

THE GOSPEL TRACT
Harvester

JANUARY 2012



**Inhabit
His
Presence,**

**Occupy
His
Presence,**

Psalm 125:1,2



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Tom's Corner

Hide me in THEE.

Months previous to this, I followed the Occupy Movement and though I know it is organized, it seems so disorganized. Still to this day—the only common thread that seems to hold it together is: Dissatisfaction. I made the comment to those close to me that it is my bet that those protesting, didn't know the Lord. As I reflect more on it, the more sure I am. So, do we "occupy" because we are dissatisfied, or are we satisfied because we occupy? It depends what we occupy and why.

It was eleven years ago this New Year's Eve, that I was in prayer. The Lord hushed me as I prayed, for this one, and that one. I paused the longest time—then cautiously began my prayer again, when He hushed me again. I couldn't imagine why the Lord would stop me from praying, so I listened: "All I want from you, Tom, is your heart focused on Me." It was real, clear, nothing fabricated here. The Lord spoke through the back of my head, and I heard it. It was a little like a scolding, but how can one feel scolded when all He wants is my intimate, intense adoration; but rather, it was—the richest, most intimate invitation I have ever received. Until then, I thought I was doing well in seeking Him, but what I was doing was "living around" Him, while He invited me to live "in Him."

The Lord Himself called me to "occupy" and to "inhabit" His Presence, in the same way He desires

all His Creation to fall before Him in praise and worship. That's why I am saddened to see those at Occupy Wall Street and such, because actually—they are deceived to think that what they do is something important. The Lord, meanwhile, waits for the ones He died for to realize what an offer awaits them: The Lord God Almighty wants us all to attend Him in humble surrender and adoration.

Whether one is camping in a park or on the street to make a point, or busying themselves with things that please them, the same loss has occurred—the habitation of the Lord has been vacated.



"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me." Psalm 26:8-11

"Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and

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What I Liked About China

No matter which teaching of Christ's Return the Christian trusts in, all of us are aware of the moral decay of this nation, and this world. We here at Gospel Tract Society, have had our noses in the Bible and our eyes on the news, watching for definitive clarity of the times that may indicate: A One-World government, global upheaval, or anything that could be assigned the value of—The Signs of The End Times. There are many false trails, like conspiracy theories and writings of those I call—radical, so for the many who listen to us, we owe truth and calm. For a couple years, we have posted on the back page of the *Harvester*,

upon the publication of Bible tracts, there is another call of God upon us, and it is one we have little choice in, as long as we serve, follow, and are obedient to Him.

One day, there will be an end to the life we know. The prophets spoke of it, Jesus spoke of it much, and the apostles spoke of it. At that time, the Church will be the handmaiden of God, doing His Work, teaching the Word, and turning many to Righteousness. When will that time come? Will the Church be aware of it, and will they be up to the task? We believe that the time for preparation is **NOW**. We are not saying prophetically anything past that. We see the signs of the times; we feel the world, as we once knew it, is slipping away; but much greater than that—we feel the call of God upon this ministry, to prepare those who love Him, for the days ahead. We have plans, should we need to implement them, to send a series of updates to the ministry family and publish “real-time” messages, when the end-time calendar begins, should it be in our lifetime.

The latest blip on our radar came just in time to make our publishing deadline for this magazine, and it is a blip to focus on. In December 2011, as we remembered Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution to rescind the BAN AGAINST SODOMY AND THE PRACTICE OF BEASTIALITY IN THE ARMED SER-

VICES. Like you, I never knew there was such a ban, nor—that a ban was ever needed. Now, I am stunned and alarmed that there is a perceived need to rescind such a ban. I was appalled at the executive order by our president to repeal the “don't ask, don't tell” provision of the military code, allowing homosexuals to openly display their “sexual preference” without fear of retribution. Now, my jaw has dropped out of its socket.

When I was in China six years ago, I talked to my guide about some social behavior customs and such. I learned that a couple may wait for many years before being allowed to marry. Among other things, he told me that homosexuality was strictly forbidden! I then thought how the Chinese have surpassed us, in an area I wouldn't have expected, for a godless nation. Perhaps, it is a matter that they haven't caught up with us; as we slide uncontrollably down the slippery slope. Now, I wonder—at this news—how godless nations will abhor us, even Islamic nations now call us the devil, and make a good point.

The point today's news brings us to, is this: What is God's response? We, as a people, have put in office to represent us, people who will or have already brought God's Judgment against us by their despicable laws. I think the siren needs to be sounded now, one that says: “Conditions for the forming of a tornado are right.” I don't see the tornado, but I am on high ground watching. You see—one of the things that will give rise quickly to “sin abounding” is when the restraint of sin is removed. That is when either the angel Michael (sometimes referred to as the restrainer), or the Holy Spirit removes His restraint on sin. When that occurs, and when Satan

realizes he is free to go his way unhampered, we will go downhill very fast, as the blessing of His Righteous Hand has been removed. That could give Satan the green light, and once realized—his plan for world domination will be on the fast track.

Like a vicious dog on a twenty-foot chain for 10 years, he will run hard and bark, then stop short of the chain length, so he doesn't con-



tinually snap his neck. When the chain is loosed at the other end, it may take a while, but eventually he is going to test the boundary. When he does, he is a menace to everyone. That illustrates why that the time of sin's restraint being removed, may not make the news. The menace will make the news, but it will be gradual until we are so engulfed in sin's sea that we won't be able to see the shoreline. That's why I am writing you this news. Am I looking for the Antichrist? No, I am looking for God's Christ, but He is on the other side of the approaching storm, and as the Lord leads us, we will keep you informed of any changes in weather. 🙌

Now, I wonder—at this news—how godless nations will abhor us, even Islamic nations now call us the devil, and make a good point.

events that seem “Biblical” in nature, and all the items could fall under the Matthew 24 warning given by Jesus.

