

THE THREE COMINGS OF JESUS

Leland Earls



INTRODUCTION

There are multitudinous signs in the world today that indicate the nearness of the return of Jesus Christ to planet earth. A study of those signs is very important, but is beyond the scope of this particular booklet. Herein, I shall deal only with the HOW of Jesus' return. Is it all at once, in stages, etc.? Does He come secretly, visibly, or what? And what about the "rapture"? Is it scriptural? Are Christians to be taken or left? And if taken, where to and for how long? I hope that this study will clear up many of these and other questions; I have chosen to divide the material into three sections:

The Coming of Jesus TO His saints.

The Coming of Jesus FOR His saints.

The Coming of Jesus WITH His saints,

I hope you will carefully study this booklet, trying to keep an open mind and heart to the Lord. My only desire is to let the truth that is contained in these pages bring joy and comfort to your heart, and challenge you to further study of this important subject. I make no claim to have the final word on this or any other scriptural truth, but only want to be faithful to present the insights I have received to the praise of the Lord, I am open to further light which will amplify or modify what has been written. I would suggest that you read through the whole booklet first, to get a complete perspective; then review and study.

Leland Earls

Word of Life Fellowship

Three Comings Of Jesus

Come, Lord Jesus!

Probably no man on earth, other than the Lord Jesus Himself, has ever had such an awe-inspiring, dramatic and revealing experience, than the one granted to the apostle John on the isle of Patmos as he had unveiled to him in symbolic and prophetic vision what he chose to call "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1). After recording faithfully what he had seen and heard with a hearty "Amen," he no doubt began to contemplate what he had written. The joy and anticipation of his heart was beyond description. How he longed to see this wondrous vision fulfilled to himself and to all of the church. Perhaps he quickly picked up his pen again and appended that which was not only the cry of his own heart, but also the longing in the heart of every true Christian from that day to this: "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS" (Rev. 22:20).

Different Phases

However, we need to see that there are different phases to the coming of the Lord. Whenever I long for the Lord to move by His Spirit and make Himself real by His spiritual presence, I say in my heart "Come, Lord Jesus!" And this is scriptural, for Jesus Himself said, when promising another Comforter in the person of the Holy Spirit, "I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO YOU" (John 14:18). But the Lord's coming TO the church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit is NOT His only coming, as some are erroneously teaching. Jesus also promised to come FOR His church when He said: "I will come again, and RECEIVE you *to* myself; that where I AM, there *you* may be also (John 14:3). Please note, He was not speaking in this verse of His coming in the ministry of the Holy Spirit; for had He been. He would have said, "that where YOU ARE, there I will be also. For that is the purpose of His sending the Holy Spirit, that we might experience His spiritual presence where WE ARE (here and now). But He said He would come to RECEIVE us that we might be where HE IS. Since He is no longer an earthly being walking this earth, that means being translated into His own heavenly kingdom realm, with a body like *to* His (Phil. 3:21).

Final

But there is a final coming of the Lord Jesus expressed in the words of Jude in the 14th verse of his book: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes WITH ten thousands of his saints'." Some say this refers to angels only, but though there will be myriads

of angels returning with Him (Mt. 25:31), I believe it is quite clear that the glorified saints also return with Him in His final descent, as in Rev. 19:14 the "armies" of heaven follow Him to earth. And also in Luke 19:12 we read where Jesus told of a certain nobleman (representing Jesus Himself) who went into a far country to RECEIVE for himself a kingdom, and to RETURN. Notice that He receives the kingdom (His people) *to* Himself first; then returns with it. Since His people return WITH Him, it is quite obvious that previous to that they have BEEN somewhere. But that is just one of the "mysteries" which I will seek to unveil in this study. Are you ready? Then come and let us LOOK!

Taken and Left?

Before dealing with the various phases of the Lord's coming in detail, I want to jump right into what seems to be a difficult scripture passage, and which has been frequently misinterpreted. I refer to Mt. 24:37-41, where it speaks of some being taken and others left. After dealing with this passage, a certain writer that I read recently, said: "Lord, we want to be left!" I hope that by the time you have finished reading this booklet, that you will say with me, "Lord, we want to be taken!" Another end-time writer that I read not too long ago, also ridicules the idea that anyone would want to be taken; for, he says, according to this passage only the wicked are to be taken. But does it? NOT if we examine carefully and understand the TWO kinds of "taking" the Lord was talking about.

The Key

So often the truth is missed because our English translations do not give the distinction between different Greek words that are used. Let me quote the passage under consideration and then I will show you what I mean. "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. WATCH THEREFORE: for *you* know not what hour your Lord *comes*" (Mt. 24:38-42). The Greek word translated "took" in the first instance, where it speaks of the fact that he "took them all away" (in judgment), is an entirely different Greek word than that used in the verses following where He says that "one shall be taken, and the other left." Let me illustrate this by using the numbers and definitions in Strongs Concordance as follows:

Strong's: #142, Greek, AIRO: "to lift; by implication, to take up or away; away with, put away, remove, take." This is the Greek word that is used in Mt. 24:39 where it says that God "took them (the wicked) all away." It is the same word used in Lk. 19:26 where of the "wicked servant" it is said that "even that which he *has* shall be taken away from him."

Strong's: #3880, Greek, PARALAMBANO: "to receive near, i.e. associate with oneself (in any familiar or intimate act or relation); by anal. to assume an office; receive, take (unto, with)." WOW! Does not this word literally SHOUT at us? And this is the word used in Mt. 24:40-41 where it says that "one shall be taken, and the other left." Here it is not the wicked being taken away in judgment, but rather Christians who are READY (this will be discussed later) being taken to be near Jesus in intimate relationship, to be associated with Him in a particular work or ministry, where they will "assume an office "or function in His consummating plan for this age. Note the following other scriptures where this Greek word is used.

Mt. 1:20:"...fear not to take *to you* Mary *your* wife."

Mt. 2:24: "...and (Joseph) took *to* himself his wife."

Lk. 9:28: "He (Jesus) took Peter, John, James, and went. . ."

Mt. 26:37: "...and He (Jesus) took with him Peter."

All indicate a taking or receiving *to* a person for an intimate relation and purpose. Hallelujah! Lord, we want to be taken!

Watch

Immediately following His statement that some would be taken and others left, Jesus gives the admonition, "Watch therefore: for *you* know not what hour your Lord *comes*." Mt. 24:42. Now WHY the admonition to "watch" if the Lord is only talking about the wicked being taken away? But if, as we have pointed out, the Lord is warning Christians lest they be left behind when He comes to take some to Himself, THEN the admonition to watch makes sense. All we have to do is to continue to read the verses following the admonition (24:43-51), and the misty fogs of man's confusion will disappear. "But know this, that if the good man (head) of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, *and* would not have *permitted* his house to be broken up. Therefore BE YOU ALSO READY: for in such an hour as *you* think not the Son of man comes" (Mt. 24:43-44). Thus Jesus is coming to break into the household of the church to TAKE those who are READY, and leave others

behind. The same thought is presented under a different analogy in 24:45-51 as the faithful and wise servant who is ready when the Lord comes, is contrasted with the unfaithful and careless servant who is to be "cut asunder" (separated from those who are ready by being left behind), so that his portion (during the tribulation) will be appointed with the hypocrites. These thoughts will be developed more fully little later. I have been seeking to show now that the whole context of the passage has to be studied to grasp the significance of some being taken and others being left because of READINESS, as well as STRATEGY in dealing with the household of the church.

Coming TO His Saints

By the Spirit

Having jumped right into the middle of the subject, I am now going to "back up" and deal with each phase of the Lord's coming. First, we need to see that there is a spiritual coming of the Lord TO His church through the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our authority for this is found in John 14:15-18, where Jesus promises another Comforter, and then He says: "I WILL COME TO YOU." Jesus was very clear in His teaching on the Holy Spirit in John, chaps. 14-16, that this one who was to be sent was HIS personal representative, acting on HIS behalf, and communicating HIS life, truth, presence, etc. to HIS disciples (see particularly John 16:13-15). By means of the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit, HE would always be with them, to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20, Heb. 13:5).

Suddenly coming

God had spoken through the prophet Malachi concerning HIS COMING to His people in these words: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom *you* seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Mal.3:1). This was first fulfilled when God in human flesh came to the Jews in the person of Jesus. The messenger who prepared the way was John the Baptist. In the early part of His ministry, Jesus came suddenly to the temple at Jerusalem and cleansed it of the money changers (John 2:13-17), However, I want to point out a second application which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost after Jesus had been raised from the dead and had ascended back to the Father. The disciples who had gathered in the upper room to wait for the "promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4) had become, through the previous impartation of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), His spiritual

TEMPLE. But Jesus was yet to COME to that temple in order to endue and fill it with power and glory. This was to be accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Note the words in Acts 2:1-2: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And SUDDENLY there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Thus in fulfillment of Mal. 3:1, Jesus suddenly came to His spiritual temple when the Holy Spirit was outpoured *on* the waiting disciples.

Second Pentecost

There must, however, be a second Pentecost in order to bring forth an end-time harvest. The outpouring of God's Spirit in the Scriptures is likened to the falling of rain (Isa, 44:3, 32:15). The Lord had promised the Israelites that if they would obey His commandments. He would give them rain for their land in its season, "the first rain and the latter rain" (Deut. 11:14). The first, or early, rain came in the fall of the year, after the long hot summer, in order to soften the ground that they might plow the soil and plant the grains before the winter came. The latter rain came in the spring in order to swell the grain and bring the crops to maturity for harvest. That which God established in the natural is designed by Him to pattern His workings in the spiritual realm. First the natural and then the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46), with the natural becoming a type of the spiritual. Thus we know that for God to be true to His word, there MUST be a latter rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the HARVEST of this age to be brought forth. That which came on the disciples in the upper room as recorded in Acts 2 was only the first, or early, rain, in order that the gospel seed might be sown. We are now coming to the end of this age which is the time of the latter rain and harvest. Mt. 13:39 makes it clear that the harvest is the end of the age.

