was not aware of it after Paul's time until the late 1880's.

There was a mass exodus from the Methodist movement twice in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The first group to leave the Methodist churches broke because of the need for holiness and evangelism through tracts etc. The Methodist church had become quite established from the revivals of the 1700's and the Great Awakening move in the 1830's with Finney.

These ministers who left felt compelled to express the need for holiness. Where salvation represents the brazen altar sacrifice for sin, which Jesus fulfilled for us, these men felt to get back to the need of holiness as Wesley preached. Their separation and rabid devotion to evangelism led to another experience.

It was from these men and others who left later in the early 1900's that the Pentecostal movement sprang. The Lord blessed these followers with "speaking in tongues" and other gifts of the early church (1 Corinthians 12). Today in 2000, these Pentecostal churches of varied names are just being accepted as mainstream Christianity.

However, these denominations and free churches, along with the older denominations teach Passover (salvation) and Pentecost (baptism of the Spirit with gifts). They do not teach the feast of Tabernacles which is the third feast that is experiential. If they did, they would not preach the doctrine of rapture. We shall not discuss the third feast experience but suffice it to say that it is just as blessed as the experience of salvation and Pentecost. Before one can experience the third feast, certain doctrines which are not true have to be removed from the nature of the person. One of these is rapture. It seems to be the fulcrum, the pivotal point, on which a person decides to live his faith.

The Pentecostal churches express the belief in a Second Coming of the Lord and integrate to that concept the belief in a 'secret rapture' of the saints. These two points are not related but rather are separate subjects and events, as we determine the truthful interpretation of

There are four words for "coming" in the Greek - Parousia, Epiphany and Apocalypse and Phanero. Each has a different meaning and connotation to it. As one studies the Scriptures it is important also to discern which word is being used rather than translating each word "Coming."

#### *As it was in Noah's Day*

"But as the days of Noah were so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ... and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left." Matthew 24:37, 39, 40 see also Luke 17:26-37

These verses are often used to teach the rapture. There are five premises in these Scriptures. (1) The flood came as a surprise to the unsaved. (2) The righteous were prepared. (3) The flood destroyed the wicked. (4) The saints were protected. (5) The saints inherited the earth. Theologians agree on points (1), (2), (3) and (4). But theologians forget that Noah never left the earth, but rather inherited the earth.

The rapture teaches that the saint is removed from the earth and is protected in a literal heaven, not in the physical sky (heavens). The saint is thereby protected from the judgment of God which happens to the unrighteous. The basis of the removal of the saint is found in verse 40 where a person is "taken."

But in the days of Noah, we find that the UNrighteous were removed or "taken." Noah was protected but REMAINED on the earth. It is interesting to note Luke 17:27 which states God "destroyed them all." Judgment was given to the unrighteous, the unsaved. They died and were removed, "taken" from the earth. The word "taken" is connected with judgment. It is not connected with the life of the saved person. In fact, that very verse states "the all" is speaking of the unrighteous when it says "the flood came and destroyed them all".

The Noahic story is supported in other Scriptures also. 1 Corinthians 6:9 states: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" God always removes the unrighteous.

The parable of the wheat and the tares is another example. In Matthew 13: 24-30 we find the parable. Theologians agree that the wheat represent the saints and the tares the unsaved. Who is removed in the parable? The unrighteous, the tares are removed. The wheat remains. Scripture consistently reveals that the righteous remain and the unrighteous, the tares are removed.

We have written a message on 1 Corinthians 10:13. This verse in the KJV states "... who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The word "escape" has no connection with a rapture. Rather the word "escape" implies the concept of entering into something else while enduring the trial. That "something else" is "Christ." Noah entered into the ark, which is a type of Christ, not to escape the judgment on the earth, but to ride it out. So also here in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Or perhaps we should consider the words of Jesus Himself as the ultimate authority as He prayed to the Father in John 17:15. The Father was to keep them in the world but protected. They were not to leave.

Our purpose is not to be taken out but to be victorious in the trial. The three men in the fiery furnace went through the fire not tainted of smoke. Noah went through the flood untouched by the waters. Consider the Scripture found in Revelation 21:7 which reads: "He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." One does not overcome by escaping.

While Matthew 24 is used for "rapture", even the Assemblies of God's official (stated on page 4) publication, The Pentecostal Evangel states in an article about Matthew 24 on page 9: "Contrary to what is often taught...the Rapture is not in evidence here. Those "taken" are the wicked, who are taken in judgment - just as the wicked of Noah's time(mentioned in the proceeding verse) were taken in judgment. Those "left" are the righteous who remain..." (Bill Britton, *The Rapture What is it?*) So, even one of the largest evangelical organizations in the USA doesn't officially preach the rapture from this verse... yet many do. Why? They have twisted Scripture to their own destruction.

"So unexpected will be the actual appearance of the Lord in judgment, in parallel manner to the judgment which was suddenly unleashed upon the antediluvians, that Jesus stated that they: "knew not until the flood came and took them away..."(Matthew 24:39) His comparison is striking. Rather than predicting a world warned of the nearness of His coming in judgment, the converse is true." (What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation, page 226).

It is important to note that the author is remarking that the Lord appeared in judgment in Noah's day. He Himself did not appear, but rather was manifested in judgment. Keep this thought in mind as you begin to see how Matthew 24 has already been fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Lord appeared in judgment to "that generation."

Other ministers relate Enoch who was translated as an example that relates to those "who are taken" in Matthew 24. The only problem is Enoch was not "taken" for punishment - he lived. Secondly, he was not taken in a time of judgment. Thirdly, the stories do not relate. Again twisting of the Scriptures.

Some would say that this chapter relates to the "end-time" and must assuredly speak to us this day. Let me address that question. As mentioned before there are many comings of the Lord and different words are used. The word "coming" in the KJV in Matthew 24:37 is "parousia." This means that the Lord is near to, co-existent with, or presence is felt.

The historical school, which as we have discussed earlier believes the fulfillment has already occurred. Consider these interesting facts. First, Matthew 24 was written to the generation of Jesus' day. In verse 34 Jesus mentions "this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled." He speaks of the generation of Jews that condemned Him to death and rejected the Father, the Son and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Stephen. Having rejected the Godhead's manifestation, they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and their salvation was cut off for an age (Matthew 12:31-32).

They go on to state that a "parousia" of the Lord does not mean a personal return of the Lord Himself. As an example, the Lord appeared in Noah's day - not physically - but judgmentally with a flood. Matthew 24 according to Josephus and the historical school states the Lord came in 70 A.D. and judged the nation, that generation of Israel, that rejected Him. How did Jesus come? Not through an agency of a flood, but through Roman soldiers.

In fact, verse 24:28 is interpreted by the historical school to represent the nations which had Jews in them. The eagle was a symbol of Rome (the KJV translates it vulture but the Greek is eagle), the body is the Jewish people scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Some even interpret that Paul wrote the Thessalonians to warn them of the "coming" of the Lord in that town because that town had Jews and would be touched by the Roman government because of the rebellion of the Jews in Israel.

Or perhaps we should finally consider the words of our Lord as He spoke to the disciples, who were still there during 70 A.D. If we wanted to interpret the saying as specifically meaning that "generation," we should also consider the words of our Lord in a broader scenario. He said in John 17:11 "...Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father keep through Your name those whom You have given Me..." (NKJV)

Here, Jesus is expressing the thought that the disciples will remain on the earth during perilous times. Regardless of the situations, the disciples were to go through problems whether they be spiritual, natural or physical. If the disciples were to remain, what about them as a pattern for us?

Even more so we should consider Jesus. He is our pattern to follow. Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:21 "To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps." Jesus never escaped anything. The walk of faith cost Him His life. Our walk too is not to escape trials and tribulations, but rather to be an example of an overcoming life through the blood of Christ.

