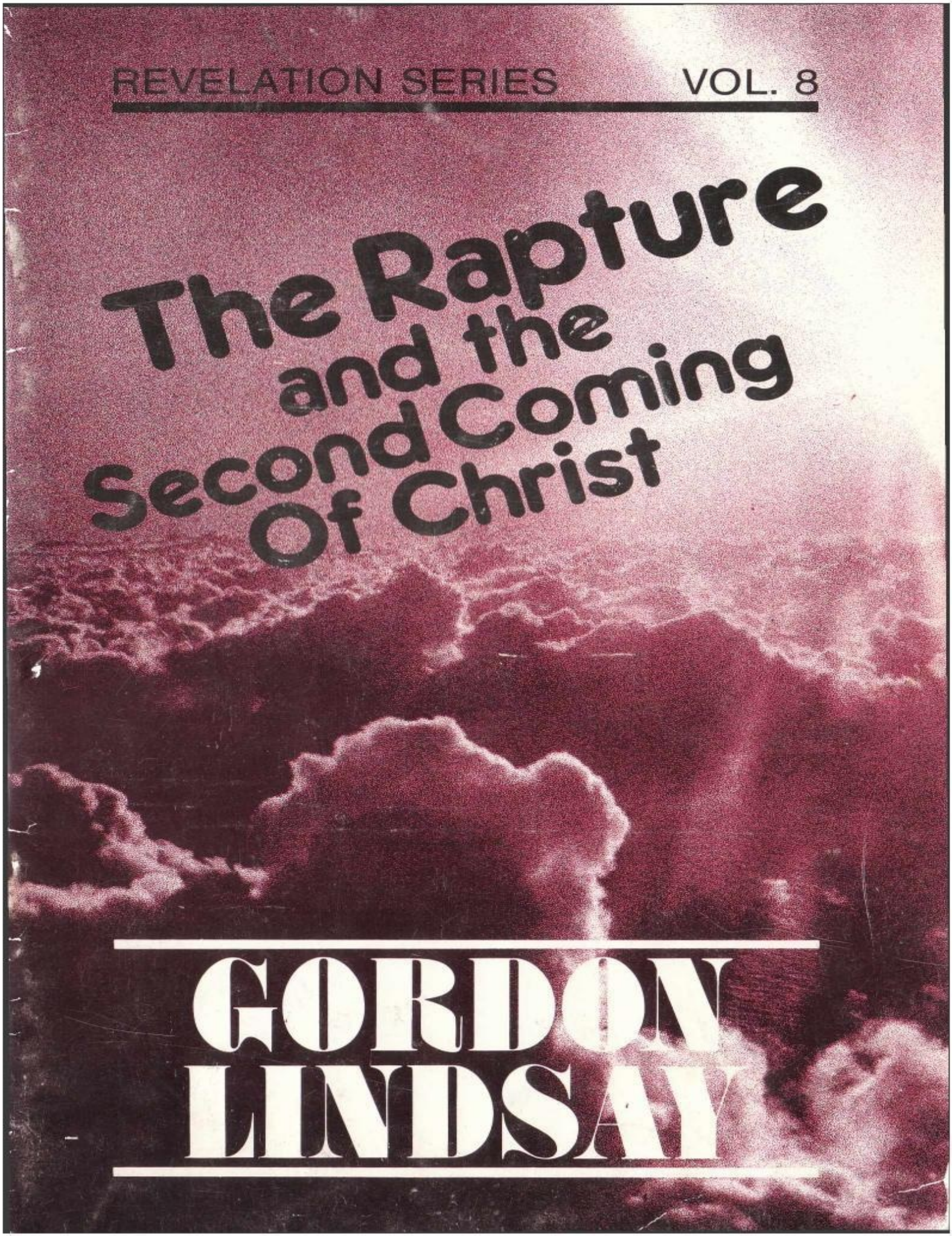
REVELATION SERIES VOL. 8

The Rapture and the Second Coming Of Christ



GORDON LINDSAY

Revelation Series 08, The Rapture And The Second Coming Of Christ By Gordon Lindsay

This is the eighth of the BOOK OF REVELATION SERIES.

In this series of lessons we deal with the most important subjects of the Book of Revelation — the rapture of the Church. This book shows that millions now living will never see death, but will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. They will be translated as Enoch and Elijah were.

In this book we answer a number of very important questions which involve the church — those who are expecting His coming and those who are not ready for Him to come, as shown in the parable of the Ten Virgins. Some of the questions answered include the following:

What will be the effect of the rapture on those who are left behind?

Will there be any cases of supernatural transportation in the church, before Christ comes?

Will all believers die in the Great Tribulation?

What are the signs of the Coming of Christ?

What is the last sign to be fulfilled before Christ returns?

What is the abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel?

What is the meaning of the parable of the Ten Virgins?

Who are the foolish virgins of the parable?

Where is the wilderness that the sun-clothed woman flees to?

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Chapter 26, The Effect of the Rapture Upon the World

148. The Result Of The Manchild’s Rapture

Question: WHAT is the effect of the rapture of the Manchild upon the world's inhabitants?

Answer: It is not too difficult to imagine what will happen on earth when the Manchild company is taken out. Seiss gives a good picture of what must be the result:

> ***“ The birth of the Manchild into immortality takes out of the world the best material in it. Being made up of the truest and most devoted of God’s saints, and being caught away to Clod, and to His throne, the earth is left minus the presence, prayers and activities, and moral forces of its holiest population. The removal of these faithful ones to their Lord is such a depletion of spiritual power in earthly society, such a diminution of the salt of the earth ... to give the field almost entirely to the devil and his angels . . . Hence, while heaven thrills with rejoicing over his defeat there, his ejectment to earth coming with the song of triumph, there is a sad note of woe and pity for dwellers there. ‘Woe to the earth and the sea! because the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ ”***

The devil, despite his bravado and impudence, realizes that only a few years are left before his reign is over, and it stirs him to desperation and rage. The Manchild is gone, he can do nothing more about this. The only saints vulnerable to his attacks are the remnant of the Woman’s seed. The Woman is on earth, and exceedingly weakened by the birth of the Manchild. The Tribulation Church no longer sits in the heavenlies, and the saints left on earth wrestle with the powers of hell now cast down into their midst.

Question: The Manchild company being caught up to heaven, and the rest of the seed of the Woman being left on earth, of course implies that some saints will be caught away to heaven, and others left behind. Is there further Scriptural support of this?