Our role for decades, has been the evangelistic outreach of printing Bible tracts; that, and the ministry to the land of Haiti, which my family has treated as a call from God. Now, while our ministry is based

TIMING Is Everything

Everyone has heard the old adage for where to place a business: Location, Location, Location. In other words, no matter what you do or how well you do it, if you are in a bad or inappropriate location—your business will suffer. Whether you are in business or simply want to prosper in what you do, I offer that greater than location, “Timing is everything.”

Since Christ ascended into the clouds, leaving the promise of His soon Return, the discussion of timing has been on the “eye-level” shelf, and that is where it belongs. I may have told you a story, but it is too valuable to omit here, simply because of possible repetition. When I operated an auto recycling yard several years ago, I had an order for a low mileage 2.2 Chrysler engine. I had just the thing, but it was in a badly damaged car. Bobby, one of my dismantlers, “unwrapped” the engine by peeling away all the crushed metal, but noticed that the timing belt had been cut, so he replaced it with a new one. He tried to test-fire the engine for many hours, but as it tried to run, it could only get warm, make running sounds, and nearly run. We tried everything, even rechecking the timing marks often. After several hours, I re-studied the timing marks with a good light. Both large marks were matched, however, I noticed a much smaller mark on the crankshaft that was purposefully set, but barely noticeable. Bobby strongly resisted my instruction to him to reset the tim-

ing to the “acute” (smaller) mark, but after he did, he hit the starter and we heard “hummmm.” Bobby smiled so hard, it turned to laughter. The engine was pulled and sent to the customer, never to be heard from again.

Now, that is a longer story than I wanted to spend time on here, but its value has no equal. The engine had all the components of its purpose: fuel, air, and compression, but lacked timing to the degree of one tooth. If we were not tenacious (unrelenting) in our search for the needed timing, the sale would have been lost, and the engine scrapped! Need I say more about the value of our tenacity concerning the timing of the Lord’s Return? We are not arguing or leveling a finger at each other, but we are trying to find two marks that match. In doing so, I have tried to keep everyone in the same wagon as we bump down the road of discussion. Some kept falling off the wagon and I couldn’t understand why, since the clarity of evidence seemed overwhelming to me. Reading the letters from many of you, there is a pattern of understanding that is like the two large timing marks: To our understanding, they clearly match, but the engine won’t run on its own, without teachers to tell us what things mean.

That one large mark that keeps us out of time, is the definition of the Great Tribulation. While false teachers call it God’s Wrath, even God’s Tribulation, THEY TEACH A MARK ILL PLACED, and all it yields is “heat and noise.” The Bible does not teach that—anywhere. Yes, God does send curses to the ungodly and to the Antichrist, but that is in response to what they do to Israel, the Jewish people, and “the remnant of her seed,” the saved Gentiles. He does that just as He sent curses

upon Pharaoh and his Egypt for the cruelty and oppression heaped on Israel whom he held in bondage. Do you think Jesus brings tribulation on people? No, He will bring Judgment one day, and the Father will release His Wrath one day, but let us not confuse those terms. Tribulation, Wrath, and Judgment, are three distinct and separate items, coming, not at random times, but like a clock and a calendar and not one tick out of sync.

1. The Great Tribulation comes not at God’s Hand, but like the Great Holocaust; Satan sends his apostle to do his work of destruction, as he attempts to cancel God’s Work and His People. Not to be confused with personal tribulations, or larger scale tribulations.

2. God’s Wrath is witnessed when He has had enough. It builds like a river dammed up by His LONGSUFFERING. When that dam breaks, things get ugly—fast. It came in Noah’s day when sin and disobedience was the mainstay for the people. It will happen once again after Jesus returns, and the Redeemed (dead and living) are resurrected to Eternal Life, while the damned are resurrected, also, but to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. 2:2). Not to be confused with flare-ups of wrath.

3. God’s Judgment comes after the Millennial Reign of Christ on Earth, after the Second Resurrection, when the books are opened on everyone, and their sins exposed, except for those who are excused by Mercy. Not to be confused with smaller judgments by God.

The discussion about whether Jesus returns once or twice before the Millennium, is one of timing. We must be able to read the timing marks thoroughly or suffer the poverty of ignorance (not know-



ing). Recently, while reading a Pre-Tribulation book, “*The Master Plan*,” by David Reagan, I saw one of those large, misleading timing marks. He used the verses found in Jude 1:14, 15: “...Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all...,” to promote the doctrine of Pre-Trib Rapture, with Jesus at His Second Coming, bringing His Saints with Him to execute Judgment, at the Rapture. He infers then, that the Saints are retrieved from an earlier rapture. To his thinking, that cinches the doctrine of Pre-Tribulation Rapture. For me, it brings back the same feeling I had when Bobby and I stared at that engine and could feel it warm, but I was unable to ship it because it wouldn’t run. Looking with a good light at those two verses, we see the little mark—it is Judgment. Judgment doesn’t come until the Millennium is complete, and there the Saints of God do come with Him, because the two Resurrections are complete. While Dr. Reagan uses those verses to teach an earlier rapture, he unconsciously, but correctly places God’s Wrath beginning at the Return of Christ (Rev. 11:15). He does so by using “Judgment” and “Wrath” interchangeably, but at the expense of accuracy. When you identify: Tribulation, Wrath, and Judgment—separately—and give them their proper timing, the result is a joy in Truthfulness and the sound you have sought for years: “Hummm.” Tom Buttram

PLAIN SPEAKING ON THE RAPTURE QUESTION Part 3

By Orson P. Jones



Notes: This paper was first published in the 1940's by Rev. Orson P. Jones. Rev. Jones was pastor of Grace Baptist Church of San Diego, CA. for almost half a century!