While it is not ours to go into detail on the historical school we do suggest you read and research this area. There is no possible way that verses 36-44 of Matthew 24 refer to saints being raptured (futuristic school) as it is out of context and even a futuristic school of theology found in the Assemblies of God says you cannot interpret it that way. Secondly, the historical school shows that the literal fulfillment has already occurred. The only interpretation left is that of a spiritual nature.

If the historical school is correct, the church at Jerusalem actually escaped the carnage of the Roman soldiers since they left the city before it occurred. Secondly, if it was historically fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 A.D., then the verse has no significance to us today in any way eschatologically.

#### *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

Before we even begin the study of this verse, it is important to mention that the historical school believes that this was already fulfilled in the judgment of Jerusalem by the Roman soldiers in 70 A.D. While this may be contrary to the standard evangelical teaching, we would suggest the reading of the books mentioned in the appendix of a small tract written by Kimball and Russell.

I do not consider 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 a rapture verse but truly a second coming verse. In fact, we will interpret it "spiritually" rather than literally as the evangelical teaching does.

The rapture teaching uses this verse which deals with the Second Coming of Christ as part of its teaching to support a secret rapture before the coming of the Lord. This is incorrect. The two events, if true, are not interrelated. The Second Coming, which is true, has nothing to do with a secret rapture.

Secondly, nowhere do you find anyone going to heaven. The Greek word "apantesis" is translated "to meet." In ancient times it was a word used in conjunction with a party of people who go out and meet an important person. Today it would be used as if you went to the airport to meet a person and bring him back to your house. This verb implies the saints meeting Christ and escorting Him back to the earth to set up His kingdom.

There are three other locations in Scripture that use this word "meet," and each time the word is used to greet and return. Matthew 25:1,6 speaks of the ten virgins who went forth to "meet" the bridegroom and return to the party. John 12:13 speaks of Jesus entering Jerusalem where people "took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him." Then in Acts 28:15 Paul writes "they came to meet us as far as Appii forum..." "they came to meet us as far as Appii forum..." Saints came and led him back into the city (about 43 miles). The information on "meet" has been supplied by Stephen Jones', *The Rapture of the Wicked*.

The "meeting" with the Lord is contrary to the rapture concept that the saints leave the earth to go to heaven and remain while the earth is judged. This, on the other hand, shows the saints on the earth to set up Christ's kingdom; whereas, the church system teaches Jesus returns from heaven with His saints to set up the kingdom. That is a substantial difference of viewpoint.

Lloyd Willhite in his booklet, *Rapture, Taking a Second Look*, discusses 1 Thessalonians 4:15. On page 12 he states the following: "This text definitely indicates we are going somewhere. It says the "dead in Christ" rise first. It says the "alive and remain" shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and it says the "alive and remain" will not go ahead of those who are "asleep." Go ahead to where?, Rise first to where? Get caught up to where? Traditionally we have never thought any more about it than to say we are going up into the sky or we are going to heaven.

It is easy to understand when we say Adam fell or the Fall of Adam that we do not mean he literally fell out of a tree or he literally fell off a building. The fall was in his character, his nature, his relationship with God. He fell from obedience into disobedience. By the same measure, rising up or getting caught up does not mean we have to literally leave the earth. It means He is going to raise us up above the realm of fallen Adam. Adam fell from a realm of life into the realm of death. Jesus came into the realm of death and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil (Heb.2:14) and is raising His body, the church, to immortality; and fashioning it like unto His glorious body."

As we know, Adam was on the earth when he fell. Adam did not fall off the earth. He did leave a heavenly state for an earthly state - spiritually speaking. Thus, his fall was not literal but spiritual. Willhite carries the same analogy to the verse in Thessalonians. The catching up is not a literal but a spiritual catching up, even as Adam's fall was a spiritual fall not a literal fall.

If the catching up were literal it would cause many problems. A man in Jerusalem could not be seen visibly from the USA. Yet, Scripture declares every eye shall see Him. Some have said Jesus will appear on television and people will see Him that way. Not every man in the world has a television. Truly, it was a spiritual fall and it is a spiritual catching up.

#### *"Caught up"*

The word "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4 is the Greek word "harpazo" which means "seize" or "to take to oneself." This word is found only thirteen times in the New Testament and in the KJV it is translated: take it, catch away, take, catch, pluck, caught away, caught up and pulling out.

2 Corinthians 12:2-3 Paul writes about being caught up (harpazo). He clearly mentions that it was a spiritual experience. He did not know whether it was in or out of the body - but the body remained where it was. The catching up was not literal. Matthew 11:12 and 13:19 both use harpazo to mean that there was a spiritual action where the kingdom was "taken by force." This is not a literal action because the word of God, which is "taken away" out of a person's heart, is also spiritual. Twelve out of 13 times harpazo means a spiritual event. Only one time was it used with Philip and then he was transported to another location, not translated or removed from the earth.

Could "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians mean a physical removing? Chances are one in thirteen. Based upon the context of the verses in the first book of Thessalonians the answer should be no. Just as Adam "fell" spiritually, the "catching up" is a spiritual event. It is the means of "escape" as in 1 Corinthians 10:13 which is an escape into Christ's nature and thereby salvation from the judgment.

#### *"Coming" there are 4 words for it...*

One of the words for "coming" in the Greek is "parousia." Consistently, it is used with the idea of judgment. Judgment is not for saints; they have been judged already and now are reaping the rewards of a Christian life. The "parousia" speaks of judgment on the world. "Parousia" does not refer to a "rapture." Rather it refers to the coming of the Lord.

The word "coming" in verse 15 is the Greek word "parousia." It is used about seventeen times with the Lord. In actuality the word means "presence". How often we have felt the Lord in a service. Did we not feel His presence or coming? It does not mean a literal, bodily expression of Christ. Rather the word "parousia" found in many locations in the Scriptures means a presence of the Lord different than what is normally conceived.

The Lord's "presence" was seen in Noah's day. But the Lord Himself did not appear. The Lord was seen in 70 A.D. in judgment also, but He did not physically appear. Yet, the presence of the Lord was seen in the result.

The parousia is found in Matthew 24 where it speaks of the Son of Man "coming" as in the days of Noah. We never did see Jesus in the days of Noah, did we? But the Scripture relates an analogy to that time. Thus, the coming in Noah's day was a manifestation

of judgment. We also showed that in 70 A.D. there was a "coming" of the Lord, not personally, but in a manifestation of judgment to Jerusalem which Matthew 24 calls "coming of the son of man" or the "parousia."

The word "parousia" means "presence." While some would, based on their own theological leanings, pre-determine that the word means the literal appearance of the Lord Jesus in bodily form, it is not necessarily interpreted that way. "Presence" can mean many things. As we saw in Noah's day, the "presence" of the Lord was in a judgmental way and not in a personal appearance. Also in Matthew 24 we find the Lord's "presence" via the Roman army destroying the enemy (Jews who were revolting at the time, see Josephus for details).

Here in Thessalonians we find the "parousia" is used again with the concept of judgment. "Those that are living" some translations state should be translated as those who "have survived" as in the sense of a battle. In fact, the verse reveals some have died and are asleep. This could mean that life was lost in terrible tribulation during the advent of the Lord. This is consistent with the use of "parousia" because the word's usage in many cases ties in with troubles.

We cannot disannul the understanding also that the "shout," "the archangels," "the trumpet of God" all could refer to military terms. Many times in the Bible angels are used in warfare; the trumpet is used in the Pentateuch for warfare assembly, etc.

It is spiritual warfare when we throw down the "man of sin" who lives in the temple. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 it states that our body is the temple of God. The word there in the Greek is "naos" meaning your body. Whereas, "heiron" means a physical structure such as a literal building. In 2 Thessalonians 2:5 where it refers to the "man of sin" in the "temple" it does not mean a physical structure or building. The word there is "naos" meaning your body. The man of sin lives in your carnal Adamic nature.