Answer: That is intimated in many places in the Scriptures. Jesus taught the

solemn truth in Luke 17, that “one shall be taken and the other left:”

“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; and one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” (Luke 17:34-36)

Question: Concerning this rapture of the Manchild company, how is it shown in the Book of Revelation that part of the Church is left behind?

Answer: Well, we are frankly told that the Woman and a “remnant of her seed” are still on earth.

> ***“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. 12:17)***

This persecution, Satan accomplishes through the Beast who now comes on the scene. This Beast, or Antichrist, immediately begins a fierce and relentless war of extermination against the saints. This war is not only against the believing Jews, but against the saints of “all kindreds, tongues and nations”. The rather prevalent teaching that all the saints go up at the rapture, is certainly not in accord with the plainest statements of the Scripture.

> ***“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Rev. 13:7)***

149. What Will Be The Effect Of The Rapture Upon Those That Are Left Behind?

Question: When the Manchild company is caught away by rapture, what will be the effect upon those who are left behind?

Answer: Imagination has run free on what may happen when this crucial and supernatural event takes place. One thing is certain, life will have to go on, and each person will adjust himself, or rationalize the event, as it suits his peace of mind. Some will be filled with remorse as they realize they have missed the prize. Others will be hardened. The Scriptures are not without evidence concerning events which follow the rapture.

1. What will be the effect of the rapture on nominal Christians? In the days of Elijah, the sons of the prophets had a premonition that the prophet would be

translated. (2 Kings 2:5) Yet when the event occurred, they were not ready to believe that it had taken place. They were not convinced that Elijah had gone all the way to heaven. Like Obadiah, they thought that the prophet probably had been transported to another place. (1 Kings 18:12) Despite Elisha's protestations, they insisted on 'a three-day search. (2 Kings 2:16) Of course they did not find Elijah. (Do those "three days" foreshadow or speak of the three years of the Great Tribulation?) Certainly there will be many who will rationalize the strange disappearance of God's people in a way that will be in harmony with what they want to believe.

2. With others, however, the event will result in a heartbreaking confession. Too late they realize that they have neglected the repeated warnings of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be ready for His Coming. "Watch ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." (Matthew 25:13) This warning was given at the conclusion of the parable of the Five Wise and the Five Foolish Virgins, where Jesus plainly showed that a substantial part of professing Christians who will be waiting for the Bridegroom, will not be ready when He comes. "And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." (Verse 10) Again Jesus said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)(With many, there will come, after the rapture, the bitter realization that they have failed to be among the Wise Virgins that were ready, and there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Though they now resolve to resist at all costs, the Antichrist, they must live in the realization that they have missed the prize.)

3. Yet, it is likely that much of the sobering effect of the rapture will be neutralized by remarkable preternatural happenings associated with the Antichrist. The devil now has his superman, the Son of Perdition, on the scene. "Even him whose coming is, after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thes. 2:9) These lying wonders will astonish the world. Apparently there will be some kind of pseudo-resurrection of the Beast. We are told that the Beast was "as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast." (Rev. 13:3) This lying miracle, a wound unto death, and the demonstration of the Beast's return to life will be, whatever it is, of a nature to astonish and amaze the world. As Satan moved in the days of Moses, through the magicians to mimic the miracles of God, so we may be sure that Satan has plans to confuse people, so that the effect of the rapture will as much as possible, be neutralized.

150. Rapture Of The Saints—The Effect When Elijah Was Translated

Question: Bui surely when people hear of such a remarkable event as a translation or rapture, especially of someone they know, they will repent?

Answer; Many, no doubt, will repent and seek God. But we have just noted that even the sons of the prophets, who 'had: been informed of the translation of Elijah in advance, were not convinced it had really occurred. (2 Kings 2:16) Then what about religious professors who have not believed in the ministry of the supernatural in the first place?

There is another incident in the life of Elisha that took place immediately after Elijah’s translation, which throws further light upon this subject.

Bethel was a religious city and it had noted religious traditions from the past. At Bethel, Jacob the father of Israel had witnessed a vision of a ladder extending from earth to heaven. Jacob had been so moved by that experience that he called the place Bethel, “the house of God.” In later centuries it was the site of a school of the prophets. Notwithstanding its religious past, as the place where Jacob met with God, this Bethel had now become a seat of apostate religion. There Jeroboam had set up the worship of a golden calf. From that time on, Bethel was a center of idolatrous worship.

Now Elisha had thought to go up to Bethel. Perhaps he anticipated that the people of that city with such a religious background, would eagerly listen to his thrilling story of the translation of Elijah. If so, he was to be doomed to disappointment. Elijah had been at cross-purposes with these apostate idol-worshippers, and they were no friends of his. Bethelites were in no mood to put stock in anything that Elisha might have to tell. Was not Bethel the religious center of Israel? Certainly, they needed no itinerant evangelist to set them right.

When news that Elisha was coming to Bethel got around, forty-two youths of the city, in a fit of blasphemous daring, decided to go out and have sport with the prophet of God. The King James version calls them “little children”, but the Hebrew idiom indicates the probability that they were from fifteen to eighteen years of age. The wicked troupe of juveniles rushing up to mock the man of God, burst out into profane jesting and abuse. It had not escaped their attention that the prophet was bald, and they made this the butt of coarse jokes. Not satisfied with this, they added blasphemy to their insults. Did Elisha claim Elijah had gone to heaven? Well, well! Why then did not Elisha go up also? “Go up thou baldhead. Go up thou baldhead,” they cried. Thus in their mockery, they

demanded that Elisha ascend to heaven, too.

Now all this is a sobering matter. The saints who remain on earth during the Great Tribulation may expect some of this kind of persecution. And in their case, alas, they are forced to admit that they were at fault in not being ready. It will not be easy for them to meet the taunts of the wicked, or to be asked why they were left behind.

Elisha is shocked by what is happening. Is it possible that anyone would be so daring as to ridicule or trifle about the mighty divine manifestation that had just taken place? Suddenly the Spirit of God came on the prophet. Outraged Diety speaking through Elisha's lips pronounces a curse upon these wicked youths. Elisha's curse probably only evoked more ribald laughter and jesting. But retribution was at hand. Two ferocious she-bears appear from out of the woods and make their way to the band of youths. With blood-curdling screams of terror, these young blasphemers begin to go down before the clawing beasts. The jesting and blasphemy are over, and the terror-stricken group flees in mad retreat toward the protection of Bethel. But, alas, the "house of God," is no protection for the profane and irreverent. Though in wild haste they try to escape, the fierce beasts are hard behind, and one by one they overtake the youths and leave them tom, bleeding and dying. We can imagine that those who watch the fearsome scene from a distance, dash panic-stricken into the town to carry the dreadful news of the divine retribution that has come upon the mockers.