This copy of Rev. Jones' paper is from the Dave Macpherson Papers collection at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. Thanks to SEBTS Archivist Jim Lutzweiler and to Bill Youngmark for providing us a copy of this rare and hard to find document!

WOULD GOD POUR OUT THE VIALS OF HIS WRATH WHILE THE CHURCH IS ON EARTH?

The Church has passed through great tribulations in the past. "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Pre-trib rapturists reply, "Tribulation that comes from wicked men is different from awful, supernatural wrath poured out by the Lord Himself"

Tut! Tut! What about the elect whom the angels are going to gather when Jesus comes in glory? (Matt. 24:31). Have they survived in spite of vials of wrath? Are the elect of one era more precious in the sight of God than those of another era? Is it proper for Jewish elect to suffer from vials of wrath; but unthinkable for Church elect? And yet Israel is graven on His palms, and the apple of His eye (Isa. 49:16; Zech. 2:8).

We point out that the vials of God's wrath are within the limits of human endurance, affect chiefly the enemies of God, and are similar to the judgments which fell upon

Egypt. Out of such judgments the Hebrews walked in triumph; and those judgments came from God!

Turn to the sixteenth chapter of Revelation and read. From the first vial came a noisome and grievous sore upon men who had the Mark of the Beast. The elect will have no Mark of the Beast, and no sores.

As the second and third vials are poured out, seas, rivers, and fountains are turned to blood. Similar judgments fell on Egypt. We have heard no weeping from suffering Hebrews. Comes the fourth vial and men are scorched by the heat of the Sun. We would expect the saints to be prepared (Luke 21:36).

With the fifth vial, the kingdom of the Beast is filled with darkness and they gnaw their tongues for pain. Even so it came to pass in Egypt and the Hebrews had light in their dwellings (Ex. 10:23).

The sixth vial dries up the waters of the Euphrates that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared; even as Pharaoh was lured to destruction by the drying up of the Red Sea.

With the seventh vial, great Bab-

ylon drinks the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath; but God's people have been called out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4).

IS THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH TAUGHT IN OLD TESTAMENT TYPES?

Doctrine is never to be DISCOVERED in types. No inspired apostle wrote of the Church caught away before the Tribulation. Therefore, no inspired apostle could possibly have taught that Enoch's translation before the Flood was a type of the Church caught away before the Tribulation. Uninspired men are attaching meanings to certain events for which they have not a syllable of inspired authority.

ARE THERE TYPES AND SYMBOLS IN THE BIBLE?

Yes, many! Baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbols. Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, the Way, the Door, and the Good Shepherd. All of these and many more rest on the divine authority of the written Word. They were not invented by modern preachers to support doctrines never stated in the Bible.

WHAT SCRIPTURES ARE SUPPOSED TO TEACH THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH BEFORE THE TRIBULATION?

The term "Rapture of the Church," and the phrase "before the Tribulation" cannot be found in the New Testament. "Rapture" is an unscriptural word used in an obsolete sense—"a snatching away." It is used to avoid such forth-right language as "second coming" and "third coming." This unscriptural word, "Rapture," is used to set forth an unscriptural doctrine.

Where in the entire Bible can you

find a statement, or even a suggestion of the lifting out of this world of every living believer, leaving this ungodly world to pursue its business and pleasures? Passenger trains wrecked because the engineers have been translated! Empty caskets at funeral parlors! Children disappearing from school desks leaving only little heaps of clothes! If such a sensational, world-wide event might occur at any moment in the future, why would the apostles be silent? Why would such a stupendous affair be revealed only to men who can read between the lines? Men who teach this doctrine are positive that it is set forth in such passages as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-55; Philippians 3:20, 21; and Titus 2:12, 13. In none of these passages is there a syllable suggesting that these events will take place before the Tribulation, or that business will continue as usual after they occur.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: We point out that this is a resurrection passage, beginning: "*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep...*" A resurrection should not be called a RAPTURE. A resurrection of the saints of all ages should not be called a CHURCH resurrection, or a CHURCH rapture. The glorious event described in Revelation 20:1-10 should be called by its proper name, THE FIRST RESURRECTION! and not by an unscriptural name, the Rapture of the Church. In a footnote under this passage, the *Scofield Reference Bible* says: "Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection as here described."

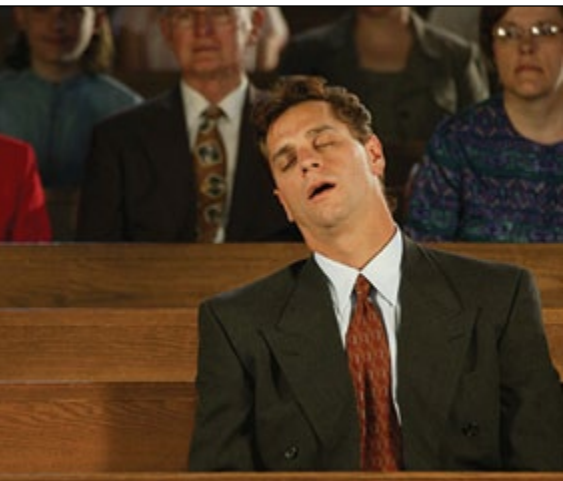
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To the Sleeping Saints: “Wake Up!”

In his wonderful letter to the Ephesian church, the apostle Paul included a shattering statement which is astonishingly appropriate today: *“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light”* (Ephesians 5:14). We usually think of this church as outstandingly spiritual, particularly in the light of our Lord’s commendation in Revelation 2:2, 3. Yet Paul’s words indicate that even in his day, thirty years earlier, it had already begun to “leave its first love.” So he seeks to arouse them with a disturbing diagnosis, a drastic demand, and the promise of a dazzling development.