The Husbandman

In James 5:7-8, God is likened to a husbandman who "waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and *has* long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain." Then follows the admonition, "Be [] also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord *draws near* ." This scripture indicates that the Lord cannot receive the full fruit of the earth (the final harvest) apart from the "latter rain," and with patience does He wait for the time of that fruit to come. There are two other scriptures which I will quote from the Old Testament to indicate the Lord's coming TO His people in a latter rain outpouring. The first is Joel 2:23: "Be glad then, *you* children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he *has* given you the former rain moderately,

and He WILL CAUSE TO COME down for you the rain, the former rain, AND the latter rain in the first month. " Then in Hos. 6:1-3 we have the following admonition and promise: "Come, and let us return *to* the Lord; for he *has* torn, and he will heal us; he *has* smitten and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE SHALL COME *TO US* as the rain, as the latter and former rain *to* the earth." We are now in the dawning period of this third day, and the Lord is beginning to come to His church as the rain. But first it is a restoration of the former rain, coming down now moderately, according to Joel 2:23. But the full intensity of the former rain is to be restored, as well as the latter rain being added to it. This will take place only after the first fruits company has been translated, as I will show later.

The Coming of Jesus FOR His Saints

Receive

We have already quoted Jesus' promise in John 14:3 that He would come again and RECEIVE His own *to* Himself, and also alluded to Jesus' statement in the parable of the pounds recorded in Lk. 19:1-27. Verse 12 tells of a certain nobleman (symbolizing Himself) who "went into a far country to RECEIVE FOR HIMSELF a kingdom, and to RETURN." Notice, the kingdom (people) is received FOR Him first, and then He returns WITH it. This is in harmony with the Greek word paralambano which we examined earlier as used in Mt. 24:40, which means "to RECEIVE NEAR." As we examine the scriptures, however, the evidence points to the fact that Christ will receive His saints to Himself in TWO groups, separated by a period of time. Remember that the word church means the "called out ones." Just as we have been spiritually called out of the "Egypt" of this world, so will the saints of the true church be literally "called out" of the present earthly conditions, putting on immortal, incorruptible and glorified bodies, which will no longer be subject to the limitations of the physical realm. Christ cannot "receive" them *to* Himself unless their bodies are changed into the likeness of His glorious body, so that they can function in the heavenly realm where He is, and also manifest or appear in the physical realm as He did after His resurrection to glorified life.

Illustrate

There are a number of scriptural illustrations which can clarify this truth of the two-fold church, or the church being received in two groups. I will list them first, and then deal with each illustration separately.

1. Wise and Foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-13).
2. Children and Friend (Luke 11:5-8).
3. Feeding of 5,000 and 4,000 (Mt. 14:15-21, 15:29-39).
4. First fruits and Harvest (Rev. 14:1-5, 14-16).
5. Woman and Manchild (Rev. 12:1-17).
6. Martha and Mary (John 11:1-32).
7. Enoch and Elijah (Gen. 5:22-24, II Kings 2:11-12).
8. Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-37).
9. Daniel and Three Companions (Dan. 2:48-49, 3:10-27).
10. Queen and Virgins (Psalm 45:9-16).
11. Bride and Those Called (Rev. 19:7-9).
12. "You" and "They" (Luke 12:35-36).
13. Second and Third watches (Luke 12:37-40),
14. Jesus' First and Second Ascensions (John 20:17, Acts 1:9).
15. Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (Luke 12:41-48).
16. Peter, James, John and Rest of Disciples (Mt. 17:1-18).
17. Overcomers and Churches (Rev., chaps. 2 & 3).

As you can see, there are two contrasting groups in each Biblical illustration, and/or there are two distinct events or episodes which demonstrate the same pattern. Christians have so often fought over pre-tribulation and post-tribulation rapture theories, each finding scriptural support for their beliefs, with most polarizing to one point of view or the other. But very few ever seem to realize that there is some truth to both positions. I hope that after you have read this study, it will help you to "unify" all scriptures in a beautiful picture of God's end-time plan, which clearly shows that some (a small number) will be translated before the tribulation for the purpose of strategy, as well as to fulfil a certain "role;" and that a much greater number will be translated at the close

of the tribulation, for they will have a purpose to fulfill on earth during the tribulation, For contrary to traditional teaching, the tribulation period will see the greatest revival in human history. Even those translated first will minister on the earth at that time.

Wise and Foolish

Let us take a look first at a parable which vividly portrays the truth of some being taken and others left behind. In Mt. 25:1-13 we have the story of the TEN VIRGINS, of whom five were wise, and five foolish. All went out to meet the Bridegroom, but the wise took extra oil with them, so that when the Bridegroom tarried they did not run out. The foolish did not take extra oil and were found wanting at the midnight hour when the Bridegroom finally came. The wise were taken into the marriage, but the foolish were left behind, as expressed in Mt. 25:10: "they that were READY went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Those who want to wrest the scripture to fit their traditions try to make this parable a picture of the separation of Christians from non-Christians, saying that the foolish virgins are wicked people who are left behind when Christ comes to take the believers. This will simply not "hold water," for ALL ten were VIRGINS. Thus they all portray born-again Christians who have been "ESPOUSED to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). This is further shown by the fact that all ten had lamps (a type of the Word of God) and oil in their lamps (a type of the Holy Spirit). The wise simply had EXTRA oil with them (a type of the FURTHER WORK of the Holy Spirit in the BAPTISM of the Holy Spirit and subsequent purifyings and preparations by that same Spirit).

Ready

Most Christians, brainwashed by the traditions of man, simply do not want to accept the fact that MORE is required to be READY to be taken by the Lord than simply being a born-again believer. This is too vast a subject to go into here, but there is an abundance of scripture to show that salvation is simply the lifting of the death penalty, giving the recipient of Christ's gift of grace LIFE (eternal) for the soul now, and resurrection or a change for the physical body at Christ's return. But just WHERE that life will be lived, and in what realm of glory is another question. Paul says that there is the glory of the earthly (terrestrial), and there is the glory of the heavenly (celestial); so also is the resurrection (I Cor. 15:40). The glory of the heavenly, where those who are changed into the likeness of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21), to rule in His kingdom, in intimate association with Him, is reserved only for the over-comers (Rev. 2:26-28, 3:2!). All Christians are now espoused to Christ in new covenant relationship through the new birth, but only a select group out of the espoused

ones will be TAKEN (even as the wise virgins) to become the heavenly BRIDE of the Christ, for the bride is one who makes herself READY (Rev. 19:7). For a further discussion of these truths, ask for the booklets "[The Voice of the Bridegroom](#)" and "[A New and Living Way](#)" I will simply add here, that though the foolish virgins in the parable were left behind when the Lord came as the Bridegroom, it is quite evident that they did secure that extra oil they so sorely needed (even though too late to be taken at the midnight hour). And this is what vast numbers of Christians left behind will be doing during the tribulation period: getting that extra oil and getting READY for the Lord's return to take them at the close of the tribulation, to be a part of His heavenly household.

Children and Friend

Another parable which is closely related to that of the wise and foolish virgins is the "friend at midnight" as recorded in Lk. 11:5-8. Both parables deal with a crisis at the midnight hour. The foolish virgins were without oil at the midnight hour, and a certain man was without bread. In both parables we find that "a door was shut" (indicating a lost opportunity because of lack of preparedness). In both parables there were some on the inside of the shut door, indicating that they were taken in before the door was shut. The wise virgins were taken in, and in the parable of Lk. 11:7 we read of the Friend (Jesus) saying to the one on the outside: "Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed." "In bed" with Jesus would indicate that place of REST and INTIMACY which will be experienced after translation and glorification into His realm to be with Him. This parable illustrates again that some will be taken first to be with the Lord and others left behind. But this parable adds a clarifying and hopeful detail with reference to those left behind. Although the man without bread found the door shut when He went to his friend (Jesus) to get the bread he so desperately needed, he continued in importunity asking, seeking, knocking (see Lk. 11:9-10 which immediately follows the parable), until he got what he sought so intently for.

Three loaves

Because of his importunity (persistence) the man in the parable receives the assurance that his friend (Jesus) will "rise and give him as many as he needs" (Lk. 11:8); but since in vs. 5, he specifically asks for three loaves, we can assume that is what he received. The "three loaves" are a veiled reference to the three categories of Christians as given in Mk. 4:28—the 30 fold, 60 fold and 100 fold. Since the man in the parable who needed bread asked for three loaves, it portrays to us that he was not going to be satisfied with the 30 or 60 fold stages of Christian experience, but wanted that "third loaf—the 100

fold estate. Only the 100 fold will be translated into the heavenly realm to be with Christ, so this parable vividly portrays the intensity with which all Christians who are left behind when some are taken at the midnight hour, will seek the Lord Jesus (their Friend) and with importunity cry out for Him to meet them with the fiery Spirit baptism and other dealings and preparations that will be necessary to be taken at the close of the tribulation.