This too would seem to support the spiritual warfare of casting down principalities and powers and ascending into the realm of life. As Adam fell out of heaven, spiritually speaking, so too we in Christ shall ascend and are ascending in the new creation man which we are. For we sit in heavenly places today with Christ Jesus.

John 14:12 states that Jesus must go "back to the Father." Who was Jesus' Father? John 4:21 reveals that God is a Spirit. God does not have flesh and bone. This is indicated in Matthew 16:17 and Luke 24:39 as Jesus compares Himself to God. 1 Timothy 1:17 states: "*Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible...*" This also tells us that God is invisible to the human eye.

Now then, if Jesus left (He was the first coming), how does He appear to us and is it just one more time or many appearances? Again as we look at John 14:17-18 Jesus states that if He leaves, the Spirit of Truth will come to the disciples. He goes on further to state that the Comforter (that Spirit of Truth) which is Himself as a Spirit, will come to them (vs. 18).

When did Jesus come? At Pentecost. The Greek word for spirit is "pneuma." It is the same word that is used in the book of Acts used as "wind." Jesus came and empowered the disciples. But He did more than that. Just as salvation (the feast of Passover, 1 Corinthians 5:8) is experiential, so also is Pentecost. These men had placed within their own vessel the "presence" or the "coming" of the Lord.

Clearly, 1 Corinthians 15:45 states that Jesus (last Adam) was made a "quickening Spirit." The word "quickening" means to vivify, to make that which is dead alive. So, when these men received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were "quickened" or "made alive" by the Spirit, which possessed them. In other words the power of the resurrection, that resurrection life, which is spiritual life (Greek "zoe", not the Greek "bios" which means natural life) had come within them to abide.

This too is a fulfillment of John 14:21-23. Where Jesus states that when He returns to the Father that the two of them shall make their abode in the person. Thus, heaven is not a literal place in the sense of religious tradition which indicates that heaven is the "sky," but rather that heaven is found where God is, which is in you (Luke 17:21). "*He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*" (1 Cor. 6:17). We cannot leave this thought without reviewing Ephesians 4:10 which states: "*He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.*" The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, which is still a viable experience for all Christendom, is part of the fulfilling of Ephesians 4:10. Hopefully it is seen then that His coming, His presence, is a spiritual experience and we hope to show that the "parousia" is not a one-time event but an ongoing occurrence.

So far then we have discussed, albeit briefly, a "coming" of the Lord. The problem with most saints is that they fail to comprehend, due to religious teachings of the Babylonish church system, that we no longer know Christ after the flesh. When the name Jesus is said there is an immediate picture of a man about 33 years old in a robe. This is not Jesus. He has ascended and is a Spirit that has possessed His people at salvation (a coming), at Pentecost (a coming) and at Tabernacles (a coming). Paul admonishes us in 2 Corinthians 5:16: "*Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet, now henceforth know we Him no more.*"

How do we know Him then? 1 John 4:20 states that we see His coming as we see Him in another. For How can we love God whom we have not seen, if we cannot love our brother whom we have seen? Loving God is loving our neighbor for He is in them as John 1:9 states. The question is how do we see Him - as He was or as He is?

His coming is in His saints. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 states that He will be glorified "*IN His saints.*" John 14:20 states that He is IN us. That is how He is glorified - by His "coming," His "presence" in us. There is no doubt of this for Revelation 21:3 states that "*...the tabernacle of God is with men and He shall dwell* (Greek: be at home, reside in,) *with them.*"

Because of traditional religious teaching which emphasizes external concepts of Christianity, many Christians have not appropriated the truth of Him who lives within. Thus, they have difficulty with delineation of the truths found in the scriptures. As an example, most saints mix up "IN His saints" and "WITH His saints" as being synonymous and both dealing with a "second" coming. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Perhaps to radically portray the coming of Christ, we should consider some verses, which show a coming of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4 reveals Christ coming as a "shout." Jude 14 He comes with His saints. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 He comes in His saints. Matthew 16:27 states He comes with angels. Have you considered His coming as the Morning Star arising in your heart (1 Peter)? In Revelation He comes as the white horse. Matthew has the Son of Man appearing as lightning. The comings of the Lord are the manifestations of His presence - whether it be the whirlwind that Elijah saw, the donkey that Balaam heard speak or the angels that visited Abraham.

I do hope that as a diligent Berean, you will search the scriptures for yourself to verify these things mentioned thus far. For there are other words also used for the coming of the Lord. The nuances are important for each reveals a greater glory of God.

## A Specific Coming - 1 John 2:28

Not only Jesus but also John the Baptist called the people of Israel unto repentance. John the Baptist stated the kingdom of heaven was at hand, as did Jesus (Matthew 3:2, 4:17). Jesus even told the disciples that the kingdom of God was at hand and that they should preach such as they traveled (Matthew 10:7). Jesus warned the people of a coming judgment (Matthew 11:20-24). All these verses point to a consummation soon to take place, but we know that it was not during the time of Jesus because it was "nigh" meaning close but some time off - not immediate.

Now in Matthew 12:38 - 45 we find Jesus warning "this generation." He was talking to the Hebrews of the day and not some future generation since the time of judgment was "nigh." The parable of the fig tree on the historical interpretation refers to Israel and it being cut off. Jesus even states in the parable of the tares that: "*He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man.*" He is warning the people of the judgment to come.

In Matthew 10:23 Jesus tells His disciples when persecution comes to flee to another city, but that they shall not go over the cities until the Son of Man comes. Perhaps reading the following in conjunction will show that some of the disciples would be alive at His coming (Matthew 16:27, 28, Mark 8:38, 9:1, Luke 9:26,27). This means some of the disciples would have died before it occurs but that others would see the fulfillment of the "parousia" of the Lord.

Ultimately, the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19) refers in the historical sense to the Hebrews who were the leaders of the nation of Israel at the time of Christ. This parable seems to relate the destruction of Israel with the coming of the Lord (Matthew 16:27-28).

In 70 AD came the fall of Jerusalem. The Romans overthrew the Hebrew religious/political leaders. The Romans destroyed the temple and removed once and for all animal sacrifice for sin, which Jesus had removed spiritually at the cross. He would return again without need for sacrifice but to establish His kingdom scripture states.

The word "world" used in Matthew 24 refers to the whole chapter in the sense of "age" or dispensation and not the same as "world" as we use it today. Matthew 24 reveals Jesus talking in prophecy of the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:1-2) and the judgment of that particular time, the end of the age.

It cannot be reiterated enough that "parousia" means "presence", not a literal physical return of the Lord. Roman soldiers were the physical presence of the Lord that came in judgment on Israel of which some of the disciples were still alive to see.

The end of the age occurred with the judgment of Israel by the "parousia" of the Lord, just as the Lord sent the nation of Babylon to attack Judah and to come as His "presence" in judgment on the nation of Judah and lead the people into captivity.

The coming/parousia can be personal as in 1 Corinthians 16:17 but in most cases it speaks of a spiritual fulfillment. Or the parousia can take on a natural sense (2 Corinthians 7:7) when an individual comes. In 2 Corinthians this refers to the consolation that came with Titus. Perhaps we should put that in contrast with the judgment that came with the Romans.