The Disturbing Diagnosis

Like many in the church today, the Ephesians were spiritually



asleep, unaware of the seriousness of *lying* (4:25); *uncontrolled anger* (4:26); *yielding to the devil’s devices* (4:27); *stealing* (4:28); *foul language* (4:29); *bitterness, wrath and anger* (4:31); *immorality and covetousness* (5:3); *filthiness (obscenity), foolish talk or coarse joking* (5:4); *fellowship with the world* (5:11); and consequently, *the inability to discern God’s will for their lives* (5:17). But there is a remedy for all of this, and sleeping Christians are challenged to take it without delay.

The Drastic Demand

“Awake...and arise from the dead.” A sleeping man and a dead man are alike oblivious to their surroundings. But the sleeper can be aroused, and once awakened, make deliberate return to alertness. How many Christians need to do this spiritually—by waking to their true condition and deliberately dropping any habit, any relationship, and any fleshly indulgence which keeps them in a state of spiritual death.

Jacob urged this upon his household (Gen. 35:2): *“...Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:”* *“Having therefore these promises,”* Paul wrote the Corinthian church, *“let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Cor. 7:1).

The Dazzling Development

“...and Christ shall give thee light”—light in the darkness of a lost world— *“...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul had already prayed that these Ephesians might have *“The eyes of your understanding...enlightened...”* (Eph. 1:18); here he assures them of the certain answer to his prayer—if they will *“walk in the light as he (Jesus) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”*

(1 John 1:7).

Let us rejoice that *“whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”* (Rom. 15:4), and *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* (1 Cor. 10:11).

—The Great Commission Prayer League

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Among the saved of all dispensations the prophet Daniel will surely appear. The twelfth chapter of Daniel is an end-time, Tribulation chapter mentioning the “time, times, and an half;” also some mysterious periods, “a thousand two hundred and ninety days,” and “the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” And then the thirteenth verse, *“But go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot AT THE END OF THE DAYS.”* Daniel will stand in his lot AFTER the Tribulation.

1 Corinthians 15:50-55: This is from the greatest of all resurrection chapters and describes the moment in which this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Call it not a rapture!

Philippians 3:20, 21: Another resurrection passage! *“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...”* We look for a resurrection, not for a rapture; for a resurrection of all saints, not Church saints only; for a resurrection at the beginning of the thousand year reign of Christ; for a resurrection that will

include the martyrs of the Tribulation.

Titus 2:12, 13: *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing...”* Paul was not looking for an “any-moment” coming. He expected to be offered, and to depart. He looked for perverse men and wolves who would prey upon the Church after his own departure. Paul’s blessed hope is the promise of eternal life to men justified by the grace of God. This is brought out in three verses. *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”* (Titus 1:2). *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,”* (Titus 2:12, 13). *“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 3:7). (To be continued).

—Orson P. Jones, Pastor,
Grace Baptist Church

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Fields of Harvest

Dear Tom:

I wanted to make a comment about a reply you made to a statement by E.C. of KS. Part of their note talked about having a hard time with people wearing jeans with holes in them and their shirts on the outside, at church. Your comment said you thought alike, then you said that the fear of God and the love of the Lord went out the same door. How sad this statement made me. You made it sound as if people who wear jeans do not have the fear of God and the love of the Lord in them. I have been in churches where the people were all dressed up and there was very little love or fear of God in those people. The fear of God and love for Him does not depend on whether people have a pair of dress pants on, or a pair of jeans. It's not about the clothes we wear, but about our heart! I am thankful I can say God has clothed me with the garments of salvation and covered me with the Robe of Righteousness. Those are the best clothes of all.

C.F., GA

Dear C.F.: Thank you for your letter and comment. I've been in those dead, dressed-up churches too, and you are right, also. The subject of dress and reverence seems to be as controversial as traditional/contemporary worship music. My problem is perhaps that I have spent too much time in Haiti where poverty exceeds anything we have seen in the U.S. There, at any funeral, or church gathering, men wear suits, and the ladies wear dresses and hats—or some sort of head covering. They sit erect and won't cross their legs, slouch, or drape their arms across

the back of a bench. To do so, is undisciplined, and counter to the purpose of their presence. As they may walk many miles on dusty roads to get to church, they carry a cloth to dust their shoes and clothing so they will be "fit" for worship. They may only have one suit and one set of work clothes, and they may be hand made, but certainly used and "fitted" for their use, but most of all—they wear the best they can find, to worship. I have always believed that a person should dress for success, or dress for the job he wants. I learned in college, that if I went to class in my raggy clothes, my attitude never exceeded my presentation. If I prepared my appearance to excel, then I noticed that my grades excelled as well. Most likely, I am the only one in a suit when and wherever I go to worship. I don't scold the others for what they choose to wear; if they choose camo-wear, and shower clogs—that's their deal. To me, going to worship is to be a special occasion, different from the deer-stand, strip mall, or theater, so please understand where I am coming from. Does one's outward appearance reflect their inward preparation for worship? Maybe, maybe not, but for me, it's a place to start. Bro. Tom

Tom:

The Lord delivered His people from the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and many more, and before the Tribulation, too. He doesn't want to lose any with the Mark. Some will accept it for food and medicine. Please send me your new revelation from God saying I'm wrong. Thanks.

R.P., CA

Dear R.P.: I get and read every note attached, so your comment was noted.