Feeding of 5,000 and 4,000

One of the most interesting pictures of two gatherings is in two similar miracles which Jesus performed, in Mt. 14:15 we read of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000. Jesus fed this multitude with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. The miracle took place near the Sea of Galilee. Galilee means "a circle," and is a picture of the circuitous area of the whole earth. To us it speaks of Jesus' ministry throughout this age as the bread of life has been broken to multitudes throughout the whole earth, and as they have partaken of the benefits of His plan of salvation (symbolized by the fish—which speaks of the mystery of regeneration). But notice, after the multitudes were fed, there was a gathering up of the fragments that remained. This speaks of those who remain (are still alive) at the coming of the Lord. They shall be "gathered" to the Lord through translation, even as we read in II Thess. 2:1 of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him." This will be the first gathering, for we read of another gathering in the feeding of the 4,000, which we will look at shortly. In Mt. 14:20 we read that the fragments taken up filled twelve baskets. Notice that number 12, for it is the key number in speaking to us of the First fruits who will be gathered first. We have already seen that in Rev. 14:1 that the first fruits are symbolized by 144,000. But please note that this number is the multiple of 12 x 12,000; confirming that 12 is the first fruits number. Also the Greek word for "basket" in Mt. 14:20 means a small wicker hand basket. This is tremendously important as we will see when we examine the next miracle.

Contrast

I will now show some contrasts between the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000. The latter miracle is recorded in Mt. 15:32-39. It also took place near the sea of Galilee in a "wilderness" place, it is important to notice that this miracle took place some time after the other one, so that the "gathering" of the fragments pictured here would speak to us of a gathering of saints which takes place later than the first gathering. The "wilderness" place (15:33) could speak to us of the great tribulation period, which great numbers of Christians will find themselves going through after the first fruits have been

taken, for in Rev. 12:6 we see the remaining church going into the wilderness. Now note carefully! in the feeding of the 4,000 there are seven baskets of fragments taken up. The number 7 is symbolic of completeness of fullness. Thus this miracle speaks to us of the close of the tribulation when the FULL and complete gathering of the church takes place (in contrast to a small part only—the first fruits—being taken earlier). Also, the Greek word for "basket" in Mt. 15:37 means a large bushel-like basket. See the Amplified Bible and contrast Mt. 15:37 with Mt. 14:20. Thus the 7 baskets taken up after the feeding of the 4,000 would be a much larger amount of fragments than the 12 baskets taken up after the feeding of the 5,000. Again, confirming the fact that the great host to be taken after the tribulation is a much larger group than the first fruits taken earlier.

Numbers

The numbers also speak further to us when we see the contrast between the "5" in the feeding of the 5,000, and the "4" in the feeding of the 4,000. Five is the number of freedom through the grace of God. Four is the earth number, and also speaks of the fullness of fruit. Thus the fragments taken after the feeding of the 5,000 speak to us of the first fruits who shall enter into a full freedom FIRST, being released from the earthly into the heavenly through translation into a glorified body—FREE from all limitations and corruption of the flesh. The fragments taken after the feeding of the 4,000 speak to us of those who must remain on EARTH during the tribulation, that the fullness of fruit might be developed in them during that time. Then they shall be ready to be gathered after the tribulation. Halleluiah for the beauty and simplicity of God's plan when our eyes are opened to the truth.*

* In John's account of the feeding of the five thousand, we read in chap. 6:9, that the loaves used to feed the multitudes and gathered in fragments at the close were " barley loaves." This is a further confirmation that these fragments symbolize the first fruits, for barley ripens and is ready for harvest before the wheat. In the feeding of the four thousand, no mention is made that the loaves were of barley, so we might assume they were likely of wheat. Also, barley was particularly used to make bread for the poor, and this speaks of that which we read in Isa. 66:2, "but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word." Jesus' first blessing was *on* the "poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3).

First fruits and Harvest

Having mentioned the "first fruits" in the preceding section on the miraculous

feeding of the 5,000, I will now elaborate a little more on the scriptural background for the offering of a first fruits preceding the main harvest. For the law of the first fruits was clearly set forth to the Israelites in the Old Testament; namely, that the first ripe of their harvest was to be dedicated to the Lord in a special way. Deut. 26:1-12 gives the instructions of how each family was to bring a basket of their first fruits and give it to the priest as the Lord's representative. Also Lev. 23:10-14 gives the instructions for a special "first fruits sheaf" of the barley harvest which was to be offered to the Lord at the time of the Passover festival in the spring of the year. They could not begin their harvest of the barley and other crops until the high priest had offered this first fruits sheaf to the Lord in a special ceremony. As the Lord of the harvest, God had to receive His special portion before the rest of the harvest could be reaped. This is a TYPE of God's ways in His spiritual harvest of human beings. Jesus clearly states in Mt. 13:39 that His harvest comes at the close of this age. But before He can gather a great host into His "heavenly barn" (kingdom)—Mt. 13:30, He must receive to Himself a first-fruits. And this "first fruits" must be gathered out of the end-time harvest, to be translated without experiencing death.

Mystery Revealed

The preceding "mystery" is revealed to us in that added portion of Divine revelation given by Jesus to the apostle John on the island of Patmos. We must keep in mind that when Jesus was on the earth. He either did not know, or was not permitted to reveal all the details of the Father's plan. This is why the book of Revelation is an absolute MUST to get the whole picture. In Rev. 1:1, it is called "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him (in addition to that which He spoke when on earth) to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass." In the 14th chap. of Rev., we see both the first fruits and the rest of the harvest. In Rev. 14:1-5, are the 144,000 first fruits standing with the Lamb w Mount Zion," having been redeemed from (out from) the earth." This can only mean that they are no longer on earth, but translated into the heavenly realm through having their bodies glorified. Then follows in the rest of chap. 14: the preaching of the gospel to all the earth, the judgment on Babylon, the warning about the mark of the beast, the wrath of God, the commendation of the martyrs who die at the hands of the Beast powers—all of which take place during the tribulation period. AFTER these things, we see the Lord Himself in 14:14-16 with a sickle REAPING the REST of the harvest, gathering the remainder of the saints at the close of the tribulation.

Woman and Manchild

The truth of a two-fold church is also clearly given to us in the 12th chap. of the book of Revelation. in 12:1-2 is recorded the vision of the woman "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and *on* her head a crown of twelve stars." This heavenly archetypal pattern which John describes portrays the glorious church as it is to manifest on the earth, symbolically pictured as a woman. He then notices that this woman is "with child"; and then sees her give birth to a male child which is caught up to the throne of God (12:2-5). A comparison of the language of 12:5 with Rev. 2:26-27 shows that this "manchild" portrays the "overcomers" within the woman or church. Their "birth" out of the church, being caught up to the throne of God, pictures their translation without the experience of death to the glorified estate AHEAD of the rest of the church. That this takes place at the beginning of the tribulation is clear from 12:6 where we read that after the woman gives birth she goes into the "wilderness" for 1260 days. This "wilderness "is none other than the great tribulation which Jesus describes in Mt. 24:21-22. Rev. 12:7-17 describes the wrath of Satan at that time against the "woman" and her divine protection by God. Surely this makes plain the truth, and confirms the many other patterns, that a small group will be translated at the beginning of the tribulation, while the remainder and much larger body of Christians goes through the tribulation; emphasizing the truth of some being taken and others left.

Martha and Mary

Another symbolic picture of the two-fold church given to us in the New Testament is that of the sisters: Martha and Mary. I mention Martha first since she evidently was older, and more mature. This is portrayed by the fact that in Lk. 10:38 we read of Jesus and His disciples coming to the village of Bethany and "Martha received him into her house." Likewise she was taking charge of making preparations for the several tired and hungry travelers, while Mary, her sister, sat at Jesus' feet. Some have tried to deduce from this that Mary was the more spiritual one. However, close examination of the symbology does not bear this out. Mary represents the newer, more immature Christian, who is not ready to be "up and serving" the Master. Martha was rebuked by Jesus, not because she was serving—that was her responsibility as head of the house—but because she was burdened with having no help and critical of Mary for not giving her a hand. Martha's approach to the Master and her words indicate that she was on intimate terms with Him, and evidently had herself sat at His feet much previous to Mary's coming to that point. Mary, on the other hand, was no doubt a more recent "convert," perhaps coming out of a life of deep

sin. Therefore she needed to be at the Master's feet at that time. Jesus said that she had chosen "that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10:42). This portrays the "gift of eternal life" (Rom. 6:23) which shall not be taken away once it is given (Rom. 11:29). Like Mary, we too who have received His gift of life, must always find time to "sit at His feet" and learn of Him; but we must also grow and mature to where we can also be "up and serving" like Martha. Both are necessary in our Christian experience.

Meeting Jesus

Having clarified the above picture, we now proceed to the 11th chapter of John where again we see Jesus visiting the household of Bethany. This time it was a crisis situation. Martha and Mary had sent word for Jesus to come from some distance and four days had passed before He arrived. In the meantime Lazarus had died. Jesus had allowed this to happen because He purposed to glorify God by raising him from the dead. Our purpose at this time is not to go into all of the details of this *story*, but to point out the prophetic pattern portrayed by Martha, Mary and Lazarus. The name "Lazarus" means "whom God helps" and he is symbolic of the Jewish nation whom God has sworn to help, and which He is going to "raise up" to spiritual life (through their accepting of the Messiah) at the time of Jesus' return to this earth. Martha and Mary represent the two-fold church, one portion of which goes out to meet the Lord before the other. John 11:20 says that "Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary sat still in the house." Martha going out to meet the Master "outside the city" is a type of the first group of Christians being translated to meet the Lord before the tribulation begins; whereas Mary represents those left behind to go through the tribulation.

Martha calls Mary

After Martha had met Jesus outside the village, and had conversed with Him for a time, John 11:28 says that "she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying. The Master is come, and calls for you." This portrays the fact that the Martha group will have a ministry in helping to prepare the Mary group for their translation. Notice that Martha talked to Mary secretly. After the Martha group has been translated, during the tribulation they will be engaged in appearing to Christians yet on the earth, to help them. These appearances will be "secret"—that is, not known by the world. Such appearances will be similar to the appearances of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection and glorification. Acts 1:3 says that Jesus was "seen of them forty days," and He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." So will the glorified saints of the Martha group appear during the "40" of the great

tribulation, for the number "40" is symbolic of testing through tribulation.