What we are trying to proclaim is that the "presence" or "parousia" of the Lord is not limited to Jesus the man nor Christ Jesus our ascended Lord. In fact, the "parousia" could, with further elucidation, probably prove that there is no need for a physical return but rather that the "presence" of Him in a people is a type of "coming" of the Lord.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 10:10 " 'For his letters', they say 'are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence (Greek here, parousia) is weak.'" Here we find that the word "parousia" is used with the concept of "presence" and not really dealing with Paul's small physical stature, although a factor, but rather dealing with the "power of the presence" that Paul brought. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that God "*sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" "sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ." "sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the "coming" of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here again, the "presence" of the Lord is His coming to be glorified IN His saints (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

2 Thessalonians 2:1 speaks of the parousia again. Here it is in relation to the Lord's appearance in the temple (Greek - NAOS) which refers to the body as the temple (1 Corinthians 3:17). The word for physical structure in the Greek is *heiron* which means a building. So the coming of the Lord, the parousia is His appearing in the saint causing the man of sin in this chapter to be cast off - the fallen Adamic nature. For those with a historical frame of reference it could be used to tie into the "presence" of the Lord with the Roman emperor standing in the literal Hebrew temple thus defiling the physical temple, BUT this cannot be true since the word here for temple refers to your physical body and not a building.

The key to understanding "parousia" is that it refers to the invisible power of God being expressed through a vessel of His choosing, whether a saint or a pagan who is doing His bidding. The "parousia" does not refer to the literal manifestation of the man Jesus nor to our ascended Lord physically returning. It can and does refer to our Lord who appears in and through us for His glory.

John writes in 1 John that we may have confidence at His appearing/coming (1 John 2:28). Many would interpret that to be a personal return of the man Jesus. But if 1 John 4:20 is considered with this verse, as it should be since the letter is a "whole," there is a deep truth. How can we love the ascended Lord who is Spirit, if we cannot love His appearing or "presence" in a person whom we do see? The truth of the "parousia" or "coming" of the Lord is the recognition of His "presence" in His people.

But the "parousia" is just the first part of four parts of His appearing that will be made manifest through each saint. The "parousia" is just the first step on the path to the complete manifestation of who He is in us. Again we see that Peter in 2 Peter 1:16 refers to the "coming" of the Lord to whom he was an eye-witness. How did Peter know the man Jesus was the Son of God? It was the presence of God that revealed it to him. Otherwise Jesus was not comely to look at as Isaiah foretold.

Recognizing the "coming" of the Lord as the "presence" of the Lord whether in a Roman general or a saint is to say that we see the hand of God moving over the face of the deep. For the Lord moves mysteriously to fulfill His purposes on a grand scale in the tides of the affairs of men and also in the individual's life. Recognizing the "presence" of the Lord in one's life is a prerequisite before the student can begin to study the second stage of the manifestation of the Lord.

There are three other words used for the coming of the Lord which are: apocalypse, epiphany and phanero. We shall consider the apocalypse as it relates to the fulfilling of the book of Revelation. After the "presence" of Christ in you is known experientially by

the believer the next step is the awareness of the apocalypse "coming" of the Lord in your life which the book of Revelation discusses.

### The Apocalypse

The first verse in the book of Revelation states: *"The revelation of Jesus Christ."* The Greek word for the English "revelation" is "apocalypse." This word is distinctly different from "presence." It is first used by Simeon at Jesus' dedication found in Luke 2:32. The translation would read: "A light 'unveiled' to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel." For the word "apocalypse" means the "unveiling" predominately.

Simeon was proclaiming that the Savior was now manifested, made visible, distinguished from all others, a complete revelation of the invisible God made visible to the world. Simeon's prophecy proclaimed the completed manifestation of the Lord. What do we mean the completed manifestation, revelation? Just this, the fulfilling of 1 Corinthians 15:28. For the true "unveiling" of Christ Jesus is that in the fullness of time His victory on the cross over death will gather together all things whether in the earth, under the earth or above the earth (Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 2:10, Colossians 1:16-17).

The Gospels reveal a progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. The letters of the New Testament reveal the glorious ascended Lord who has descended into His people. Luke reveals the "man" side of Jesus where he states: *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man"* (Luke 2:52). The Lord's path, planned from its inception, was designed to reveal to the world the fullness of God could be manifested in a man.

As the life of Jesus is our pattern to follow (1 Peter 2:21, Philippians 3:17), we find that what He did was to learn who He was until the time of His manifestation at the Jordan River. Every step of His life from birth until His appearance in ministry after being in the wilderness was designed by the Father to teach Him who He was.

It is important to note while the dedication revealed who Jesus was, it did not change the blindness of the people to who He was! For even though He was manifested then, He was not received but by a very few and those only knew by revelation from God. Consequently, when the saint comes to the third experience, the third feast of the faith, Tabernacles, the saint will know who he is for his identity is with Christ not with Adam and the sin nature. But the world, even other Christians, will not recognize his identity. The world did not recognize Jesus and the people of Israel, that household of the faith, did not know who He was either. For they looked on the outer and not the inner.

Perhaps another way to state the concept of unveiling is the usage of an affair that is currently done in the world today. When a famous artist or sculptor has finished his work it is transported to the location of the dedication and covered. On the appointed day people gather and with great anticipation strain to catch the first glimpse of this work of art as the curtain or veil is lifted off the piece of art. Thus, the people see a finished work and marvel at the piece and the handicraft of the artist.

You may have seen the *Pieta* sculptured by Michaelangelo. It is so magnificent. Smooth white marble I believe. Awe struck looking upon the piece it takes some time to begin to intimately discern the details like the curves, the eyes, the hands cradling the Lord, etc. Seeing the overview, the big picture overwhelms. Gradually, the details are seen when the "glare" of the first look is done. Michaelangelo had to see the *Pieta* in the rock before he could chisel the revelation.

Simeon proclaimed the "glare," the overview, of the Lord. Luke and others proclaimed the outworking, the manifestation, the revealing of the Lord on the intimate daily basis. So, when we look at the book of Revelation we must realize that the first verse is announcing the complete unveiling of the Lord to all who would read its pages.

1 Peter 1:5-7 uses the word "apocalypse" twice and is generally translated as "revealing." The apocalypse of Jesus Christ in these verses is the faith of the saint tried by fire. Christ was revealed in Daniel in the fire as the fourth man. This understanding also goes along with the book of Revelation in that the verses and chapters that follow 1:1 are designed to reveal the process which is necessary for the complete appreciation of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul writes in Galatians 1:12 that the word that he received did not come *"from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation (apocalypse) of Jesus Christ."* Paul as Saul had studied for years and was well acquainted with the Old Testament. But he knew not God. It takes an unveiling, the scales removed from your carnal mind, to know spiritual things. Knowledge does not make you spiritual although it could help your spiritual walk.

In Galatians 1:16 the word "revealed" in the KJV is the Greek word "apocalypse." So the translation could read: *"When it pleased God to manifest in me..."* or "appear in me..." The coming of the Lord is within a vessel during his lifetime. The apocalypse (The Revelation) is an allegorical book that is fulfilled within the individual.

The following reference study is quoted from J. Preston Eby: "The Greek word APOKALUPSIS is a derivative of APOKALUPTO. APOKALUPTO is a compound word composed of APO, meaning "off" or "away," and KALUPTO, meaning "to cover up." Thus APOKALUPSIS means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: *"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (uncovered)"* (Matt. 10:26). Our English word "revelation" has become for many a word that signifies a strange belief or some far-out doctrine, which should be handled as something delusive and dangerous, and avoided if possible. But this is just the opposite from the biblical meaning of the word, and the consideration we need to give to that which is revealed. That which is uncovered is no more a mystery, nor can it any longer be a threat. It is open to view, whether positive or negative, and can be considered without fear since it is no longer shrouded in darkness or mystery.

"In the following texts the word related to our Lord's appearing is from either the Greek APOKALUPSIS or APOKALUPTO. *"Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is REVEALED"* (Lk. 17:30). *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be REVEALED in us"* (Rom. 8:18). "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the COMING (unveiling; revelation) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7). *"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be REVEALED from heaven...in flaming fire...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints"* (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). *"That the trial of your faith...might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the APPEARING of Jesus Christ"* (I Pet. 1:7). *"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION of Jesus Christ"* (I Pet. 1:13). *"Rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that,*

when His glory shall be REVEALED, ye might be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:13). "The REVELATION of Jesus Christ ..." (Rev. 1:1). "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the MANIFESTATION (unveiling; revealment) of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).

