

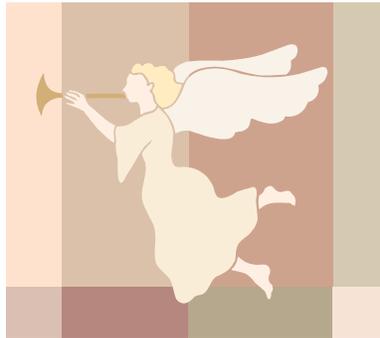
# AN AMERICAN PROPHET AND HIS MESSAGE

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*Questions and Answers on the Second Coming of Christ*

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<http://www.americanprophet.org>



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## WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

I have no doubt that this will not sound to anyone like the typical rise of a minister along a specified or plotted course. No preacher or prophet is worth his salt if he is not completely committed to the truth even if he has at times some difficulty discerning what that is exactly. To tell only those things that cast my life in a good light is falsehood and to detail every negative aspect would be too unproductive. Where I can I have included both the failings and faults along with the achievements and successes. My hope is to show how the grace of God works in a preacher's life that after all is just as human as anyone else.

I have chosen to speak only of a handful of dreams and visions whether they are mine or not. I have had hundreds even thousands of dream visions over a thirty-year period but many of them were personal in nature and would not lend themselves to teaching for others. The visions are a gift interspersed with a discipline, namely the discipline of learning to walk with and like Christ. The first draft was written thirty years past and this is the fourth revision. In fact at the start of this re-write I was notified by a national publisher that they are going to publish another book I wrote about twenty years ago entitled "Hook, Line and Sinker" or "What Has Your Church Been Teaching You?" So with one book coming off the presses soon and my years catching up faster and faster I'm sure it is about time to get on with it. But in writing there must be a conclusion, a list or set of purposes, a fruit, if you will. Most people think a story must come to a conclusion, a resolve, or a lesson. I also think a good story should have some destination or consummation but I was raised in America and perhaps I've been tainted all too much by "happily ever after" and similar clichés. The only conclusion I have ever thought might come out of this account is that God is graceful, merciful, patient and always faithful. I have always thought that another conclusion is that God has never caused me to meet anyone else in thirty years that has had as much extra revelation as I have. It's a big world and there probably are others out there like me but to date I have not encountered them. Am sure there will never be another revision so in that way at least I can say with Pontius Pilate "What I have written...I have written" John 19:22.

The impetus for this final revision came after a dear departed sister in the Lord named Patricia Thibodeaux had a vision concerning me around 1980. It was a very low time in my life. While I had a small church in Acushnet Massachusetts it was a far cry from the one I had previously pastored which at the time was the fastest growing church in southeastern Massachusetts. I held a Tuesday evening bible study at Pat's house for about five years and it was during one of our studies that she recounted this vision. She said that like all her visions about me it came as a dream in the night. It was clear concise and was definitely the voice of the Lord. Pat once told me that she had never had any dream visions before she knew me and after I left the area she never had anymore. But while I lived in the area she became almost my personal prophetess appointed I'm sure by the Lord Himself.

She said she saw a large stage area much like a theater stage. On one side of the stage was a pulpit. On the other side of the stage I stood waiting in the wings for some sort of a cue. A large group of people sat waiting in the auditorium for me to enter and address them or preach to them. She said I started across the stage to accommodate the crowd but at about halfway across the stage I fell down. After re-composing myself I went back to the wings where I again waited for the cue to enter again. Starting out again I fell again at about center stage. I returned to the wings where I awaited the cue to enter for a third time. Once again I started across the stage only to fall down again. This time I refused to get up. Instead I lay there discouraged and said “I can’t get up and I won’t get up” Suddenly there appeared on the stage with me a very powerful angel of the Lord. He approached me and reached down and touched me as he said “you must get up it is the Lord’s will”. As he touched me I grew stronger and more resolute and stood to my feet. The angel then placed a staff in my hand. On the very top of the staff were two distinct stacks of papers. One stack of papers was labeled “Michael’s Life with Michael” and the other stack read “Michael’s Life with Christ” The angel then proceeded to shuffle the two stacks of papers. He combined some papers, shifted them around and threw some of them out. When he was finished he seemed satisfied to see that there was only one stack of papers on the top of my staff. He then looked at me and said “now go and take this with you wherever you go”. I immediately proceeded to the pulpit and began to speak, teach and prophesy.

I pondered this vision in my heart over the years but never quite knew what it fully meant. While I had written this account of my life already and revised it several times I had all but given up on the idea that it was supposed to be read by anyone. It also seemed to be a bad mix of what some call “war stories”, that is all the bad stuff, the gory details of my life without reference to the grace of God and how it came to work in my life. I determined in the beginning of 2004 that I might try revising these accounts for the last and final time. Only this time I determined to present a more balanced version. I have endeavored to show how God was preparing me for his service and how He followed close to me to guide every step even in the worst of times. It took years for me to see that I am not just another minister or pastor looking for a typical church setting but indeed I am called to the office of the prophet. When this all began I wasn’t even sure there really was such a thing as a prophet and if there was it had to be some ancient personage or calling for only a very peculiar few. I can easily say I wouldn’t have ever chosen such a calling and even more I wouldn’t ever want to admit that this calling had fallen to me. I have no illusions about it in fact I’m sure most people are woefully unaware of what a prophet is or if they really do exist in this modern era. One thing for certain that I have discovered is that many of today’s ministers are not much different than the ancient priests. A priest is the representative of man to God. That is they interceded in practice and prayer always for the people. A prophet on the other hand was and is only called to represent God to the people. The prophet says, “Thus says the Lord” and doesn’t seek to see if it is acceptable to the people. He is after all only a mouth piece and not the maker of the message. It’s sort of “take it or leave it” after the message is spoken.

A few of my visions have been of the future of the entire world many are only visions of those things and people in my immediate surroundings. This never kept me from thinking that my

prophetic calling is any less certified. Micah who is a biblical doomsday prophet as well as my namesake spoke and recorded so few words that they are contained entirely in only seven small chapters of the bible.

Revelation 19:10 says "... the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" Because of this I know that my recounting the gospel of Christ to anyone is prophecy. Most of my ministry will always consist of only this singular thrust. I have firmly taken it upon myself to believe and obey the biblical admonition that we should never say God has said something when in fact he hasn't. But I also must take seriously the many warnings given to those who refuse to say what God has said. To stay balanced is the key and that is done by always comparing anything I think God has spoken against the scriptures in nature and content. If anything even remotely seems to contradict Gods revealed word I flatly ignore it. One definition of prophecy is that it is "the forth telling of the will and counsel of God both past present and future" In this way, a ministry that combines the many personal but futuristic revelations God has given to me with the "testimony of Jesus" is acceptable to my conscience and to most people I know.

No one has questioned the idea of having a prophetic calling in this modern day more than me. In fact when I began to have dozens of dream visions revealing the future I was quite unsure why this was happening to me. I almost never felt fearful about it but I couldn't understand why no one else I ever knew or heard of had such dreams. I was so puzzled by it that I seriously prayed all one night for God to help me understand what it meant and why this was happening to me. The next morning I opened my bible and the first place I read from said..."Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" Numbers 13:6. This has always satisfied me and even though there are still a few that think that God doesn't call prophets in this day, I'm ok with that. I am also sure that of the few obvious dispensations that God has enacted and then dismissed such as the law which then moved on to grace that relieving himself of mouthpieces is not one of them. Any proof texts to the contrary are to me only pretexts. It wasn't until years later that I was given an additional answer. When I was a boy, I slept in the bottom bunk while my brother was on the top bunk in our room. Sometimes in the evening my father would come in and talk with my brother. He would ask him how he was doing, and discuss matters with him. He virtually never spoke to me in that way. He also didn't know that I lay on the bottom bunk with an aching in my heart wondering, longing and wishing he would speak to me. I thought my brother was very lucky to have this interaction with my father. There are hundreds of names for God in the Bible, and each of them reflects something about his nature. One name has always impressed me more than others and it's the one we are told to call him, Father. God has shown me his fatherhood and that he speaks to me as I lie in the bottom bunk, figuratively that is. And he has consoled me with the thought that fathers should want to talk to their sons, and it should not just be that sounds wish that fathers would want to talk to them. This is the personal side of God, that he can be personal with men even to the degree of being a concerned, involved loving father. That God can speak to man has always amazed me, that he wants to speak to man is yet more amazing. That he wants to speak to me is beyond my imagination, but well within my experience. It is the reason why when I'm sharing my faith with someone I can easily say, God loves you very much.

Pat's dream is in large part one of the reasons I chose to pull out the old manuscript and revise it yet one more time. This time I have struggled to show those things that glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ rather than me. I could hardly redeem myself much less all of mankind so as I prayerfully began to re-write I was watching ever so carefully for the angel to reach in and shuffle the events and the phenomena to the liking of the Lord Jesus Christ who sent him to do just that.

## HOW THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN



Today in a show of their craft movie makers might start their stories at the end and then proceed to the beginning. In some movies they even show parallel themes based on what would happen to an individual if they had made different choices. But this book is not written to entertain or mesmerize the reader with its mixed time line or plot. My clearest intention is to get the heart of the message out first and foremost. Many people read only the first part of a book or chapter and make summaries from that alone. Thus I wouldn't make the reader wait until later to get to the meat. What God has directly said or done in my life is far more important than the ordinary business of my life or my rearing. I have chosen to start with what I believe is the single most important vision that God has given me to date. This vision came in the fall of nineteen sixty nine. It was a time when I was new to the faith and knew little or nothing about the scriptures. My lack of bible knowledge only furthered the veracity of the vision as I began to check what I saw in the vision against what is written in the scriptures.

I was new to the bible and to faith in Jesus Christ in 1969. As a fledgling I hung on every word of the best preaching I could find. One evening before I retired I listened intently to a sermon about the second coming of Christ. As a boy in the Catholic Church I had never even heard of the second coming. If our priest did know of it he never uttered a word to us about it. The radio preacher spoke of what conditions would be like at the time of Christ's return. He spoke of how knowledge would be increased at that time and that people would be traveling all over the world in hordes. I went and read a few of the verses he was referring to in the gospels but to date I hadn't read any part of the Old Testament. He carefully explained how Israel must become a nation and possess Jerusalem before these events could transpire. All in all it sounded like he was speaking about this generation, my generation...whew!

I said a little prayer just before going to sleep that night. I asked God if this was the generation the scripture was speaking about. The dream vision I received that night I have to put in a class by itself. I had seen the future in clear Technicolor like visions dozens of times by then but nothing like this. Even at this moment though my dream visions have been in the hundreds I

have not had one with the same power or surety as the vision I saw that night. I have heard of out of body experiences of every kind and weighed them with curiosity if nothing else. I hadn't had any myself and by no means was I hoping to have one. But even at that, I knew that this was not a mere floating out of the body type thing. This rather, was being taken out of the body by a divinely appointed celestial being...an angel. It was I suppose not at all unlike John's experience of being taken up in the spirit on the Sabbath day while on the Isle of Patmos and shown the revelation of Jesus Christ. Rev. 1: f

I remember being lifted out of my body by an angelic like creature and I was told to follow him, it seemed like I had no choice. He didn't speak in an audible voice as we know it but you couldn't miss even one word he said. He carried me along by the force of his will and never actually touched me. He carried me to a place just above the earth perhaps at the height where the astronauts might be hovering. He then said look at what I will show you and he proceeded to point to where I should fix my gaze. He pointed to the earth and I saw it revolving around and it looked quite normal.

Next he pointed to the sun and I saw it was covered with a somewhat opaque like covering. I could clearly see it was the sun but the major part of its light was blocked from view both to me and everyone on the earth. He turned and pointed to the moon so I looked at it also. It was normal in every way but one; it was a deep red in color. It wasn't like the harvest moon or the orange moon we have all seen at times it was clearly a deep blood like red. Then he turned completely around from the earth, sun and moon and pointed far out into space. There I saw a brilliant white light come flowing downward to the earth. It landed on a very strategic and specified place on the earth. I can't remember that I asked the angel where that spot was but he seemed he sensed my rising curiosity and answered it. He indicated that it was the geographical center of the earth where the occidental and oriental races meet; it was none other than the city of Jerusalem. I watched the light for a few seconds and noticed it wasn't just glowing, it was pulsating, it was clearly alive and was not just a phenomena or an extraterrestrial craft it was the Lord Jesus Christ. I thought the vision was over but only the visual part had concluded there was yet one more part to unfold.

In a gesture something like the cupping of his ear the angel told me to listen. I obeyed his request and turned my best ear toward the earth. I heard cries, moaning and laments but all the voices made two clear and distinct statements that I will never forget. First I heard people saying Oh no He has returned and we weren't ready and secondly, oh no he has returned and we didn't believe.

I spent a good deal of time that night pondering what I had seen. From that night to this day I began studying and gathering all the information I could on the second coming of the Lord. I was surprised to find not only that there is a great deal of information about it but that about twenty five percent of the bible speaks to this subject. Prayerfully, carefully and responsibly I approached and assimilated every bit of information I could find pertaining to this second coming event. I prayed and endeavored to stay on the conservative and balanced side of all the information. I am sure that God is not glorified or even dignified when we teach speculation and

conjecture as truth. If I feel some speculation will elucidate a point I'll use it but I'm careful to explain that it is after all just that, a speculation.

I have related this vision to hundreds of people over the years, some who believe and some who don't and of course those who are simply indifferent. Three things have always been perfectly clear to me about this vision. First, I could not make up such a story. Secondly, I wouldn't have ever asked or believed that I could have such a vision. Lastly, since I can't prove it I don't try. People seem to believe it or not and that is not my responsibility either. I believe it and I wouldn't insult God by hiding it or altering it in any way. I have profound changes in the lives of all those who believe me and check everything I say against their bibles. In fact they are the ones who after all know that I'm not so special I'm only among the many people male and female in these last days that are going to have God use them in a special way as he promised in Joel 2:28f. So this is how this book is written. It is a message and a recounting of a bit of the messengers life. Yet, all of it has but one purpose ...to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

## MY BIRTH AND SOME EARLY EXPERIENCES

I was born in a small town in New England the third child of a family of three. Not long after my birth my parents were divorced. My father raised us and I didn't come to know my mother at all until I was about ten years old. Dad eventually remarried but until he did I and my brother Bruce and sister Carolyn stayed with our Italian immigrant grandparents on a large chicken farm. Nono and Nona were the terms for grandfather and grandmother in Italian families. They spoke little English but communication was very smooth because the medium always seemed to be one of love. Everything a boy might want was there it seemed. There were animals, hills, woods, fruit trees but most of all two very gentle grandparents.

When dad did remarry the little honeymoon on the chicken farm ended abruptly. Our stepmother who had two children of her own was anything but a mother to me and my brother and sister. She was an alcoholic and had a mean streak that erupted like a volcano when she had a few. The turbulence and frustration she brought into our lives could comprise a whole separate book so I won't dwell too much on these details. One thing that I couldn't understand was her desire to remove me from the home to anyplace else and for any reason, imagined or real. Sadly, for me she had great success in accomplishing her plan.



Almost all the trouble I got into as a boy was no more than petty mischief but my stepmother used it to justify kicking me out of the house. As a result I spent a good deal of my childhood in one situation or another but very little time at home. There were extended stays at the detention

center near Boston, six months in an old fashioned reform school, some time in a catholic boy's home and finally fourteen months in one of the states most feared juvenile prisons. I never returned home after that and I was only sixteen years old when they let me out.

The building and the grounds of the Institution for Juvenile Guidance have been leveled for over thirty years now and another complex stands in its place. It was built at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a women's prison. Complete with eighteen foot high drab gray walls it was a dilapidated old cold and musty place that could only conger feelings of dread just to look at it. Living in it was worse. The warden in charge was a cruel man who wasn't above brutally beating boys or punishing them with extended stays in the hole. The hole was a dingy unlighted cubicle where a boy would stay for up to thirty days, nearly naked, no visits, no books and only half rations for meals. Some people have trouble believing me when I describe this to them. This was a time when adults did pretty much what they wanted to with children without the fear of being held accountable. We were just bad boys tucked away by our disdaining society and quite forgotten and in those days that is what was generally accepted. If what I and other boys endured in that place were done today the law suits and child abuse charges would be endless. To me it is now no more than water under the bridge but I will always be amazed at how this all came about. It is one of those experiences that seem to be all bad but in the end produces a powerful reversal for the good. Just like Joseph in the bible book of Genesis who after going through the worst treatment imaginable finally says to his brothers who caused his suffering, But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good. Genesis 50:20

My brother Bruce shared the bedroom with me where we often talked about our situation. We sort of compared notes to form a defense against our common enemy, our stepmother. Bruce was four years older and I hung on every word he spoke. I reasoned that next to dad no one could possibly know as much as my big brother. One night the subject of God came up. My brother is a good Christian today and will talk about the Lord with anyone who is prepared to listen. At that time, however, he was about as far from faith as he had ever been. He told me in no uncertain terms that God didn't really exist. He said grownups just told us about God so we would be good. I took what he told me to heart and something changed in me very abruptly. The effect it created was to remove my consciousness of God. I've thought a million times it must be similar to the effect of taking prayer out of the public schools. As a boy the idea of God is what helped me to be good, so what is wrong with that? Today faith in God is still why I try to be good. The simplicity of this no longer causes me to doubt either its profoundness or its veracity. Little by little this idea began to affect every aspect of my behavior as a boy. I started to lie and steal if I could, and I wasn't afraid to entertain lewd thoughts of every description and nature. I reasoned that if there was no God then the only real mistake that could be made in life was not doing something wrong but only getting caught at it. It was this kind of thinking that lead to an act of thievery that got me into the kind of trouble that ended in the Institution for Juvenile Guidance for fourteen long and grueling months. I told this story in the first draft of this book which I entitled *The Chalice Thief* over thirty years ago. It was noticed by the editors of both *Guideposts Magazine* and *Catholic Digest*. They printed the story for their thirty five million readers worldwide about twenty five years ago. The story was very short then but I will add a few more

important details here for my readers.

At age fourteen I spent a short period of time with my real mother in the nearby town where she lived. I enjoyed more freedom than I had ever known and I had a bicycle to explore with. One day I pedaled my bicycle to the town where I used to live and as I passed by our old Catholic Church I decided to stop in. I didn't intend to pray I was just curious and I wondered if perhaps there was something left not tied down in or around the church that could be snatched and sold. The church was at that time always unlocked so devotees could enter and pray as they wished. I saw no one was there that day so I went to the front and knelt at the candles as a reuse of course. First I noticed a folded dollar bill sticking just inside of the candle offering box. I used one of the long waxed wicks to pry the dollar out then proceeded to light a candle. I snickered thinking I must be the only person who ever got money for lighting one of these candles instead of giving money to do it. As I peered around the altar I noticed the door to the vestibule was ajar and just inside was a gray safe about four feet high. The door of the safe was cracked open a few inches and that sent my curiosity spiraling. I had to pass by the altar where the Eucharist was stored to get to the safe and as I did I hesitated for a second and thought what if God was real, wouldn't He be very angry with me right now? I quickly dismissed this notion reassuring myself with my brother's words. He after all would know if there's a God or not. I arrived in front of the safe and sheepishly pulled it open to expose its contents.