Mary meets Jesus

After being prepared by Martha, John 11:29 says that Mary "arose quickly, and came *to* him." And verse 30 tells us that "Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him." Isn't that amazing? Or is it? Mary met Jesus in the same place outside the town that Martha had met Him. WHY? We would ordinarily think that Jesus would have proceeded into the town with Martha after she had gone out to meet Him. But once we understand that every MOVE Jesus made portrays a part of His prophetic plan, then such details SPEAK to us. Both Martha and Mary meeting Jesus OUTSIDE the town, speaks to us of saints meeting Jesus "in the air" (atmospheric region above the earth) BEFORE He comes TO the earth with those saints to fully manifest Himself. But again, we notice two groups separated by time. Martha meeting Jesus first, and Mary later (but in the SAME place), so shall the two-fold church be. When Martha went out to meet Jesus there is no record that anyone saw her go (John 11:20), but when Mary left, John 11:31 says that the Jews saw her leave. This again fits the pattern that when Jesus takes the first group of saints it is a secret maneuver, but when the second group is taken, they are seen ascending, headed by the two witnesses (Rev. 11:12).

Enoch and Elijah

Facts and prophetic episodes relating to the New Testament church are TYPED in the Old Testament, as God previewed by living drama things to come in the Messianic age of covenant fullness. It is no accident that just TWO men were translated without experiencing death. They picture the two-fold church in this end time. Enoch is a type of those to be taken first, BEFORE the tribulation, because Enoch was translated before the FLOOD came *on* the earth. Enoch pictures those who are now "walking with God," as he did (see Gen. 5:22-24). "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. " Heb. 11:5 declares that "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." In contrast to Enoch, Elijah pictures those who will be translated following the tribulation. Elijah was on the earth when FIRE fell from heaven, and a great RAIN came (I Kings 18:38, 45), which symbolize the "second Pentecost" of latter rain outpouring which is to come in fullness AFTER the Enoch group of Christians is translated. Following this, Elijah went into the "wilderness," where he was sustained supernaturally (I Kings 19:4-8), for a period of 40 days and

nights. "Forty" is the number of testing, and speaks to us of the great trial of the tribulation period (Rev, 3:10), while the church is in the wilderness (Rev. 12:14). Elijah was persecuted by King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel, who picture the end-time forces of the Beast and apostate religion coming against the true saints (Rev. 2:20, chap. 13 and chap. 17), especially during the tribulation period.

Noah and Lot

In Luke 17-26-32, Jesus connects the days of Noah and Lot together as picturing end-time conditions and the return of the Lord. Noah was taken into the ark BEFORE the floods of tribulation came, and was LIFTED UP above the waters, even as the first fruits will be "lifted up" by translation before the tribulation. Mt. 24:39 says that the people in Noah's day "knew not "that Noah had been taken into the ark until the floods came. In other words, it was a secret maneuver and secret departure. The name Noah means "rest"; and speaks to us of the rest obtained or entered into by a small elect body by means of the mystic "marriage "to the Lamb of God. Like *to* Enoch, Noah "walked with God" (Gen, 6:9), and was called "a just man and perfect in his generations." Thus he types those who are now "following the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4), waiting and expecting to be secretly taken. On the other hand, Lot did not live a separated life like *to* Noah, but in the midst of Sodom and its wickedness (and this was something that he decided). Gen.13:10-11. Sodom means "scorched," whereas her sister city, Gomorrah, means "submerged." Lot lived in Sodom, not Gomorrah. Thus he pictures those Christians who have lived free enough from the world so that they are not submerged in its sin and ways; but they have lived in close enough proximity to its ways that they have been scorched by it. Lot chose to live in Sodom even though his righteous soul was vexed by its wickedness (II Pet. 2:8).

Delivered from Wrath

Compromising Lot thus represents that group of Christians who must go through the tribulation, and be received of the Lord at its close. Note that it is clear from Luke 17:29 that Lot and his family were delivered out of Sodom JUST BEFORE God rained fire on the city to destroy it. Then verse 30 says, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is REVEALED." Jesus is not revealed "in flaming fire" to take vengeance (11 Thess. 1:7) until the very close of the tribulation. When He comes at the beginning of the tribulation it is as a "thief," unseen except by that small group that he takes. Some quote I Thess. 1:10 as evidence that Christians cannot go through the tribulation because they have been "delivered from wrath to come." However, it must be seen that the tribulation is not God's wrath, but rather Satan's wrath (Rev.

12:12). Only at the very close of the tribulation, in the 7 Vials of Wrath of Rev. 16:1-21, is the "wrath of God" poured out on the earth. This corresponds to the "fire" that was rained on Sodom AFTER Lot was delivered. Also in Rev. 15:2-4 we see saints who are obviously in a glorified estate in the heavenlies just BEFORE the vials of wrath are poured out. That they had gone through the tribulation is evident by the fact that they "had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (15:2). So shall the "Lot" group go through the tribulation, in victory over the beast and his system, and be translated to glory just BEFORE the vials of wrath are poured out.

Taken and Left

We have already examined the passage in the gospel of Matthew about those being taken and left. However, Luke's account gives added insight which needs to be looked at, Matthew does not give a complete account; Luke is better. In Luke 17:34 we read: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." Notice, the two are in ONE bed; they are resting in the same place, having one abode in common. Thus they are both Christian believers. Had the Lord wanted to portray the difference between believers and unbelievers, He would have said: "Those in one house shall be taken, whereas those in another house shall be left." Whereas Jesus said "In that NIGHT there shall be two in one bed and one shall be taken," etc., it first indicates that it shall be factual night over Jerusalem when the "taking" starts. Secondly, because the horror and darkness of the great tribulation then opens IN FORCE, the general situation in the world will be similar to that of a "night." Recall that it was at midnight (Mt. 25:6), that the cry went forth which caused the wise virgins to bestir themselves that they might meet the approaching bridegroom. Also, it was at midnight (Ex. 12-29) that a cry went up out of the land of Egypt because the Lord had taken (by death) the firstborn of the land. As THAT "taking was a judgment *on* Egypt for their hardness, in heart, so in a like SIMILITUDE, shall a CRY go up from the church, as the Lord takes the "firstborn" (first fruits) through translation as a judgment *on* a lukewarm, careless, "sleeping" church. It is the same as the Lord "breaking into" the household of the church as a thief (Mt. 24:43-44) to take His "jewels," as in Mal. 3:17: "And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them (from the great tribulation), as a man spares his own son that serves him." Such "thievery" is the PRICE He exacts *on* the balance of the church for their lack of readiness.

Lot Prepared

We read in Gen. 19:1 that God sent heavenly messengers to Sodom to prepare Lot for departure from Sodom. Even so, shortly after the "first fruits" are translated, shall THEY be sent as "messengers" to the Lot group to help prepare them. They shall have their glorified bodies at that time, and will have the power to appear and disappear even as did Jesus when He was on earth for 40 days after His resurrection and glorification. This is pictured in Rev. 12:6 where we read that those of the "Manchild" group "FEED the church in the wilderness (of tribulation)." When Lot left Sodom, it was not secretly, and at night, but in broad daylight (Gen. 19:15), seen by others. Of that moment Jesus spoke in Luke 17:35, "Two shall be grinding together (at the mill); the one shall be taken, and the other left." Ordinarily, grinding is done in the DAY. Thus over Jerusalem, broad daylight shall prevail when the Lot group is taken, and Rev. 11:12 informs us that those who ascend at THAT time will be SEEN going up, even as Jesus was seen when He ascended (Acts 1:9). In perfect harmony with this is the fact that when Martha went out to meet Jesus, no one saw her leave (John 11:20), but later, when Mary left to meet Jesus in the same place where Martha had met him, we read that "the Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they SAW Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her." Hallelujah! Beloved, when we see the dove-tailing of all these little details, all in perfect harmony with the numerous illustrations which God has given us in His Word, to Show the two-fold church and His plan for each group, how can we help but SHOUT His praises.

Summarizing

Looking again at Luke 17:34-35, we see that there are two statements of being "taken." Lk. 17:36 is NOT to be found in the older and authentic Greek manuscripts. It probably means that the statement contained in that verse was spoken by Jesus at ANOTHER TIME, when speaking of the same matter, but inadvertently inserted here by a copyist of later manuscripts. Thus we have TWO "takings"; the first of Lk.17:34 at NIGHT; the second of Lk. 17:35 in the DAY. They are separated by three and one half years. The first "taking" is a Secret maneuver; a sudden breaking into the house by the thief to take the "jewels," who are the first fruits Bride; symbolized by the Wise Virgins, the Manchild, Enoch, Noah, Martha, etc. These are taken before the great tribulation, and are thus "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Lk. 21:36; see also Rev. 3:10). This coming of Jesus is unexpected, except by those awake and watching; thus the admonition by Jesus: "Watch, therefore, for *you* know not what hour your Lord *comes*. . . therefore be *you* also ready; for in such an

hour as *you* think not the Son of man comes" (Mt. 24:42, 44). "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Lk. 21:35). The second taking is EXPECTED; there is nothing secret about it. Christians left to go through the great tribulation will KNOW that they have just three and one half *years* to get ready. It will correspond to Lot going out of Sodom in broad daylight. This group to be taken will make up the remainder of the "heavenly household" to be joined to the Bride. They are symbolized by the foolish virgins, the woman in the wilderness, Elijah, Mary, Lot, etc. They will be SEEN as they go up.