"Only by REVELATION, UNVEILING can we know the Christ of God or behold Him in His ineffable glory. When the light of the Holy Spirit shines in, the mists that have hung like a cloud over our minds, obscuring the King in His beauty, are cleared away. Then the realities which were once unseen become clearly visible and that which was once seen through a glass darkly is now seen face to face and that which was once known only in part is now known as we are known. The word "unveiling" is certainly the clearest possible translation of the word APOKALUPSIS. On the basis of this "unveiling" of our wonderful Christ, we may, then, expect the APOKALUPSIS to be understood not as a matter of His COMING, but merely of SEEING. It is not at all a question of our Lord making some change in location, as "coming" from high heaven back down into the atmosphere of this planet; it is, rather, the matter of Him who is already present with and within us becoming unveiled - uncovered disclosed, revealed in the power of the Holy Spirit that we may truly BEHOLD HIM in the fullness of Himself. It would be one thing for you to "feel a presence" in your room, but it would be something greater should that presence become visible, so that you SEE CLEARLY what was once veiled in obscurity.

"Since APOKALUPSIS means to reveal, or unveil, there must be something to unveil or which may be unveiled. That something must be Present or it cannot be unveiled; and it must be hidden from sight or it cannot be disclosed. Jesus is PRESENT and that He is hidden from sight of the natural eye because "the Lord is that Spirit." We are now to find that His invisible presence, parousia is to be revealed, disclosed, uncovered, unveiled and that, too, to the whole world in due season. Are we looking for a so-called "second coming" of the Lord? Emphatically, we are NOT looking into the sky for such a thing BUT we most emphatically, are looking forward for the disclosure, uncovering, revealing of the Lord NOW PRESENT BUT HIDDEN in Spirit form. Truly the APOKALUPSIS of Jesus Christ is a yet future vision for the great mass of Christians as well as for the world, and to all of us there is yet much to be unveiled.

"We greatly rejoice...that the trial of your faith...might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing (apocalypse disclosure, uncovering, revelation, unveiling, manifestation) of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:6-7). Prayerful pondering of this scripture is all that is needed to grasp the meaning of the honor and glory that shall be ours, not in being caught up into the starry skies out of the trials which produce the honor and glory, nor in Jesus coming riding upon a cloud in the upper atmosphere, but when He is UNVEILED TO THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS MANY-MEMBERED BODY OF SAINTS bringing deliverance to the entire groaning creation through the manifestation of His grace, glory and power which shall yet bring a larger measure of life and immortality to light through the gospel.

"Again, "So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7). We are waiting for the marvelous apokalupsis, disclosure, unveiling of Jesus Christ that which transcends HIS GIFTS, wonderful as they are, as He manifests the fullness of the Son of God and His great, many-membered Christ body, but we are no longer gazing into the sky for His so-called "second coming" at some indefinite future date. Praise God, we are beholding the handiwork of our God on every hand today as He moves the nations like pawns on a chessboard in mighty preparation for the closing events of this age and the ushering in of the more glorious age to come.

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design - except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored. Then on a certain day a vast multitude of the citizens of Florence assembled in the public square; the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. At this unveiling all of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David". In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. And, precious friend of mine, in the lump of clay which is you, the almighty Father sees an image too - the image of Jesus Christ! And God is working unceasingly and tirelessly to form the image of His Son in you. No truth has come with more soul-gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the beautiful hope of sonship to God. Well indeed may we yield ourselves into the hands of heaven's skilled sculptor that HE may form His Son in us, for the mind of omniscience has ordained that that sonship should be the HOPE OF ALL CREATION. It is for sonship that the whole creation groans in a sort of universal travail while it eagerly waits to see the glorious sight of the sons of God coming into their own (Rom. 8:22-23)." unquote

#### *Revealing or Manifestation, which Coming?*

The Hebrew-Greek Study Bible by Spiros Zodhiates and published by AMG Publishers of Chattanooga, Tennessee, has this to say in the Lexical Aids to the New Testament: "Phaneroo; to make manifest, make known...differs from apokalupto as 'to exhibit' differs from 'to disclose,' so that in relation to each other apokalupto must precede phaneroo. Apokalupto refers only to the object revealed, but phaneroo refers to those to whom the revelation is made."

Remembering that apokalupto means revelation, the person, that called saint, the individual who is called and purposed of God to be conformed to His Image and be a son of God (Romans 8:19, Revelation 21:7), has revealed to himself/herself that God is appearing and revealing Himself in that person. It is a great revelation to know that God's coming is occurring within you. The second word, apocalypse, has great meaning to the individual. It is personal and exciting to see God coming within yourself.

But that is neither the end result nor the end purpose. It is not a selfish thing that God is doing just for the individual. He is appearing within the vessel so that the individual will do the will of the Father and show forth God Himself within the person's lifestyle, that is, the way that the person lives his daily life. No, the apocalypse is but a part of a larger plan - the restoration and restitution of all things (Acts 3:21).

"Phaneroo signifies also to make visible, to show, to make public" the Lexical Aid continues. The idea behind the word is that the saint has progressed in the Lord from knowing the Lord is within and enlarging His presence to the point that the world can now see the Lord in the saint. The Coming of the Lord is not Jesus, the man, returning. The Coming of the Lord is more than the ascended Lord returning. The real truth is the manifestation of the Lord in a people.

When the saints confronted the Jesuits and the Roman Catholic church and the false doctrine of that church system, they were made martyrs. When the martyrs were burned at the stake for their confrontation, there was a sound heard and sights were seen by the onlookers. Fox's Book of Martyrs brings out how many were converted to faith in God by the manifestation of God in the ones martyred. The onlookers saw a manifestation of God, a 'phaneroo.'

Jesus states in John 17:6: "*I manifested (phaneroo) Thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world;*" In other words, Jesus lived before the men the way God would live in a man. Jesus is stating that He slept like a godly man would sleep. He ate like a godly man would eat. He spoke as a godly man would speak. He expressed God to the men by what He did in every moment. As Jesus is our pattern, we are to follow in similar footsteps. We are to walk as He walked, speak as He spoke and live as He lived. This is a manifestation.

Paul reiterates the same thought in Titus that Jesus states in John 17. As the letter opens Paul greets the saints and ties in His relationship to the Lord based upon the manifestation of the Logos (verse 3, 'word' also the same used in John 1:1), Who was Jesus. Paul states: "*but at the proper time manifested His word...*" Paul is stating that God appeared in Paul's proclamations to the unsaved he testified unto. God came out of Paul's personal expression of the Christ life and people did not see Paul but God. Is your Christian walk able to bear such a testimony?

John, the beloved of the Lord, states in 1 John 1:2 "*and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness...*" Again, 'phaneroo' is used for manifestation. Eternal life was manifested in the flesh. Jesus made known the very life of God which goes beyond the natural plane although the life is visible via the natural plane. God who is a Spirit was seen, manifested, by and in Jesus. Thus, the manifestation has to do with the saint entering into a deep relationship with Christ, not a superficial one. To have your opinions considered 'canon' by God and included in the Bible is to have entered into that relationship, as Paul did.

1 John 3:5, 8 both used the word 'phaneroo.' The first verse states that Jesus appeared to take away the sin of the world. He is appearing within you to do the same! He did it when you received Him as your Savior and now He is doing it in your walk so that others might see Him and have their sin taken away. This is the priesthood of the believers (1 Peter 2:9) in action and why we have one Mediator, Christ and need no other.

The other verse states that He was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. Jesus did that over 2,000 years ago on the cross and in the resurrection. But now, today, He is doing it within each of us. His Coming is to remove the works of the Devil within each of us so that He is manifested to all. His manifestation in us, as we are conformed to His Image, is so that others may see the victory over the Devil.