The safe housed four or five chalices for serving the Eucharist. Some were gold and lavishly adorned with jewels of every description. I pulled a black box from the bottom of the safe thinking there might be money in it. Instead I found the simplest chalice of all in the little red velvet lined box. I pulled the chalice out and read the words engraved on the bottom of the base. It said To the Reverend John A. Wilcox from his loving mother and father on the day of his ordination. I peeked out the front door of the church and seeing no one around I jumped on my bike and pedaled away only once glancing back at the church and reading the name over the front door, St Thomas Aquinas. When I returned home I hid the box in the cellar until the next day. I took a very large nail and gouged and scratched at the engraving on the bottom of the chalice until it couldn't be read. I bicycled the cup to a local jeweler who kept an ad in the regional paper offering to buy any gold and silver articles. With hardly a question the jeweler paid me the sum of nine dollars and sixty five cents which represented the worth of the chalice for its actual weight in silver at the current rate of exchange.

In time the police began to question my mother of my whereabouts on the day the chalice was stolen. I felt that I would soon be caught and I panicked. The next morning I dressed for school and left as usual but instead of going to school I hitched a ride to the train station in Providence Rhode Island. There I spent the only money I had to buy a ticket for the only place fifteen dollars would carry me, Philadelphia Pennsylvania. I reasoned that when I got there I would just hitchhike further west or south and take up a whole new life. At fourteen years of age I still looked like a twelve year old but I didn't think anyone would notice that. I didn't have a clue about how to survive. I spent one night sleeping in an abandoned building and another in a

rooming house I snuck into in the wee hours of the morning. I was getting very hungry and a few stolen candy bars were all I had to eat for days. I thought it couldn't get much worse, but it did.

I caught a few rides on Pennsylvania's highways but I began to grow weak from the lack of food and even worse was the extreme cold. Just before making it to West Virginia I found myself standing on the highway at about three in the morning knee deep in snow. Every time a big rig drove by it would pelt me with snow and road dirt until my face started to burn. I knew I had to stop, but where? Looking down a long slope of highway I noticed a small white church set all by itself, it might have been a Baptist Church. I hobbled down the hill and scrambled up the front stairs to the church only to find it locked. Undaunted I went to the rear of the church building and tried the back door which to my surprise was not locked. I felt my way up a staircase to the main sanctuary where I tried to fall asleep on a pew. I couldn't sleep for the cold. I looked everywhere for something to cover myself with. Then I saw the large red velveteen cloth that draped the communion table with the words embossed across the front, this do in remembrance of me. I pulled it off the table, wrapped myself in it and went back to the pew where I fell asleep instantly.

In retrospect I can see myself being taken care of by the same God I was denying. The chalice was for the Eucharist, the velveteen cloth was for the same service and unknown to me was the fact that one day my whole life would be for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ as well.

I found a place to stay when I arrived in Parkersburg West Virginia but I had to leave very early the next morning. Seeing such a young person on the street at five thirty in the morning aroused the suspicions of two policemen in a patrol cruiser. They pulled over to speak to me but not liking the answers I gave them about my presence on the street so early in the morning, they told me to get in the cruiser. As we rode and they questioned me I stumbled over my explanations so badly they decided to take me to the station for questioning. Perhaps police cruisers didn't have security locks in those days or they just didn't think such a young man could be much trouble, but I bolted out of the cruiser when it stopped at the first red light. They pulled up along side me as I ran down the street and a heavy policeman darted out of the vehicle to pursue me on foot. I quickly left him in my dust. I could see a train yard in the distance and that became my hopeful destination. While I ran at top speed toward the train yard the policemen switched places at the wheel of the cruiser. The heavy cop drove and the slimmer cop got ready to jump out and chase me. They pulled up along side me with only a few blocks to go to the trains. The younger cop shot out after me. He almost caught me but he slipped tearing his pants leg open. I turned around quickly, and saw his knee was bleeding profusely. At that moment one man came around the corner probably on his way to work. The cops yelled out to him stop that kid. I was exhausted and out of breath when the stranger leaped forwards and threw a bear hug around me and that ended any resistance I had left.

When they got me to the police station, they kept talking about the kid with rabbit's feet. The cop with a bleeding knee screamed in my face and I'm sure if it weren't for my youthful

appearance he probably would of clobbered me. They could see I was afraid and it seemed that held them back a little bit. But they threw me in the jail nevertheless. When they ask me my name I gave them a thick tissues name and address hoping that they might just tire of trying to figure out who I was and let me go. I'm not sure I got that crazy idea but it didn't work because day after day they would come and asked me my name and address again. Finally, they came and got me one morning took me down to the station where I sat in an empty room all alone. In walked a tall and stern looking police detective complete with trench coat and top hat. Without saying a word he stood in front of me grabbed my shirt and lifted me off the chair and just stared into my eyes for a few seconds. With a deep and deliberate voice he declared, son you are going to tell me your name and your address. It was clear he meant to scare me. In fact I was so scared that I blurted out my name and address so fast I had to repeat it so they could hear me more clearly. The next step for me was when my father arrived in West Virginia to pick me up. When I get back to the hometown the police were there to question me again about the chalice. This time I told them the whole truth.

The next run of events were hazy at best but they lead to my being put in the detention center again only this time I would be sent away for a while to where I was not sure. The day they brought me to the juvenile court I can remember only three things clearly. First my father was there but he seemed remote and uninvolved if not unconcerned with what happened. Secondly there was a priest on minister in the courtroom who seemed very interested in what was going on. And lastly, the judge who seemed very angry and upset, leaned over his bench looking down at me and said... son don't you have one shred of moral conviction in your body? I wasn't sure what moral conviction was, but I was sure I didn't have enough for that Judge.

While in the detention center all I could do was worry about where they were going to send me. There were several places they could send boys but among them the most feared of all was the Institution for Juvenile Guidance. When the day came for them to decide where to send me I came out of the hearing weeping like a baby. I was going to be sent to the Institution for Juvenile Guidance for a minimum stay of nine months. I actually stayed for 14 months because of complications.

I was only there a few days when the boy approached my room and asked if I wanted to go to a church service. He said it was a Catholic service so I said OK. I sat right in the front row and as the priest performed the mass I noticed that he looked familiar. It took me a few moments to realize this was the same priest that was in the courthouse the day the judge sent me to the detention center. I nudged one of the boys sitting next to me and asked who this priest was. He said "this is father John Wilcox." It all made sense then, this was the priest whose chalice I had stolen. I left word with one of the altar boys, that I wanted to see him if it was possible. That day later in the afternoon I was summoned to his office. He was the full-time institution chaplain. When I entered his office he told me to sit down and asked what he could help me with. I stuttered and stumbled in my attempt to tell him I was sorry for stealing is chalice. He saw my discomfort but he also saw I was contrite. He gently interrupted me and said "I have

already forgiven you." I sat there and amazed, why he hadn't he scolded and lambasted me or at the very least provoked my feelings of guilt? He was obviously sincere and when we had finished talking he even invited me to consider becoming one of his altar boys. I went back to my room and pondered our meeting for days. I didn't throw my life down to the mercy of God, and I didn't have a spiritual awakening or an emotional catharsis. But two things clearly did happen to me. First, I was provoked to contemplate the kindness and forgiveness of this priest. And I also chose to take him up on his offer to become one of his altar boys. We met together from time to time and chatted and he always seemed genuinely interested in me. He would advise me on some matters and was always both gentle and kind. He was not alone the reason I would finally turn my life around but he certainly was an example of godliness that I would never forget. He was you might say, somebody who was living his faith, not just professing it. I will always respect him for that as I do anyone who practices their faith as he did.

For the next 14 months I would see and hear many things that I would rather forget. Boys were brutalized, thrown into the hole, awakened in the middle of the night to be sure they were not frozen to death by the poorly heated upper cells, and handled in a way that could only be called abusive.

Since my stepmother didn't want me he returned home I had to wait an extra five months before they could find a place to send me. In those days they had a program where a few boys were allowed to live with the state police. We were general mess boys but the life was pretty good. We were allowed to go out at night and give in one day a week off. The state policeman would generally be kind and even though there was a military atmosphere about the life, it wasn't bad. I stayed with the police for about a year after which I found my own place and tried living on my own. I was just 18 years old and not very well-founded in anything. I still wasn't sure there was a God and if there was that he had anything to do with me.

The next few years were turbulent as I moved here and there around New England. I decided to trek out to California. While living in Los Angeles I dabbled with alcohol marijuana and pills all the while tied to keep a steady job. My faith was weak and almost nonexistent and the alcohol and drugs were plunging me deeper and deeper into a nebulous darkness. The confusion became a weight, a burden that I felt pressing me from day to day. One day while walking down the street toward my place I glanced over to see a beautiful garden in the back of the Catholic Church. I decided to wander through it, and it was there a very strange event took place. At that time had anyone told me of spiritual visitations, visions or any of the like I would have scoffed it off in a second. I approached a statue of the mother Mary and looked up at it. In the quietest voice I said, Mary, would you ask Jesus to help me? I felt something move over me that was powerful and loving. I dropped my head and started to cry. I'm pretty sure that Mary had nothing to do with it but that Jesus both heard me and instantly responded to my question. Within days someone I had not seen in almost a year approached me and offered to make a way for me to return back home. I took that as being the help I asked for, and I packed up my things for the trip back to New England.

Years later as a student of the Bible I reflected back on the events in that garden by the church. It was only a feeling but I'm sure it was caused by a third-party not just a passing emotion. I compared it with a confusing and dark emotion I felt when I studied Buddhism for short period of time. I recognize that dark emotion was the convicting of the Holy Spirit, it was God's way of saying, don't go that way. It took me years to realize how God was gently touching and teaching me through these experiences. At that time, however, I was mostly oblivious to the meaning of these events and I went glibly on my way doing pretty much what I wanted to. The things I did in those days hardly glorified God and still wouldn't serve to glorify Him if I described them in detail here. But God was about to change all of that, and I'm certainly glad that he did.

I traveled all over the country and lived in cities like Washington, DC, New York, Los Angeles, Boston and others too numerous to list. It wasn't until I boarded a night train out of Memphis, Tennessee with an old buddy and headed to New Orleans, Louisiana that things really changed. I got a job and a place to stay right away. My friend and I lived in the French Quarter of New Orleans and I suppose because it is one of the freest places in America that may have been why I began careening down hill very quickly. New Orleans is one of the best places in this country to lose your self and I took to it with a passion. Women, drugs, partying and whatever else were available, and there was plenty. I always seem to be able to pull myself out of any obsessions that might try dragging me down but in time the French Quarter got the best of me. I couldn't have been further away from God than I was in those first few years in the city that care forgot. Just before I hit rock bottom, God sent someone into my life whose prayer, concern and patient help became the turning point in my entire life.



The French Quarter is famous for its wrought iron balconies that resemble ornate perches mounted on old Spanish architecture. Mine was one of those beauties that adorn and the French Quarter and overlooked St. Peter Street. I could see all the way down to world famous Bourbon Street. But Bourbon Street had less effect on me than the girl who lived across the hall. Her name was Francis. Unlike any of the girls I knew in the French Quarter she was a quiet and strong personality. I would ask her often why she didn't do what everyone else was doing. She would say it was because of her faith in Christ. I would scoff at that or ignore it most of the time. I went to see Fran when I was coming down hard from some drug trip or breaking up with my latest flame she would always give me some soup, speak kindly to me and let me rest safely away from my crazy friends. Her patience with me was the first thing that made me want to find out what really made her different. One day I came in particularly emotionally distraught and happen to notice her Bible on her coffee table. I said, what's this? She said that's my bible. I said, I do want to see that when I come here, and I threw it down on the floor. She showed no signs of anger as she quietly picked up the Bible and put it somewhere else. That day she said, Michael you're a very troubled and I'm going to have my church pray for you. I said, I don't care Fran, because I don't believe in church or prayer and it makes no difference to me whether you ask them to pray for me or not.

It is hard to explain even to believers what the conviction of the Holy Spirit is exactly. But at that time I hadn't the first clue as to what it was, nevertheless I experienced it firsthand as the members of her church began to pray for me. My conscience attacked me like a lion, and my mind raced with questions. Questions about my behavior and my choices, questions I rarely ever bothered to raise before. I tried to straighten everything out my own way. I tried going to sea for a while as a merchant marine, I tried working on the offshore rigs, and I even tried quitting all alcohol and drugs. I still found no peace. I even thought perhaps it was time to get more domesticated so I did what everyone was doing in those days and took up with a girlfriend and played house. One of the final attempts to straighten things out was when I moved out of the French Quarter and moved with my girlfriend to the lovely garden district of New Orleans. It was in that house that I finally found peace through an event that was so overwhelming; I dared not tell anyone about it for almost a year after it happened.

## MY BURNING BUSH

Prior to my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ I believed anyone who claimed to have had a vision must be among the certified cuckoo birds of this world. At the very least I thought they might be one of those unusual people that the pope canonized as a saint. I was relatively sure that God did not speak to anybody much less show up in a theophany or an apparition. Like many people I thought that anyone who had visions should be asked if they took drugs or had mental problems. After my own conversion experience I was afraid to tell anyone what had happened to me for about a year. When I finally did get up the nerve I went about it very sheepishly, yet to my surprise people still seemed to believe me. In addition to believing me some of them were converted themselves, on the spot, as I spoke.

In a very roomy apartment in the uptown section of New Orleans, I wandered from room to room pondering why my life seemed so incomplete. I had never bothered to ask questions before, but now I couldn't cease. The meaning of life, the purpose of life and the source of life were all up for perusal. Something was driving me and although I didn't understand it at the time I now know it was the Holy Spirit. I tossed around a dozen or so questions but it wasn't until I sat on the edge of the bed and asked three very pointed questions that anything at all happened.

The first question I asked was... are we just the product of our environment and our upbringing? I knew this was the hype of the behavioral psychologists and environmentalists of the day. But I had known people who lived in all sorts of backward environments who still managed to rise above their situations. I didn't know a great deal about free volition, but I knew a man could choose to do whatever he wanted to thus he wasn't bound by the things around him. To believe that we were only the product of our upbringing seemed more like a copout or an excuse. This



was an answer that I couldn't accept, and it brought me no satisfaction. I had come from a broken family and had lived under all sorts of unusually difficult circumstances, but I knew I still could be anything I wanted to be. This commonly accepted answer seemed to me as no answer at all, so I moved on to the next question.

For question number two I asked...what about heredity. The geneticists were saying that we are all just a product of our predecessors. If grandma or great grandpa were suicidal then I will likely be inclined to bump myself off. I knew about Mendel's law of the third generation, how a strong trait was inclined to come out in someone three generations ahead. Again, this answer failed to provide any satisfaction. I knew that choices were capable of overcoming genetics. Once again, free will seemed to neutralize the force of genetics. I knew I was something like my father and something like my mother, but I could still be me, in anyway I chose. Genetic influences notwithstanding, I knew I wasn't on the right road once again.

When I asked question number three, everything around me changed and everything within me as well. I pondered for a while and slowly asked this question...is there really a God, is there really anything to this idea of a supreme being or a creator? At the very moment I asked this question, something or someone I'm sure entered the room where I sat. I had a profound sense of someone very powerful and important being in the room with me. Growing up I often heard other children ask the question, when you die do you think your whole life passes before you at the moment of your death. That question struck me in that very moment. I was not dying and my whole life was not passing before me but something else was. In that charged moment, dozens of things did pass before my consciousness. Suddenly I remembered the times I was searching for some rock 'n roll music on the radio, and happened to come across Billy Graham preaching the gospel. I could see the gospel tracts some preacher put it in my hand on the street. I could see myself reading about the love of Christ and his death on the cross but only for a few seconds, and then crumpling up the tract and tossing it on the ground. I could hear the words of the priest in the Sunday morning masses I was forced to go to when he read the words of Jesus Christ right out of the Bible. I could hear that kind person who tried to convince me that Christ loved me and had died for me, and I rejected their pleas. In that moment I knew I had passed by the answer a hundred times, but was too busy, prideful or just plain arrogant and I wouldn't accept it. In a split second I thought I might try to remedy this situation by calling out now to the one I had always rejected. I slowly spoke these words not just once but three times, I said, I believe, I believe you're the son of God and I'm sorry I have ignored to all of these years. As I slowly and carefully uttered these words two amazing things began to happen. The first was the presence that I had felt enter the room was now entering me, like a flood. It was like I didn't know there was any oxygen in the air and now I was taking my first breath. It was as if I had been in the dark all my life and some kind person finally stepped in and turned on the lights. It literally took my breath away. But that wasn't all.

At the very point that I began speaking, I looked up at the ceiling as if I was looking toward heaven. I hadn't prayed in years and I wasn't sure if what I was saying qualified as a prayer, I only knew I meant every word. At the beginning of my words and continuing all the way to the last words I spoke the face of Jesus Christ appeared to me. It was a brilliant bearded face that shone with an uncreated light that filled the entire room. Between the sight of his face and the feeling that the Holy Spirit was entering my body I fell to the floor and wept. I felt as though I had been dead and now I was alive. I wasn't sure what it meant yet I knew it meant everything. I didn't know what to do next but I knew I would never cease to believe that Jesus Christ was the Savior of the world and that now he was my Savior. He ceased to be a figure out of the past or a figure that I would have to deal with only after death. He was now alive in me at that very moment. It would be years before I would hear someone utter the old adage, a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. I have never been at the mercy of anyone's argument since.

### THANK YOU CHARLES DICKENS



Seeing Jesus at my conversion experience seemed all I could bear of visions for that moment in my life. I was still leery to tell anyone of the experience for fear they would label me a religious nut. I have had so many more unusual experiences since then, that I could hardly care what anyone thinks anymore. I could no more deny these experiences than I could deny the sunrise in the morning. I take comfort in the fact that God has had to deal with the doubtful opinions of men daily and throughout the centuries. He has had to tolerate the false and misguided notions that people hold about him. The spectrum of misconceptions ranging from seeing him as doting old Santa Claus like grandpa, to a non-existent make believe character that resides only in the minds of hopelessly needy people. Jesus said, it would be enough for us (his servants) to be like him and if people loved and heard him they would love and hear us. Conversely he said if they hated him they would hate us. (John 15:18-20) I take that to mean that if it's good enough for the goose, it's good enough for the gander. I have lost all timidity about revealing his dreams, visions or revelations, in fact, I now know they were given to me so I would reveal them.

Before God gave me a series of dreams to show me his ability and willingness to clearly show me the future, he provided a couple of unusual events to prepare me for what was to come. One such event happened as I was returning to New Orleans from a trip to Virginia. All went well until I was about twenty five miles away from New Orleans. A severe storm came up just as I approached Lake Pontchartrain. By the time I started across the lake on the twenty four mile long twin span bridge, the storm was raging. Cars had pulled over and stopped because of the poor visibility and some cars had crashed into the guard rails. This was the longest bridge in the world, and at that moment it seemed that it was engulfed in the worst weather in the world.