Revelation

Lest some of you think I am "reading" too much into some of Jesus' statements in the gospels, I want to make it clear that it is impossible for anyone to construct a pattern of end-time events from the gospels alone. Only the book of Revelation can help clarify some of the details, and that is why Jesus gave to John that revelation on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:1, 19). Therefore I am scripturally interpreting some of Jesus' statements in the gospels in light of the further revelation given to John on Patmos, especially time factors. Let me illustrate this principle by touching on another matter. Jesus speaks about the resurrection in John 5:29: "And they shall come forth; they that have done good, *to* the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, *to* the resurrection of judgment." If this brief statement was all the information we had concerning the subject, we might conclude that the resurrection of both the good and the evil would take place at approximately the same time. Yet, Jesus' further revelation given to John on Patmos makes it clear that the two resurrections will be separated by a thousand *years* (Rev. 20:4-6). Thus the book of Revelation is very important in order to get the whole picture of end-time events. It is also impossible to try to build an end-time pattern on the writings of Paul alone. Paul said he "saw through a glass darkly" (I Cor. 13:12), so important details were not given to him. His writings can add some illumination, but the basics must come from Jesus' words in the gospels and in the book of Revelation.

Where to Lord?

It is quite obvious from Lk. 17:37 that the disciples understood Jesus' teaching concerning the "taking," for they asked the question "Where, Lord?" That is, WHERE are those taken going? What's their destination? Jesus answered "*Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* At the beginning of the tribulation, just before He takes the first group of Christians, Jesus will have personally descended to our earth's atmosphere. HE, himself,

will be the "Body" to which the saints will be gathered. Jesus used the figure of "eagles" or birds of prey which feed on a "body" or carcass. First, the figure is fulfilled in that we who belong to the Lord FEED on Him; we "eat His flesh and drink His blood" (John 6:56). Secondly, when Christians are translated from an earth-bound body to a glorified body, they are FREED (like the birds) to ascend and GO where Jesus IS (gathered together to Him). At the close of the tribulation, at the time of the second "taking," both Jesus and the glorified first fruits saints will constitute the "Body" that the rest of the saints will be gathered to. This will fulfil I Thess. 4:17 where Paul speaks of those to be "caught up" to "meet the Lord in the air." Also, II Thess. 2:1 speaks of the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to HIM."

Where JESUS Is

The above is in harmony with Jesus' statement in John 14:3 that he would come again and "receive you to MYSELF; that where I AM, there you may be also." Jesus remains in the atmosphere of our earth during the entire three and a half *years* tribulation, and so do the first fruits who will have been translated (but ministering to those yet on earth by appearing to them and instructing them). When the second group is translated at the close of the tribulation, ALL of the glorified saints will be taken by Jesus into the highest heaven where the TEMPLE (and throne) of God is located. There, at the proper time they will enter that temple to be introduced to the Father. There the "marriage supper of the Lamb" will take place while the "vials of wrath" are being poured out on the earth. Jesus then RETURNS WITH His saints to the earth at the very climax of those vials, to personally consummate the "wrath of God" on this earth. Rev. 15:1-8, 19:7-21.

Those left

One other factor needs to be clarified here. If indeed there are two "takings," as indicated by the many Scriptures we have been studying, then according to this pattern, even at the close of the tribulation, when a great host is taken, others will at that time be left behind. Why? And what is their destiny? It must be realized that during the tribulation, with the greatest "revival" in human history, multitudes will turn to the Lord. For many of these, there will simply not be enough time (or for some a lack of willingness) to be fully prepared and proven for entrance into the heavenly kingdom. The pattern which enables us to understand God's plan for those left is found in II Kings 2:1-15, in the story of Elijah and his successor, Elisha. We have already seen that Elijah is a type of those to be translated at the close of the tribulation, in contrast to Enoch who pictures the first fruits translation before the tribulation. Without taking time to go into great detail, we see in the story that immediately after Elijah is

taken by God into the heavenlies, Elisha picks up Elijah's mantle and smites the waters of Jordan and they part, enabling Elisha to go across. Crossing Jordan on "dry ground" is a type of entering into life without the experience of death. But Elisha remained on earth after Elijah was taken, showing us that those left on earth after the final "taking" at the close of the tribulation will have the opportunity to enter into deathless LIFE in physical bodies; immortality in human flesh; living in perpetual youth and health for the entire thousand year millennium or longer. Their opportunity to have their bodies glorified by translation will come at a time specified by God some time in the future.

Daniel and Three Friends

Let us now go back to the Old Testament for further illustrations of the two-fold church and God's plan for each in this end time. One of the most interesting patterns is that of Daniel and his 3 companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In Daniel 3:1, we read of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, setting up a great image, and in 3:4, everyone was commanded to bow down and worship the image. This is a type of the end-time "image" which the nations of earth are commanded to "worship" according to Rev. 13:14-15. I will not take time here to detail just what that "image" will involve in this end-time, for I have dealt with the matter in other writings. Order the booklet "Christ Revealed verses The Man of Sin" for information on this. [Ed. Note - not available on this website] Because Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not bow down to the image they were cast into a fiery furnace, but were supernaturally protected (Dan. 3:19-27). The "fiery furnace" is a type of the great tribulation which most Christians will have to go through, but with the protection of Almighty God.

Why?

I had often pondered over the question of why Daniel was not cast into the fiery furnace. Surely he did not compromise and bow down before the image. The answer is found in Daniel, chap. 2. There we read of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the inability of all the wise men of Babylon to tell the dream or its interpretation. However, God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel, who then related it to the king. The king was so grateful that Dan., 2:48-49 tells us that "the king made Daniel a great man. . . and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors overall the wise men of Babylon. " This "elevation" of Daniel took place BEFORE the fiery furnace of chap. 3. Thus we see that those who accused Daniel's friends in 3:8 could not touch Daniel. He was TOO HIGH. He could have had their heads lopped off. The picture here fits beautifully into the patterns that we have seen elsewhere. Daniel represents the "first fruits" who are taken (and

elevated through translation) before the peoples of the nations are required to submit to the "image" of the Beast. Whereas Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego represent the Christians who go through the tribulation (the "fiery furnace"). Because of their faith and commitment, these men were protected by God and brought through the fire unharmed. Hallelujah! What a beautiful picture of what God will do for all who are committed to Him in the coming tribulation. But also, how blessed will be those in the "Daniel" group to be "elevated" before the fiery tribulation comes.

Queen and Virgins

Psalm 45 is one of the most beautiful of all the Psalms. It speaks of the glory and majesty of Christ and His Kingdom. Besides the King in verses 1-8, we see the Queen in verse 9: "*on your* right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." Verses 10-14 tell of her beauty and character, as well as her love and devotion to the King, Then verse 14 says: "She shall be brought *to* the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that FOLLOW her shall be brought *to you* (the King)." Notice, that there is another company mentioned besides the queen. They are "the virgins her companions who follow her." That they follow her indicates that they would arrive AFTER the queen. This again is in harmony with the other patterns we have seen. The first group of Christians ("firstfruits") taken by Jesus will make up the BRIDE company, becoming the "Queen" of the heavenly realm. The others who follow (three and one half years later) will be "virgins her companions," that is, maidens in waiting and servants of the King and Queen but destined to fulfill important posts of responsibility in the Kingdom.

Sonship

The above designations refer to the "roles" or positions they will be filling, whether of the Bride company or the Servant company. But all together, they will make up the "heavenly household" of UNVEILED SONS OF GOD. This is why in Rev. 12:5, even the Bride company is pictured as a "manchild." It is to emphasize the positive spirit-factors: overcoming and gaining dominion; of maturity and "SONSHIP." When God seeks to emphasize the soul-qualities to be developed in His people such as love, devotion, gentleness, faithfulness, etc., the church (or any part thereof) is pictured as FE-male, as in II Cor, 11:2 where the church is espoused to the Lord as to a husband (see also Ephes. 5:22-33). But when God seeks to emphasize the spirit-attributes of positive overcoming, gaining dominion, coming to maturity, etc., the church (or any part thereof) is pictured as male, as in Ephes. 4:11-16 where Paul speaks of the church being edified and growing to maturity, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *to* a perfect (full-grown)

MAN, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Paul says in Rom. 8:19 that creation waits for the "manifestation (revealing) of the Sons of God." Those in the "Bride" company will be the first to manifest such "Sonship" in deathless, glorified bodies, at the beginning of the tribulation. Many others will be ready for "manifest Sonship" at the close of the tribulation, but they will be a part of the "household of servants" to fill many posts of responsibility in the Kingdom OTHER than the role of the Bride. Then there will also be "unveiled sons" on the earthly plane, in deathless physical bodies, even as we have seen in the type of Elisha. No doubt a "first fruits" (first ones) will manifest such deathless life even during the tribulation, such as the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3. As the millennium begins, many others will have the opportunity to enter into this kind of deathless life here on earth.

The Bride and Those Called

We have seen how the 5 wise virgins (who represent the Bride) are pictured in Mt. 25:10 as going in with the Lord to the marriage. In Bible times, when a man was ready to marry, he simply took the woman who had been pledged (espoused) to him to live with him, making a public announcement of the fact that they were beginning married life, and then inviting his relatives and friends to a time of feasting and celebrating, called the marriage supper or wedding feast. When Jesus takes (through translation) His first fruits Bride at the beginning of the tribulation, the fact that they are then joined to Him constitutes the "marriage"—they are united to live together. Those who are left behind are not a part of that marriage, but they ARE invited to the "marriage supper," which will take place when the great host is translated at the close of the tribulation. Note two distinct episodes in Rev. 19:7 and 9. First, the writer says, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give *honor* to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife *has* made herself ready" (19:7). But then in 19:9 we read, "And he says *to* me. Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." A Bride is not invited to her own marriage celebration; SHE is the one who helps to extend the call, and invites others, as we read in Rev. 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Bride company will be busy during the tribulation extending the call to many, and getting them ready for the marriage supper. This is in harmony with a previous pattern where we saw Martha returning to Mary and saying "The Master is come, and calls for *you*" (John 11:28). We have already seen that those in the Bride company will have the power to materialize their glorified bodies and speak to those yet on the earth.