Will it not be similar in the days of the Great Tribulation? The wicked will not be inclined to take such events solemnly, but will mock and scorn those who do. Now as two ferocious bears brought judgment on the wicked in that day, so the two Beasts of Revelation shall arise in the Great Tribulation, to tear the earth for 42 months. These beasts at Bethel were bears. The Beast of Revelation 13 had the "feet of a bear." The Communist Beast that today threatens the world is symbolized by a "bear" — the only nation in the world to be so represented!

151. Supernatural Transportation

Question: One thing more. You mention that the sons of the prophets supposed that Elijah had been transported somewhere instead of being translated. Does the Bible indicate that Elijah had experienced one or more transportations before he was caught up to heaven? And do you think there may be similar events before the rapture of the Church?

Answer: Obadiah's remarks to Elijah in 1 Kings 18:12, would indicate that Elijah had one or more such experiences and that these were generally known.

Obadiah feared that while he went to inform King Ahab of Elijah's presence, the Spirit of the Lord would catch him away to a secret location.

Such events happened at least once in the Early Church, for we have recorded in Acts, Philip's transportation from the desert to Azotus:

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea." (Acts 8:39-40)

There is good reason to believe that similar events will happen just before the rapture to give the Church an awareness of translation power. Indeed, we have rather strong evidence that such incidents have already taken place. One was the supernatural transportation of a missionary lady in China, when the Reds were closing in, to a place of safety. These events are unusual, however, and they will not occur regularly. Even Christ walked from city to city, in carrying on His labors.

152. The Persecution Of The Woman, Following Rapture Of Manchild

Question: What is the first thing that happens, after Satan is cast out of the heavenlies?

Answer: He begins to persecute the Woman of whom was born the Manchild. Satan, being spirit, cannot affect or harm physical beings by direct onslaught. He must seduce or deceive those who will yield themselves to him. Once he controls these people, he can use them to persecute the people of God. In his vengeful hatred of the Woman, he gives power to the Beast or Antichrist, as is related in a subsequent chapter. (Rev. 12:4) The Beast, whom Satan controls persecutes the Woman.

Question: During the terrible persecution of those who are left after the rapture of the Manchild company, will all believers be slain?

Answer: There will be many martyrs. Multitudes unable to escape from the wrath of the Dragon and his Antichrist will give their lives for the cause. It might be inferred in the words spoken to "the souls under the altar", at the breaking of the Fifth Seal, that all saints on earth will be killed. The word to them was that "they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Rev. 6:11) Nevertheless, although multitudes must seal their faith by their own blood, the

devil will not succeed in destroying all. God gave the woman “two wings of an eagle that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times and a half time, from the face of the serpent.” (Rev. 12:14) The woman was also helped by the earth which “swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.” (Verse 16)

We are told that the Beast or Antichrist has power to make war with the Saints and overcome them. (Rev. 13:7) He would no doubt destroy all who believe in Christ, from the face of the earth, were he given time. However, God will cut him short, so that he will not be able to fully accomplish his diabolical intentions.

> ***“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt. 24:22)***

Question: When we see the Woman before she gives birth to the Manchild, her aspect is glorious. She is the Sun-clothed Woman, with the moon under her feet, and is wearing a crown of twelve stars. But after the ascension of the Manchild, she is seen in weakness, fleeing for her life into the wilderness. What has happened to make this great change?

Answer: Here is another great clue to the correct interpretation of this prophetic drama. During this age, the Church is in a position of power and authority. She sits in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. She is clothed with the “sun of righteousness”.

The moon “ruler of the night”, is under her feet. She occupies a position of dominion, although, it is true, that she also is in travail for the birth of the Manchild company.

But when the Manchild is born, she is no longer seen in her exalted heavenly position. She is on earth, in desperate straits, fleeing as it were, for her very life. Bloomfield portrays the picture well:

> ***“Notice the glorious position of the woman prior to the birth of her child: clothed with light, victorious over the forces of darkness and reigning as a queen. Now compare the condition after the birth of the child. All the former glory is gone. She is persecuted, hunted, forlorn, managing to keep only one step ahead of death. All her greatness was in the child. When the child is gone, her victory is gone; she no longer stands, she runs or flies in fear and weakness. Her dwelling place is now a***

wilderness.

“Previously she had been powerful and rich and ‘in need of nothing.' When the child is caught up to God, it takes all the glory with it. This is the most complete picture of rapture to be found anywhere in the Bible. Nearly every feature recorded elsewhere is recorded here.

“The wilderness represents the conditions the church will face upon the earth after the rapture; the wars, the famines, the pestilence, and the persecutions of the antichrist. Antichrist will try to starve the woman by making it impossible for her members to buy or to sell without the mark of the beast. It is out of this wilderness experience that the tribulation saints come.”

Chapter 27, Christ’s Discourse on His Coming

Question: In explaining events in the Book of Revelation such as the rapture, the abomination of desolation, the Great Tribulation, and the reign of the Antichrist, you refer from time to time to the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew. Could we take special notice of this discourse of the Lord on His Second Coming, and harmonize it with the order of events in the Book of Revelation?

Answer: Yes. A very important help in understanding the Book of Revelation is the Lord’s discourse of Matthew 24, which was occasioned by three questions, His disciples had asked Him. (Verse 3)

153. The Three Questions Of The Olivet Discourse

Question: What are these three questions and how did the disciples happen to ask them?

> ***“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.***
>
> ***And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:1-3)***

Answer: You will notice from the first two verses of the chapter, the disciples had taken the opportunity to show the Lord the many features of the newly completed Temple of Herod that had been forty-six years in building. (John 2:20) The Lord’s comment was a surprising one. He said that not only would the temple be destroyed but not one stone would be left standing upon another. (Verse 2) This statement aroused the curiosity of the disciples and caused them to ask three questions which they apparently assumed were all to be fulfilled at the same time. Actually the first was to be fulfilled long before the last two.