Although sudden violent storms are common on the lake, this was all new to me. I felt completely peaceful and secure in my new found faith. I was sure God was with me and would keep me safe. The only instance of fear I felt was when I saw something in front of me that I could not explain. I asked the person who accompanied me on the trip if they saw what I saw and they confirmed it. About every fifty or sixty feet in front of my car was a blue arch. After traveling through the arch another would appear about the same distance away. Clearly the arches were a path for me to travel through and they kept me, my passenger and my car in perfect safety. I didn't know what to make of this experience at the time but many years later it all came back to me when something happened to another person on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway that involved a blue light.



Years after the blue light event I was attending seminary in the city of New Orleans. I had several friends among my classmates who like me were involved in local ministries. One such friend was an associate minister in the largest African American church in the city. Paul Morton was a serious young man who took his ministry to heart in every way. Although he was only one of several associate ministers in his church and the youngest of them all, one day his fate changed suddenly. Paul walked into class and announced that he had just been installed as the senior minister of his church. Along with other students I was amazed and asked how that came about so abruptly. He said this is how as he plunked the New Orleans Times Picayune newspaper down on my desk. There on the front page was a story about the unusual death of the pastor of the city's largest African American church. Seventeen witnesses on both the North and South bound spans saw the same thing, a blue light. Only this time the blue light wasn't in an arch, as it was for me. They said a blue light came down from the air landed on top of the preacher's car and it was immediately driven toward the rail where it crashed through, and plunged into churning murky waters of the lake. The picture was clear to me. A blue light that once protected me now, on the same lake, did the opposite for another. I could see exactly what happened, but I could never explain why, then or now. Paul is still the pastor of that church at the writing of this book, but now it has grown exponentially and includes thousands of believers throughout the greater New Orleans area.

Another beginning of visions took place when I was visiting a friend out of state shortly after my initial conversion experience. I didn't know how important God's word was at that time; in fact I wasn't sure if God had even spoken a word. I knew of the bible, but I was not sure what it was. Because I had no particular guidance at the time I was prone to slipping back to some of my old habits. Even though my conscience was more sharply honed by the knowledge of God now blossoming in me, I wasn't tutored or learned in the right ways as yet. On this occasion I went to a party and imbibed along with all the others there. The next day was Good Friday. In the

morning I arose to feel the Holy Spirit in the room with me. I knew it was Him because I recognized that Spirit from the day Christ appeared to me. I couldn't do anything else but fall to my knees and pray. I started to confess my sins and I felt so bad about my recent behavior that all I could do was cry. But every time I closed my eyes to cry I could see Jesus being led up a hill by a crowd of angry people. It was so clear I was shocked. I opened my eyes but when I started to cry again I saw them nailing him to the cross. I saw them holding a large spike on his hand and striking it with a huge hammer. I was as sure then as I am now that I was not seeing a vision of what it was like at the crucifixion, I was seeing the actual crucifixion.

Later I was to learn that prophetic utterances and prophetic visions all come under the definition of, the forth telling of the will and counsel of God. At the moment I saw that vision, I was granted the ability to see nearly two thousand years into the past with complete accuracy, and I felt the horror, the pain, the injustice and I saw the powerful salvation that was being worked out for us, just as if I was there. I was granted the sight of the actual event and not someone else's idea of what it was. I consider this vision as a gift as well as a serious responsibility conveyed by the words of Christ when he said...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. Luke 12:48

Not long after my Good Friday vision I was preparing to return to New Orleans. I was sad that night as I slept on a friend's sofa. I was heading into the unknown again, and I felt a bit apprehensive and lonely. I said a prayer to God, and as I was speaking my eyes fell on a large bible sitting out by itself on the coffee table. It was one of those giant family bibles, probably sold by a door to door salesman, the kind that probably would be found in countless American homes. It looked more like a conversation piece than a book for the reading, but I was drawn to it like a magnet. I picked it up and while perusing through the New Testament I was surprised to see that all the words of Christ were in red. All I had under my belt at that time to help me identify God's presence was the memory and feeling of that Spirit that came into the room, and into me when I was converted. But at the very moment I began reading those red words spoken by Jesus that Spirit fell all over me. I simply put two and two together, and the inference was as clear as a bell. The Spirit was confirming that these words were His words, and he wanted me to read them, learn them and live by them. Then I knew what was ahead. I knew that my life and these words were the future for me. I knew that Spirit, and those words were inextricably linked to each other and I to them.

When God was ready to show me that I could see the future he gently taught me how I would know he had spoken. After a long period of prayer about what I should do for work, and where I should live, I had a dream one night. I don't remember dreaming much about anything in my whole life before then, and it never bothered me. After this dream I had hundreds, no, thousands of dreams. As I said before in this book, it even began to scare me that I could see the future so clearly and so often, until I read Numbers 13:6. It was unusual for me to hear from God in this way, but it is not unusual for God to speak in this way. He has done so throughout the centuries and has promised to do so even more as we approach the time of his second coming. And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your

daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. Joel 2:28-31

My first prophetic dream came in three parts, that is, I had three separate dreams right after each other in the same night. Having never heard of prophetic dreams or visions I didn't know I was having one. I had a dream that was so vivid and clear it was like a Technicolor movie preview. I was physically in the dream, and sometimes other people I knew were there as well. The only noticeable difference between the three dreams was the time frame of each. The first dream was my recent past. The second dream was of the events of the present. Nothing I saw was very significant in any way but the past was clearly what had just happened in my life, and the dream of the present was also obviously the events of the present. In the third dream I saw myself just as in the previous dreams, but the events and surroundings were unfamiliar to me. After the third dream I sat up in my bed and pondered what any of this could possibly mean. Clueless, I called to God in a short but very serious prayer and said...God could you help me to understand what all these dreams mean? I don't think I heard his name in the English language, but quite clearly the impression came to me of the writer of A Christmas Carol, Mr. Charles Dickens. It was always my favorite Christmas story as I was growing up and I knew full well that Ebenezer Scrooge was visited by three spirits, one from the past, one from the present and one from the future. Instantly it hit me I was visited by only one spirit, the Holy Spirit, but he held both the past, present and future in his hands, and for some reason had chosen to show me them in that order. I said, thank you God for helping me, and went back to sleep. Eight days later the events of the third dream happened just as I had seen them down to the last detail. When those events started to happen, I remembered the dream, and realized that God had shown me three things I knew of, and one I didn't just to show me that he could and would show me the future. From that time on, however, I have not needed to have three dreams in a row but only one. That revelation was only God's way of introducing me to his power and willingness to show me things ahead.

The third dream had some figurative matter in it and some actual events. The mixture of both rarely happened again after that. Usually I see exactly what is going to happen and not things that need to be interpreted. What I saw was myself standing near a large body of water, when a large hand lowered a boat or a ship down in front of me. Next, I boarded the ship and began to work. As I worked I noticed that everyone onboard was white while only one member of the boat crew was black. As the dream went on I saw myself befriending the black man and he and I spent a good deal of time together. The other noticeable fact was that every time I saw my black friend he was toiling very hard and sweating a lot. I on the other hand didn't work very hard and I never sweated at all. Exactly eight days after the dream I got a call from a major oil company in Baton Rouge Louisiana. They said they had reviewed my application as a merchant mariner and had a ship for me to work on that was leaving the next morning. I boarded the ship the next day, and of course the first thing I noticed was that there was only one African American onboard. He did become my friend and remained so for many years after we both quit going to sea. As time

passed, I noticed that my friend who worked in the kitchen had a very hard job near the galley stoves, and he worked long hours and because of his close proximity to the stoves he was constantly sweating. My job required only a few hours in the morning and a few in the evening and I found myself with a lot of free time on my hands. The events of the dream are not very significant, but the way God laid out the details was a learning experience for me. One thing that took me time to learn was that if God took the time to show me something, and I knew it was Him speaking, I had better believe him. A few times the events I saw in dreams seemed so unlikely that I chose not to believe the message. I quickly learned that God doesn't waste his time or mine with whimsical revelations, if he shows it, it will happen.

One of the times I chose not to believe that the dream could be prophetic God gently rebuked me and it was as if he was testing my ability to accept what he said regardless of how impossible it seemed. I had just been fired from a job in the French Quarter because I wouldn't lie to my employer's customers about the prices of things. It was a very critical time for me financially, and I didn't need to be out of a job. That night I called out to God and told him that I trusted him to keep me in this difficulty, but that to miss any time out of work would be a disaster. That night I had a dream that I was out looking for work in the same neighborhood and very near the place I had been fired from. Someone asked me to show him what I could do, and after giving me specifications for what they wanted done, I built what they wanted. They were pleased and negotiated a salary agreement with me, and I was hired on the spot. As the dream unraveled I saw myself working quietly when suddenly the man who hired me went walking across the wall in mid air about eight feet up and directly in front of me. I woke from the dream in doubt. Certainly no one can walk across walls suspended from nothing.

I dismissed the dream as not prophetic even though I knew God had given it to me. The next morning I was hired by a business directly adjacent to the shop that had just fired me. I was asked to do something before I was hired and the terms of my pay were settled after the owner saw my work. I still didn't remember the dream until that afternoon when I looked up directly in front of where my shop bench was located, there along the twelve foot high wall in front of me came the boss, his hands full of boxes. He was crouching slightly but was traversing along a ten foot cutout in the wall that was used for storage. It looked like he was suspended from nothing. I was summarily rebuked as I remembered not just the dream, but my unwillingness to believe it.

## FLEDGLING

As a young believer everything seems new and exciting, and for me it was as well. Changes came so quickly sometimes that I could hardly keep up with them. Most of them came while I was contemplating an entirely different course for my self. It was easy to accept the wisdom in the old adage...life is what happens when your making other plans. All the time these changes were happening I was having dreams and visions. Most of them were very personal. It was not uncommon for me to see the next day's events as often as four or five times a week. Although

the visions were personal they were always absolutely accurate. In fact some three decades later I can say that not one vision was ever incorrect. Besides visions God has spoken to me in an audible voice, in the English language. Just like my first vision I was very skeptical about God using audible communications with anyone, even believers, even me!

I had heard God's voice or one of his angels several times in dreams but hearing him audibly address me has only happened about three or four times throughout my walk with him. One of the times God spoke to me in a dream actually defined my calling and ministry. It further gave the basis for my last day's ministry, and is the outline and purpose of my work until the end. I will conclude this book with the gist of that message because if anyone has read through to the end, it is probably because they have recognized the work God is doing in and through me. It means they will be more likely to take the message God gave to me a great deal more seriously and thereby possibly save them selves from literally shipwrecking their future.

The first time I heard God speak or perhaps his angel came while I was still a very young believer. I was so new to the faith that I was sort of testing the faith, even as God was testing me. Having left going out to sea as a merchant mariner, I knew God wanted me to stay on land, find a church and grow in his grace. But money was growing scarce. I had everything I needed, but I did have to go to work soon. Everyday I went out looking for work around New Orleans and the French Quarter. As the weeks went by I grew anxious but continued to pray. The lower my funds got the harder I prayed. One night praying myself to sleep. For the word to me as I understood it. I receive according to Matthew exactly what I'm doing. After what I had been doing every



each morning was to ask myself if I had any dreams in the night. I was after all, used to God communicating with me in that way. I thought he would somehow show me where I would find a job. I realized that I hadn't had any dreams that night and my heart sunk a bit. Instead of laying my head back down on the pillow I propped my self up and peered out my window. Because I threw birdseed out on to my window air conditioner every night there would be all kinds of beautiful birds on it in the morning. As I stared at some rather colorful varieties of birds vying for the seeds I felt a very warm and powerful presence enter my room. In the perfect hush of that warm Louisiana morning, I heard a clear steady voice speak to me three times. It was soft, loving and not hasty and there was a pause between each sentence.

The first words I heard were...Michael you are beloved of God. After a pause of about three seconds the voice came again and said...all your prayers have been heard. After another pause the voice said just one single word...Weiss.

I arose took my shower and headed out to the city to look for work with those words still on my heart. I felt loved and now I was sure God heard me, but the word Weiss was absolutely

meaningless to me. Since I couldn't even guess at what the word Weiss might mean I simply tucked it into a corner of my heart and proceeded with renewed vigor to find a job.

The famous St. Charles Avenue street car stopped right in front of my house where I boarded and dropped one thin dime in the slot and rode to the French Quarter. I went from downtown to the French Quarter on foot, and as I walked I popped into several shops and galleries and inquired about work. I made one last stop on Chartres Street right near Jackson Square in the old quarter, and there one shop owner invited me in to talk. He said, I have been looking for someone to help me here, do you think you could run this shop if I was away? I quickly replied that I could, if he would show me the ropes. He liked my willingness and hired me on the spot. I was supposed to start the very next day so as I left, I thanked God under my breath. I was half way down the block when I realized I hadn't asked my new employer his name. I turned around went back down the block and stuck my head in the door and said...I'm sorry sir but I forgot to ask you your name. He replied...My name is Weiss, Jules Weiss.

The full importance of what God does in our lives may take years to unfold. In the process you may find that what seemed like a simple lesson or confirmation is after all far more than that. That voice, that revelation, that single word, Weiss, was not just to confirm something to me but it was to confirm something to anyone who will ever believe me when I tell them this story. This story is only a path and a prelude to the bigger story, the story that I will tell until my last breath. The story I'm speaking of and my compunction to tell it is best summarized in the words of the old hymn written by Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911.

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, Of Jesus and His love:  
I love to tell the story, because I know tis true;  
It satisfies my longings, as nothing else will do.

I love to tell the story, twill be my theme in glory  
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

## CHURCHES, CHURCHES EVERYWHERE

Finding my first church was for me a bit of an adventure. Catholicism was out of the question because I had already read much of the bible, and found that it was too often in conflict with that religion's teachings. I made the choice to take God at his word and that eliminated the priests who often didn't. Not knowing one protestant church from the other left me in a quandary that I attempted to solve by just visiting a few different ones in the area.



My first experience was to visit a very upscale church in the uptown

section of New Orleans. I dressed casually in jeans and a shirt as I always do. As I walked in and sat down in the church all eyes fell on me and there was little wonder why. I was so under dressed that I might as well have been undressed. All the men were in suits and ties and all the women were dressed to the nines in lovely long dresses, high heeled shoes and spectacular sprawling hats. I shrugged off the unwanted attention and just hoped that I wouldn't be thrown out. I waited for something to come out of that service that would help me in my new faith, it never came. The worship was rigid, the music dry and the sermon had nothing at all to do with Christ. The sermon on the, Bed of Procrustes, was never connected to the bible or Christ even accidentally. It was only the first in a series of disappointments that all but forced me to consider giving up on church altogether.

As an alternative I began visiting outreach ministries like Teen Challenge, and some Christian coffee houses. Deep in the heart of the old French quarter I visited a coffee house called The Way. It was there I had a talk with a young Southern Baptist preacher who was a student in the local Baptist Seminary. One of his very first questions to me was, have you ever been saved? I asked him what he meant by saved. He said, have you ever met the Lord Jesus or given your life to him? I pondered his question for a moment and replied I don't know if I have been saved but I'll tell you about something that happened to me a while back. I explained what had happened to me in that uptown apartment the day Christ appeared to me, in detail. He looked astonished and replied, boy, have you been saved! He asked if I had been going to church somewhere and when I told him of my efforts to find one he quickly offered the addresses of two local churches. One was in the downtown section of the city and the other in the French Quarter. I knew the French Quarter like the back of my hand, so I decided on the spot that I would visit the one in the Quarter first.

My first try at visiting the little church in the Quarter was a total failure. I arrived a few minutes late for the Wednesday prayer service. Peering through the glass of door near the street I saw the service had already begun. The Pastor was in the pulpit speaking, but he noticed me standing in the doorway and beckoned for me to come in. My Old Catholic upbringing must have kicked in and I just took off thinking that you can't go to church late. The next Sunday morning I tried again but once again I arrive just a few minutes late. Once again the young pastor was already speaking from his pulpit but this time to a much larger congregation. He was a tall thin man and was growing a beard. He looked exactly like a young Abraham Lincoln. To my great surprise he left the pulpit, sauntered down the aisle to the rear of the church and opened the door. With a friendly and genuine smile full across his face he softly said, Hello, why don't you come in and join us?

I walked in and there I saw a wonderful cross section of young and old, some were dressed up and some were casual. Some of them said hello over their smiles as someone moved over to make room for me to sit. I felt like I was home. I have often pondered this little experience, that Sunday morning. It has always made me think that when Jerry, the pastor left his pulpit, leaving all those people just sitting there, to come out and bring me into the church, it was exactly like the analogy Christ used when he said, If a man had a hundred sheep and one had gone astray, he would leave the ninety nine, and go get the single lost sheep and bring it back to the fold. Luke

15:4

The next few years I learned many things at the little church. I learned the scriptures and the Christian life, with the help of three wonderful pastors and a body of believers who were all dedicated to living out their faith in the middle of one of the wildest party places in the country the New Orleans French Quarter. Jerry pastored until he finished his work on his masters degree, then he went on to missionary work in Indo China. I couldn't have asked for a better man to help me start my new walk with Christ. He was a marvelous example of love and gentleness. After he left another great helper came to the church.

Richard was a highly intelligent man also working on his masters in the local seminary. He was fresh out of Princeton and later he got his doctorate from Oxford University in England. He is heard daily today on over six hundred radio stations around the country. His brilliance never got in the way of his faith. In fact he was the finest example of balance I may have ever encountered. He was devoted to the Gospel of Christ and a fervent believer in the inspiration and infallibility of the scriptures, yet he possessed an intellectual prowess that was remarkable. He taught me by his example that God and knowledge are not meant to be mutually exclusive. He dispelled the erroneous notion that you have to be somewhat dumb if you're going to be one of faith. The old blind faith idea had been given its walking papers in my mind forever because of his ministry in my life. When Richard moved on to teach in a major theological seminary in Dallas, Texas, God sent yet another great pastor to our little church.

Years passed before I could see how God was rounding out my training by supplying such a perfect diversity of pastors. The last Pastor to come to the little quarter church was what some have called a real, country bumpkin. From a small town in Mississippi, Don may have been a country boy, but he made a powerful presentation of his faith much like I imagined the prophets of old would have done. When the Spirit of God moved on him he spoke with power and authority. It was something altogether new for me. Don helped me to see that with or without great education that a man, who submitted to God, was someone to reckon with, someone to heed and whether you believed him or not, you would take notice. He hadn't much polish, but had plenty of power. He made me think of the Apostle Peter who was a humble fisherman and probably a little rough and uneducated but when under the power of the Holy Spirit was a force to reckon with. Don helped me to realize that I needn't emulate any ones preaching style; I needed only to yield to the movement of the Spirit in my own life. He helped me to realize the truth in the saying that, God and one are a majority.