"You" and "They"

Another passage which relates to this matter is Luke 12:35-36. Jesus again contrasts and shows the difference between some who will be ready when He comes and others who will not. He distinguishes between two groups in verses 35-36 by using two personal pronouns: "You" and "They." Based on the understanding I have been presenting in this study, I will punctuate this passage differently than the Authorized Version. Remember, there is no punctuation in the original Greek text. Words and sentences simply run together. All punctuation is supplied by the translators based on how they believe it makes the best sense, according to their understanding. Let me now quote verse 35 and the first part of verse 36, inserting a period where I believe it makes better sense. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and *YOU* like *to* men that wait for their lord." The "*YOU*" here would be those who are ready, looking for and expecting the return of the Lord. The very fact that He admonishes them to have their "lights burning," indicates that His coming would be at NIGHT, and we have previously seen that this coming is for the FIRST group of Christians, and it also parallels the thought of the parable in Mt. 25:1-6 where the wise virgins were ready because they had extra oil, and thus their lights were burning when the Bridegroom came at the midnight hour. Now notice the next statement Jesus makes in the last half of Lk. 12:36, which I will punctuate by beginning a new sentence: "When he (the Lord) will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, *THEY* may open *to* him immediately." Notice the change in pronouns from "*You*" to "*They*." And the "*they*" group are admonished to be ready to receive the Lord when He returns from the WEDDING. This in itself indicates that some had previously been taken by the Lord and joined to Him in "spiritual matrimony," as we read in Mt. 25:10. The initial "union" of Jesus, the Bridegroom, and His Bride, continues during the tribulation period, at the close of which He returns from the wedding to receive those who are CALLED to the marriage supper. The marriage festivities will take place in the heavenlies while the vials of wrath are being poured out on the earth. Then, as we will see later, following the vials of wrath, they will all RETURN with the Lord to help inaugurate His Kingdom on this earth.

Second and Third Watches

Continuing in the passage in Lk.12, we note that in vs. 37 the Lord admonishes watchfulness. I will now quote vs. 38 from Young's Literal Translation, for most versions do not translate this verse correctly; "and if he may come in the second watch, and in the third watch he may come, and may find it so, happy are those servants." Notice carefully, that this verse says Jesus will come in the second watch AND in the third watch—that is, a TWO-fold coming for His people; in perfect harmony with the other patterns we have

beheld. The second watch in Bible times was the watch from 9:00 p.m. to MIDNIGHT, and was called the "midnight" watch; and thus speaks of Jesus coming for the first fruits Bride company at the "midnight" hour (Mt. 25:6). The third watch came after midnight until 3:00 a.m., and was called the "cockcrowing watch." It was during this watch that the disciples went through severe trial the night Jesus was betrayed and taken into custody, ending in Peter's denial of the Lord, which came just before the cock crowed (Mt. 26:34, 74-75). So does the third watch portray the tribulation period, which is spoken of in Rev. 3:10 as "The hour of temptation, which shall come *on* all the world to TRY them that dwell *on* the earth." The "third watch" coming of the Lord is for those who go through the tribulation and are ready to be received at its close. For more information on the "watches," order the booklet ["The Voice of the Seventh Angel."](#)

Jesus' First and Second Ascensions

Jesus was "taken" twice from this earth. WHY? Certainly the primary reason was related to His personal ministry and that which He was accomplishing for man's redemption. However, we need to realize that He set the pattern for the church, portraying in His own life and actions God's plan. Did He not declare Himself to be THE TRUTH? (John 14:6). Will His church be involved in anything that He Himself has not already depicted and acted out? Beloved, ponder that deeply. First of all, Jesus' resurrection and translation to glorified life took place secretly, No one saw it. His body was simply found missing. Then, on the very morning of His resurrection. He ascended to the Father. The only one to whom He appeared before that ascension was Mary Magdalene (see John 20:11-18). WHY? When we realize that Jesus by His actions was enacting a prophetic drama, then we understand that Mary is thus prophetic of the Bride who is to be taken first, secretly as it were, even as Jesus appeared secretly to Mary and then ascended without anyone else seeing Him. There are several women named "Mary" in the New Testament. Mary Magdalene is a different woman than Mary, the sister of Martha, whom we discussed earlier. Mary Magdalene is the one of whom it is spoken in Mark 16:9 that Jesus "appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." Seven is the number of the Bride, and the "seven devils cast out" here speaks of the complete work of cleansing of the Bride company in preparation for their translation.

Jesus Appears to Others

As Jesus ascended following His secret meeting with Mary, So did He depict by His own action the coming translation and ascension of the first fruits Bride. But later in the day, He returned and appeared to the other women and His

disciples. He then remained on earth for 40 days during which time He appeared to many (Acts 1:3). Even so shall the first fruits Bride company (after their translation to ascend to Jesus somewhere in our atmosphere) RETURN to appear to and minister to the remaining church on earth. "40" is the number of tribulation through testing, and Jesus TYPED the coming tribulation period by that 40 days He ministered on earth after His glorification. After Jesus' 40 days on earth He again ascended, but NOT secretly as previously. According to Acts 1:9-11, His disciples saw Him visibly ascending until He disappeared into a cloud. Thus the prophetic drama continues, as Jesus by His own action depicts the translation and ascension of the remainder of the saints at the close of the tribulation, who, as we have already shown, will go up visibly and openly. Hallelujah! How can we hold back our "shouts of praise" as we behold such "dove-tailing" of details in the prophetic pattern Jesus wrought for us in His own life and actions.

Faithful and Unfaithful Servants

I will now return to Luke 12, and comment on one more contrast which Jesus spoke of. In vs. 39 Jesus speaks of the thief breaking into the house „ We know that Jesus comes first as a "thief "to break into the household of the church to take His "jewels" (the Bride company). Some quote I Thess. 5:1 and say that it is only the "day of the Lord" that comes as a thief and not Jesus personally. They use I Thess. 5:4 as evidence that it is only the world that is to be taken by surprise, for "*you*, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." But WHO are the "*you*" of that verse? Certainly we cannot equate the common lot of careless, sleeping, Christians of today with the Spirit sanctified and consecrated Thessalonian Christians who had been under the personal teaching of the apostle Paul and were fully instructed in end-time matters. In addition, a careful reading of scripture shows that it is not only the day of the Lord that is to come as a thief, but also Jesus personally. Besides, how can we separate Jesus from His "day"? In Rev. 16:15, Jesus, speaking TO Christians, says: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Jesus also warns the church in Rev. 3:3: "If therefore *you shall* not watch, I will come on *you* as a thief, and *you shall* not know what hour I will come *on you*." The "day of the Lord" coming as a thief speaks primarily of sudden and unexpected judgments coming on the world, but Jesus personally coming as a thief refers directly to His sudden and unexpected (by most Christians) coming *on* His church, to break through and "steal." It is in this context that Jesus gives the contrast in Luke 12:37-48 of the two kinds of servants—the faithful and wise, and the unfaithful.

In Contrast

In the passage just mentioned, the "faithful and wise" servant is the one who is "ready" (vs. 40), faithfully doing the Lord's will (vs. 43), and receiving the promises of increased "meat" (understanding) and rulership (increased stewardship) responsibility (vs. 42, 44). The unfaithful and careless servant does not take seriously the warnings of the Lord's coming and the need to be ready (vs. 45), but continues to engage in carnal type activities (vs. 45). The "beating" of others and getting "drunk" are not necessarily to be taken literally any more than the "stripes" of vs. 47-48. They are simply symbolic of wrong attitudes and actions towards others through unfaithfulness in stewardship responsibilities. Also Rev. 17:2 gives a symbolic picture of being "drunk" on the "wine" of the harlot's "fornication." This speaks of compromise and unfaithfulness to the Lord, consorting with the "woman" (soul desires) of the world's Babylonish systems. James amplifies on this by saying in his epistle that "friendship (intimate contact, spiritual adultery) with the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4). In Luke 12:46 Jesus states the consequence of such careless, compromised living: "The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware (as a "thief"), and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unfaithful."

Cut in Sunder

Just what does the Lord mean by the expression "cut him in sunder"? The Greek word used here means literally to bisect or cut in two. Young's Literal translation says "will cut him off." The Rotherham version says "cut him asunder." The Lord is not going to literally cut any person in two, but when He comes "unawares," secretly, "as a thief," and TAKES by translation the "faithful and wise servants," then He divides or "cuts asunder" some from others; those left behind are then "cut off" from those taken. Those left behind then have their lot appointed with the "unfaithful," that is, they will have to go through the tribulation. According to the concordance, the Greek word translated "cut asunder" can, by extension of thought, also be translated "to flog severely." This is exactly in harmony with that which is stated in the passage in Luke 12:47-48, that those servants who did not prepare themselves sufficiently and are left behind shall be "beaten with stripes." These "stripes" are simply the buffeting conditions of the tribulation period, which the Lord says will be either few or many. Can we not see how important it is for the Lord to prepare us now, so that even if we are not chosen to be in the first group to be taken, we will not have to be buffeted greatly by the tribulation conditions, but will receive the completeness of the Lord's protection. The parable we have just been considering, however, does indicate that many

careless and unfaithful servants of the Lord will experience many buffeting "stripes" during the tribulation.