The first question was, "Tell us what shall these things be?” The second was, “And what shall be the sign of thy coming?” And third, “Of the end of the world (age).”

The last two questions relate to the end of the age. But the first question, which was an inquiry of when Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, referred to a much earlier time — the invasion of Judaea by the armies of Titus in A. D. 70.

154. The First Question

Question: How did the Lord answer the first question?

Answer: It is answered in special detail in the parallel passage of the gospel of Luke.

> ***"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:20-24)***

In these verses, the prophetic foreview of what would happen to the Jews who had rejected their Messiah, is briefly but graphically set forth.

1. Alien armies would in the not distant future, compass Jerusalem. That would be the signal for believers to escape out of Judaea. Actually Titus, commander of the Roman army, gave a brief respite for those who wished to escape the city. He did not personally want to destroy Jerusalem or its inhabitants, but the Roman government thought it necessary to put an end to the rebellious agitation being constantly fomented by fanatical Jews.

The Christian Jews heeded the warning and escaped to Pella, in Edom. But the false prophets of the unbelieving Jews predicted that Jerusalem would escape by Divine intervention. This encouraged the Jews to fight on with a demoniac ferocity, which so infuriated the Romans that when they at last broke through the walls they put the population to the sword.

Fire broke out in the Temple, of undetermined origin, causing the inlaid gold to melt between the stones. The rocks were broken apart one by one, by the soldiers

in their efforts to recover the melted gold.

2. In the 24th verse, Jesus predicted the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, and that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. This, as we know, has taken place to the letter, even as Jesus said it would. Now that the Jews have returned once more to Jerusalem, the indication is that the times of the Gentiles have practically run their course.

Question: Did Jesus say that this destruction and judgment was to come on that self-same generation?

Answer: Yes. Just before this discourse, Jesus had given a most severe denunciation of the Jews who had rejected Him. He told them that their house was to be left desolate and that "all these things shall come upon this generation.'' (Matt. 23:36-39)

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Question: In speaking of the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), Jesus was referring to a long period ahead, was He not?

Answer: Yes, He spoke of events far in the future after A. D. 70, of many sorrows that would come upon the world. There would be "wars and rumors of wars . . . Nation shall rise against nation . . . and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places." (Matt. 24:6-7)

Question: When Christians experienced these great wars and disasters, they would be tempted to conclude that they were a sign of the coming of Christ, and of the end of the age, would they not?

Answer: Yes. Many times people have supposed that some great catastrophe that occurred in their day was a sign that Christ was about to come. However, the Lord gave a warning against premature expectancy of the event. He said, "All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." (Verse 6)

155. The Second Question

Question: One of the questions which the disciples asked, was, "What would be the sign of the end of the world"?

Answer: You will notice that the phrase, “end of the world” in the King James version, should really read “end of the age”. (Aion) The earth itself is not to come to an end, but after it has been cleansed of evil, it will continue on through the Millennial age.

Now the sign of the end of the age, is found in Verse 14 “the preaching of the Gospel to all nations.”

> ***“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matt. 24:14)***

The fulfillment of the command of the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations is therefore the final sign before the coming of the Lord!

What a responsibility the Church has! The pressing job upon us now is to get the message to the masses. This can only be done through the ministry of healing and miracles. Those who would advise the people of God to cease attempting to have revivals but to quietly wait until the Lord comes and takes them out of the world, are guilty of negligence, a sin more serious than they realize. Unless we do the job Christ has asked us to do, He cannot come. He has straightly declared that the Gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the Lord will come, but we also believe that the Church will fulfill its destiny of evangelizing the world.

Question: What is meant by the phrase “the gospel of the Kingdom” spoken of in verse 14? Is it a different gospel that is to be preached at the end of the age?

Answer: There is no need for a new Gospel. Christ preached the Gospel of the Kingdom at the very beginning of His ministry.

> ***“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” (Matt. 4:23)***

Christ's Discourse on His Coming Here we see that the Gospel of the kingdom is associated with the message of deliverance. The great commission includes the gospel of healing. (Mark 16:15-18) Many fanciful interpretations have been made relative to the Gospel of the Kingdom, but Matt. 4:23 shows what it is.

Question: How do these first 14 verses of Matthew relate chronologically to the Book of Revelation?

Answer: They correspond to events of the Church age, as depicted in the first

three chapters of Revelation. The terrible persecutions that are mentioned in verses 9 and 10 are those suffered by God's people at various times, such as during the Smyrna and Thyatira periods.

Question: What did Jesus mean when He spoke of the rise of the false prophets? The rise of false prophets and false religions are seen in Verse 11 of Matthew 24.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

Answer: Many such pretenders have arisen during the Church age. The most well-known of all, was Mohammed who claimed to be a prophet of God, and whose fanatical followers thought to conquer the world by forcing all men to accept Mohammed or perish by the sword. (An interesting point: Caesar, who established the Roman Empire died in A. D. 44. He is often considered a type of the Antichrist. Mohammed, the false prophet, began his era in 622 A. D.—just 666 years later!) (578?)

There have been many other false prophets who have arisen, some establishing false religions that still lead people astray. Father Divine is but one example of the false prophets of our day. Mary Baker Eddy, Charles Taze Russel, and others have appeared in recent times.

Question: What is meant by the words, "And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." (Verse 12)

Answer: This is the "falling away" of which the Apostle Paul spoke. (2 Thes. 2:3) This "falling away," precedes the Great Tribulation. The Ephesian Church lost its first love, and the trend continued in the Church until it resulted in the apostasy of the Dark ages. Today a lukewarm spirit is a marked characteristic of the Laodicean Church.

156. The Abomination Of Desolation And The Great Tribulation

Question: Verse 15, speaks of the abomination of desolation. This marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation, does it not?

Answer: Yes, we have dealt with the subject of the abomination of desolation elsewhere, and we will restrict ourselves to these brief remarks. The abomination of desolation evidently marks,, the beginning of the Great Tribulation, because:

1. Verse 14, with its preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations, marks the end of the Church Age.

2. Jesus declares that this next event of the 15th verse, is the abomination of

desolation and it inaugurates the Great Tribulation.

Question: This is the time for the Tribulation saints to flee to the "Wilderness" is it not?

Answer: Yes. We see the Lord's warning Verses 16-20, for believing Jews to flee out of Judaea to the mountains. Believers all over the world should also take warning when the Beast brings the abomination of desolation into the Temple.