All the time these pastors tutored me I was busier than I had ever been in my entire life. I finished high school junior college and seminary. I was a weekly radio speaker on a powerful local station and I was both the music director and assistant pastor in the church. At one point I began living in an apartment above the church that was part of the churches property. While living there I began ministering to people in the French Quarter. I helped to feed some, clothed

and at times housed some, all the time I witnessed to people whenever I had the opportunity. There were plenty of opportunities. I always carried a few gospel tracts in my pocket as I went around the quarter. After all, here were burgeoning crowds of tourists, fun seekers and locals and among them were Gods sheep just waiting for me to make the same offer Pastor Jerry made to me that fateful Sunday morning when he left his pulpit to come out and ask me to, come in and join us.



There were old men I put up for the night and young men who would sit and listen as I explained how Christ had appeared to me in my salvation experience. Young street evangelists would be allowed to stay over as they ministered in the French Quarter. At MardiGras we would make sweeping evangelistic efforts with many extra helpers who volunteered their time. It was simply, the exercising of our first love. We were saved and glad of it and we wanted to share that good stuff with everyone else. I'm sure that is exactly what Christ meant when he rebuked five of the brand new churches in Asia only a few years after his resurrection. The book of Revelation records his rebuke and says that some of the churches had already left their first love. Jesus is always any believer's first love, no more and no less.

A great deal of the results we enjoyed at the little church was overt, and was the direct result of our going out to witness. Some of the result came more subtly as part of the regular ministries of the church. I would lead studies of second coming doctrine at the same time I was absorbing anything I could find on the subject. This pursuit of eschatological knowledge is still going on in my life to this day.

One evening as I was teaching that subject a young man came in with a black book under his arm that I assumed was a bible. He sat respectfully through the lesson and quietly approached me at the finish of the lesson and asked to speak with me. It was then I noticed that the book he carried was a study in Buddhism, not a bible. He said he wasn't sure that Buddhism was the right answer and he wanted to know if I could help him to see the differences between Jesus and Buddha. I sat with him for hours and he patiently listened before he had to go. I wasn't sure what he was thinking as he left but he said he would carefully examine the bible that I gave him, and take some time to think about the things we had discussed. I prayed for him throughout the following week and wondered if I would ever see him again. The next time we met for the second coming teaching he showed up with a black book still under his arm, only this time it was the bible. He was happy to announce that he had given his life to Christ and planned to follow Him alone.

These kinds of stories are too numerous to tell here, but it was these kinds of successes we grew used to. It was these successes we were after. Nothing seemed as fulfilling as seeing others take their first steps toward a new life. Youthful zeal has a thrust and a momentum that seems to make even time of no consequence. Perhaps there wasn't time to notice time. As those years

rolled by the idea of starting my own church became a very strong desire. With the help of a few friends we started a new non-denominational church that was first called the French Quarter Christian Church. It started in 1973 and that's when the outreach ministries really began to spread far and wide. The church never had many people in it but its ministries were even greater than anyone could ever imagine. It seemed that someone forgot to tell us that we were so small because things never stopped happening in a big way. People got saved, people got healed and the Lord seemed to be all over us in anything we entered into.

We were located on the edge of the quarter and people of all kinds seemed to find us. We saw transvestites, drunkards, tourists, Nazis, cultists, Satanists and many others not just coming in but in many cases being converted and starting new and productive lives as children of God. MardiGras witnessing expanded as well. One year the American Bible Society made a very colorful edition of the Gospel of John available to all New Orleans churches who wanted them. The glossy covers depicted MardiGras reveling and were easily accepted by anyone they were offered to during the carnival season. The most any church in New Orleans asked for was two thousand. With only about ten people to help we distributed about twenty thousand copies that year. One of our men found a way to maneuver his station wagon into a MardiGras parade. With us standing on the back we had no trouble handing out gospels of John. Thousands of hands were extended as the people clamored for the beads thrown from the floats. Amid cries of, throw me something mister we threw them the greatest lifeline they could ever hope to receive.

Just prior to starting our little church I had a dream vision one night that I knew was my call to preach the gospel. I was already teaching and involved in every aspect of the church but after that call, I found a new power to witness and preach. It was as if I was given a direct connection to God's will and purpose. In the dream I was simply walking down the street and I saw before me an enormous rock. It reminded me of the Rock of Gibraltar. Suddenly a sign popped out of the rock with only two words on it, and they were, pastor needed. I had heard the men in the seminary talk about how God had given them a call to preach. They had always spoken about it as if it were a separate event in their lives apart from their salvation or any other experience. It always mystified me and I could not relate to it in anyway. The next day I asked God all day long if that was a call to preach. The Holy Spirit was all over me in reply and I know when God is saying yes. Like a child who doesn't know many words yet but is familiar with yes and no. This was a big yes. I couldn't understand part of the dream for years to come. After I saw the sign that said, pastor needed, I bent down in front of me and scooped up something in my hand. I examined it closely and saw it was a glittering handful of solid gold nuggets. I replied this is my part of the rock. Many years later I took up the hobby of treasure hunting and metal detecting. I became quite prolific in it, and edited a worldwide newsletter on treasure hunting. I also published a book on treasure hunting in the water and had many articles published in hobby magazines. What seemed to confirm the dream was that I also went panning and prospecting for gold successfully in seven or so states and in Western Australia. It is something I only attend to occasionally now. Once again God added something that was unknown if not altogether implausible in a prophetic dream. Only time and a gentle acquiescence could bring me to the fulfillment of what he had shown, but not explained.

## MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT

Before my conversion experience I had not communicated with my parents for over ten years. Now I had begun writing and calling them on a fairly regular basis. When I finally went up to New England to visit them all sorts of new beginnings started to break loose. In my father's little home town in Vermont I was asked to preach in a little evangelical church. That Sunday I gave an altar call in which about twenty five people came forward to pray and ask Christ to be Lord of their lives. Among them were my step brother who has since gone on to minister in music and messages, in the Messianic organization known as, Jews for Jesus. Several other family members came forward as well but the most amazing thing to me was that my own father also prayed to receive Christ. It was something I could not even have imagined.



Following my first visit to the sleepy little Vermont village, I was asked to come back and preach in the annual Snow Weekend. During one of those engagements I was approached by a church in a small town a few miles away from my father's home town. I pondered that offer for months as I put it before the Lord in prayer. I had a dream vision in which I saw myself moving to Vermont. When I announced to my church in New Orleans that I would be going to Vermont some people doubted that it was really God's will. But his prophetic dream said otherwise to me and the move was on. In time I not only pastored the church that called me to preach but I simultaneously pastored a church about twenty five miles away and at the same time taught in a local Bible Institute. I was teaching the bible and at the same time learning about the church.

Our church was more like a non-denominational fellowship. The charismatic movement was just coming into full swing at that time and it was hard to distinguish between any particular denominations at that time. It seemed that if they knew Christ as their Savior and wanted to learn more of Him then they belonged. I knew that in countries where religion is not tolerated at all, that is all that needs to be known about each other. Here in this little Vermont setting I was seeing what that was like first hand, and I loved it.

## THE PROPHETIC CALLING AND A WARNING FOR AMERICA

It was during my time in Vermont that among many minor dream visions of smaller and more regional events that I received a far more serious and larger call to the prophetic ministry. I was already sure that because of all the dream visions I had received in my life up to then that the prophetic call already existed for me. So this dream was more of a confirmation of that knowledge, but it held something else in it that I had not experienced as yet. That something else was a specific message that I was to convey to anyone who would listen. As usual it came with a problem connected to it, it seemed ridiculous. What seemed ridiculous was that the message that was outlined to me was not at all happening throughout this land. In fact the opposite was and up to the writing of this book it is still happening. I chose then and now to ignore this simple fact and preach what I was told to say. Now I see the inevitable signs of this message in the very near future or to borrow a biblical phrase, even at the doors. Mt. 24:3

Unlike many of the previous revelations God had given to me this one consisted only of a voice. It seemed as if I saw myself summoned or at least called to attention. After that I heard these words in a clear and concise manner. You are a prophet, you shall speak to the American people and this is the message you will give them...ov, ov penury, not many of them will come out. I took the first part as a reiteration of something God had revealed years earlier to me through Numbers 12:6. The part about speaking to the American people settled once and for all the nagging question I often tossed around in my head about whether I should go work in some other countries where the gospel of Christ wasn't as profusely preached. The ov, ov was a complete puzzle to me as was the word penury. After some searching the next day I found that ov was the old English contraction for overmuch, that is just another way of saying, a lot, or very much of something. Penury was easier to find. It was a common word but up to that time was not a word in my vocabulary. I was surprised when I discovered that it meant extreme poverty or scarcity. Finally I understood that the warning of not many coming out meant that only a few will leave the comfort of other places to take heed and possibly prepare for the fulfillment of this warning. Few will leave the comfort of un-belief or cotton candy belief that holds that God is never going to do anything but keep blessing this country and dumping more and more material benefits to all who reside here.



If only I was asked to say this just prior to the days of America's dust bowl or the stock market crash of nineteen twenty nine. But here I was in the booming eighties and nineties with a message of poverty and scarcity. I now had an idea of how the Old Testament prophets must have felt when at the height of Israel's golden era they had to speak of war, capture and

subservience. I found some comfort when I remembered that in his book *The Vision*, David Wilkerson said the same thing. In fact every prophetic warning Wilkerson gave has already happened except for that one. I feel I'm in good company as I await its fulfillment. It is not something I fully neither understand nor welcome but because I'm sure of who said it I will say it without fear or reservation. The delay in the fulfillment of this prophecy only adds to one of the theories of how the antichrist is able to assuage and convince the fiercely independent people and government of America to join him in the great economic plan he has for the whole world. If those who hold to the vision of invasion of America by a pact this remains the only other not forced into agreement with poverty would be the next best him by the dozens according to is failing, but because it is a great success. If Americans are suddenly deprived of the abundance they have become so accustomed to I'm sure they will seriously consider any alternatives to bring back the goodies they will so desperately be missing. I can remember when only one single common commodity was missing in the seventies...gas. The lines at the pumps caused panic, anger, fights and in some cases resulted in deaths. Imagine if almost everything was scarce such as fuel, clothing and food. I am reminded of the line in one of the early Jesus movement songs...a piece of bread would buy a bag of gold. Wilkerson predicted an economic collapse that would make the stock market crash of twenty nine look like child's play. I don't know the nature of the collapse but I am certain that it will come to pass.



George Washington about a final of Eurasian nations are wrong then likely possibility. That is, if we are his economic system by war then avenue. Other countries join with scriptures, not because his system

In the latter part of this book I will outline the kinds of things you can expect to happen in the years ahead. Much of it is derived from scripture, some is culled from study and observation and yet some is speculative in nature. I feel fully responsible to God and to others, so that if a matter is a mere speculation or conjecture I will reveal it as that and no more. My personal revelation of the second coming is not a series of clearly defined dreams and visions of the future. What I have seen of the future may be clear but the prophetic nature of my message is an aggregate or better an inspired symposium of scripture, dreams, visions, study, observation, and a sense of responsibility to others. I have perused ever so thoroughly through the melee of second coming material. I'm sure that by now I can tell the difference between the conservative and the liberal view, the scriptural and the speculative, the well defined and the nonsensical. This is a time when popular doctrine is being well sounded and not a time when sound doctrine is very popular. Because this is true, people are not being prepared to face the coming events with confidence and clarity. This will result in a loss to many and that is not part of God's plan for any. Keep in mind that Jesus warned us not just to be careful about what we taught, but whether we even wanted to be called teachers in the first place. But be not ye called Rabbi: (teacher) for one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren. Mt 23:8

Those who mind the doctrines of eschatology or the second coming of Christ are not all equally equipped to do so. Just as the prophets of the Old Testament each had a different range of sight, today's eschatologists also have different ranges of sight and comprehension. More than a

teachers range of sight we do well to question his or her motives. If the warnings of the second coming are used only to draw people to themselves, then they should be disregarded or if they use second coming only to scare people into some predefined action. Examples like Jim Jones or David Koresh come to mind. The motive of sound eschatology must always be to point to Jesus Christ and his saving gospel and to prepare believers for his imminent return. We can warn of the season but can't give a date. We can presuppose but we can't presume. We can speculate but we can't teach the spurious. We can read the signs but we can't sign all that we read. Great presumptions and predispositions by the Jews in Jesus day caused them to miss the very presence of their Messiah. The same could cause us to miss the oncoming of events leading to his return and leave us in a state of un-preparedness. It is with this in mind that I have reverently approached this subject now for more than thirty five years.

### **MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**

Everyone has seen some new product being sold on the television with a full compliment of anecdotal stories offered by those who have purchased the product, and attained great if not perfect results or satisfaction from it. Usually these stories offered as proof, are followed by a money back guarantee if the purchaser isn't completely satisfied for any reason. A money back guarantee wouldn't have to be offered if all of the stories were more balanced. If those who used the product and weren't happy with it or got no result were allowed to tell their stories it wouldn't sell as well, but the guarantee would be superfluous. Having read the stories of many Christians and preachers, I was always amazed that their lives were so transitionally smooth, flowing from success to even greater success just like water over the falls. My life both in and out of the Lord has not been so smooth. I did not always do everything right, and every plan did not come down as I imagined it would, with a silver lining. I believe telling only positive anecdotal stories about ourselves is the equivalent of telling lies by omission

I don't want to lie here or at any time or place. I will gloss over the not so glorious places of my walk but only because to dwell on it would lessen the major point and purpose of this book. That point is to glorify Jesus Christ, tell of his mercy and warn of his imminent return. I once sat through the testimony of a young man at the Teen Challenge center. He spent hours going over the filthy details of his past life at the end of his talk he casually mentioned giving his life to Christ and the meeting ended. I was exhausted, uninspired and generally agitated. I don't want to bore anybody with my war stories, so I'll keep them to a minimum. Like most people, I already know what the world needs to be saved from; I need to know how it gets saved.

At a point when I was pastoring the fastest growing church in the region I underwent a divorce. It was messy and grievous as are all divorces and it was all largely my own fault. After the divorce I separated myself from the ministry for a number of years. I attended church for the most part but sporadically at best. I maintained my faith but not my connection to the church. It was a cold and weary time and just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, it did. My friend

Pat had warned me that a great sorrow would befall me and while I believed her I had no idea how great it would be until it was underway. I got a call from a New York district attorney who after asking my name informed me that my second oldest daughter who had been missing for several days was found murdered. They caught her killer with her body and before his attorney came in he confessed to some eighteen similar murders throughout the New York area. He is in jail now with no chance for parole.

For next few years I played my guitar and banjo doing American folk music and Irish ballads not only in America but in parts of Europe as well. I produced three CDs and played on other musicians CDs as a backup musician. I got to rub elbows with some of the so called great ones in the business but my calling and relationship to the Lord constantly nagged at my conscience. Including one or two gospel songs on my albums was a pittance, and God was always waiting for me to answer the call He had originally given me, and I always knew it. I found myself witnessing to people at the oddest times and places, in studios, gatherings, weddings and even a pub in Galway Ireland. It seemed even if I determined not to speak to anyone the Holy Spirit saw it otherwise and at times my testimony would flow out of me like a river. As the years went by I drifted further and further from the peaceful shore and nearly came to disaster before I woke up to the direct prodding of the Holy Spirit.

## **TWO VISIONS ONE LIFE**

Only two times in my life have I been granted a vision while I was awake? It seems that both of them were to save my life although they were a couple of years apart. The first one came as I was barreling down a country road in New England at breakneck speed. I was in a large van going about sixty five miles an hour, in a hurry of course to get somewhere. Something caught my attention off to my left. I looked over the road ahead and there were no approaching cars, in fact there weren't any cars at all in front or in back of me. Feeling safe because nothing appeared to be in my way I turned to my left to see what had caught my attention. It was a small pond that I had never noticed before. I studied it for a few seconds until a clear and very detailed vision of a white station wagon coming across my path flashed in front of my eyes. The vision was so real that I popped my foot on the brake in a sudden knee jerk reaction. As I turned my eyes back on the road in front of me, with my foot still depressing the brake, I saw a white station wagon pulling out from an obscured dirt road on my right. The car flew in front of me and I missed it by only inches. If I had not seen the car in the vision my fastest reaction time could not have saved me from hitting it dead center in the driver's door. I knew God had helped me to save some ones life and perhaps my own as well. I was grateful and amazed all at the same time. Even with this kind of marvelous intervention I was still not prepared to return fully to the ministry and my calling.

The only other day vision I ever had to date came just shortly before I was ready to begin the trip back to the peaceful shores of God's purpose. This second, day vision, as I call it, wasn't as dramatic but it also had a lifesaving element to it. When I saw this vision, I began to pray once again like I had not done in years and seeking God's help again. It was the beginning of another lifesaving move from God, only this time it was my spiritual life he was out to salvage. Once again I was driving down a highway and suddenly and quite clearly there appeared a frail lamb. He was in a cold and distant surrounding that seemed hostile and difficult. He stood weak, trembling and visibly frightened. I didn't need to ask who it was or who the little lamb was supposed to represent. Clearly it was me. I cried as I looked at it for I knew I was out in the darkness and all alone just like the little lamb. It made me see how much I needed to return to the warmth and solace I had known when I was fully submitted to God. I asked Him to help me to find my way back to his perfect will and I knew he heard me that very moment.

### **A DREAM TO GET READY**

One night I dreamed that I was sailing a boat among other boats in a large river. Suddenly and without warning, a boat larger than all the boats in the river put together came on the scene. It threw a line to my boat and without hesitation began pulling me away from the other boats at break neck speed. It wasn't long after that dream that everything in my life changed and I didn't even have time to think about it.

God moved me back down to where I had started my very first church. I dug up the old charter and began fellowship meetings again not far from where we had the original church. It was almost thirty years to the day from when the first church began. I wondered why God would bring me back to this exact location but it wouldn't take long for me to find out.

Because the church began small and slowly, I found time to begin editing some manuscripts I had written years earlier. The first one I worked on was entitled Hook Line and Sinker or What Has Your Church Been Teaching You? I had written it some eighteen years earlier and now I had time to bring it up to date and polish its message to a fine hue. Not long after I finished I also began transcribing and re-writing a huge manuscript on the book of Acts. I started a new book I call The Great Lie of The Last Days, What is it? When I was well underway in the re-writing and in some of the new material I remembered Pat's vision of the papers the angel mixed together on the top of a staff I was holding. I remembered he told me to take it wherever I went when he was finished with his angelic editing. It occurred to me that I better work on the first book I had ever written starting back in nineteen seventy four. This book was originally entitled The Chalice Thief. God clearly made me see that the events that took place over the last thirty years were all part of the content of this book and it now called for a new name, An American Prophet and His Message.

As I began all this business of re-writing I threw myself at it with a vengeance. It wasn't long before I had Hook Line and Sinker ready. When it was done I made it available online as an e-book where it just seemed to languish. With things going so slowly and not much in the wings for the other manuscripts I began to grow a bit weary. It became increasingly difficult to write so much with no particular avenue in which to let my work get seen. I had several articles published over the years but book publishing is an entirely different world. Just as a whim I sent out Hook, Line and Sinker to a publisher on a CD. After perusing it over they sent me a notice that they would like to publish it. That news provided me with a whole new impetus to keep writing. That coupled with God reminding me of the dream Pat had, got the ball rolling again with a renewed fervor.