What happened to my eschatology (study of end-times) was not any "new revelation" as many suggest. What happened to me after 55 years of believing in the teaching of the "Secret Rapture," was finally—a true understanding of the Scriptures. So many things that we base our "handed down" beliefs on, are based on the misunderstanding of what really happens in the Scriptures, by the change of one or two words. For example: you said, "The Lord delivered His people from the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah and many more and before the tribulation too." In the Great Flood, you say that Noah and his family were taken out. Well, where were they taken? Actually, they were not taken "out," but rather—taken through the Flood. They rode it out for 40 days and nights, then, they had to stay aboard the Ark for over a year for the water to recede. Their lives were spared, but living on that boat was a hardship. After the Great Tribulation at Christ's Return and just before the Wrath of God is released, the Saints of God (both living and dead) will then be taken out at the Resurrection, just as Lot and his family were taken out of Sodom and Gomorrah, because no flesh would remain alive there. As for the "many more" you suggest, let's talk about Pharaoh's sentence of death upon the first born of the Israelites. They weren't taken out, not at all, but instead, they had the "passover" blood of the lamb on their doorposts and lintels, and the death angel passed them by.

So, there is no new revelation from God saying that you are wrong, just an explanation on the difference of being taken out, passed over, and

taken through. One more thing, if any take the Mark of the Beast for any reason, they are damned. That's what choice is all about. If people think they can serve two masters, they have a sad awakening coming. That is why we are preaching so hard.

Thanks for your comment. Keep studying the Word as the Lord reveals it to us, Tom

Dear Tom:

I love to work with the book of Revelation. After all, it is the only book that has this statement: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). When we are told, "Blessed are they," why then do we avoid this book like the plague?

Have you ever had a question that would not go away? One such instance for me was Revelation 8:1. "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." My question is: Why is there silence in Heaven? With all the rejoicing there, how could there be silence? And why for a half hour? I asked God about this over and over. Then one day, listening to the radio, John Hagee came on, and he gave his interpretation of Rev. 8:1. He said there is silence because, God allowed the raptured saints to walk to the edge of Heaven and look over the edge so they could see the horror of the Tribulation judgments taking place on the Earth, and it was so terrible that they could only stare in horror-filled silence. Immediately my spirit was angry, and I said, "Lord, I do not know the answer, but I know that is the dumb-

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est thing I have ever heard!"

R.K., MO

Dear R.K.: As I read the radio preacher's comment you shared, I said to myself also—"That's the dumbest thing I have ever heard." I think they really have to make stuff up to make it fit. Well, I am like you about the sound of rejoicing in Heaven, because I have never thought that the silence was on the inside of Heaven, but as viewed from the outside. The perspective I believe, is as Heaven appears from the Earth. After all, for awhile, there is a lot going on just before Christ's return: Huge earthquakes, thunder, lightning, a shout from the Arcangel, the seventh trumpet—sounding the end of the age, the noise of the dead in Christ being released from death, only to be joined by those living in Christ, while at the same time, those dead in sin being resurrected to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2, Rev. 11), and the nations screaming and cursing, because they finally realize the truth of their damnation. The noise and violence of it all will be like living through a category 5 hurricane. When the leading edge hits you, there is a lot of noise, death and destruction, then the silence of the eye is witnessed—about half an hour, then it comes again more vengeful (God's Wrath). It may not be absolute silence, but will seem that way, because of what has just occurred. That's my understanding. Tom

Dear Brother in Christ:

Some time ago I wrote to you to confirm my own discovery concerning of the Scond Coming. Both my husband (a pastor) and I had been taught the theory of a secret

rapture. Through the years I began to doubt this belief. When I read about your experience in 2009, I saw a parallel in my own discovery. Around 1996, I was reading Revelation 1:7 where it says, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." I told my husband, "This is a visible coming." Then when I read Matthew 24 again and again, it came to me. This is Glorious, Loud, Visible, Angels, the Trumpet, the Son of Man coming on the clouds. Another verse which confirms a Second Coming, not a third, is Hebrews 9:28, "...unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." I agree with you that the verses used to teach the early rapture are the same ones that confirm His second appearance. I do not fear a tribulation period because "He is with us always." All through the Bible we read of That Day, The Day of the Lord, The Blessed Hope. This is what Paul and Peter were preaching in the early days of the Church. The Blessed Hope is very real to me and a precious truth. My husband passed away in 1999 before we had the opportunity to explore further these great truths. Sincerely,

A.W., SC

Dear A.W.: This is so encouraging to me. I am sorry your husband can't join you in exploring these truths, but I am glad we have found each other. It is good to learn more of the Lord. Tom

Family Altar

Please join us in prayer for a few of the needs of some of our Gospel Tract Society "family."

I need a job desperately. I'm afraid we're going to lose our home. I had 2 major surgeries 8 months apart. I haven't worked in over a year, and I can't find a job. I have type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and kidney stones. I am in a lot of pain. I need a miracle. Please pray for my family and me. God bless you.

FL

Please pray for my grandson and his friend. They are gay.

CT

My best friend's husband has been very sick in the hospital and now in a rehab facility from having a severe heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure. He is only in his mid-40s, and they have six kids who need him.

NY

My son needs a liver transplant. The doctors are trying different types of healing. They say he is doing well. He is a Christian. At Thanksgiving, he was so sick from the chemo, and whatever else he is taking. They found a tumor on his liver, which they want to make smaller. So thank you for your prayers.

KY

Please pray for God to keep me strong spiritually and physically. I am 81 and I love the Lord, but sometimes I get depressed. And please pray for my backslidden granddaughter and her mother to have restoration.

NC

I fell and broke my arm. I live upstairs and have no one to take care of me. I'm in a very bad situation. Please pray for me.

NY

Please pray for a 10-year-old boy who has anger problems. He is a child of parents who abused drugs. He is now in a safe home.