Question: Not all believers will perish in the Great Tribulation, will they?

Answer: Given time, all flesh would perish, but the Lord will shorten the time for the elect's sake. However many must die for their faith. This period corresponds to the Fifth Seal in the Book of Revelation.

Question: The abomination of desolation is the work of the Beast and the False Prophet, is it not?

Answer: Yes. The Antichrist is in the saddle at this time. He is showing and demonstrating great signs and wonders so that if it were possible he would deceive the very elect.

The Lord gives a solemn warning against these Satanic personages whose seductions deceive the multitudes.

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, 1 have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth:

> ***behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." (Matt. 24:24-26)***

Question: What event follows or marks the ending of the Great Tribulation?

Answer: The darkening of the sun and the moon. This corresponds to the Sixth Seal of Revelation.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Matt 24:29)

With the darkening of the sun and the moon, the day of God's wrath is about to begin. (Rev. 6:12-17 and Acts 2:20)

Question: What happens after these celestial disturbances?

Answer: The Coming of Christ for His elect. It is the harvest rapture and resurrection, which follows the opening of the Sixth Seal. This is the multitude which came out of Great Tribulation which no man can number. (Rev. 7:9-14)

> ***"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24:30-31)***

157. Moral State Of The World

Question: What is the moral state of the world at the time of the Coming of Christ?

Answer: The world will be in a state of moral corruption. Jesus said conditions will be as in the days of Noah. Those conditions are described in Gen. 6:11, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

> ***"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:37-39)***

Chapter 28, The Vive Wise and the Five Foolish Virgins

> ***"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord open to us. But he answered and said, Verily 1 say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 25:1-13)***

158. Explanation Of The Parable

Question: Does the parable of the Five Wise and the Five Foolish Virgins have reference to the rapture of the Manchild company of Revelation 12?

Answer: It obviously does. Christ is teaching that the virgins represent the visible Church —.those who believe in His coming. The parable implies that only one-half of the Church will be ready when the Bridegroom comes.

Question: In the parable, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins. What does Christ mean by the term "kingdom of heaven"?

Answer: It does not mean heaven itself, for the parable relates to events on earth. It is a phrase which is used only in the Book of Matthew. The term, "kingdom of heaven" has almost, but not quite the same meaning, as that of "kingdom of God". While both terms are generally interchangeable, yet "kingdom of God", relates to God's kingdom as it exists throughout the whole universe. The term "kingdom of heaven" on the other hand is restricted to events

on earth, and therefore represents what we commonly call Christendom. The Kingdom of heaven is said_ to have both “good fishes” and “bad fishes” in it. Tt contains both “tares” and “wheat”. .....

> ***“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” (Matt. 13:47-48)***

Question: Are the “ten virgins” all to be considered genuine believers?

Answer: Yes. The term “virgins” is used in the Scriptures as representative of people who are separated from the world. Paul used the word “virgin” as denoting one espoused to Christ.

> ***“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. 1 1:2)***

Again, the 144,000, of Revelation 14, the First-fruits unto God, are spoken of as “virgins.”

> ***“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:4)***

The term “virgins” when used symbolically in the Scriptures does not refer to the married state, but rather to separation from the world. “Virgins” are those not defiled with the harlot daughters of Babylon. They have come out of Babylon. Friendship and conformity with the world is reckoned by the Scriptures as spiritual adultery. (James 4:4)

We must therefore grant that the ten virgins represent the true ’believers of the Church of Jesus Christ. That is, they are saved people.

Question: What is meant by the expression “which took their lamps”? (Matt. 25:1)

Answer: Lamps are a symbol of the word of God. It is through the word of God that the Church has been able to know and understand that Christ is coming as a Bridegroom for His people. The psalmist says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Psa. 119:105) By means of the light of God’s word the virgins are able to go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

159. The Foolish Virgins

Question: Who are the foolish virgins?

Answer: One thing marks the foolish virgins from the wise— the foolish failed to take oil in their vessels with their lamps, while the wise did. Oil in the Scriptures, is a type of the Holy Spirit. An illustration of the symbolism of the oil, is found in James. The Apostle commands the elders to anoint the sick with oil:

> ***"Is any sick among you? let him call for the ciders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14)***

The oil in itself has no power to heal. But as a symbol of the omnipresent Spirit of God, it represents God's presence to heal.

This oil of the Holy Spirit is contained in vessels — our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Ghost. The foolish virgins may have had oil in their vessels, at the beginning, since their lamps had burned for a while, but at any rate, they had failed to replenish the supply.

It is God's will that His Spirit should ever flow through and overflow from the innermost being of His people. (Jn. 7:37-38) Our light cannot continue to burn indefinitely without the continual infilling of the Spirit. Neglect can allow the supply to diminish. This was the mistake of the foolish virgins. "They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them." (Verse 3)

II Corinthians 4, uses the symbolism of the Parable of the Virgins. Verse 6, speaks of the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God" that "hath shined in our hearts". That is God's word of the gospel which is a" lamp unto our feet". As we enter into the fulness of Divine blessing, we receive that "treasure", or "power" in "earthen vessels". This earthen vessel which is our physical body, dissolves at death (II Cor. 5:1) and "an house not made with hands" takes its place. But while we are in this world, this "earthen vessel" holds "the earnest of the Spirit". (II Cor. 5:5)

The wise virgins recognized the need of keeping oil in their vessels. The foolish virgins realized the importance of the lamps, but they neglected the oil to their great sorrow and loss.

160. The Delay Of The Bridegroom

Question: What is meant by the words, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all

slumbered and slept”?

Answer: It evidently means that there was an unexpected delay. Had they known the Bridegroom would not have arrived at the expected time, they would have delayed their own going forth. There have been times when a false cry has been made that the rapture of the Church was at hand, and dates have been set. People have gone out on hilltops, haystacks, and roof tops waiting for the Lord to come, only to be disappointed. As early as Paul’s day, there were those teaching that the rapture was just at hand. Of course, there is nothing wrong in preaching the immanency of the Coming of Christ. Indeed we arc commanded to preach it. But it must not be done in such a way as to excite people into believing that Christ is coming at a given time. Immanency does not necessarily mean immediacy. When such unauthorized predictions fail to materialize, people become disillusioned and lose faith in Christ’s Coming altogether. So Paul gave his warning.