As I began to write again one day I decided to take a walk a few blocks up the street to the levee. It was one of my favorite places to meditate and pray. Even when I was a young man I resorted to this beautiful spot on the mighty Mississippi River. A view of the city of New Orleans is foregrounded by the swirling muddy waters of the Old Man River and often large freighters with exotic foreign names cruise by. The Natchez and The Cajun Queen also would at times stream by sloshing their giant red paddles as though they were gobbling up the river as they went. On that warm and sunny day as I started to pray I was reminded by God of a prayer I had prayed in that very spot about twelve years earlier. I had asked God if he could give me a house in that neighborhood there by the river, to write in and perhaps do some ministering again. My wife and I had just bought that house and after spending a few months fixing it up I finally had time to go down and visit the river. It wasn't until that moment when I did rest by the river that I remembered the prayer of so many years before. All I could do is thank him and I determined to do exactly what I said I would do pray, write and minister.

## MAPLE SYRUP



Living in New England as a boy I got to see a full share of maple trees. We didn't have any on our property but across the street from our house there stood an evenly spaced row of about six maple trees at the edge of the woods. My brother got the idea to tap a couple of the trees and boil down the sap to make maple syrup. Dad told him how to go about it, so Bruce proceeded to carefully bore holes in the trees with an old hand cranked drill. He inserted drain pipes in the trees on which he hung several mason jars to catch the sap.

In time we had several pots full of the syrup. Dad set up a Coleman stove in the cellar and we gleefully began the boiling of the maple sap. We boiled and we boiled and we boiled some more. With great anticipation I watched this process and entertained dreams of tall stacks of pancakes, smothered with thick golden super sweet fresh homemade maple syrup. It took so long to boil down the sap that I got bored to tears and had to go off to find something to do. Later in the day the sap was fully processed and I flew down the cellar stairs to see the final product. It was thick

and golden just as I imagined and it gave new definition to the word sweet. It was by all accounts a total success except for one thing. The entire amount didn't quite fill half a coffee cup. I thought my brother was trying to kid me when he showed me the results. Saturated with incredulity, I stood looking at the little bit of syrup in unbelief. Gallons of sap had come down to this, I was stunned.

Boiling down the maple syrup has become one of the most important lessons of my life. It is the very picture of my life. God has boiled a lot in my life. I have resisted and at times hated the boiling not to mention being bored as I boiled for what seemed like an eternity. But then after several decades of labor we finally saw the product. Only now after over sixty years of boiling do I see the golden rich aromatic and perfectly sweet product of the boiling. And what is that product? Without hesitation I can describe that product, and that is what the rest of this book is about.

Like the maple syrup the essence of my life and my message has a texture, a flavor and an aroma. It is however very simple and can be summarized in only two main points. The first is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and rose from the dead. He is now harvesting the souls he died for in a new and highly active way because the time is short. It is the shortness of time that comprises the heart of the second point of my entire life. To communicate that shortness and to explain the events surrounding the approach of the Lord are second only to the gospel message itself. Even though there are now many people around the world proclaiming the things of Christ's second coming, my message is no less important. The only thing that makes my message any different is that God has gone out of the way considerably to do two special things in my preparations for this task. The first is that he has given special veracity to my revelation by keeping them in line with the promises he made in Joel 2:28f, and Numbers 12:6. The second is that God has given me warning and confirmation to keep my sights on his word and on realistic exegesis of second coming doctrine. I cannot afford a message filled with conjecture and speculation because the price is too high. What is the price? The price is that of your own soul. My lack of responsibility in the proclamation of this serious message holds the souls of some in the balance. If I teach nonsense, conjecture, speculation and guesswork I may leave my listeners unprepared, confused or worse. This is not something I want to answer for now or later.

I've read and heard some of the best teachers on the subject of the second coming. I'm sad to say I've also read and heard some of the worst as well. In every case I found that the hardest thing to discern in most of my observations was the essence of the matter. Speculative teachings may incite the imagination but do little to prepare anyone for what is about to happen. God has promised that when he is about to do something he will reveal it to his servants the prophets Amos 3:7. It is increasingly harder to actually determine who the prophets are today, and that is why God has begun to certify them through his word. No prophecy can be considered legitimate if it does not line up with the bible message. Of course no one has the right or calling to say God has said something if he has not. God has said very little to me, and he has shown me a few things but in the end it is the careful search of the scripture compared against unfolding events in

our world that make up the best second coming message. Extra-biblical revelation is not impossible otherwise Paul would be guilty of hyperbole when he said Jesus is always the same past present or future. Hebrews 13:8 Paul may be the single best example of extra-biblical revelation in the entire bible. All teachers, pastors or scholars needn't have extra-biblical revelation to teach well on this subject but if they do it behooves us to require a litmus test of some kind. First the test must show that the teachings are biblical in nature. Second a conservative lean should always be preferred against liberal interpretation. In the event that you are not well versed in the differences between conservative and liberal interpretation you should at least use the following adage as a rule of thumb. If the scripture makes plain sense, seek no other sense. Lastly if someone claims to have extra biblical revelation, I personally am inclined to give little or no credence to anyone who doesn't come under the certification of Joel 2:28f and Numbers 12:6. Lives are in the balance, and anyone would agree that any disaster in history would have been lessened in its impact if it were only for early warnings and good information.

Among the evangelical and historic denominations of today are those who believe that there are no more prophets. It is a separate argument entirely and since such a view has little proof to support it I won't give it credence by entering the argument. I have found one definition for a prophet that almost makes me chuckle when I ponder it. If there is one iota of truth to it then even those of the historic denominations are prophets, but they just don't know it. The definition of a prophet I am speaking of says...a prophet is one who tells forth the will and counsel of God, from the past, present and the future. With this definition, anyone who preaches the gospel and is called to do so can be considered a prophet. I find it easy to accept this because the bible goes a step further and includes the common laity of the church as prophets if they are witnessing for their faith. And I fell at his feet to worship him. See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren and have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Rev. 19:10. The bible is not vague concerning who is and is not a prophet. In fact the bible says that any one may prophecy as the Holy Spirit gives them the gift. This is a momentary gift; it is among the nine gifts of the Spirit listed in first Corinthians. 1 Cor. 12:10

This should not be confused with the office of the prophet which is a permanent calling just like the calling to other certified ministries God has appointed to us. The office of the prophet is a distinct calling defined in, First Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11. Those who insist that prophets don't exist today would have to argue with God about it and if they prevailed then other callings would have to cease as well. That might include their own. Pastors, teachers and other types of callings that are in the church today are covered in the same passages as prophets. That leaves those who think prophets are part of the past in a strange place if they continue to insist that the calling has ended, their callings, must also be assigned to the past. Much of the speculation about which ministries or offices are still in, as opposed to those that have passed out is based on, II Tim. 2:15. It must be noted that this scripture has to do with the dividing of the truth of scripture and not the dividing up of time. Dispensations are in Gods hands. He alone decides when a thing is in or out. It does well for us to take the warning seriously about overworking the scriptures to fit our particular beliefs, it can be worked so much that we work ourselves right out of our own salvation. II Peter 3:16

Perhaps almost as a footnote I would remind anyone who may think they have a prophetic calling that they are in a very dangerous and precarious position. Prophets, especially the legitimate ones have not fared well in this world. One of the first and certainly the most popular books on the second coming has been Hal Lindsey's, *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Although somewhat general in nature, it is nevertheless one of the best first tries at making this teaching known to people at large. It surely has succeeded better than anything since, and it even made the best seller list along with the secular best sellers of the time. The only thing I have taken exception with in Lindsey's treatment of the subject was his introduction. He carefully points out that the scripture provides strong penalties for the false prophet. In fact the penalty is death. When the movie was made from Lindsey's book, it started off with a man running for his life from a crowd of angry people. They manage to catch up with him, and then after denouncing him as a false prophet they proceed to mercilessly stone him to death. Lindsey is correct about the penalty for the false prophet, but woefully mistaken about the actual enforcement of this mandate. The truth is that in almost every known case it was the real and legitimate prophets of the Lord that were stoned and put to death.

Attempting to tell people that their behavior is bad and that their country is on a downward spiral stirs up a crowd in a very predictable way. They don't usually want to stop and picnic on the side of a hill while the prophet lays out the details of their demise. They are more likely to skip the picnic, and seek to throw the messenger off the top of the hill. Most of the Old Testament prophets were not well received. Daniel was thrown into a lions den and his friends into a furnace. Jeremiah was left for dead in a deep pit of mud. Elijah was pursued by armies of assassins. In the New Testament times things didn't get much better. Timothy was stoned to death, all he did was wait on tables for the church, until he opened his mouth with the testimony of Jesus (which is the spirit of prophecy Rev. 19:10) Almost all the apostles met with violent deaths at the hands of people who could not bear the testimony of Jesus. My aim is not to correct Mr. Lindsey, but rather to warn the believer that it is the true prophet that is the most likely to die as a result of his message, and not the false prophet.

Yet another common fallacy about prophets and their prophecies is the erroneous idea that a real prophet will only say good stuff. I can't forget the time I heard a preacher proclaim that the surest way to tell if a prophecy is real, and from the Lord was that it would be positive, uplifting and not judgmental in any way. The first thing that came to my mind was whether this preacher had ever read the old testament in his entire life. Not being a statistician I cannot say with absolute certainty the percentage of Old Testament prophecies that could be considered positive, uplifting and without judgment. I can safely guesstimate that most of the prophecy of the bible, would not qualify for the positive category. It seems to me that somewhere between fifty and seventy five percent of the Old Testament prophets had some very un-positive things to say. I wouldn't have much trouble supporting that figure, but even without a statistical analysis anyone with two good eyes could come to about the same conclusion. All I would have to do is suggest that the doubters read the prophetic books of the bible. A real prophet is not given the latitude or

the luxury of saying only that which he deems as positive and uplifting. A real prophet is no priest that is he is not one representing the will of the people to God. The prophet can only reveal the will of God to the people. Anything less than this, would make him disobedient and in danger of direct confrontation with Almighty God.

## IS IT THE END OF THE WORLD?



When talking about the second coming of Jesus Christ you are not talking about the end of the world. It is only the end of the world as we know it. In fact it is a new beginning as well. How can it be both? To simplify this let us make a brief list of what ends and another of what begins.

The following is the list of things that will end at his coming to earth again.

- Satan's rule of the earth and his deceiving the nations Rev.20:2
- Democracies, Monarchies, dictatorships and all other forms of rule by men. Rev. 11:15
- Sorrows, warfare, sickness, hunger, misrule, crime, hospitals, prisons, police forces, fires, accidents, disasters and barriers of all kinds between nations. Rev. 7:17
- Cities as we know them today. Rev. 16:19
- Islands and mountains as we know them today. Rev. 16:20
- Conversely, the things that will start up at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ are...
- Judgment of the earth and its inhabitants. (Not the final judgment) Rev. 20:2
- The physical and bodily resurrection of all the believers throughout time. Rev.20:6

- Beginning of not only Christ's rule but the co- rule of his redeemed men and women for a period of exactly one thousand years. Rev. 20:4
- Nature at rest and in perfect harmony for the first time in history. Isa. 11:6-8, 65:12
- Permanent rewards given to all believers in accordance with their faithfulness. Isa. 57:13
- The full knowledge of God throughout the entire globe. Isaiah 11:9

This list is not comprehensive. I have left out things like the restoration of Israel, specific plagues and judgments and the battle of Armageddon. The generalization of the list is meant only to show that the return of Christ is anything but the end of the world.

## WHAT ABOUT AMERICA



This is perhaps the most often asked question heard in connection with the second coming, at least for Americans. It a reasonable question for any North American to ask, but it is far from easy to answer. I would be remiss if I were to say that the bible expressly names America in any passage from Genesis to Revelation. That some passages may refer to America is very possible but not provable and that is the very kind of conjecture I will not entertain.

Naturally all the events surrounding the second coming of Christ are global or universal in nature so they necessarily include the United States. That the antichrist rules America for the same short period he rules the rest of the world is covered in Revelation 13:7. How he gets this powerful and fiercely independent nation to bow to his will is probably the more interesting question to try to answer. Some people believe that America will be forced to comply with antichrist after an invasion of our shores by a great Eurasian pact of nations. Mostly, the invasion idea stems from the vision of George Washington. In that vision it is said that Washington told this story to his aide who in turn told it to someone else just before he died at about the time of the civil war. Washington was told that three great calamities would befall the nation. Starting with the revolutionary war, following that the civil war and finally some future war where America would be invaded. My learned opinion of this vision is who knows? That America would require force

to be pushed into the rule of the antichrist is easy to believe but the force in question could be of a different nature. The remaining two views of how the United States is forced into the final pact of nations are probably more tenable.

The antichrist does not act alone but he is aided by one the scripture refers to as the false prophet Rev. 16:13, 19:20, 20:10. We know little about who this person is today, but what is known about him is that he doesn't come from the same region, country and perhaps even the same hemisphere as the antichrist. The antichrist rises up from out of the sea according to Rev. 13:1. The false prophet rises up out of the land, Rev. 13:11-16. The antichrist rules from the revived Roman Empire or The European Union. Where the false prophet is stationed exactly is not known but some think it will be America. This of course is speculative, even though it is very possible. The false prophet will probably not be connected to any religion, but it is most likely he will be a political figure or a minister of science. What he is may be uncertain, but the influence he wields over the world is not. He is able to produce signs in the heavens and draw fire down from heaven at will. Whether he does this supernaturally through the aide of the devil or engages some star wars type pyrotechnical display is also not known. What is known is that his antics are very successful in persuading the people on earth to give antichrist both credence and rule. Some biblical scholars have thought that he could come from America and while this is not known for sure, it gives rise to the idea that America will be assuaged to join with antichrist by his direct influence. But again while it is very possible, it is still only conjectural at this time.

A third and perhaps a far more likely scenario is that America will undergo a collapse of all of its markets and financial institutions. Following a collapse, a desperate nation may seek to join with antichrist's emerging economic system that will be so successful throughout much of the rest of the world at that time. Not long ago I asked some people the question, what do you think would be the most disastrous thing that could happen to America and what would change its nature significantly, an all out invasion of our shores or a complete and pervasive financial collapse? The majority answered that it obviously would be the collapse of our finances. America is in the long stretch of the good times. We have many years between us and the dust bowl days and the stock market crash of twenty nine. World war two is also far behind and the post war boom has become a post war glut. Any people that might decide to invade the shores of this powerful and fiercely proud nation would be in great peril. But take away what Americans really love, their affluence, money and material blessings and you could make them dance to just about any tune. This is the theorem that when applied to the question of how America joins the great evil new world order is the most believable, if not the most likely. If the compunction to have more, drives a few to fraud, robbery and murder, then what will the lack of almost all consumer goods do to this nation? If history teaches us anything, the answer to this question is not a pretty one.

One fact that is so often overlooked by the eschatologist and second coming enthusiasts, is the means by which antichrist succeeds in completely taking over the world. His means are unique in every way. Unlike all dictators and despots before him who tried and failed, he manages to pull it

off. He succeeds where others have failed because his approach is entirely different. Every wannabe dictator or ruler prior to antichrist tried to conquer and rule by one means, and it always failed. The method always employed in times past was warfare. My force is bigger than your force so I'm in charge. From Antiochus Epiphanes to Adolph Hitler warfare has been the primary tool of the despot. Antichrist breaks the trend and thereby breaks the backs of the nations. In the very end he leads the entire world into the greatest and most futile of all battles, but in the beginning he use only one single element to bring the world into submission and that is, the economy. Rev.13:7

It is common today to hear America referred to as a superpower. This terminology is pompous at best, but what is worse is the prevalent attitude that we've got it made and we know it. We're the big boy on the block strutting and carrying on while the rest of the world is thinking we're just a big bully. The result of this attitude is a deep preoccupation with our own affairs and the influences we are able to wield throughout the rest of the world. All the time we spend on our own position in the world has kept most Americans completely in the dark, while right under their noses a world empire is being birthed that dwarfs anything that has ever come before it, including us. The EU was born in the early fifties as a means of enjoining labor forces throughout Europe has steadily grown unnoticed by most of America. The Union even without the fifteen new nations that are joining through ratification at this very moment comprises the largest economic bloc of countries that has ever existed in the history of the world. How many Americans know this? The answer is sadly almost none. What's worse is they don't seem to care.



The European Union already has three times the gross national product of the United States. It controls almost fifty percent of the worlds shipping, and already has a dollar that is more stable than ours, and is trending toward becoming the world standard. The Union is in every way as technically advanced as the United States, and in some ways even exceeds it. If all the countries now joining can successfully ratify the constitution that is now being presented to them, then the EU will essentially become the United States of Europe by late in the year two thousand and six. Nations are literally clamoring to join the Union while America is involved with its own affairs. We of course take comfort in NATO as we have for over fifty years now. But the chances of America coming directly under the authority of the Union seem about as remote as pigs flying, unless of course, if we have no choice.

The push to democratize the world is gaining momentum around the world since the recent demise of communism. But that alone isn't the reason for the renewed interest in democracy. If you were to question those seeking democratization anywhere in the world, you would be surprised to find their reasons have little to do with patriotism or national pride. The answer is always the economy. The rest of the world wants what America and Western Europe have, and that simply put is, plenty of everything. Materials and goods coupled with the hope of the good

life is what are driving the world to democracy. The day of revolutions that are driven by the desire to be free of tyranny is almost dead. It is the common desire to have a higher standard of living, to be secure and to be in need of nothing that fuels the winds of democracy. Alone this seems like a good desire but if it is the only desire it will culminate in sure disaster.

Were the United States to undergo a full financial collapse, the will and the resolve for independence would be hammered and twisted more easily than we might expect. Picture a nation one moment clamoring for lower gas prices, a greater supply of beanie babies and cabbage patch dolls suddenly finding itself in desperate need of virtually every basic consumer item needed just to live. Enter antichrist, with a new and tested economy that is lifting nations up all over the world. Make no mistake about it; even though it seems hard to see this happening, when it does the ears of our nation will be well attuned, and inclined to take the offer. As a nation we have shown that we can hardly endure the lack of only some of the consumer goods we have grown accustomed to. The lack of almost every one of them would drive most Americans to a pact with the Devil himself.

This is a picture I can easily see happening and it conjuncts with the revelation God gave to me many years ago. God indicated to me that we will not be missing a few things; we will be in need of everything. Extreme poverty and scarcity means just that. The old adage that mans extremity is God's opportunity is about to be engaged full force. Unfortunately, we always think of mans extremity as being when he has reached the end of his rope and has gone about as low as he can go. In our case, the extremity is that we have gone as high as we can go. In America we now hear terms like extreme sports, extreme wealth or extreme lifestyles, and that is just what it is. God is going to use this extremity as much as he does when people reach their all time lows. In this case he will simply pull the rug out from under us. It won't be a television survival show trying to pass itself off as reality; it will be reality waking us up to the hardship of survival. We will tumble down a steep embankment, going from plenty to nothing in less time than it takes to say America. Anyone undergoing such a sudden change is thrust into a search for the way out as fast as possible. There will be a way out, but it will come from the most unlikely place, the very heart of the kingdom of darkness.