*"By this the love of God is manifested (phaneroo) in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him."* Love is manifested in us? How? Because we live through Jesus Christ. Our identity is in Him. Our life is hid with God in Christ. It is a living vibrant reality that is experiential. Love is a fruit, a result of living in God. **IT CANNOT BE STATED ENOUGH THAT THE 'phaneroo' EXPERIENCE IS A FRUIT OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT OTHERS SEE.**

There are many other locations of this word, 'phaneroo,' but let me close with John 2:11 which states: "*This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*" The purpose of the manifestation is for others to believe in Him, Jesus, the Lord of all. Is your life manifesting Him enough that others believe regularly and mature in Him?

#### *The Epiphany*

The last word found in the Greek for the Coming of the Lord is transliterated into the English as it is - epiphany. It means the 'glorious appearing.' It is used only by Paul in his writings. Epiphany needs to be understood in the light of the other three occurrences for Coming.

Parousia, means the presence. You have experienced that in your walk with God when you know He is with you. The apocalypse is the unveiling to you that He has come within you, much to your surprise and chagrin at times. Then there is the phaneroo or the ability for others to see Christ as you which many times leads the person unto salvation, a personal encounter with God. But the epiphany is the out-ricing of the Lord, even as He was transfigured before the disciples.

Perhaps the most explosive manifestation of this word is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Here it reads: "*...whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring an end by the appearance (epiphany) of His coming (parousia).*" The man of sin, that fallen adamic nature within each person inherited from the fall of Adam, is dispersed by breath (Greek pneuma which means spirit) of God. Remember that Adam became a living soul when the breath of God entered him (Genesis 2:8). What this verse is stating is that God again is building a man - one in His nature by the removing of the fallen nature of man.

There is only one man of sin and he was found in you until you accepted Christ as your savior. He was slain by the glorious appearing of Jesus in you. Now the dust of the old nature is being swept out of your house by the Holy Spirit. The Coming (parousia) of the Lord, the presence of the Lord, within you brings an end of the old by being visibly seen (epiphany).

Another major location is 2 Timothy 1:10. It reads: "*but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.*" Again we find two of the four words for coming used together - revealed, appearing. It cannot be stated clearly enough that these words work in conjunction with one another and are found experientially within the individual. The one, revealed, is phaneroo and the other appearing is epiphany. Thus, this means that one has been declared, been an expression of God which is what phaneroo implies and epiphany means to illuminate that truth, to shine it forth, to appear in such a manner that there is no doubt. Obviously this is used in reference to Christ. He destroyed death over 2,000 years ago and brought it to light by revealing in His body the glory of God. We too are called to reveal His glory (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

Paul goes on in Titus 2:13 to state: "*looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus.*" Now our blessed hope is not heaven as many teach! But as Colossians 1:27 states: "*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" It is the appearing, the epiphany of Christ in you that will change the world. When death is abolished in you (2 Timothy 1:10) and you know that you are fully alive in Christ in eternal life, living in that realm even though the body is in the natural realm, then and only then can you reveal Him. Then you can

join with Paul and say "according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. (Philippians 1:20)"

The reason Paul wrote of this 'epiphany' and was the only one to use this word was because of the life that was percolating within him. He knew that the kingdom had come when He accepted Christ within Him. He saw the working of the Lord within him. He was bitten by a venomous snake and lived. The life of God in him swallowed up the death and turned it into life. The people called him a God (Acts 28) because no one survived that experience. He was left for dead twice. Yet, he was resurrected. Some may say that he didn't die. But let me state that the Jews knew how to stone people to death because they did so regularly then at the bequest of the priesthood. Yet, Paul was raised. Raised by an external Jesus? Or was he raised by being one with the Lord within? Paul and others had seen the out-raying of the glory of the Lord in their lives. They healed the sick, cast out demons and raised the dead. This is the Coming of the Lord that God seeks. That a person would allow the Lord to so deal with him/her that God is seen. Watchman Nee in his book, The Ministry of God's Word, expresses how the fullness of God can be seen in the corporal body. But it takes a crucified life to do so.

#### "Clouds"

Now, in reference to the word "clouds" which is used in first Thessalonians 4:17 there is some important information. Let me first quote Jude 12: "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves; they are clouds without water..." "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves; they are clouds without water..." "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves; they are clouds without water..." This is the same word used in Thessalonians. Jude refers to people as clouds.

Hebrews 12:1 states we are "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.." "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.." "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.." This word "witnesses" in the Greek means: martyr, record, witness. The witnesses are people. Thus, when Paul is referring to "the cloud of witnesses," he is talking about people. The word "cloud" within the context of Thessalonians has a spiritual meaning.

Yet, there is more truth here. Bennie Skinner uses the analogy of the school teacher and student. The teacher descends (out of her heaven, mind or understanding) to the level of the student (who resides on the earth level). The word (shout) that she brings (voice) to the student (saint) causes him to arise out of the realm of his understanding (earth) and ascend into the clouds (heaven) where the teacher is. The student is now educated and can converse with the teacher intelligently because both are on the same plane.

Revelation 1:7 states that: "He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." This does not mean a literal, physical, appearing of the man Jesus. If Jesus literally, physically returned to Jerusalem, you would not know it in China or the USA. You couldn't see Him. I have had friends say all would see Him on the news (Television). Most people in the world do not have television and I know many fundamental Christians who do not even have that television in their homes because they consider it wicked.

But who are the "clouds"? Note that it is plural? The clouds are people, saints, who have entered into the same realm where He is. What realm is He in right now in 2000? God is a Spirit. The Son is a Spirit. Those clouds have entered, have been caught up into the realm where He is and are in a spiritual state, whether in the body or out - who knows. Jesus, the man, (to differentiate from the Pre-existent Christ and the ascended Lord) lived in heaven while He walked the earth. John 3:13 states: "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven." He made a way that we can walk in also.

If we are in heavenly places in our walk, we find that heaven is a realm of life, and, as Paul says, the brethren encompass us about. The Lord has come and made His abode in us (John 14:23) and we find the kingdom of God is within (Luke 17:21). Paul writes in Galatians 1:16 that the Son was revealed in him and then goes on to say that it was no longer he that lived but Christ that lived in him (Galatians 2:20). This is living in a realm where you as an individual have had the ingathering (the feast of Tabernacles, the third experience - after Passover and Pentecost).

Paul states in Galatians that he was received as an angel, even as Christ Jesus (Galatians 4:14). Note that Christ Jesus is different from Jesus Christ. While we have a message on that, let me summarize that Jesus Christ refers to the man in Paul's writing; whereas, Christ Jesus refers to the ascended Lord, after the resurrection and ascension. Thus, Paul is saying that he, Paul, resides in a heavenly place, a spiritual realm, set down in heavenly places with the Lord.

Heaven is not literal in the Scriptures. Neither is Hell. Both are spiritual places because God is a spirit. "Lo, though you make your bed in hell, I will be there with you", Psalm 139:8 states. The Lord is there. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. If we are in heaven, the Lord is there. God is a spirit. It is a spiritual place. Another point is that the Lord's Prayer states that heaven is going to be established where? On the earth. It has to be a spiritual realm for it to be established on the earth.

#### "Voice"

Consider for a moment the word "voice" in 4:16 of 1 Thessalonians. In Revelation 1:13 it states "one like unto the Son of Man." The chapter then goes on to describe this man who is like the Son of Man, and what his appearance is like. The key is the word "like." It is not talking about Jesus here, but rather the church, the corporate body of Christ, which has been conformed to His image.

We have mentioned this so that we could discuss Revelation 1:15 which describes the one "like" the Son of Man, but before we do, it is a great study in the Bible to look at the word "like" and see it in many verses. Verse 15 states "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace and his voice as the sound of many waters."