SC

Please believe with me for deliverance from drug addiction for my grandson, that he will be willing to be free through faith in Jesus.

NJ

Please continue to pray for my two sons. They both need the Saviour so badly, also wisdom and common sense. It is so difficult to watch them make mess after mess of their lives – especially when they were taught differently.

IL

Please pray for my friend who has been battling cancer for several years and is currently hospitalized. Her elderly mom is also in the hospital, which adds to my friend's helplessness.

RI

Please pray for me that the Lord will continue to bless me and meet my needs. I live alone and need my eyesight restored in my left eye. Thanks, in Jesus' name.

MO

Please pray for deliverance for my friend who hates her sister. She has the love of money and a spirit of control and bitterness in her life.

IN

My family is in crisis, with two daughters very ill. Please pray for us. At almost 80, it's hard for me to be a caregiver. God has been faithful and I love Him. We need your prayers. God bless you all.

NY

Growing In Independence

The one thing I see among mission work, is that effort by the missionaries to: Birth, Disciple, and Reproduce. Our mission has done that—to a large extent—but for many years, I have been concerned about “having so many children, but them never leaving home.” Early in my work with the churches and pastors, I tried to cast the vision of the mission, growing into its own convention, meaning—that someday, hopefully, they would grow into their own leadership and provision.

I preached about trusting God for meeting their needs; and they would pray and trust God for provision. As the ministry grew, I feared a time when it would outsize the parent ministry of the Gospel Tract Society. I scratched drawings on the board of a small generator (called a “delco” in Haiti) with lines going to lights throughout Haiti, then I would add more lines and lights (I labeled churches), and as the lights increased, I would draw squiggles rising from the generator, which represented “heat.” I told them that the demand on the little generator would one day cause it to overheat and burn up. So, I told them, we need to build a Bible-based program of tithing and gifting by the people—then they would “profit” at God’s Hand. We would teach

how to build a tithing church and at times make gains, however, at each growth cycle, a political upheaval or national disaster would continually render the people to the point of absolute desperation, and we would rush in to “save the ship,” time after time.

There have been other difficulties arising from jealous and vindictive pastors, and the greatest of these difficulties nearly caused the end of me. It grew from pride and jealousy between leaders, and eventually into hatred that led to a plot to murder. Yes, this was a hardship I never shared with you because of those still alive. I tell you now, so you might conceive the difficulties to doing what we want to do and what we know is right. The earthquake changed a lot for us. It put a heavy financial burden on the supporters of this ministry, destroyed some churches completely, while at the same time back home—the world economy skidded to a near-halt. Last year, I had an impossible task of providing help for the most desperate, while maintaining support for the teachers. They went without pay for months the year before, following the earthquake; then again last year, we couldn’t meet our obligations: I concluded that I wouldn’t put ourselves and our witness in such peril. So last March, I pleaded with you about



Hot, leaky FEMA tarp roof (right) at Cote Plaigne Church resembles roof at Carrefour/Aviation Church, now replaced with steel roof (above).

the need to maintain our work with the school system that we had built over a forty year period. I asked for those who were able and willing to commit to a monthly contribution toward teacher salaries, and I received ONE response that was able and willing. I don’t think that the desire to do so was lacking, but rather—the ability to do so had evaporated.

I thought it was going to be a very rough ride, last July, telling the pastors that we (the ministry) would not guarantee the salaries of the teachers for the following year. We would not, because we could not, as the local and world economy was such, that we had to go to plan B. That plan went like this: If a church school could operate on the tuition it received and pay a certain amount of teachers, then go ahead,

but—if they needed funding from this mission organization, terminate the teachers now. At that time,

...I saw steel beams jutting in the air, covered by a new steel roof. I shouted with joy. Somehow they had found the faith, vision, or venture to get started without a promise of help from us. They are quiet about how they have gotten so far on their own, but I shout VICTORY!



A church within a church. Spacious and raised steel structure allows for balcony to the rear and sides of building.

we still owed \$10,500 for back pay for teachers. I robbed Peter to pay Paul and fulfilled that obligation; and after a day of discussion, they understood well, because most of them have family in the U.S. who are having a hard time sending money back, also. My announcement went so well, and without bloodshed, that I gathered my nerve and held it tight while I told them the next part. That was, after three months, we wouldn't be able to guarantee the gifts that we have been granting to the pastors for over forty years. I reminded them of the little generator from my "years ago illustration" and that the little generator was suffering from a lack of input. They nodded their heads with understanding and belly-ached for a short time; then as I cast a vision of a new day and a new Haiti, they began to plan how they would operate as an independent convention, without reliance on a blanc (white) mission.

Since then, we have been working on the design and organization of Bethel Christian Assembly. School started in September, minus only a few classes, and the churches seem to be unaffected by the loss of income for teachers and pastors. The money I plead for on a monthly basis is much less than it used to be, and has been directed largely to the orphanage in Les Cayes. I felt the Lord's leading and strength to follow through with what was really our design for missions, and now I had no choice but to insist on reliance upon The Provider, rather than GTS. My wife and I were some nervous about bringing such changes to the pastors and their congregations, but the Lord was there before me and I felt Him.

The pastors wanted to know clearly what our relationship would then be, and I responded that we would be fellow workers in the Harvest, doing what we can financially, but no longer with pay-

rolls and obligations, except for the orphans under Mrs. Resmar's care. I told them that where we needed to be after these announcements is where we have really needed to be—if the world was not in dire straights! In other words, I lacked the conviction to put responsibility on the churches to manage themselves and their schools without outside help, but now that the economy dictated that, I was glad. They smiled sideways, acknowledging the truth, but preferring the easier way.