On my own I wouldn't dare propose the notion of a financial collapse to the richest people on earth during the peak of their power. Life is hard enough without telling people something they would rather not hear anytime, much less at this time. I knew I'd sound ridiculous, but I also knew that I had little choice. What amazes me the most is that when I first received this revelation I had no means of understanding how it could be possible? But God is gracious and has given me more insight into just how and more importantly why this must happen to America. He left off telling me just when this is going to happen but I am growing more sure every day, that it is only a very short time from now.

In the last few years we have witnessed a woman who drowned her children to have her rich boyfriend, and an ice skating competitor who had the legs of her top rival broken so she could

win. We have seen a mother hire a hit man to eliminate her daughter's competition in baton twirling championships. Another man destroyed his pregnant wife to be able to play the field, and live the life of a playboy. Perhaps the most unbelievable of all was a woman who killed a pregnant woman then cut her open and stole her unborn baby. I take exception with those who take exception with me for saying, that we have a nation of potential criminals and crackpots in our own children. We have created this dangerous potential by giving our children anything and everything they want or call for. When they enter the real world, the work a day world where they must fend for themselves suddenly the silver platter is withdrawn and the reality is too much to handle for some. We have forgotten the days of our austerity when as pioneers, plainmen, and immigrants we were thankful to have our most basic needs met. We have elevated our wants and desires to the level of the sacred. We imitate and borrow from the language of the greedy with our preoccupation with the prosperity gospel of today's preachers. You will be just as likely to find today's churches teaching us how to invest our money as how to get saved. Being born again is mocked and set aside in favor of instruction in the stock market, retirement funds and get rich schemes. Add to this, that modern psychology, sociology and other behavioral and environmental scientist have repeatedly warned us that poverty leads to crime and social upheaval of every kind. You can only imagine what America would look like if virtually every extra and almost all essentials were at a premium, if they could be found at all. It does not paint a very good picture. The ancient city of Sodom was rebuked by the prophet Ezekiel. Everyone knows the sins of ancient Sodom but in Ezekiel's rebuke, the root cause for Sodom's sin is revealed. In Ezekiel's rebuke there is a warning for us to recognize the same cause festering in our land today. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. (Eze.16:49)

Ezekiel's rebuke comes to my mind every time I hear some one refuse to give a few dollars to a children's organization because they think the child won't get all the money. But no one seems to even notice, much less demand a tax refund when a four hundred million dollar Jupiter probes go haywire and becomes useless. Movies are made that cost hundreds of millions of dollars to produce, whose messages and images would be better left in a garbage can. Tax money is spent on everything from the study of the flow of ketchup to the nocturnal habits of lesbians. Concupiscence and waste are rampant in every level of society and government, while personal responsibility and prudent stewardship has become an ethical relic of sorts. Where does it end? I have no doubt that the chastisement of America will be the sudden and complete removal of nearly all essential goods and personal wealth. Something on the order of the dust bowl and the stock market crash combined, but multiplied many times over will soon befall this country. How this come will about is not certain, but that is not my concern at this moment. I would prefer to see millions of Americans coming to their senses and turning back to God in humility and thereby avoiding this great portent, but I am sure that this is not what they are going to do.

A few years ago I was singing and playing guitar in some folk music venues. I produced three albums of Irish, folk, bluegrass and gospel songs before I published a compilation of my original songs. Among them is one I named *An American Lament*, I tried to present it as a Christian song

but in the most subdued fashion. I wanted a message without the mush. I think I was able to accomplish that and this is why I present it here to appendage this section.

Many tall mountains, many long valleys  
Many the White Plains, those stretch out so far  
All deep flowing rivers, rise cresting to meet me  
Two shimmering oceans, with soft sandy shore

Darkly thick are the woodlands, the tall trees are bending  
From beyond the soft west wind, rolls the waves to the shore  
Free flies the eagle, free rolling in blue skies  
On high still the master, of all he surveys

But this land is not my land, this home it's not my home  
For I've never yet been there, not now or before

Her people have proud eyes, all resting so carefree  
They've left their strong towers, passing on to and fro  
All beauty before them, great mountains and rivers  
Yet groping like blind men. Who can't find the door?

Bard, prophet and poet, sing haply their bright songs  
But the heart that is searching, can feel something's wrong  
To pierce through the dark clouds, the heart always wanders  
But to grow into greatness, the hearts made to cry

But this land it's not my land, this home it's not my home  
For I've never yet been there, not now or before

### WHY MUST THE LORD RETURN WHEN HE DOES?



There are many ways that God enters into judgment with both individuals and entire nations. There is only one reason why he enters into judgment and that is rampant immorality and sin. The nations have followed the same path as ancient Israel. Like Israel they sought God for a time, but when they were secure and full they started backsliding into every imaginable sin. God then sent prophets, preachers and messengers of every kind and description. If their warnings went unheeded, which they did in most cases the judgments given by the messengers came against them. When the people were tired of the lack of goods or the captivity or the warfare they began to seek the prophets and messengers again, but this time for the means to get right with God again. A microcosmic example of this in our recent past would be what happened right after the destruction of the twin towers in New York

on nine eleven. People started going back to church in droves and church attendance reached record levels. But already we are showing signs of slipping again. The call to defeat terrorism by just returning to what we were doing before was taken more seriously than the call to return to God.

When a people, Jew or Gentile begins seeking God again their lot usually improves depending on how serious they are. This same vicious cycle is repeated over and over throughout history by almost every nation or people on the earth. Judgments come when people pass over the mark God has set for them. He is patient and slow to anger and it is amazing that he lets them go as far as he does in some cases. The longer a nation or people persist in their collective backsliding the more it strengthens them to continue in that pathway. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Ec. 8:11

The second coming will surprise more people than it will please. The promise of his second coming seems a long ways behind us, and some would like to believe that it will not take place for several more millennia. What seems like a very long delay is one of the chief reasons they will be caught off guard, and it is one of the world's major excuses for unbelief. The apostle Peter covers this in 2Peter 3:3, 4... Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

How God judges sinful nations is the greater variable than why. He will use anything at his He chooses in all of nature such as floods, drought, wild animals, plagues and general pestilence. He also uses internal collapses in the infrastructure and the financial well being of a nation. One of the more common ways he enters into judgment, is to bring another nation against the violators in warfare. He uses one nation's fury in all out war or surprise attack to chasten the offender or to send a wake up call. What is most amazing of all is that the nation that is doing the judging may not even be as righteous or Godly as the nation being judged. The ancient

Babylonians were not lovers of the God of Israel at all, but God used them to judge Israel. Not only did they come under chastisement from this pagan nation but the fact that they were so idolatrous and particularly offensive to the self righteous Jews of that time. Babylon's godlessness was part of the humiliation attached to the judgment and they knew it

A major difference at the end times is that no nation is in a position to judge any other nation. They have all gone into perdition. They all have decided to become part of the new world order and together have begun to follow the antichrist. Since there are no nations able to enter into judgment for God, He must enter into it himself. In other words at that time the whole world has passed the mark God has set, and only God can enter the judgment. It is the worldwide fall of

nations that is the primary factor or what actually precipitates the second coming of Christ.

## THE GREAT RAPTURE CONTROVERSY



The rapture of the Christian is a well known matter among believers around the world. It is sometimes referred to as the catching away. Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 24:37-42 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, and 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.

Then two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken. And the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

The Apostle Paul further elucidates the matter by adding to it a few details that the account in Matthew leaves out. 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52 Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Like so many other prophecies of the second coming believers can't seem to fully agree on this one. The three common views are what are known as, pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation rapture. That all believers dead or alive will be instantly transformed and carried up to meet the Lord at his second coming is not the argument. It is only when their going to be caught up that so puzzles the believer. Not wanting to add to the confusion I can say that only the first two views have any possibility of being correct. The main purpose of Christ's return is to judge a world that has plunged into the worship of the devil in the flesh (antichrist) and it culminates in the pouring out of God's wrath on the entire world. When the pouring out of God's wrath actually begins in the course of the antichrist's reign is extremely hard to pinpoint with accuracy. But whenever it is we who believe in Christ won't be here. The reason this can be said without one shred of doubt is based on a promise God has made to his children that he will save them from the wrath to come. The wrath of God is for the wicked not for his own children. This promise is found in 1 Thess. 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. The idea that we are not removed from the world before God starts to pour out his wrath, not only flies in the face of this clear promise but it smacks of absurdity. We would be directly in the line of fire and only a cursory perusal of God's judgments would be enough to see that no one will escape some damage. In modern warfare that is called, collateral damage, but even this term would not adequately describe the damages to almost everything and everyone during God's judgments.

Anyone holding one of the three views mentioned has an ample supply of proof texts to support

their views. Very few proof texts are available for the post tribulation theory and it is barely supportable. Most people are on the side of the pre-tribulation rapture; unfortunately it is often for the wrong reasons. Many people view pre-trib rapture as an enormous escape hatch. When the going gets rough the pre-tribulationists just get going, or just get gone. The fact that their views may be correct doesn't diminish the fact that it is the view most likely to leave the believer unprepared. It is human nature to take the path of least resistance but it is high folly to think it will be available right at the point when things start really getting rough. The bottom line for the unprepared is that they can only hope their views are right. But hope is a long way from preparedness.

Many Christians have failed to do the math, not to mention engaging good sense. It is easy to see why this could happen considering that no one really wants to see their world torn up from the roots, and in the vast sticky quagmire of apocalyptic interpretations and speculations it is easy to get confused. As a result they have not noticed that one of the simplest ways to know when the rapture will take place is clearly provided in scripture. It is not so much when, but it is the latest point at which it could happen, and also a promise that it can't happen before a specific event. The prophet Daniel spoke of it hundreds of years before Christ. Jesus reiterated it with a few more details. Finally the book of Revelation shows it as a pivotal event in the judgment to come. Simply put the event is the abomination of desolation. 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 :) Mt 24:15 and arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. Da 11:31 and from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Da 12:11. The time is halfway through the last seven years in which the antichrist rules the world. The result is the pouring out of the wrath of God. Rev 16:2. Without getting bogged down in eschatological theory, semantic word games or other second coming hype here is the picture in all of its blaring simplicity. Since the wrath of God is not poured out until the antichrist does the abomination of desolation that means this is the last point we could possibly be on the earth according to the promise of 1 Thess 1:10. Because this is true, that puts the mid-tribulationists at the top of the list of those who are most likely to have it right. This kind of interpretation comes under the heading of... if the scripture makes plain sense, seek no other sense.

Because this problem arises so frequently I tend to appendage my teaching on of the rapture with the following but equally important fact. The rapture could come at any time God chooses to make it happen. All theology is subject to the ultimate sovereignty of God. The pre-tribulation theory is the most petted, preferred and defended for a reason. The reason is that believers fail to differentiate between who and what is causing the tribulation in those last days. The antichrist makes trouble for the believer, and then God makes trouble for the antichrist. We are promised that God will not pour his wrath out on his own but we are never promised that we can escape the troubles incurred at the onset of the rule of the antichrist. Rather, we are told to resist his rule which of itself implies trouble Mk 8:35.

In a country where we are waiting for more of Gods unbridled blessings it is hard to teach believers that they may not only have to give something up to fight evil, but ultimately that something, may be their lives, literally. If your rapture theology includes the possibility that you may have to give up your life, you may be happy to find out that even if you held the wrong view you couldn't possibly lose anything. More importantly if you are not wrong at the very least you will be prepared. Being ready is part of Gods plan for us when it has to do with his return. In fact it is a command and an expectation that our Savior has clearly made known to all of us. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Mt 24:44

## THE SIGN OF SIGNS

The Pope it is said condemned the use of the cross bow when it was first introduced. He apparently thought it could be the demise of the whole world because it was so deadly. When cannons were first invented some thought that marked the end of the world. Now we have a weapon that could bring an end to all life on the planet, the hydrogen bomb, and certainly there are people who still believe that it might yet bring about the end of civilization. Adding to this there has always been someone or some group insisting that their generation would surely be the last. Who hasn't seen the person wearing or carrying the sign that reads something like, Repent for the end of the world is near? Hollywood makes sure to show such people in the movies and usually they are depicted as neurotic and mentally deranged weirdoes' who only need to be avoided and ignored. By now it is easy to understand why some Christians may be a little embarrassed to bring up the subject of the second coming of Christ. Add to this the fact that Jesus said that no one would know the day or the hour of his return and you have the right mix to produce the wholesale indifference that emerges among more and more of today's believers.

The enemy certainly has been able to capitalize on these eccentric second coming enthusiasts with their spurious interpretations of scripture. But we would be foolish and remiss to allow him this victory because of the excess of a few, or our fear of embarrassment. The misinterpretation of a sign is possible with any theological position. One of the safest ways to be surer about the signs is to be patient and wait for them to unfold. It is alright to speculate and watch as things begin to materialize but hold back on some conclusions and give God space to show us what he is doing. We must always keep in mind that some of the Jews missed the coming of their messiah because they had nailed down an exact path for his appearance without allowing that some of their speculation may not have been exactly on the mark. For example, it was well known that messiah was to come from Bethlehem but Jesus was from Nazareth. A little research, questioning and openness could have resulted in finding the rest of the story. The birth of Christ was never meant to be a secret, and anyone making even cursory inquiries could have found out that he was actually born in Bethlehem. But many were clinging hard to their pet beliefs and

would not allow themselves this knowledge; one might say that they missed salvation itself, not because they were so sinful but because they were so stubborn. They had created a formula, a viewpoint or a theory that by sheer force of time and repetition had become like an immutable law. A lack of pliability in second coming doctrine is far more serious than rigidity in any other area of scripture. Much of eschatology is yet to unfold; being rigid about an unknown is foolishness on the level of finding moral guidance from the stories of ancient mythology. No one should think that guidance comes from make believe characters and events, unfortunately, they do. Many second coming buffs are also deriving some sort of guidance from events that haven't occurred yet. The best answer to this dilemma is found in a single saying of the Lord Jesus concerning signs. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things are fulfilled. Mt 24:34

This verse could be called, the sign of signs. It is a capstone or the key to all the events preceding the second coming of Christ. Jesus knew the second coming would not take place in his generation so it had to be some future and seemingly unspecified generation. Yet, it is specified. That generation, is the generation in which all the other signs happen together. They cannot be spread out over millennia, centuries or even more than one single generation. This sign is what qualifies all the other signs. Simply put, if all the signs are happening concurrently, that is the sign that it is the last generation, and it will culminate with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we are given a failsafe or a perfect way to keep from falling into error in today's second coming doctrinal maze. If you haven't checked lately, you might want to look again, because no generation in over twenty centuries has had all the signs happening at once, except this one.

#### FOUR PROPHETIC PILLARS THAT MARK WHERE WE ARE NOW



We could choose dozens of references to the second coming to show that these are the times predicted just prior to the second coming. For example Jesus spoke of wars and rumors of wars. It is no secret that most of the wars fought throughout history have been fought in the last seventy five years. Or that most of the earthquakes ever recorded have taken place in the last twenty five years. But it is not these general signs that give us the greatest insight into the timing of the second coming. It is the four pillars of prophecy that place us smack in the middle of the last generation before Christ's return. The four pillars are as follows.

- The re-birth of the nation of Israel. The Jewish people will possess the same general area as ancient Israel and be in full possession of the city of Jerusalem. Hosea 2:14-23, Ezekiel 16:58-63, Ezekiel 37:27-27
- The birth of a nation in the same general geographic area as the old Roman Empire.

Daniel 2:1f, Daniel 7:1f, Rev. 17:1f

- The building of a new temple in Jerusalem where oblations and burnt sacrifices will be offered daily by the Jewish priesthood. Ezekiel 40:1f
- The rise out of the European continent of the world's last, and worst dictator. He will present himself to the world as its very savior in the new Jewish temple, which causes the final judgments to fall on the earth. God's wrath, Armageddon and the physical and literal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. 2 Thess. 2:3-4, 1 John 2:18-27, 2 John 1:7, Daniel 7:8-20, Daniel 8:23-25, Mt. 24:24, Rev. 16:1f, Rev 13:11-18

No way is ever given for any believer to name the exact date on which the Lord will return. Likewise there is no means of telling when all of the events surrounding the second coming will happen. At this point we can safely say that we are between two major prophecies that are fulfilled and two that apparently will soon be fulfilled. Dozens of connecting events are in the entire scenario but these four pillars are major and definitive events. These prophecies could never be said to have been fulfilled in any other period of time. One generation of time will bring everything to an end when these things begin to happen.

Superbly universal in nature, the first sign alone could give us the clue as to when the last generation begins. Israel has not been a free and independent nation since 586 BC. The promise is that Israel will be a nation, and be in possession of Jerusalem before the clock can start ticking. Even though the span of one generation has always been in dispute, it is reasonable to use a median figure of between forty and seventy five years. The city of Jerusalem was re-captured by the Jews in the six day war of nineteen sixty seven, even though they were outnumbered by forty to one and had many Arab nations on the march against them. Can we safely start the last generation from this time? Since the European parliament is only one year away from their hopes of their new constitution being signed the answer is an unequivocal, yes.

Many books, web pages and teaching ministries are now addressing the matter of the second coming of Christ. The total affect, however, seems to be that the whole subject has gotten bogged down in endless conjecture and minuscule dissecting of every jot and tittle. I am under the greatest sense of duty and compunction to both refrain from entering the fray, and of warning those who are helping to create the fray. I can't dictate the perfect method to approach the entire subject. What I will do is suggest that we look at the response made by someone in the bible who was given a great and deeply disturbing direct revelation from God.

Mary the mother of Jesus was approached by the angel Gabriel, and told she would bear a son

that would be a product of the Holy Spirit overshadowing her. That alone could have sent her into an emotional tailspin, but she remained submissive and stayed on course until her child was born. Just after he was born she was met by others including herdsmen and travelers, who had also been visited by angels, and told her of the great things these angel messengers said would come of her child. Luke 2:8-19. Remaining steady as a rock, she took in the reports that seemed to put her child in a place that would affect every man, woman and child on the planet, one way or the other. Her response was so remarkable that it begs to be examined. Her response should be the hallmark of all those who will ever receive any direct or indirect revelation from God, but especially the millions of second coming enthusiasts that are now emerging in this present day. Her response is spoken of in one simple and succinct verse that is impossible to disregard. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19 Mary has shown us an entirely different way to deal with revelation, a way that is not found anywhere else in scripture. With second coming doctrine it would also serve us well to engage a great deal less pontificating and a whole lot more pondering. Wisdom may truly cry aloud from the streets Proverbs 1:20, but we might want to wait until we are within earshot of the voices before we proclaim what we've heard.