The key to note is that voice is singular. One voice speaks of the unity of the message, the wholeness of the word that is spoken, the very expression of the Father of lights. The sound is as many waters. Isaiah 17:12 states in the New King James: "Woe to the multitude of many people who make a noise (voice?) like the roar of the sea." The parentheses are added. Revelation 17:15 states that water represents people, nations, tongues etc.

The word "voice" is the message proclaimed by many waters or people. Consider reading some other verses and meditate on them that the Lord would also reveal some hidden things: Jeremiah 51:16, 55; Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2; Revelation 14:2, 19:6.

#### What About Angels?

This "voice" is the voice of an archangel, since the word "voice" speaks of a message, a word, delivered by many waters or people and is brought out of the "archangel." The "voice of the archangel" is symbolical and not literal. The "voice of the archangel" is not

speaking of one but of a corporate act with one sound coming from the very Holy of Holies, descending out of heaven, which is not the literal sky but out of where God has His throne - in you and in others. The Christ in you is the sound of many waters declaring a word from the throne.

In Ezekiel we find that the Cherubim, who minister only from the Holy of Holies, are archangels. The voice of the archangel comes from the very throne of God. The key is to understand that the archangel is not a winged creature in a white robe with a halo over its head. Jesus ministered out of the throne of God and was a man. We are called to be in His image and to do the same thing. There are many Scriptures which show that angels are men. Revelation 21:7 and Galatians 4:14 are two accounts. But also there are other locations. An angel comes from the Greek meaning a messenger of good news. Many of the traditional visual expressions of angels are erroneous.

Even the teaching that is typically presented by the denominational churches concerning Lucifer, the angel, is quite misleading. Lucifer was a man - and an angel. Isaiah 14:12 states that Lucifer, a word found only once in the Bible, which is not a name as the KJV makes it, means "light bearer" in the Hebrew. Adam as Luke 3:38 brings out was a son of God. Adam was a light bearer, even as we are the children of light also (1 Thessalonians 5:5, Luke 16:8, John 8:12) when we are in Christ Jesus. Conformed to the image of Jesus we become as He is - light. Adam was in light but lost the light. As for our booklet on Satan.

But it goes further than that. Ezekiel 28:2 (see also Isaiah 14:16), which is another chapter that is often used to show Lucifer is Satan, is not quite an accurate truth either. For verse two states that this person is a "man" and as we know from Scripture that Satan is a spirit and not a man

Satan masquerades as an angel of light. He fakes it because he never was and never could be. John 8:44 states Satan was a murderer from the beginning. He had no good qualities, and as the verse says there was no truth in him. The word "beginning" means exactly that. God states in Isaiah 45:7 that He creates evil. Satan was created by God for a purpose in the beginning. The purpose was good but the function was evil. Isaiah 54:16 states that God created the spoiler to destroy.

Adam was created in the image of God. He was good from the beginning but fell due to being subject to vanity unwillingly (Romans 8:18-19). Adam was full of light. He was light bearer. Note also that the Scripture states that the "light bearer" was a cherub (Ezekiel 28:14). Cherubim are a positive image. NEVER are they in any way described in the negative or used for evil purposes. The importance here is that the cherubim are found around the throne of God and are living creatures not creatures of death.

Adam was called to be the revelation of the Lord in the earth until he forsook that place and descended. Satan never was the "light-bearer" which Lucifer means. Satan was always darkness and had no life in him, as is seen even in the Genesis account where Satan attacks Adam, the light bearer. Satan was already evil then in Genesis 3. Whereas, Adam, the light-bearer was in God's image but lost the light and began living in darkness at that point.

The Amplified Bible translates Isaiah 14:12 as follows: *"How are you fallen from heaven, lightbearer and day star, son of the morning"* *"How are you fallen from heaven, lightbearer and day star, son of the morning."* As we know Jesus was the Day Star (2 Peter 1:19) and here is a reference to how "Lucifer" (light-bearer) is a day star.

*Also the truth that is important is that Adam was a cherub who lost his state and God is changing us from death and an earthly existence to life and a heavenly one. This change, which is in the process, is to establish us as cherubim. This truth is so great that the world will rejoice at the manifestation of Christ Jesus in a new creation man. He has called us through His Son to bear His image, be handwritten epistles made manifest to creation so that creation might be released from the bondage of corruption. Our duty is to be angels - which in the Greek means nothing more than messengers with good news.*

*The voice of the archangel is a message proclaimed by a group conformed to the image of the Son of God. The word that they proclaim is singular, inspired and brings deliverance and judgment at the same time. It is one word, a clear distinct sound and each proclaim the same message out of their vessel. It is a word that comes with total purity from the very throne of God. It is a word proclaimed by men, who having died to the self nature reveal the nature of the Father, a heavenly nature and thus become angels, divine messengers sent to deliver an earth filled with havoc. Write for our book on angels.*

#### *Descend from Heaven*

*"Will descend from heaven." The typical teaching is that heaven is a literal place. Unfortunately, this is not so. Heaven is a spiritual place, not a literal place in the sense of the "sky" or perhaps the "universe" etc. Jesus stated in John 14:23 the following: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." The Goodspeed states: "come to him and live with him." The Amplified Bible states: "...to make our (abode, special dwelling place) with him."*

*This scripture must also relate to 1 John 2:24 which states: "...If what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, you also abide in the Son and in the Father." Heaven is not an altitude. "The Lord, Himself, will descend" implies, as some scholars indicate, not the man Jesus coming but God manifesting Himself. How will He come? Romans 8:19 states He will come in the "sons of God." 1 Thessalonians 1:10 states He will be "glorified in His saints."*

*He will descend out of heaven. Jesus walked the earth but lived in heaven! He did nothing save what He saw His Father do (John 5:19) or say (John 5:30). The kingdom of God is within us (Luke 17:21). On the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus was changed before the disciples. In fact the Wuest translation of transfiguration (Greek word "metamorphoses") states "the manner of His outward expression was changed before them, that expression coming from and being representative of His inner being." Heaven was made manifest on the earth. Adam was made of the earth, was he not (Genesis 2:7)? Jesus, made in the similitude of man (earth), revealed heaven (1 Corinthians 15:45-49).*

*The descent of the Lord in Jesus came when on the mount, His inner nature was expressed through his outer appearance. He descended from the realm He was living in, a spiritual place, and manifested the life of the eternal on the outer man. The descent of the Lord will be from your spiritual place, heaven, which is in you and will be made manifest out of you.*

*The descent of the Lord is from heaven, and the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven (Revelation 21:11). But this verse clearly states that the New Jerusalem is the bride, the wife of God (Revelation 21:9). It is not a literal city. It is a spiritual realm. The soul is generally feminine in the Scriptures. The Spirit is masculine. The "psyche" or mind is the soul. Adam was a living soul*

until he sinned. Any soul that sins dies (Ezekiel 18:4). This is the reason for the need for atonement. Jesus offered His soul (Isaiah 53:10) for atonement. Now we are to have the mind of Christ. When the saint has the mind of Christ, that city which represents government will govern and be seen in the body of the individual as the fruits of the Spirit are manifested through the vessel.

#### *The Good News of the Third Experience*

This entire booklet is endeavoring to bring out the truth of being spiritually "caught up" while still walking physically on the earth. The rapture is not a literal, physical catching away but an experience that is internal. Just as Paul's was. It is a place, a realm, in which the person dwells.

The catching up is a return to the spiritual place and relationship that Adam had before the fall. He fell from the location, not literally but spiritually. He lost the relationship with the Lord. Jesus broke down the partition so that we might again have access to the Father. We are ascending in Him. The third experience which follows Pentecost and Passover provides the means to live above the battles on the earth.

Christ in you is your deliverance. Not just having Him within in the Passover experience nor in the Pentecostal but in the Tabernacles experience. Many evangelicals will speak of the "saving" experience. Some will speak of the "baptism of the Spirit" (speaking in tongues etc). You must have the two experiences to experience the third. This is the catching up - 2 Corinthians 12:2.