I don't blame the supporters for the downturn in their giving to Haiti Missions—I applaud the years of sacrifice and compassion. I applaud them now for embracing Mrs. Resmar and her 25 runny noses, and Pastors Salnave, Luckner, Tenelien, Gracia, and others who will carry and grow the "convention" to brighter days. Their lives are invested in the people of Haiti, and the work they do in the depths of poverty, ignorance, and evil, is a work only a Haitian could do. I will be with them and I know there will be special needs as they trust the Lord, day by day.

Lastly, I want to tell you about the central church of this mission that was heavily damaged by the earthquake. The people have been meeting under a blue FEMA-tarp roof for over a year. Conditions were unbearable, to say the least. They pleaded with me, begged for help, even demanded money. The blueprint they hoped to have, was way past our highest dream to accomplish. I told them that the undertaking was past our ability, considering the pressing needs that were staring us in the face. Then, a long silence from them. Later, when I went to visit them in July, Maybe some

of the money that has flowed into Haiti to rebuild church—I don't know, but I know it is an answer to prayer.

I want to finish and furnish the dormitory and dining area for Mrs. Resmar's children. We have agreed to help with the needs of the school they are yet living in, and we do so, because the school is largely composed of orphan children. Oh, the

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needs are big, and when I am there, it seems to be such an opportunity to make a difference, so as the Lord provides—we will do His Will, by caring for the widow and orphan, while at the same time—guiding, teaching, and assisting, as a co-worker. 🙌

Tom Buttram

THE OIL OF KINDNESS



There was an old man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went. If he passed through a door that squeaked, he poured a little oil on the hinges. If a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. So he went through life lubricating all the hard places and making it easier for those who came after him. People called him eccentric, cranky, odd, and other degrading names. But the old man went steadily on, refilling his can of oil when it became empty and oiling the hard places he found. He did not wait until he found a creaky door or a rusty hinge and then go home to get his oil; he carried it with him.

There are many lives that creak and grate harshly day by day. They need lubricating with the oil of kindness, gentleness, or thoughtfulness. That can of oil is predominantly one that characterizes the Christian religion. The task of using it belongs to those who claim to be Christians. As the old man kept his oil with him, so we need to keep our Christian kindness handy. It does no good if left at home or in the church.

MY NAME IS NOT "I WAS"

One day, I was regretting my past and fearing my future. Suddenly, the Lord was speaking: "My Name is 'I AM.'" He paused and I waited.

He continued: "When you live in

the past, with its mistakes and regrets, it is very hard. I am not there. My Name is not 'I Was.' When you live in the future, with its problems and fears, it is also hard. I am not there. My Name is not 'I Will Be.' When you live in this moment, it is not hard. I am here. My Name is 'I AM.'"

OVERCOMERS THROUGH CHRIST

Christian defeatism grieves God. We must refuse to stand as mere spectators while the godless dismantle our nation. Believers through Christ are to be the overcomers, not the overcome. Have we forgotten how those First Century believers, working against even greater odds, "turned the world upside down"? Have we become so mesmerized by the coming Tribulation that we have forgotten Christ's order to "occupy until I return"? Once again Christians must become the nation's salt, its preservative, and put the reins into the hands of righteous leaders. No longer can we be mere "hearers," but through Christ, "doers," if our nation is to survive.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny. What starts out as a simple thought may ultimately determine our destiny, even our eternal destiny. The writer of the above statement must have heard or read the words of Solomon found in Proverbs 23:7: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."

Our thoughts reflect the person we really are. If we have thoughts

which are hateful, they will manifest themselves as words—actions—habits. If, however, we fill our hearts with positive things, can anything but good actions result? Paul summed it up rightly when he wrote in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Think about "these things." If we occupy our time on thoughts concerning "these things," it cannot help but result in an eternal destiny with God the Father. We are what we think.

—Steven Killpatrick

DOES GOD KNOW?

We are all on our way somewhere—and not just out to lunch after church or to a party next week.

A small boy, with his father, was in an elevator going up in the Empire State Building in New York. As they flashed by the 66nd floor, the lad, in considerable anxiety, seized his father's hand, and in an awestruck whisper, asked, "Does God know we are coming?"

This is an amusing story; but, the serious answer is: Yes, God knows we are coming!

SENIOR AEROBICS

I felt like my body had gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising.

I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors.

I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

In Memory

- From **Kenneth Fortner** in memory of **Wendy M. Fortner**.
- From **Bill & Caroline Doty** in memory of their daughter, **Cyndi Doty**.
- From **Larry & Nancy Richards** in memory of their brother & sister-in-law, **Gerald & Lorraine Everitt**.
- From **Lenora Whatley** in memory of her mother, **Mrs. Ozelle Whatley**.
- From **Marsha Smith** in memory of her mother, **Nora G. Coomer**.
- From **Rachel Belton** in memory of **Bill Belton**.
- From **Marian E. LeMay** in memory of **Richard & Elsie Barber**.
- From **Lucy W. Berkley** in memory of her parents, **Tommie & Dorothy Wade**.

REJOICE IN THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING

During World War II, a contingent of American troops in Normandy who were holding German soldiers as prisoners received a message that relief was on the way. They were holding their own at the greatest cost; provisions were low, and they felt that they could not hold out much longer. What cheer the message brought! They were not alone. They were allied to a great power that was at their service. But the prisoners did not rejoice; they had no part in the blessings of their captors. So the Comforter comes to help the children of God alone, and they alone rejoice in the promise of our Saviour's coming.

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THIS COMING YEAR

Lord Jesus, for this coming year,
just one request I bring;
I do not pray for happiness,
or any earthly thing.

I do not ask to understand
the way Thou guidest me,
But this I ask: Teach me to do
the thing that pleaseth Thee.