Peter, James, John and Rest of Disciples

Mt. 17 relates the story of Jesus' transfiguration on a high mountain. When we understand that everything Jesus did was prophetic of His plan for His church, then this episode takes on special importance. In God's symbolic language, a mountain symbolizes a kingdom--and in this story we must see it as symbolic of the heavenly kingdom which Jesus will establish when He returns. His own glory which He chose to manifest at that time (Mt. 17:1) was a foretaste and preview of that which would take place when His physical body would be changed into a glorified body—after His resurrection. All who are translated into that realm will have glorified bodies like *to* His (Phil. 3:21). Mt. 17:1 says that this took place six days following His declaration that He was to go to Jerusalem and die (Mt. 16:21). A day is with the Lord as a thousand years (II Pet. 3:8). From God's perspective, in His pre-ordained plan, the death of Jesus took place from the time of Adam's fall (Rev. 13:8). The Greek word for "foundation" in this verse is katabole, which comes from kataballo. The "kata" part means down, and "ballo" means to throw or cast. Thus the word means "to throw or cast down." And the correct translation of Rev. 13:8 is "the Lamb slain from the disruption or overthrow of the world" (through Adam's sin). There is another Greek word ("themelios") which means foundation in the sense of the substructure of a building. We can now see that the six days of Mt. 17:1 refers to 6,000 years from Adam's fall, when Jesus was crucified in God's sight, to the end of the present age; at the end of which some are to be taken INTO the HEAVENLY KINGDOM (symbolized by the high mountain into which Jesus took Peter, James and John).

Not All of the Disciples

It is important to note that Jesus did NOT take all twelve of the disciples into the mount on this occasion. WHY? Can we not see that He was trying to convey a prophetic pattern? This is just another evidence that it is only a small portion of Christians that are FIRST to be translated when Jesus comes for His saints. Now I wish to call your attention to something remarkable. How many hours are there in six days? You will find there are exactly 144 hours. We have already seen previously that the first group to be translated is represented by the 144,000 of Rev. 14:1. To me this is absolutely staggering—that God would have that "144" number as an integral part of the time pattern showing us WHEN the first group is to be taken. I have shown in another writing (get the article on "The Third Day"), that it has now been

approximately 6,000 years since Adam's fall (4,000 years before Christ, and 2,000 years since Christ), and that if we figure the time according to either lunar or prophetic time—in contrast to solar time, that we are already closing out the 6th day and are in the dawning of the 7th day. So any year now Jesus may come and take some into that "mountain." Notice that after the experience in the mountain, Jesus and the three disciples come down to find the rest of the disciples dealing with a "lunatic" who was vexed with a demon, and they could not cure him (Mt. 17: 14-16). Even so, when those who are taken first RETURN to manifest to the remaining church, they will find the world vexed with demonic power, for Satan and his demons will be cast down when the first group is taken (Rev. 12:5-9). And the church on earth will need the ministry of the glorified saints to help counteract the influence of such demonic power. This is the meaning of the statement in Rev. 12:16 that "the earth helped the woman." The glorified saints will be able to appear in their glorified physical bodies and open their mouths to speak comfort, deliverance, or whatever is needed. They will help the saints on earth bring deliverance to many, and this is pictured in the deliverance wrought in Mt. 17:18.

Overcomers and Churches

There is one final contrast I will present before I end this section on the Lord's coming for His saints. In the book of Revelation, chapters 2 & 3, are recorded the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia. Each letter, with its commendations and rebukes, is sent to the whole church in the city to which it was designated. But within each letter is a special promise to the "overcomers." The Greek word means "to subdue, conquer, prevail, or get the victory." We cannot here go into all of these promises. But in the last three (Rev. 2:26, 3:12, & 3:21), we have the clear indication that it is the overcomers who are going to rule with Christ in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, which will come down and be stationed in our upper atmosphere (Rev. 21:10), and from which the glorified saints will descend and ascend to carry out their duties on this earth during the millennium and beyond. When we get a clear understanding of these promises to the overcomers, it will become apparent that more is required to be qualified for translation into the heavenly kingdom than just being saved. There must be victory over sin in one's life, and a partaking of the holiness of Christ (Heb. 12:14). For more information along this line, order the article ["Preparation for the Lord's Coming."](#) Note the correlation between Rev. 2:26-27 and Rev. 12:5, showing that the FIRST ones to be translated will be a group of overcoming Christians. Then the rest of the Christians in the churches will have their opportunity to become "overcomers" during the tribulation period, being ready to be taken at its close.

Parousia

When speaking of His "coming," Jesus used two Greek words: erchomai, and parousia. WHY? The erchomai word is the one most commonly used in the New Testament for the arrival of someone. In the passage in Matthew's gospel dealing with Jesus' second coming, chap. 24, it is used in vs. 30, 42, 43, 44, 46, & 48. The parousia word is used relatively few times in the New Testament, but most particularly with reference to Christ's coming again. It is used in Mt.24:3, 27, 37, & 39. Parousia means "a being near," or "presence." Ada R. Habershon, in the book "The Study of the Miracles" says of parousia: "This word which is so often translated 'coming,' and is literally 'presence,' does not refer merely to His coming for His saints, but to a series of events. The very usage of the Greek word in other writings bears out this important truth. In some newly discovered papyri it has been used to denote the coming of the court or of some high official, and mention is made of special taxes being levied, and large supplies of wheat being provided for the "parousia"—not for the moment when the king or his representative arrived, but for his stay in the locality, as when the flag on the palace proclaims the presence of the king in the metropolis, and tells us that the court is in London. We may, therefore, conclude that the "parousia" will extend from the coming of the Lord to the air for His people, to His coming with them to the earth."

Sign

It was the parousia word that the disciples used when they asked the Lord, "What shall be the sign of your parousia, and the end of the world?" Jesus then proceeded to give a series of prophetic indicators which would signal the "end" of the age. Note the use of the word "end" in Mt. 24:6, 13, 14. But with reference to THE sign of His parousia, Jesus uses that word specifically in Mt. 24:37 & 39 in the passage that deals with the pattern of Noah and the "taking" of some and leaving of others (Mt. 24:37-44). Therefore, THE sign that His parousia (or presence) has begun, IS when some are taken by translation, and the remaining Christians realize that the "household" of the church has been "broken into" by the "thief in the night" and some of the saints are missing. STOP and think for a moment. No one shall require a "sign" after the Lord has come visibly and openly to the earth. But if, as we have pointed out, Jesus arrives secretly, in the earth's atmosphere, to remain unseen there for a period of time (the tribulation period), THEN a specific sign would be needed to indicate He had arrived, and had begun His end-time parousia; and that specific SIGN IS the "taking" of some saints and the leaving of others behind. This will begin the three and one half year parousia of our Lord, when He will be present in our atmosphere watching over the church on earth while the

tribulation rages.

As Lightning

Jesus made it abundantly clear, however, that His parousia INCLUDES His final visible descent to this earth WITH His saints. The parousia word is also used in Mt. 24:27 where Jesus says: "For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even *to* the west; so shall also the parousia of the Son of man be." The reason for this is clear. Jesus knew that false teachers would arise to use that "parousia" word to claim that his parousia is ONLY a spiritual presence with His people, and thus denying a literal, visible return of the Lord to the earth. But the word, as used by Jesus, indicates first a definite arrival in our atmospheric envelope, continuing throughout the tribulation period (present, but unseen), and then consummated by a glorious and brilliant (as lightning) VISIBLE and bodily return with His feet standing on the mount of Olives, This will be discussed in our next section.

False Christs

Before leaving this section, there is one more aspect of His coming I wish to comment on. In Mt. 24:24 Jesus warns specifically of "false Christs" and "false prophets" arising. Read verses 21-23 and you will see that this is specially spoken with reference to the great tribulation period. Now again STOP to think! When the Lord pulls His secret strategy, and it becomes evident that His end-time parousia has begun, and that He is present, but unseen, in the atmosphere; this will provide a tremendous opportunity for shysters and deceivers to arise claiming that they ARE the returned Christ, or they know where He is hiding out, etc. With reference to the beginning of that time, Jesus warned, "THEN if any man shall say *to* you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there;' believe it not." Wherefore if they shall say *to* you, 'Behold, he is in the desert;' go not forth; 'behold, he is in the secret chambers;' believe it not." (Mt. 24:23, 26). Although the tribulation period will be a time of unprecedented opportunity for the church, with the power and glory of the Lord manifest as never before, it will also be a time of great testing, with Satan furiously active. Specifically for that time are Jesus' words applicable: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Mt. 24:24). The implication of Jesus' words is that it will NOT be possible, primarily because of the "overshadowing" ministry of the glorified firstfruits saints. The "elect" who will not be deceived at that time, will be those destined to be taken into the heavenly kingdom at the close of the tribulation.

Coming WITH His Saints

Jude

Jude, the brother of Jesus, who wrote the small book of Jude in the New Testament, quotes a prophecy from Enoch in vs. 14; "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying. Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment *on* all." Thus the coming of the Lord WITH His saints is at the time that the Lord personally and openly manifests Himself in the final act (or acts) of judgment which terminate this age, and put an end to man's misrule. This is in harmony with II Thess. 1:7-8 where Paul states that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice, this is the time that He shall be revealed. The Greek word for "reveal "is apokalupto, and it means to uncover and unveil something. Up until Jesus comes with His saints, at the very climax of the pouring out of the 7 vials of wrath, He will not be "revealed." Previously, He comes as a "thief "at the beginning of the tribulation to call the first fruits Bride. This begins His three and one half year "parousia" or presence. Present in the atmosphere but unseen by those on earth. Near the close of the tribulation He calls the rest of the saints TO the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9), but still He must remain "veiled" except to those who have entered into His realm, until the 7 vials of wrath are poured out on the earth. During the pouring out of these vials, the marriage supper proceeds in the heavenlies. These vials of wrath will likely cover a very short period of time—perhaps not more than a couple of weeks. THEN shall the entire company of glorified saints be ready to accompany the Lord in His visible descent to the earth, forming great "cloud banks" of glory around Him, and trailing off into the distance behind Him like a great "train" in splendid procession.