The third experience is when the saint is birthed into a realm where there is no contention with the devil. Oh, there are still trials, even the Lord our pattern was tried/tempted by the devil. But what we speak of is a realm where the devil can find nothing in you (John 14:30). There is no contention because you reside in Christ and know where you are going. Nothing can remove you out of the third heavens. Those in Pentecost or Passover might say that this is not possible, but there are those who believe and who now live in such a realm as our Pattern did. The devil can only touch that person who has something in him left to touch. There was nothing in Jesus. If we remain in Christ and not in Adam we too can overcome the world. The new creation man cannot sin, only Adam can and Adam, as Romans brings out, is dead. We just have to reckon ourselves dead to sin and Adam and live as being alive in Christ.

Paul experienced the third heavens in 2 Corinthians 12. The purpose of the experience is to establish the individual in a realm in order to withstand any trial whether it be in the fiery furnace of Daniel's three friends, or the literal death of the cross of Jesus. The third experience is a realm of life which is above the natural plane. The historical theology and the futuristic theology do not address this, nor can they. As you the reader, have experienced Salvation in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ the Lord or perhaps you have also experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, each experience is unique and important to the Christian. The third experience is just as important and valid.

Each group of three is mentioned in the Bible. There is no reason for contention that the first, Passover or as some call it salvation, is a definite experience in one's walk in God. Some would contend that the second experience is not valid, while verifying the first. So, fewer people have experienced the second, Pentecost or as some call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Even a smaller group will proclaim the feast of Tabernacles as an experience. Generally, those in Passover and Pentecost will contend that there is not a third spiritual experience, failing to realize that if the first and second are real and accurate, God's word indicates the third is real too.

Below are some comparisons based on Scriptures.

Passover Pentecost Tabernacles

Jesus Holy Spirit Father

Way Truth Life

Spirit Soul Body

Heart Soul Might

30 fold 60 fold 100 fold

Blood on Leper Oil on Leper Vial on Leper

1st Day 2nd Day 3rd Day

Birthright Blessing Inheritance

Faith Hope Love

Red Sea Rock of Christ Promised Land

Outer Court Holy Place Holy of Holies

Psalms Hymns Spiritual Song

Blood Water Spirit

Baptism of Water Baptism of Spirit Baptism of Fire

#### *Historical School, Futuristic School or a Spiritual Interpretation?*

The historical school holds to the position that what the futuristic school believes is erroneous. It is not surprising that the futuristic school feels that the historical position is untenable. These two divergent philosophies will contend until the end. While one of these is probably correct, neither is truly important. Both focus on the natural interpretation, which is incorrect. Both focus on the literal interpretation which is incorrect.

Any theology that is true on the natural, literal or historical plane of understanding has merit. Yet, the real truth is often on a spiritual plane, which may or may not coincide with the natural, literal or even historical point of view. The real key to spiritual life for an individual is not to focus one's attention to the "outer" view but rather to focus on the "inner" meaning.

The real truth lies within the individual. As long as theology is externalized, the accountability of the individual is absent. As long as theology points to someone else's actions rather than the individual's actions, it fails to hold the individual accountable. Corruption in the world is a horrible thing. The corruption in government is a direct result of people receiving the leaders they deserve. Isaiah 26:9 states that when God's judgments are in the world people learn righteousness. God brings judgments because the wicked still do unjustly during times of righteousness (Isaiah 26:10). Romans 13:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 suggest that people reap the leadership that they deserve. Corruption in government comes from corruption in the people, and corruption in the

people comes from corruption in the family, and corruption in the family comes from corruption in the parents, and corruption in the parents comes from a corrupt man or woman - individual responsibility.

Theology which is directed to an ambiguous, nebulous "something" is not well founded. If the historical school of theology is verifiably correct, then the next step is to look for a spiritual fulfillment. If the futuristic school is correct, then we must today look for a spiritual fulfillment before the natural fulfillment occurs because the spiritual fulfillment in people will cause the natural fulfillment. Either way, either theology hinges on a spiritual fulfillment.

Jesus stated that the kingdom of God is within (Luke 17:21). He also called Peter "Satan" at one time, meaning that the kingdom of the world is found within also. Spirituality causes truth to be seen in the natural and by that is meant within the individual person. The man of sin is found within. The man of God is manifested from within the vessel even as the Father was manifested through Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration. Both the historical and futuristic schools of theology are failures. Each lacks discernment of the real truth. They fail because the individual is not held accountable and natural interpretations are given to spiritual truths.

#### Some Concluding Thoughts

Depending on your point of view, the Second Coming has already occurred (historical theology) or is to occur (futuristic theology). The man of sin has already come (historical school) or is to come (futuristic school). Some say there is no rapture (historical school) others believe there is a secret rapture (futuristic school).

The failure of both schools is that the Christian becomes so caught up in the leaving of this literal earth that living the crucified life here is not done. By crucified life I do not mean physical hardships, mental duress etc. I do mean the removal of the man of sin in oneself and the revelation of the Son. That is true evangelism. People came to Jesus because He revealed what they longed for and did not have.

The "apocalypse" is another Greek word which is translated "coming" in the KJV. It is different from parousia which we have discussed and speaks of a literal manifestation in the flesh. It is not used with the return of the Lord. It is used in Romans 8:19 and Revelation 1:1.

Dealing with Revelation 1:1 first, we see that the whole book of Revelation is actually a revelation of the Lord - not a revelation of the antichrist, the dragon etc. Yet, these things are mentioned along with the lake of fire, manchild etc. If all those "evil" things are part of the revelation of the Lord, how could it be so? As the Lord ascends in a people, His saints, He causes all the corruption in them to come forth and be dealt with. Every facet of your life that is not in alignment with the Lord's nature will be dealt with. As each facet of your carnal nature is revealed - whether it be religious, carnal or fleshly lusts - the Lord in you removes it. He comes. This is His coming IN a body (see 2 Thess.. 1:10) and He becomes greater and greater in you.

The world groans for the manifestation of the sons of God - Romans 8:19. These are those who have been conformed to His image, living epistles, handwritten by the Holy Spirit. These are those who have gone deeper than the experience of salvation/Passover. These are those who have gone yet deeper than the Baptism of the Holy Spirit/Pentecost. They have entered into the ingathering/Tabernacles. Their identity is hid with God (Galatians 2:20).

They have slain the dragon. He no longer resides in their heavens. He has been cast down. The man of sin has been removed because they have made their eye one. A double minded man (carnal and spiritual) is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). Their mind is one, their eye is clear for they realize that the work of God in them has caused them to be in His image.

The catching up to be with the Lord is a spiritual experience that can occur during the lifetime of the individual. True, Paul and the others were writing about literal things which would occur. But more than that Paul was writing a spiritual word. A literal interpretation, a natural fulfillment was not what Paul was concerned about. This was his concern:

"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." Galatians 4:18

The concern of this ministry is that religion has caused division among the saints based upon dogma that has nothing to do with the Christian life. When the real focus should be found in the development of the nature of our Lord within the person.

At least the historical school considers things "done" and then allows the saint to focus on developing his/her personal walk and revelation of the Lord within. The futuristic school is an escape mentality that puts off until the future the full development of the revelation of the Lord in a person.

"Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." 1 Samuel 8:7

When the people cried for a king, Samuel gave them Saul so that they could be like other worldly governments. The people rejected the Lord as King in a theocracy for something far less. Religious doctrine substantially removes from the saint the deep development of a personal relationship today with God. Right religious doctrine becomes predominate over right relationship (kingdom developed within).

God speaks daily to those who hear. God is raising up some "sons" (little "s") of God. These are people who are willing to remove their false theologies, their idols, precluded ideas, to worship the unknown God (Acts 17:23) - the god the religious man does not know.

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