I want to know Thy guiding voice,
to walk with Thee each day;
Blest Saviour, make me swift to hear
and ready to obey.

And thus the year I now begin
a happy year will be...

If I am seeking just to do
the thing that pleaseth Thee.

—R.W. Hart

*"...O man, what is good; and what
doth the Lord require of thee, but to
do justly, and to love mercy, and to
walk humbly with thy God?"*

(Micah 6:8)



Continued from page 3

my fortress." Psalm 71:3

For those who know the Lord, living for one's self is not an option. Jesus, our Captain, set the pace by living as a servant, loving the lost, and giving all He had, so we might dwell in Him. Covenant with me, to seek the dwelling place of His Righteousness and fellowship. It is the purpose of our breath and pulse, that we do. Tom 🙌

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FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK

A Jewish businessman in Chicago decided to send his son to Israel to absorb some of the culture of the Homeland. When the son returned, the father asked him to tell him about his trip.

The son said, "Pop, I had a great time in Israel. By the way, I converted to Christianity."

"Oy, vey," said the father. "Vot haf I dun?"

He decided to go ask his friend Jacob what to do.

Jacob said, "Funny you should ask. I, too, sent my son to Israel, and he also came back a Christian. Perhaps we should go see the rabbi and ask him what we should do." So they went to see the rabbi.

The rabbi said, "Funny you should ask. I, too, sent my son to Israel. He also came back a Christian. What is happening to our young people? Perhaps we should go talk to God and ask Him what to do."

The three of them prayed and explained what had happened to their sons and asked God what to do.

Suddenly a Voice came loud and clear from Heaven.

The Voice said, "Funny you should ask. I, too, sent my Son to Israel. . . .

Days of Praise

The Danger of Willful Sin

*"Because he hath
despised the word of
the Lord, and
hath broken his
commandment, that
soul shall utterly be
cut off; his iniquity
shall be upon him"*

(Numbers 15:31).

Under the Mosaic law, there was ample provision for forgiveness of sins committed unintentionally. *"If any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, . . . and it shall be forgiven him"* (Numbers 15:27-28). However, as in our text, it was altogether different for one who deliberately disobeyed God's law. One who would so despise God's commandment was to be put to death.

In this Christian dispensation, many would say that this harshness of God's law has been replaced by His love. There is abundant pardon for all, since Jesus died



for all our sins. Now, all we need is to confess our sins, and He will forgive us (1 John 1:9). But, *"if we willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, . . . He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God...?"* (Hebrews 10:26, 28-29).

Even assuming this warning applies specifically only to those who have willfully renounced faith in Christ, the question still remains whether one with true saving faith will willfully sin against the known will of God, as revealed in His Word. *"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:4). Only God knows the heart, but those "Christians" who deliberately reject and disobey His Word should at least *"examine [them]selves, whether [they] be in the faith..."* (2 Corinthians 13:5).

HMM III 🙌

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MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD CLAIMS ANOTHER VICTORY IN EGYPTIAN ELECTIONS

VOICE OF AMERICA NEW | Dec. 7, 2011

“Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood says its political party has won almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats reserved for individual candidates in the opening rounds of the country’s lower house elections.

In a statement Wednesday, the Islamist group’s Freedom and Justice party says it won 36 of the 56 individual seats that were contested in nine provinces, including the two largest cities of Cairo and Alexandria. It says Freedom and Justice candidates won 34 seats in runoff elections on Monday and Tuesday after winning outright victories in two other seats in last week’s first round of voting.

Official results from the runoff elections were expected by Thursday...”

RUSSIAN’S PROTEST PUTIN’S ELECTION

THE AUSTRALIAN | Dec. 11, 2011

More than 50,000 people have rallied in Moscow while thousands more came out across Russia following disputed polls in the biggest ever national show of defiance against strongman Vladimir Putin’s 12-year rule.

A crowd chanting “Russia without Putin” marched past tight police cordons to a square on an island in the

Monthly Jihad Report November, 2011

Jihad Attacks	151
Countries	23
Dead Bodies	685
Critically Injured	1087
www.thereligionofpeace.com	

Moscow river amid anger at alleged vote-rigging in December 4 parliamentary elections won by Vladimir Putin’s ruling party.

The polls were seen as a test of Putin’s decision to return to the Kremlin for up to 12 more years via a job swap with Medvedev.

Similar scenes were replayed on a smaller scale in the Far East and across the industrial hubs of Siberia and the Urals - a sign that Putin’s path back to the Kremlin in March polls may be more fraught than it appeared just a week ago.

SENATE REPEALS BANS ON SODOMY AND BESTIALITY IN THE MILITARY

THE BLAZE | Dec. 2, 2011

The U.S. Senate voted Thursday to approve a defense authorization bill which included a provision that not only repealed the military ban on sodomy, but also repealed the ban on having sex with animals — or bestiality.

The vote to remove sodomy from military law comes less than a year after President Barack Obama’s repeal of the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy for gay soldiers.

Tony Perkins, president of the conservative Family Research Council, said there’s a definite link between the repeal of DADT and the repeal of the sodomy law.

“It’s all about using the military to advance this administration’s radical social agenda,” Perkins told CNS News. “Not only did they overturn Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, but they had another problem, and that is, under military law sodomy is illegal, just as adultery is illegal, so they had to remove that prohibition against sodomy.”

Recent Earthquakes	Date	Magnitude
Sandwich Islands	12-11-11	6.2
Guerrero, Mexico	12-11-11	6.5
Atacama, Chile	12-07-11	6.1
Indonesia	12-07-11	5.9
Beni, Bolivia	11-22-11	6.6
Oklahoma	11-06-11	5.6
Source: www.earthquake.usgs.gov		