## YEARS OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this section, I will offer a general compilation of the most often asked questions asked of me over the years, and hopefully some sensible answers. Some answers will have solid scriptural support while others may just appeal to reason and good sense. You could get some answers by punching up your questions on the internet, perhaps on Ask Jeeves. You might want to confer with a Harvard University theological professor if you thought you would be getting a more valid answer. You may also just take a more casual approach, by just waiting for the next TV special on the subject and listen to the whole heavily opinionated body of experts. They might range from scoffers and doubters to liberals and conservatives and maybe a few crackpots and fanatics to spice the pot. You may or may not learn anything, and you may escape sinking further into the swirling pool of confusion and uncertainty you already feel is prevailing, but more likely than not you will be no more prepared than you were before.

The answers offered here are not infallible but they have a backing of over thirty five years of study, examination, revelation and hopefully a good smattering of common sense. The only other thing I can offer is my assurance that God has given me this particular calling and ministry. Whether any reader accepts the weight of these things is a matter of choice for them alone. My choice has already been decided. First I would not dare to call God a liar, Secondly I have nothing to prove and last, but not least, it has clearly been required of me, and I must do this as sure as I must take my next breath. I hear ever so clearly these words every time I approach this subject...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required Luke 12:48

### ***Question***

What is the single worst belief or false doctrine of all, concerning the second coming of Christ?

### ***Answer***

The single worst thing that works against sound second coming doctrine isn't a doctrine at all. It is indifference. The business as usual lifestyle will be the chief reason millions are not fully prepared for His return, not some controversial doctrine. No one has made that clearer than Jesus. 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. Matthew 24: 37-39 In America the idea of preparedness is being replaced with the idea of prosperity. Those in the continued hot pursuit of more material goods, securities and life as usual will be shocked and surprised at the sudden return of the Lord. Those who are students of the second coming message and who are prayerfully watching will be surprised by nothing.

### ***Question***

Isn't the book of Revelation just so many symbols and thus should not be placed on the level of other clearer messages of the bible?

### ***Answer***

The book of Revelation is replete with symbolism, but so is much of the rest of the bible. We should give no less credence to it than to any other part of the bible. Symbolisms were used to guide an entire nation of ancient Egyptians and to protect and give hope to generations of Israelites. All of this was done in the very first book of the bible, so if we are going to lessen the veracity or the practicality of biblical symbols we would have to start at the beginning of the bible. If we start there, we will find countless other symbols not to trust and in the end we will have chopped up a great deal of Gods word. We don't have the right to remove even one letter from Gods word physically, but we are not to remove it by spiritualizing it or nominalizing it either. When Egypt was about to undergo one of the worst droughts in its history, Pharaoh had a dream filled with symbolism that deferred the worst from happening. When Joseph interpreted Pharaohs dream he secured a future for his own generation of Israelites. Genesis 41:1f. It might do well to note that the very first recorded prophetic message in the bible was a dream also filled with symbolism. (Genesis 37:5f) Joseph's dream of the sun and the moon and the stars would outline the history of his people forever. Why then should it be hard to see Revelation and its symbols as the outline for only one small seven year long period. The very first prophetic utterance in the bible is referred to as the *prote-evangelium*, and it uses symbolism. Genesis 3:15 There is where the first promise that Christ would overcome all evil is found. Highways around the world are covered with universal traffic symbols. Language and lore is embellished with symbols. Theater, television, business, culture, and our own daily conversation are saturated with the use of symbolism. How is it, that we have thought God couldn't use symbols to convey part of his message to us, and that it could be trusted. And how is it that those who are so quick to point out that this is the most educated generation in the history of the world, cannot seem to find a

way for implicit and explicit teachings in the bible to co-exist and compliment each other. To persist in this silly fear of the symbol comes under the heading of hypocrisy rather than confusion, if we would be honest enough to admit it.



### *Question*

Aren't many of the pictures and symbols of Revelation much like those of the Old Testament and are they just borrowed from the Old Testament?

### *Answer*

I find it hard not to answer this question with a simple yes, but so what, but for the sake of the more serious student of the bible I will try to address the question in a more persuasive manner. Many New Testament references are made from the Old Testament. Jesus, the apostles and many others referred to the Old Testament scriptures and its symbols. Have we forgotten that the bible is to the Christian after all only one book, not two? If God were not so faithful in his revelation to us we might find huge differences between the symbolism of the old and new testament. That would no doubt give rise to another group of people who would argue against the validity of the bible because of the enormous disparity in the images presented in the Old Testament as compared to those of the New Testament. Doubters will never be satisfied with anything; believers are glad that God has given us one comprehensible picture of his intentions in sixty six books, spread out over thousands of years. This alone is a miracle. When John received the Revelation of Jesus Christ on the Isle of Patmos, we can imagine how relieved he must have felt when he saw it didn't diverge very much from the messages given to Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others. If it had been that radically different, he may have been inclined to dismiss it as not having come from God in the first place. We can thank God that John knew the voice of his Savior as Jesus promised he would, John 10: 27 and he could see its consistency with the rest of the messages given to his predecessors.

I am also thankful that when I saw a vision of the sun darkened and the moon glowing the color of blood, that when I finally saw that description in the bible it wasn't something unfamiliar or strange. It takes no genius to comprehend that though the symbolism of the New Testament is similar to that of the old, it is only to supplement, advance or further elucidate the message not just to borrow from it. Borrowing from the bible or any other source to enhance a vision that purportedly came from God would make the messenger not a visionary or prophet but a common

liar. The last time I looked, God was still calling only those who are searching for, living for and willing to die for the truth, to become his messengers.

### ***Question***

In a world that is so politically charged and uncertain can we trust that an entire kingdom, yet to rise, could be revealed to us by the use of a symbol, especially that of a beast?

### ***Answer***

When John depicts both the antichrist and his kingdom with the symbol of a beast, Rev. 17:1f, he is showing us some futuristic series of events that some say is too much to entrust to the uncertainty of a vision, much less a symbol within a vision. This argument is instantly neutralized when we realize that many years before John's vision the prophets had similar visions that are now fully completed, and are now a part of the historical record. For example Daniel saw the rise and fall of four separate kingdoms in two visions that he had himself or interpreted for the ruler in his time. Daniel saw the rise and fall of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman empires. One vision was of a man and the other of various beasts. Daniel 2:1f and 7:1f. These visions are now part of the past and serve only to prove that God does use such images, they are always accurate and it is time to get onboard if you are going to take God seriously.

### ***Question***

Are natural disasters the evidence that the end is at hand?

### ***Answer***

Actually the increase of natural disasters is not the evidence that it is the end. They are the evidence that the end is about to begin. They are those things that signal the approach of the coming troubles and the return of Christ. Jesus put it this way...And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, And earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Mt 24: 6-8) Such events then are the precursors to the great tribulation they are not the tribulation in all its fullness, and its scripturally provided order. You can almost hear the phrase...Just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, guess what happened.

### ***Question***

Are natural disasters, wars, nuclear incidents, and terrorism Gods judgments?

### ***Answer***

They may be his judgments for our ongoing sinfulness but they are not the judgments spoken of in Revelation. The events that follow the breaking of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets and the pouring out of seven vials of wrath are all intervening judgments performed by God alone.

Let me be brutally succinct and put it another way, Man does not perform the judgment of man in that day. God glorifies himself alone. Men would only try to explain the judgments away as some inexplicable anomaly or natural occurrence. They would not think it had anything at all to do with their own way of life. They would never admit that their sins had finally come under the scrutiny of an angry God.

God has endured centuries of our reasoning and wrangling about whether he would actually intervene and judge our behavior. Not even Christians seem to know that he has given us a many examples and an iron clad guarantee that assures us that he will. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Numbers, God gives a list of the blessings that we will earn if we obey him in fourteen verses. In the same chapter he pronounces the things that will befall us if we choose to go our own way, and that takes no less than fifty four verses. Some of the judgments included are madness, hemorrhoids, and blindness. The worn out cliché that says that a loving God would never do such things to us needs to be re-examined in a more realistic light. God usually forewarns people through men and women who aren't afraid to speak up, but he tells only a very few exactly what those judgments will be. I have not been notified about great disasters or calamities as a rule, but I am still under mandate to proclaim those judgments revealed in the scripture and especially those of the book of Revelation. The only specific judgment I have so far ever been apprised of in advance is the coming economic collapse in America. That doesn't mean I haven't felt that some of the calamities I have witnessed did not make me ponder the idea that God had surely intervened to bring them about.

One such event was the recent tsunami that killed a quarter of a million people in Indonesia and other counties in that part of the world. I don't like hearing about disasters, hardships or the demise of any people, and it brought me great sorrow to learn of this horrendous tragedy. I prayed for those families who had victims of the disaster as I watched the reports along with the rest of the world. About a week after the tsunami struck I heard a little news item about that region of the world that had not received much attention, before or after the disaster. I found it impossible to overlook the report without giving it further examination. I heard a report that said that the sale of infants and the child pornography business in that area is the largest in the world. The reporter said, his it is estimated that the income for child porn and baby sales was approximately twelve billion dollars a year. If ever I have felt that a calamity could be a direct judgment of God it was this one. I was reminded of a powerful and serious warning that Jesus gave...But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Mt 18:6



### ***Question***

Since Jesus said ...but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Mt 24:36, doesn't that mean that we shouldn't spend too much time learning about the second coming of Christ?

### ***Answer***

To use this verse as an incentive to ignore second coming doctrine would be the same as using it as an excuse. In fact, we need only to go to the very next verse to see that is not what Christ was saying by any stretch of the imagination....Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (Mt 24:37) The keyword in this verse is watch, and that implies an active and thoughtful pondering, perusing and studying the whole aspect of the promise of his return. It is painfully obvious that Jesus did not expect us to stand around gazing into the sky all day looking for him on a white horse. The verb watch is active, and at the very least means to be aware of the full meaning of everything to do with his second coming.

We have all heard some preacher reminding us of how many times a subject is alluded to in scripture as a means of emphasizing the urgency or the validity of some particular bible teaching. I have told others hundreds of times, just to note the times Jesus began a statement with, *verily verily*, it clearly was a means of raising the seriousness of what he was saying. The scripture is not just redundant as it applies to second coming doctrine, but it is replete. The second coming messages of the bible make up about one quarter of the entire scripture, including old and new testaments. If God saw fit to give that much attention to making Christ's return known to us how can we dismiss it as an unneeded or extraneous doctrine that shouldn't be given much attention. I would say that to espouse this kind of approach borders on disobedience not just misinformation or laziness. Now more than ever before, as the signs are being fulfilled all around us we are under the greatest call of all, to study, contemplate and proclaim this most serious doctrine. Further ahead in this book I will show why this doctrine moves up the ranks in importance as we approach its fulfillment. In fact it is soon to become the second most important doctrine in the entire bible.

### ***Question***

If as Jesus said, we cannot know the day or the hour, what can we know? Can we know within a year, a decade or some measurement of time?

### ***Answer***

There are two measurements of time apart from the day or the hour that we can recognize and use without naming dates and bringing God's disfavor upon ourselves. One of those measurements is referred to as a season, specifically summer. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near even at the doors. (Mt 24: 32-33) The entire twenty fourth chapter of Matthew has to do with the signs of the second coming, so those are the things he meant when he said, when ye shall see all these things. Without adding any other biblical cross references that pertain directly to the subject, Matthew's passages alone should be sufficient to show us what that season is exactly. The words, know that it is near in verse thirty three hardly sound like something we are not supposed to pay much attention to. These words are a biblical imperative that clearly addresses the lackadaisical attitude some folks have about the second coming. Taken seriously, these words mean that not only must we know the doctrine of Christ's return, but we must know the season as well. This season must not be confused with a literal season of nature. It could be shorter or longer than that, but it is used only to convey the idea of a short period not a long stretch of years or decades. The sense of it implying only a short period is conveyed by the words *even at the doors*. A pet or a child knows when you are shuffling around at the front door about to make your entrance. The front door is very close and so is the summer season when everything comes into full bloom.

The second knowable measurement of time the bible uses is a generation. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things are fulfilled. Mt 24:34 Taken in the context in which it was given, it is obvious that Jesus meant the generation that would actually see the signs he was describing throughout Matthew twenty four. He would have to be deceived, misinformed and sadly mistaken if he thought it would happen in his own generation. It is impossible that the Light of the World, Jn. 8:12 was in any way deceived. In the plainest English, Jesus always knew what he was talking about.

### ***Question***

Should the book of Revelation actually be taken literally?

### ***Answer***

Yes, but this might seem a bit clearer by posing another question. If Revelation is as some say only a book of symbols, allegories, metaphors and myths then why does it begin with one of the most powerful promises of blessing for those who read it and hear it? (Rev. 1:3) And secondly why would such a fairy tale be appendaged with what is probably the most grave warning in the entire bible...For I testify unto every man that heareth the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18-19) We are not talking here about some failure of our crops or the coming of blight, but rather the complete removal of our lives, our names and our future with God. That is some serious punishment for fooling with a book of myths and symbols. This would be about the equivalent of being condemned to hell for leaving out or altering a verse from the Rhyme of The

Ancient Mariner.

***Question***

Would God give a message or an entire book of the bible that had no readily discernable meaning until a later time, or the very end of the world as we know it?

***Answer***

Yes. In fact God has in many cases told the writers of the bible to expose their messages for a specific time. (Rev. 22:10) At other times he told them to conceal their message because it was meant for a later time. (Daniel 12:4, 12: 9, Rev. 10:4) One thing that jangles up believers quickly is their inability to cope with the fact that God sees past, present and future as one single continuum. This is child's play for the creator, but it is a wrestling match for us and that is exactly why God has chosen to make these various dispensations. They are effectively Gods way of helping us win the wrestling match I previously mentioned. Jesus said the Pharisees couldn't discern the times they were living in, even worse he said they wouldn't understand much of anything he was saying regardless of what time it was for. Jesus spoke using examples from nature, the elements and common everyday life. But these learned men couldn't grasp the spiritual content of his words, how could they be expected to understand the timing of the events or the place in history that his words would be more fully realized? How could anyone understand unless they had Gods help and were actually entering a time when the message was pertinent? Any one who has ever taken a self improvement course, or a business management course, or had training in any level of sociology knows that there is timing in all communication that is second only to the content of that communication. Modern advertising executives can bet their success or failure on their ability to accurately note that timing. Why then, would we expect an omniscient God to be so careless as to leave timing out of his messages?

***Question***

With all of the various interpretations of the second coming today how do we know if we are on target, or off on a wild tangent?

***Answer***

This question seems to be the one that plagues the believer most often and it is easy to see why. Do we go with a pre, mid or post tribulation rapture? Should we believe the teachings of the pre, post or ah millennialists? And there are many other questions swirling around today in a dizzying melee that will confuse anyone, regardless of how well grounded in God's word they may be. There is an answer to this dilemma, and it is the only answer that can prevail against the confusion.

To start with we can split the whole field of second coming teachers and an interpreter into two camps, this rule also applies to teachers and interpreters of any part of the bible. They are either conservative or liberal in their approach. We hear these terms being used largely in politics, but for the teacher or the student of the bible these terms have a slightly different meaning. The liberal interpreter of the bible doesn't take God's word nearly as serious as conservatives do.

Mostly they do not believe the bible is inspired, inerrant or infallible. They may believe the bible to be inspired in spots, and that occasionally, they may be inspired to spot the spots. Some liberals may hang to the moderate side, and think that God is only serious about the most serious things like, thou shalt not kill, or thou shalt not commit adultery. But the dyed in the wool liberal is not sure God is serious about anything. This kind of biblical liberalism winds up using terms to describe God's word like, poetry, allegory, symbolism, simile, myth, or fable. Liberals may also use terms like unknowable, questionable or false. They are often in doubt about who wrote the scripture and if it has any practical place in our lives. They may question the historicity not only of the bible, but of the characters of the bible as well. The list of attributes seen in the liberal is much greater than I want to mention here, but one attribute that looms glaringly apparent is that they are like ominous, dark, rolling thunder clouds that never produce any useful rain. The bible refers to them as scoffers. (2 Peter 3:3) We may only see them as, those guys with the other view, but in the last days they will make up a large portion of the detractors of Gods word and will even become the enemies of God. The apostate church or the church that is falling away in the last days will have many liberals speaking for it. They will help to hammer out a sort of trinity of deception that will weaken the church. They will drain its power and resolve with watered doctrine, empty liturgy, dry ceremony, religious traditions, secularism and a great deal of unbelief, so much so that the church will fall victim to the antichrist. The trinity of deception is first, ecumenicism. (Bringing all the churches under one roof, and one leader) This idea seems good on the surface, but ignores the biblical teaching that declares that every believer is already united worldwide by each individual's profession of faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Christ and his Apostles never required that we all come under one worldwide leader, auspices or general universal doctrine.

The second part of the trinity of deception is liberalism itself. In all of its form and fury it serves to essentially take the power and life out of God's message reducing the bible to a book of literature, poetry or a compendium of wishful thinking. The religious bodies that most liberals are attached to, can continue to function although tacitly under the guise of being something God would actually have something to do with.

The third facet of the trinity of deception is synchronism. This is the business of shuffling essential doctrines of the churches so that one uniform belief will work for everyone. If the virgin birth or the resurrection doesn't fit for them, it can be altered or even discarded to please the crowd. The object being to make everyone amenable to the changes and thus they will be able to walk together, in principle at least. The liberal is one who takes seriously the business of not taking things to serious.

The conservative approach to God and his word also has a sort of trinity of truth at the heart of its doctrine. All three parts of this trinity come from the bible but together they are what can assure us that we have found a true biblical conservatism. It is not always a failsafe and at times may still produce some controversy among the believers, but it is an altogether safer platform from which to start any search for biblical truth and the salvation of God.

The first doctrine in the trinity of truth is found in 2 Peter 3:16...All scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: Starting here is to fully recognize the authority, the inspiration and the infallibility of Gods word. This is also the best starting point from which to approach all second coming doctrine.

The second part of the doctrinal trinity comes from 2 Peter 1:20...Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation: The opposite of private is public. That means there is a public interpretation among the believers. A consensus or a main stream of thought emerges concerning all bible interpretation the world over. Just one example would be that while some think that antichrist could be only a spirit or some body politic like the UN, the larger body of Christ (the church) worldwide holds that he is just what scripture says he is...a man.

The third part of the doctrinal trinity, answers why the church arrives at generally the same interpretation all over the world. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any men teach you. (1 John 2:27a) The Holy Spirit teaches every believer around the world the same thing, God is not divided against himself. Thus a Spirit taught church says what its Father says, it hears the voice of its Savior, and it doesn't hear every wind of doctrine. The church doesn't cuddle up with every doctrinal new kid on the block. If we were to take the time to do the homework we could see that the main body of the church throughout the world comes up with just about the same interpretation of scripture, not counting the liberal church of course. That single Spirit taught scripture trusting interpretation is what conservative means. If you stick to the conservative side of second coming doctrine you will find yourself outside of the confusing fray and that is exactly where God wants you to be.

### ***Question***

What happens to all the cities of the world? Are they utilized in Christ's millennial kingdom?

### ***Answer***

According to Revelation 16:18-20 what may call the mother of all earthquakes will one day topple every city on earth. If Jesus wants to use them again, he would have to order their restoration. I doubt he will do that because the bible says there will be topographical changes throughout the earth. Rivers will be re-routed, mountains displaced, valleys elevated and desserts will be made to bloom. These changes may indicate that the earth will become largely an agrarian environment. This idea is not ironclad but the city busting earthquake is.