> ***“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,***
>
> ***That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” (2 Thes. 2:1-2)***

In other words, there must be no time-setting for the rapture. Though there be unexpected delays, though there arise false alarms, the Lord encouraged His Church not to be discouraged nor to allow their devotion to wane. They were to be ready, whether the Bridegroom should come at morning, noon, or midnight.

> ***“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping, And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:35-37)***

161. The Midnight Cry

Question: At midnight, the cry is made that the “Bridegroom cometh”. Who is the one who makes this cry? Is there any significance that the cry is made at the midnight?

> ***“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” (Matt. 25:6)***

Answer: Those who see the Bride as distinct from the ten virgins, or even the

five wise virgins, point out that it must be the Bride who makes the cry. (It is true that in the Oriental wedding ceremony from whence the parable is taken, the ten virgins are not the bride.) As the Bridegroom and His attendants draw near, both the foolish and the wise virgins, have fallen asleep. They have not noticed the approach of the Bridegroom. So it is said that it must be the watchful Bride that makes the cry. The Bride alone has heeded the warning of the Lord not to be caught sleeping. She is the Bride! (Others say however we should not attach such significance to the details of the parable. Let the reader discern.)

Now the Bridegroom's coming is at a late hour—midnight! The midnight hour is considered the zero hour, the darkest hour, the hour when the sun is deepest below the horizon. It is the hour people would least expect the Lord to come — although He has warned that He might come then! (Mark 13:35)

We remember that it was at midnight that the Lord took His people up out of the land of Egypt.

> ***". . . About midnight will I go into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die . . . And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt . . ." (Exod. 11:4-6)***

If the Lord is to come at the midnight hour, prophetically speaking, we may well believe that the world has been plunged into its eleventh hour for a considerable time. In connection with this, there is a curious circumstance which we would call to attention that took place at the ending of the First World War.

(1) World War I ended on the Eleventh hour

(2) of the Eleventh day

(3) of the Eleventh month of the year 1918

(4) exactly Eleven months after General Allenby liberated Jerusalem

(5) on the Eleventh day of December, 1917 Could this be coincidence? Was not God's clock striking eleven, bringing to the attention of all peoples that the world had entered into the Eleventh Hour of its history, and that the Midnight hour would soon be at hand?

Question: At the cry of the coming of the Bridegroom, there is a great stirring, and the foolish virgins speak to the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." What does this mean?

Answer: The margin reads "our lamps are going out". The need of oil was not felt during the waiting period. It is sad to note that thousands of Christians

whose experience as Christians we cannot doubt, have not felt the need of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. They have been told that salvation is enough. Or that everything necessary is received at conversion, and therefore, there is no reason to ask God for the Spirit, even though Christ commanded His followers specifically to do this. (Luke 11:13)

However, when the time of rapture comes, that great transition moment, the need of the Holy Spirit will become solemnly urgent. It was the Spirit of God that raised Christ from the dead. He quickens the believer while He is in the present body. At the time of the rapture, the Spirit of God will not only quicken the dead in Christ, but He will quicken our mortal bodies as we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

> ***"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11)***

We do not wish to give the impression that because people profess the experience of the Holy Ghost Baptism that it makes them a certain candidate tor the rapture. The foolish virgins had oil in their lamps at the beginning, but they had none in reserve. This shows us that we must constantly replenish the oil in our vessels? We dare not trust to someone else's faith, someone else's experience, or someone else's blessing, or our own past blessing. The wise virgins had to reject the plea of the foolish to lend them oil, pointing out that they had only enough oil for themselves.

Question: Some say that since the foolish virgins went to "buy" oil, therefore, oil could not refer to the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit cannot be bought.

Answer: Of course, the Holy Spirit cannot be purchased for money. But let no one say that a Spirit-filled life costs nothing.

It has cost some their lives. It is getting to be a popular thing these days to belong to a church, and the impression is gaining ground that one may be a Christian at little or no cost. But Christ sets the cost of true discipleship to include all that a man may have in this world.

> ***"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first,***

> ***and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:26-30)***

Christ has taught his followers to count the cost. While salvation and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost are free, as far as a dollars and cents transaction is concerned, nevertheless, full discipleship means that we count the cost, and be willing to forsake all, if necessary, to win Christ. (Phil. 3:7-8)

162. The Shut Door

Question: While the foolish virgins went to buy, we are told that the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went into the marriage. It then says that "the door was shut". What does this mean?

> ***"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut." (Matt. 25:10)***

Answer: We remember in the fourth chapter of Revelation that "a door was opened in heaven", and a voice said, "Come up hither". We saw that this meant rapture. When a door is opened in heaven, those who are ready may pass through. When the door is closed, none may enter. This is what happened in the case of the foolish virgins.

There is no doubt that the rapture will result in the greatest shaking in the Church that has ever taken place in its whole history. The day of playing church will be over, and there will be a tremendous overhauling of Christian experience. People will urgently call on God. They will seek the infilling of the Spirit, and apparently the Holy Spirit will be poured out even until the beginning of the day of the Lord. (Acts 2:16-21) But it will be too late to participate in the First-fruit rapture of the "wise virgins". (Rev. 14:1-5) There will be heartbroken prayers by many for God to come and take them out of the world, but it is too late for the Manchild rapture. The door is closed. It is closed just as the door of the Ark was closed by the Lord after Noah and his family had entered. "The Lord shut him in." (Gen. 7:16) Still the full judgment of God's wrath is not yet come as it did in the days of the flood. The Antichrist must rise and fulfill Satan's wrath to the world first.

Question: What did Christ mean when He said to the foolish virgins, "I know you not"? Did He mean they were rejected forever?

Answer: It is important to notice that the Lord did not say to the foolish virgins what He will say to the hypocrites on the day of judgment, “And then will I profess unto them, 1 never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:23) Christ did not call the virgins, workers of iniquity; neither did He say, “I never knew you." His words were in the present tense. “I know you not.” He indeed knew them as believers who had accepted Him as Saviour. But at this critical hour He had come as Bridegroom. He could not recognize them as members of the Bridal party.

The whole teaching of the parable is that those who would be among the “first-fruits unto God”, those who would be “virgins without fault before the throne of God”, must make themselves ready. “The bride hath made herself ready.” These are the ones who will make up the Manchild Company of believers.

Chapter 29, Flight of the Woman into the Wilderness

163. Flight Of The Jews In The Great Tribulation

Question: What happens to the Woman after she gives birth to the Manchild?