Revelation

This final descent from the heavenlies is pictured in the book of Revelation, chap. 19:11-16. Notice that this follows the verses dealing with the "Marriage supper" in 19:7-9. John says, "And I saw heaven opened" (19:11); that is, what had been previously unseen by the remaining survivors on the earth would now be OPENLY viewed. They would "see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mt. 24:30). Then John proceeds: "and behold, a white horse; and he that sat *on* him was called Faithful and True. . . and the armies (glorified saints) which were in heaven

followed him *on* white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." We then have a statement that confirms the other scriptures which indicate that as Jesus returns He is consummating the vials of wrath and climaxing the final judgments: "And out of his mouth *goes* a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations. . . and he *treads* the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he *has* on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (19:15-17). Remember that we had read previously in Luke 17:29-30, that the Lord, when speaking of the raining of fire and brimstone on Sodom, said: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is REVEALED." Thus all these scriptures agree that the Lord comes finally, and is revealed in consummating, cataclysmic judgments, when He returns WITH His saints.

Zechariah

Zechariah 14:4 indicates that when the Lord returns in His final descent out of the atmosphere that "his feet shall stand in that day *on* the mount of Olives." The following verses indicate that when this takes place there will be a great earthquake as the entire earth reels under the impact of the immense power of the glorified Christ. The Mount of Olives will be split in two and a great valley created, with underground waters springing up to flow both east and west—to the Mediterranean and Dead Seas. Then 14:9 says, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth." Hallelujah! And the glorified saints will rule with Him over the earth (Rev. 15, 2:26, 3:21, 5:10, 20:4-6), For the last 2,000 years (approximately) the Lord has been sitting at the right hand of the Father on His throne (Heb. 1:3, 8:1), but in Rev, 3:21 Jesus says, "to him that *overcomes* will I grant to set with me in MY throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in HIS throne." That throne of which Jesus spoke, which is to be shared by the overcoming saints, is in the New Jerusalem, for "the throne of God and the Lamb (Jesus) shall be IN it" (Rev. 22:3).

New Jerusalem Descends

Closely associated with the events which take place in connection with the Lord's return is the descent of the celestial city, the New Jerusalem, which Jesus has been preparing for those who are to be a part of His heavenly kingdom (John 14:2-3). John saw in vision the city descending out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-10). This city will be the home and headquarters for Christ and His glorified saints. It will be stationed in the upper atmosphere where it will likely be seen by those on earth as a soft glowing light. Although the glorified saints return with Christ when He touches down *on* this earth, they will not be

remaining on this earth all of the time. During the millennium they will be "ascending and descending (see John 1:51), or you might say, commuting between the New Jerusalem (in the upper atmosphere) and the earth, for they will be fulfilling their responsibilities of "ruling" the inhabitants of earth. For more information on the New Jerusalem, order the booklet, ["The Voice of the Seventh Angel."](#)

Occupy

In the parable of the pounds as recorded in Lk. 19:1-27, a certain "nobleman" (who pictures Christ Himself) was to go into a FAR country (which represents Heaven). So he gathered his servants together and delivered to each a certain amount of money, and said; "Occupy till I come." Without going into the details of the parable, I will simply state that WE Christians are the servants who have been given the responsibility and stewardship to be faithful with what the Lord has committed to us (the "money" in the parable represents all the gifts and blessings that are ours through Christ); and we are charged to "occupy "until Jesus comes. The Greek word translated "occupy "means "to busy oneself," "to trade," to be occupied in business." Our "business" is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and Mt. 24:14 says that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and THEN shall the end come." As long as the Lord has not returned, there is WORK to be done; we must be faithful stewards of all that the Lord has committed to us. Only the Lord knows when all nations have had a sufficient witness. I point this out because some have argued that we shouldn't put much emphasis on the second coming of Christ because it causes people to think only about His coming and NEGLECT the responsibilities that are ours now. Such should NOT be the case if a proper balance and perspective is presented. It should cause us to be MORE diligent than ever when we realize the shortness of the time. Besides this, John writes that every one who has this hope (of His coming) "*purifies* himself, even as he is pure (I John 3:3). Thus we will be diligent about our own preparation as well as being faithful in the work that the Lord has for us to do.

Ask

We have already mentioned the importance of prayer (in connection with "watching," or being spiritually awake and alert), but I want to call your attention to an O.T. scripture which is important for serious Christians at this time. In Zech. 10:1 we read this admonition, "Ask [] of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." So many tend to feel that

what the Lord is going to do will come to pass anyway. But God has chosen to work through chosen ones here on earth. God found an instrument in the person of Elijah, and James tells us that "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three *years* and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (James 5:17-18). Is not God seeking out human instruments now who will "pray earnestly" as did Elijah? Will He work apart from such instruments? The scripture quoted from Zechariah commands us to "Ask [for] rain in the time of the latter rain." This has two stages. One is now. "Rain" speaks of the outpouring of God's Spirit. Even so are we to pray now for a greater move of God's Spirit among God's people, for among those who are hungering and seeking. The Spirit will be increasingly moving and working in preparation for the climax that is coming. The second stage will be after the first fruits are translated. The remaining church will be shocked into day and night prayer, ASKING for "Rain." After 50 days of intense seeking, God will hear from heaven and pour out the full effusion of the "latter rain." It will be a "second Pentecost" plus. For a double portion and more will come *on* the church for the glorious consummation during the tribulation period.*

*A further thought needs to be added here with regards to Jesus coming TO His church in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has purposed to REVEAL Himself IN (and through) His people in a greater way before He comes for them. Paul expresses this twice in the book of Galatians. First, he says in Gal. 1:15-16: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son IN me." Then in Gal. 4:19 Paul declares: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed IN you." If Christ is being formed (developed, matured) IN us, then it follows that this will result in a greater REVELATION of Christ IN and through us. This is God's desire and purpose for His church before the curtain fully comes down *on* this age: to REVEAL His Son IN His people. This must come through a greater work and moving of the Holy Spirit within us, that "the love of God might be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given *to us*" (Rom. 5:5), and that the "fruit" or character of Christ might be developed more fully within, even the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

Snare

The importance of being spiritually alert and ready is emphasized by Jesus in Luke 21:34-36: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come *on* you unawares. For as a SNARE shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch [] therefore, and pray always, that *you* may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." The Greek word translated "snare" in this passage, means a trap (as fastened by a noose or notch); used figuratively it can be a trick or stratagem. Repeatedly in this study, I have been seeking to show you God's strategy; and that is to suddenly and unexpectedly (by most) to break into the "household" of the church and "take" as a thief, the "jewels" (first fruits saints) in order to bring the remaining church to its knees in brokenness and repentance. We have shown that these first fruits saints are to fulfill the role of the Bride. In the 24th chap. of Gen., we read the story of Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit) being sent by Abraham (a type of God the Father) to get a bride for Isaac (a type of Jesus Christ). The bride was Rebekah. The Hebrew word for REBEKAH means "a rope or noose." Thus we can see that the very name of the Bride (Rebekah) indicates that the "snare" which God is preparing to suddenly "spring" *on* the world is the TAKING (by translation) of that group of saints who will make up the Bride company. This is a part of God's stratagem.

Veiled

But notice, in Gen. 24:64-67 we read that Rebekah remained "veiled" until after she had met Isaac and he had taken her into his mother's tent. This shows that up until the time that the Bride is taken, much of the truth of God and his end-time strategy remains "veiled;" and that is why there is so much confusion and lack of understanding even among God's people. But when the Bride company is translated, the remaining "veils" will be taken away. This is shown to us in the book of Revelation in 10:5-7. Quoting from the Amplified version: "Then the (mighty) angel whom I had seen stationed on sea and land raised his right hand to the heaven (the sky), and swore in the name of Him who lives forever and ever. . . (He *swore*) that no more time should intervene and there should be no more waiting or delay. But that when the days come that the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God's mystery—His secret design. His hidden purpose—as He had announced to His servants the prophets, should be fulfilled (accomplished, completed)." It is at the time that the 7th angel (trumpet) begins to sound that the Bride company is translated. Then the "mystery" (secret design or stratagem) will

be "finished" in the sense that all remaining "veils" will then be taken away; and also, God will be able to complete His end-time purpose, for the church will quickly begin to understand and enter into the dynamic and glory which God has planned for His people during the tribulation period, and participate with fullness of power in the glorious consummation of this age.

Worthy

We had previously quoted Lk. 21:34-36 about the "snare." But I want to emphasize the statement in vs. 36 concerning those "accounted worthy to escape all these things. . . and to stand before the Son of man." What does it mean to be "worthy?" The Greek word translated "worthy" means to be entirely deserving or fit, comparable or suitable. And how do we become worthy? Jesus makes it very clear in Mt. 10:34-38: "He that *loves* father or mother more than me is not worthy of me : and he that *loves* son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that *takes* not his cross, and *follows* after me, is not worthy of me . "A very clear distinction needs to be made here. It is possible to receive a gift from the Lord (such as salvation), and yet not be worthy of HIM, as far as being ready to dwell in His immediate presence and qualifying to be a part of His ruling kingdom. There must be sufficient change in our lives that there is a comparableness or suitability of our natures with His, and there must be a proving to be trustworthy and faithful so that we are fit to dwell with Him. (For more information on this, order the article "[Preparation for the Lord's Coming](#)"). Only the "First fruits" will be worthy of this high calling at the beginning of the tribulation. The tribulation will provide the opportunity for a vast host of others to qualify and be ready by its close.

Finally

We see from Gen. 24:63 that Isaac went out into the field at eventide; and there He received His beloved Rebekah. "Eventide" speaks to us of the approaching close of this age, and is not our "Isaac" (Jesus) coming to the "field" (this world) to receive His beloved? Even so, COME, Lord Jesus!