Answer: We are told that she flees into the wilderness where she has protection of God for 1260 days.

> ***‘'And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” (Rev. 12:6)***

Question: Where does this flight of the Woman take her? To what wilderness, and what is the purpose of her flight?

Answer: As we have seen, the Woman is the Church-Israel. Therefore, both Israel and the Church are involved in this prophecy. It pertains to events of the Great Tribulation. Christ spoke of this flight in Matthew 24:15-22, warning the people that when they see the Abomination of Desolation set up in the holy place (the Temple), they are to immediately flee into the mountains, for this event initiates the Great Tribulation.

> ***“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: . . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24:15-16, 21)***

Godly Jews at this time who have come to believe in Christ as the Messiah, and who read the New Testament will take warning and will flee into the mountains. Presumably, as a result of the Antichrist’s covenant, the Arab-Israel boundary disputes will be settled and Jews will be free to flee to the mountains to the East.

But the question arises: Will not the Antichrist or his agents pursue the Jews as they flee for safety into those mountains? Apparently the Antichrist will be occupied with other problems. Certain enemies will come against him and in his pre-occupation with them, Edom and Moab, and Ammon will “escape out of his hand”.

> ***“He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries***

shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his land, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Amnion." (Dan. 11:41)

The Antichrist will be involved in terrible wars. The Holy Land and Egypt will be overrun by marching armies. (Verse 42) But the mountains of Moab, Edom, and Ammon are of difficult terrain for any army to move over and the Jews who have fled from Jerusalem, will be in comparative safety, though they may suffer from the rigors of the climate and the hardships of the journey. Christ emphasizes the need of haste in this flight, as only a little time will elapse before the avenues of escape are cut off.

"Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." (Matt. 24:18-20)

164. The Flight Of The Jews In A.D. 70

Question: You speak of the primary fulfillment of the prophecy of the birth of the Manchild, its rapture to heaven, and the flight of the Woman to the Wilderness as taking place just before the Great Tribulation. But, you have also said that the fulfillment of this prophecy was foreshadowed in the birth, life, and ascension of Christ. Was there also a flight of Israel into the Wilderness after the ascension of Christ?

Answer: Actually there was such a flight, and it involved Christian Israel not national Israel. In Luke 21, Christ gave a warning to His followers that when they should see Jerusalem compassed with armies . . . then let them which be in Judaea flee to the mountains . . ."

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know' that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which arc written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden

down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:20-24)

It is to be observed that the warning by Christ was specially directed to Jews living during that generation, as the 24th verse speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews unto all nations of the world, an event that took place in A. D. 70.

National Israel paid no heed to the warning of Christ, and the people remained in the city to be visited with the terrible judgment which came upon Jerusalem. The city was burned with fire, and those not slaughtered were "led away captive into all nations".

But the Christians had heeded the warning. They fled to Pella (in Edom), and thus were saved the horrors of the tragic disaster that befell Jerusalem. This event while not the primary fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation, since it happened before Revelation was written, was a foretype of it. It shows the following things:

1. That the flight of the Woman does not refer to all of Israel but to the spiritual part of Israel.

2. That the 1260 days of the flight of the Woman are literal days. The Roman war that desolated Palestine, occupied a period of 3 1/2 years — from A. D. 66 to A. D. 70.

3. That the flight of the believers was to an actual "wilderness". Pella was deep in Edom, far from civilization, a wilderness, but it proved a welcome refuge.

165. The Flight Of The Woman On "The Wings Of An Angel"

Question: Is this flight of the Jews to the mountains just before the Great Tribulation (and its foretype in A. D. 70), the complete fulfillment of this prophecy? You have said that the Woman represents not only Israel but the Church-Israel. How are saints other than the Jews affected?

Answer: It seems certain there is more to the prophecy than what has been mentioned. There is another important phase of the flight of the Woman. There must also be another Wilderness. To understand just where this Wilderness is, let us consider the invasion of Israel by Rosh recorded in Ezekiel 38. As practically all prophetic scholars agree, Rosh or Russia and nations allied with her, sweep down into Israel just before Armageddon. We cannot enter into a discussion here of the rivalries between Rosh and the Beast, but we do call attention to the fact

that there is a company of nations that opposes Rosh, and it is there that we must look for the Wilderness.

Question: You speak of nations warring against the Beast. Will not the Beast control every square foot of the earth's surface?

Answer:

1. This is popularly supposed, but the idea is not in accord with the facts. The Antichrist will control the prophetic world as known in Bible days, and perhaps much more. However, it is just common sense to understand that as long as there are nations effectively opposing the Antichrist, he is not controlling the territory from whence they are operating. (Read Daniel 11 :40-41 carefully)

In Ezekiel 38, which we have been discussing, we see that certain powers come against the great confederation of Rosh. When Rosh sweeps into Israel to take a spoil, these nations challenge her:

> ***"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee. Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (Ezekiel 38:13)***

It is interesting to note that prophetic students even of diverse views have generally regarded "the merchants of Tarshish, and the young lions thereof" as the English-speaking peoples. These then would be the nations who are opposed to Rosh. Being geographically situated as they arc, they would not quickly fall before him. Now America and the New World has ever been a refuge and a haven for people who have been subject to religious persecution. Will this be true again in the fateful hour which is to come? Is there only one "wilderness" to which people of God lice during the Great Tribulation? It would hardly seem possible that the comparatively small company of believing Jews who flee to Moab and Edom, would be the entire fulfillment of prophecy, which is affecting the whole world. Certainly that body of believers who go through the Great Tribulation "are of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues". (Rev. 7:9) Many of these, it is true, will perish under the hand of the Antichrist, but not all of them. The Woman will be protected in the "wilderness" during the three and a half years.

At the time that John wrote this prophecy, the New World was the great wilderness unknown to civilization. It definitely did not come under the territory of the Roman empire. Asia was known, Europe was known, and Africa was

known. But the New World, a vast wilderness, was unknown. It is a matter of history that shortly after the discovery of the New World, it became a refuge for hundreds of thousands of people who were persecuted for their religious convictions.

3. In World War II, Canada with its vast wilderness, absorbed many of the people displaced by the tides of war. So did the United States. Britain was ready in 1940, to send her women and children overseas to Canada, if the need should require. Some actually were sent, although the fortunes of war changed in time to make unnecessary mass transportation. The immanency of another deadly conflict in which the survival of civilization is at stake, makes us ask whether we might not actually witness a mass evacuation such as the one that was contemplated in 1940?

4. Atomic warfare could turn America into a literal wilderness, if such an event should come. Indeed our military leaders tell us that an atomic war would produce this result. Yet it is believed that if the population were dispersed over the open country, most of the people would survive — though some, even many would die from fall-out. Preliminary plans are being made by the U. S. government to prepare for that eventuality. The vast hinterland of America and Canada is so great an area that even atomic warfare would probably not depopulate it in the short period of three and half years.

During the time of the Great Tribulation, we may find the people of God clustered in little communities scattered through mountain areas and remote places. The general population may be forced to do this as well, because of the extreme vulnerability of cities to atomic destruction. While the new world would be the natural haven for those fleeing from the clutches of the Beast, it is quite likely that the Tribulation saints would flee to remote areas in any part of the world where they might happen to live.

5. One thing is certain, the Lord has “a place prepared of God”, where the Beast Power cannot immediately get full control.

At the present time, the only place on a large scale that would fit the description, would be North America — the last bastion of the free world. The Antichrist would quickly engulf Europe, then much of Africa and Asia, and the saints living there would have no way of escape. They must give their lives or take the “mark of the Beast”.

Question: You have spoken of two different phases of the flight of the Woman which is the Church-Israel. One — the flight of the Jews, that Christ spoke of in Matthew 24:15-22; then you mention a different flight of other “saints”, at the

beginning of the Great Tribulation — probably to the New World. What Scriptural foundation do you have for this two-phase flight of the Woman?

Answer: Notice the rather significant fact that the flight of the Woman is mentioned twice in Revelation 12. Why should this be? First in Revelation 12:6:.

> ***"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."***

Then again in Rev. 12:14-16:

> ***"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."***

Expositors have felt obliged to suppose that this repetition has no special significance, that it is just done for emphasis. But this is not true. Every sentence in the Book has a significance. The reason that the prophecy is repeated twice is because there are two phases to it.

166. The Wings Of The Eagle

Question: In this second prophecy we are told that the Woman was given the "wings of an eagle" to assist her flight into the wilderness. Does this have a significance?

Answer: The "wilderness" is a refuge for God's people in time of testing and is so spoken of a number of times in the Scriptures.

1. Thus when God poured out His judgments upon Egypt in the days of Moses, He led the children of Israel out into a wilderness. God speaks of His Divine protection by saying that he "bore them on eagle's wings".

> ***"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." (Exodus 19:4)***

This is repeated in Deut. 32:11-12:

> ***"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no***

strange god with him."

Through this shelter and haven in the wilderness, Israel was saved from the clutches of Pharaoh who followed after Israel even as the Dragon pursued after the Woman in Revelation 12. God saved Israel by bearing His people as it were on "eagles wings", and Pharaoh was not only frustrated in his efforts but perished miserably in the Red Sea, a victim of the judgment of God. As God's people on earth will be the "Church in the Wilderness' in the Great Tribulation, so Israel was called "the Church in the Wilderness", when she fled from Pharaoh. (Acts 7:38)

Question: Is there further significance in the term "wings of an eagle" as found in the prophecy which relates to the Great Tribulation?

Answer: As we have observed, the "wings of the eagle" no doubt have a spiritual meaning as they did in Exodus 19:4. They symbolize Divine protection. However, they may also symbolize the actual instrument which assists in the flight. She was given the "wings of an eagle" that she might flee. What nation, we ask, is represented by the eagle? The answer as every school boy knows, is the United States of America. The great jets now being built could carry hundreds of thousands of people across the ocean in an extremely short time. Hundreds of ships, no doubt would also be commandeered in the event of a mass evacuation.

Yet, since the understanding of prophecy does not necessitate our exact identification of "the wilderness", we leave the reader to draw his own conclusion.

The evidence is strong that "the wilderness" primarily refers to North America. Nevertheless, it is also likely that everywhere believers will attempt to flee to the remote areas in an effort to escape the Antichrist. This would only be natural.

However the difficulty in escaping from the kingdoms controlled by the Beast may well be seen in Hitler's success in reducing the number of Jews in Europe from seven million to one million.

167. Why God Allows The Woman To Flee To The Wilderness

Question: What is the Divine purpose in God's permitting the Woman to flee to the wilderness apart from giving her Divine protection?

Answer: With Israel, this is the hour spoken of in prophecy as the "time of Jacob's trouble."

“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and All Faces Are Turned Into Paleness? Alas! For That Day Is Great, So That None is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved of it.” (Jeremiah 30:6-7)

This is an hour of chastening and refining for Israel, to prepare the descendants of Jacob for the Millennium. When the dark hour is over the powers of evil will be broken, and Israel will be forever free. (Verse 8-9)

In the wilderness, God meets the people left of the sword. There He is gracious to them and bestows upon them His everlasting love.

> ***“Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord Hath Appeared Of Old Unto Me, Saying. Yea, I Have Loved Thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. 31:2-3)***

God’s pleading and chastening of His people in the wilderness is also clearly described in Ezekiel 20.

> ***“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.***
>
> ***Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” (Ezek. 20:34-37)***

It is evident that during this unprecedented time of trial and tribulation there will be great heart-searching among God’s saints, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon them. With the time of judgment and chastening nearing its end, God will deal comfortably with His people. (Note: Some of these prophecies concerning the “wilderness” relate particularly to Israel as a nation.)

> ***“Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.” (Hosea 2:14)***

At this time God will make a covenant with His people Israel and betroth them

unto Himself forever. (Verses 18-19)

Question: What is the “flood” that the Dragon casts out of his mouth to swallow up the woman? (Rev. 12:15-16)

Answer: “A “flood” in Bible symbolism are armies sent out by a Gentile power under the influence of Satan. Thus, when Egypt came against Israel, in the days of Jeremiah, the prophet exclaimed, “Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.” (Jer. 46:7-8) It is interesting to note that this prophecy referred not only to Egypt in Jeremiah’s day, but to the Day of the Lord and to the army that came from the north country. (Verse 10) In Jer. 47:2, the prophet also speaks of the overflowing flood that comes from the north.

The Antichrist does not have things entirely his way. His need for great armies indicates that he has powerful opposition. The rise of this opposition absorbs some of the shock of the Antichrist’s wrath and prevents him from utterly destroying the Woman.

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