### ***Question***

Is the battle of Armageddon the third or the last world war?

### ***Answer***

Armageddon is not the third world war. In fact it isn't a world war of any kind. It is a battle involving most every country in the world. It takes place fifty five miles north of the city of Jerusalem in the plains of Megiddo. It is a last ditch attempt of the antichrist to stop the return of

the Lord Jesus Christ. It fails miserably because Christ annihilates every last person in that battle with a single stroke. It will take the armies a hundred times longer to assemble, than to meet their doom. But a world war it is not. Perhaps it could best be described as a futile attempt to stay a very angry God. I always think of Isaiah saying the nations are as a drop in the bucket when I think of this battle. (Isaiah 40:15) It has to be constantly emphasized to the believer that man is not using his own devices to bring about the judgments of God in those days. Armageddon is the perfect example of the ineffectiveness of the combined efforts of the entire world to produce much of anything. This is God's time not mans. Revelation 16:13f

### ***Question***

Why is the idea that the world will just keep getting better, and that a gradual improvement will usher in the return of the Lord, wrong?

### ***Answer***

The Jehovah's Witnesses hold this belief, but they are not alone. The so called Dominion teachings that are strongly emerging today espouse the same idea. Sometimes referred to as restoration theology this teaching is found mostly in Great Britain but is gaining acceptance in other countries as well. It is based on the idea that man must take dominion over the earth and bring in the millennial peace by laws and biblical principles. The laws are largely based on the Old Testament Mosaic traditions. Besides the fact that the law already had its debut and failed, it is hard to believe that any person who has ever read the New Testament could believe this foolishness, but they do. Those who go ahead with this absurd idea must disregard about one quarter of the bible's teaching. This is equal to labeling every angel, apostle, prophet and the Lord himself a bunch of inveterate liars. I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of any one espousing this doctrine when Christ appears in the eastern skies and the trumpet can be heard that calls the whole world to attention.

This notion that things are getting better may allow uncounted millions to accept the rule of the antichrist without question. After all, he does enter on the wings of peace, and a promise of a better worldwide economy. How easy it would be to see him as part of the things are getting better doctrine of the Dominionists. Even without this doctrinal new kid on the block, only a fool or someone deaf, dumb and blind would admit that the world is getting better. But there will always be those who dismiss the insanity in today's world with the glib adage *these things are not new, but have been around for ages*. Yes, they have been in the world for centuries. Murder, theft, etc, have been with us since time immemorial but that's not the question. The question is how pervasive are these things today. I could use hundreds of examples here but to make the point let me just pop this one out. In the mid nineteen thirties America was shocked, outraged and in arms about the kidnapping of one single child, Charles A. Lindbergh Jr. Today upwards of fifty thousand children a year go missing, some are abducted and killed. Is this what we mean when we cover our increased penchant for evil with the worn out, lame excuse that all these things are after all, nothing new?

Jesus said that in the last days the love of many would wax cold. (Matthew 24:12) The last thing that this world needs less of, is love, but the reason love thins down is also stated in the same

verse of scripture. Love is given walking papers in the last days by the abounding of iniquity. This implies that it isn't the presence of the same old sins that have been around for centuries, but it is their exponential increase in the last days that helps to rid the world of the thing it has always needed the most.

### ***Question***

Couldn't the UN be the beast of Revelation thirteen instead of the European Union?

### ***Answer***

Both the UN and the League of Nations which gave birth to it have never produced any lasting peace, or any reason to fear it very much. Other than a few nominally effective relief programs and monitoring efforts the UN has all but ceased to be the hope of the world. It is not the ineffectiveness of the UN that forces it out of the picture. There is one distinct difference between the UN and the EU. The UN is a relatively modern organization whereas the European Union is an ancient world power, namely the Roman Empire. According to the bible the beast once was something, it passed from history for a while then it returns to its former glory at the time of the end. Only the EU has an ancient past not the UN. The beast that thou sawest, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Rev. 17:8

### ***Question***

How could anyone possibly accurately identify the antichrist, either before or after he starts to rule?

### ***Answer***

Many have endeavored to identify the antichrist in this generation. This is not new, but there are a few signs to show us when we've come upon the real McCoy, and unless they exist all attempts to spot this very wicked ruler are mere guesswork, if not outright nonsense. Because any government, ruler or individual that openly opposes Christ is a type of the final antichrist, many have thought that such figures as Antiochus Epiphanes, Nero, Hitler, Saddam Hussein and a host of other were the antichrist. They were in fact types of the antichrist but they are certainly not the final antichrist of Revelation.

By means of biblical numerology, misapplied scripture passages and some pretty extravagant guessing people have come up with some wild ideas on just who this man is. I have heard names such as Henry Kissinger, Sat Guru, David Duke, Ronald Reagan, the Pope, and a dozen of others. One web page I found recently outlines all the reasons why Arnold Schwarzenegger has to be the antichrist! I could laugh at this choice, but knowing why someone made such a ridiculous choice is no laughing matter.

There is less material available in the bible to identify the antichrist before his rule than after it begins. There is some reason to believe that he will not even be revealed until after the rapture or

removing of the church, a belief based on 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Some of the common mistakes in trying to identify this man happen because we are looking for the wrong kind of personality to start with. He will not be the leader of any new or old religious order or tradition. He will be a political, military genius. He will come up through ordinary political channels and will rise to power so suddenly that the world won't have much time to consider his past, they will be far too busy trying to keep up with his devious antics in the present. What can be known about him before he starts to rule is somewhat obscure but it is not hard to think that someone or a few people won't begin to notice him and his unusual way of approaching politics, rather early on. We might be able to identify him when we see some of those traits and attributes that the bible says he begins to show after he has taken power. The following is a list of traits and actions that he will take as his rule over the world progresses.

### ***Traits, attributes and general personality characteristics of the antichrist***

- He has no interest in women in general. Some people believe he may be gay because of this. I believe he has no time for women because he is altogether too busy either wielding power or focusing on himself. Daniel 11:37
- He is vicious and self serving and violently uproots his rivals and political opponents. Daniel 7: 20-24
- He is enamored with himself and the sense of his own self importance. He could easily be considered as the king of megalomaniacs. Daniel 7:1f, Revelation 13:1f, 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4
- He has trouble speaking without blaspheming God, the people of God and anything connected to God. He is a prolific boaster of his own brilliance and self worth. Daniel 7:1f Revelation 13:1f
- He has only disdain for most commonly established civil laws of man, or moral laws of God. He attempts to change most of the rules and ignores the ones he chooses not to regard. He gives new definition to the word recalcitrant. Daniel 7:20-24

### ***Things the antichrist will do during the inaugural or first part of his rise to power***

- He makes a pact with the Jewish people and the apostate church. This would be something of a protection agreement. He doesn't keep the agreement but it looks good to the rest of the world. Daniel 9:27

- He gains the full support of another powerful figure called the false prophet. This man is from an entirely different nation and is probably a political figure or at the least a minister of science. The false prophet does some dazzling tricks and signs, but passes the glory or the respect from those who are awed by his spectacularisms over to the antichrist. The false prophet is singularly his most powerful ally. Revelation 13:11-15
- He is a class act in every way and gains the respect and admiration of the whole world. He draws them through his astounding abilities, his striking appearance and by the help of demon spirits sent throughout the world to win the hearts of his adoring admirers. Revelation 13:3f
- He blocks, or uproots either his rising opponents or those who are already in power. Daniel 7:20-24

***Things the antichrist will do at about the time he rises to power or shortly thereafter***

- He receives a deathblow from some would be assassin, and to the amazement of the whole world he recovers from what would otherwise be a mortal wound. While it is purely conjectural, some think that he actually is dead by all standards and is revived directly by Satan. This belief is why some also believe he will acquire the full spirit of the god of this world (Satan) at that very point, and will be fully possessed of the Devil. Others tend to think that whether this is true or not, that the entire event serves in some way to mock or re-create the resurrection of Christ. Revelation 13:3
- He changes the time and the seasons as we have known them throughout history. Some think that means he will end marking time by BC and AD, and start a new era marked by the advent of his own rule. Echoes of this can be heard in Hitler's attempt to start a one thousand year period of the rule of the Third Reich. Daniel 7:25
- He proposes, and enacts an all new worldwide economic system. It starts off with a big bang and is generally accepted by the world but unlike any other system before it, this one will be completely mandatory. He will tolerate those who resist his new system but for only a very brief time. Shortly after it is firmly established, he will put to death anyone who will not become part of this system. It is a complete system, with built in checks and securities that cannot be easily circumvented. Revelation 13:17
- He will publicly kill God's two special prophets, much to the joy of the whole world. These two have spent three and one half years preaching against him and his kingdom with impunity because they have special powers from God to subdue their enemies. His public display of savagery is applauded the world over but it is appendaged by the resurrection of both of these prophets before the eyes of the entire world. You might say

that those who are still scoffing at the resurrection of Jesus get one final opportunity to see a resurrection that might lead them to repent before it is too late. Revelation 11:1f

- He starts the rapid removal of all his opponents, and those who will not receive the mark that identifies them as being in his economic system. Knowing his time is short he doesn't bother with prison camps and detention centers. His chosen means for the quick extermination of his detractors is the guillotine. Daniel 7:21, Revelation 20:4
- He commits one final sin that is the capstone of his reign. It is called the abomination of desolation. Plainly put, that means the sin that makes God disgusted. It is the straw that breaks the camels back. It is his last major act of defiance before Christ steps in and allows his angels to pour out the wrath of God on his evil empire. Unlike Antiochus Epiphanes who before him poured the blood of a pig on the altar in the inner sanctuary of the Jewish temple or Titus who defiled the temple with the Roman eagle this man does the unthinkable. He presents himself or an image of himself in the center of the sanctuary as God. (Daniel 8:11-14, 12:11) Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

### ***Things the antichrist will do or have done to him at the culmination of his reign and his final destruction***

- He leads the armies of the world to what is called the battle of Armageddon. The battle takes place in the vast plains of Esdraelon north of the city of Jerusalem. This battle is his last futile attempt to stop the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 16:14-16
- He is confronted directly by the descending Savior of the world and is removed to the lake of fire with the false prophet and Satan. Daniel 7:8-9, 8:25, Revelation 14:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:8

### ***Question***

Should Christians prepare for the coming events by storing food, buying weapons or fleeing to the mountains or some other safe retreat?

### ***Answer***

The preparation for these events has nothing to do with our survival, our self interests or our self preservation. It has to do with the preservation of the Gospel during the most intense effort in history to wipe it out. A missing or hiding witness is no witness at all, yet a martyred witness is a powerful and completely unquenchable witness. This is clearly defined in the following mandate from our Savior, and it is a clear warning not to try to save our own skins. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. Mark 8:35

***Question***

What about those who say that the events of Revelation have already occurred in the past, and can give historical examples of the fulfillment of each event?

***Answer***

It would take another whole book to dispel this fickle notion. While it is not hard to unravel the little web this doctrine has spun, that would give it more dignity than it deserves. Proponents of this doctrine have overlooked one little fact that would leave even a novice scratching his head. Simply put, the declarations of prophecy within the scripture having to do with the second coming of Christ must conclude with just that, the second coming of Christ. Until he is sitting on the throne in the city of Jerusalem this particular twisted doctrine doesn't deserve a second look.

***Question***

Are any man made weapons at all used in the judgments of Christ?

***Answer***

Not one man made weapon is utilized to aide in the final judgments of this world at the second coming of Christ. The seven vials of wrath that are poured out upon the earth come from heaven in the hands of angels who are completely unassisted by any human beings. Revelation 15:6-7

***Question***

Some say that the destruction of Babylon (Rev 18:1f), could be the city of New York or spiritually speaking it may even be the city of Jerusalem. Is that possible?

***Answer***

No, that is not possible for two very good reasons. First, Jerusalem is the city that Christ descends to and where he then begins his one thousand year reign. He doesn't return to a pile of rubble to begin his rule. Secondly, and more importantly, it is said that this city is where the blood of prophets, saints and martyrs is found. The least informed person in this world knows that the only city in the world that is known for that bloodshed is Rome. The city described in Revelation 17:9 is called the city of seven hills or seven mountains. Although Amman Jordan has seven mountains as does Seattle Washington, the only city universally known as the city of seven hills has always been none other than Rome.

***Question***

Are movies like The Omen or the more recent TV series Revelations, helpful? Even though they are not always biblically sound or historically accurate can't we glean some good things from them anyway?

***Answer***

I once heard a man describe the Hollywood crowd as a bunch of crooks and robbers with the morality of a pack of jackals. I concur with this assessment in general, so it is hard for me to

conceive of anything redemptive coming from a Hollywood interpretation of one of the gravest and most important teaching of the scripture. One of the ways the arch-deceiver has succeeded in luring even the most cautious and circumspect of people, is to mix just enough truth in with his lies to subtly seduce the hearer. It is a sort of garnishment or embellishment that makes the most poisonous plate look palatable after all. The seriousness of billions of people meeting their doom, earthquakes leveling every city on the planet and the destruction of every major institution of man should hardly be trusted to the Hollywood crowd.

It is even harder to address some of the well meaning Christian authors who have introduced some very popular fiction about the second coming. Books like, *Left Behind* may be very entertaining but the bottom line is still that they are after, all only fiction. Over thirty years past I made a statement in some of my messages that didn't seem well received or even believed. I repeat it now with an ever increasing frequency, but now I find more acceptances for what I am saying. Americans who have their eyes wide open and their hearts tuned by God are now concurring with me when I say that, We have come to the place where entertainment is so important to us that we are losing sight of where fantasy ends and real life begins.

When the comedic movie mogul Charlie Chaplin 1889-1977, was at the peak of his career, a Chaplin look-alike craze was sweeping the world. In America, Europe and South America tens of thousands of people dressed in the garb of the famous actor and imitated his well known walk and his extravagant antics. It is a well known fact that many times Chaplin entered his own look-alike contests. He never won any of them, and it is said that many times he couldn't even make the finals. Our ability to see the difference between the look alike and the real thing is quite ineffective as this story shows. Why would anyone trust our skills to differentiate between the real and the unreal concerning something as important as the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?

When the events start to unfold at a pace that no one can barely imagine there will be no time to debate which of the portents that are unfolding came from the bible, and which came from the Hollywood version of things. That would only leave people more confused, more vulnerable and in the end, more dead. If you want the truth, doesn't it make sense to get to the source of truth? Hollywood even at its best has never been heralded as a source of truth. God is always the best source to find Gods will and plan.

### ***Question***

Some today are teaching that Christ can't return soon because he is supposed to come for a church that is without spot or wrinkle. (Ephesians 5:27) Because the church is not yet in this perfect place Christ won't return until the church is fully prepared. Is this true?

### ***Answer***

Jesus warned that all Gods schedules are in the keeping of his Father. (Mark 13:32) Isn't it just like us to try to take it back? Hardly any bible read believer would disagree with the fact that we can't know the day or the hour, but why not at least take back the option to hinder the hour. This

speaks of arrogance and a failure to recognize God's sovereignty. It also speaks of a lack of understanding of the processes and elements of what the Bible calls sanctification. 1 Peter 1:2 Christians the world over labor under the false notion that this process is based on some kind of positional perfection. This is the idea that we sin less and produce more for God every day, so if we stay the course we must be better today than we were yesterday. In fact from the moment God imputes the righteousness of his Son to us, God already sees us as perfect. James 2:23 Knowing this, can take us out of the futility of jumping on the good and bad scale at the end of each day to see how we measure up. Sanctification rather than being a positional achievement is after all a conditional state of grace produced by a daily willingness to be rightly related to God. The willing heart is what is pleasing to God not the working heart. The shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has already accomplished the work.

Because true sanctification is a conditional thing and not a positional one, the church is already without spot and wrinkle every day of its existence. I am not suggesting here that we couldn't always stand some growth and improvement, but that should not be confused with some positional perfection that we might attain to at some unspecified future date. If this had any truth in it whatsoever the return of the Lord would never come.

### ***Question***

Will people actually submit and allow themselves to receive some sort of indelible mark or implant that places them in the economic system of the antichrist?

### ***Answer***

The answer is an unequivocal, yes. In the United States the Food and Drug Administration has just approved an implantable computer chip that can store and transmit a patient's medical information and make it available instantly to medical professionals and hospitals. The chip, produced by Applied Digital Solutions of Delray Beach, Florida is about the size of a grain of rice. They have been in use for sometime already in livestock, pets and animal tracking applications. Besides being presently used in animals the chips have been implanted in over two hundred people in Mexican law enforcement and are used in Spain to monitor the people's tabs in high end night clubs.

Why hasn't anyone noticed that even without requesting it, banks automatically issue ATM debit cards to every account holder, almost universally? Who doesn't know that as a result of advances in electronic micro-miniaturization that it has become mere child's play to put the personal information of every person in the world on a computer that wouldn't be as big as a single kitchen appliance? Who hasn't noticed in America that even if you submit every pertinent piece of information about yourself from your birth onward, you still will make no loans or any other monetary transactions without a social security number? We have debit and credit cards that have advanced security features like photos and fingerprint identification. These things are only a step away from an immovable, indelible, mark that would seem very convenient and couldn't be lost or stolen.

Starting with government checks and now over to payroll checks, which one of us has not been

encouraged or may already have begun using a direct deposit system? Individuals, governments and large corporate conglomerates pass trillions of dollars back and forth electronically without a single greenback appearing in the hands of anyone. Will the world submit to a cashless, ID perfect, means of personal and business money management? These things are already fully underway why wouldn't or why couldn't people be assuaged to cross just one more line which is after all, the next step in line? Any bible believing person who is only nominally aware of world trends and events could make this prediction with greater accuracy than Carl Sagan predicted the canals on the planet Mars. Christians must see that the world is not standing in front of the sign at some crossroads trying to make a decision about which way to go, they have long since started down the path to the place called, the mark of the beast.

### ***Question***

Is the woman of Revelation 12:1f a depiction of Mary the mother of Jesus?

### ***Answer***

No. With the exception of Catholics the general interpretation of this chapter is that the woman represents the nation of Israel, the twelve stars are the twelve tribes of Israel, and the man child is the Lord Jesus Christ. The bible offers no queen of heaven only an omnipotent God who is father to the redeemed, one prince to occupy the throne, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and one Spirit by which we are all made one in the believing church of Jesus Christ. I am convinced, that if we could hear Mary the Mother of Jesus speaking to us today about all the divine attachments and attributes that we have laid on her, she would probably reply with a simple, cut it out! The only other mother that might come in as a close second to Mary for receiving unearned accolades would be Mother Nature. But no mother has ever been sent to be the propitiation for our sins. It behooves us to stay focused in this troubled time. Giving divine attributes to Mary, who only wants to rest like everyone else who has passed over Jordan, is not focusing. The last days are not a time for unfounded fodder, fickle phantasms, and far fetched fluff.

### ***Question***

Who are the one hundred and forty four thousand people who receive a special mark on them in Revelation 7:3-4?

### ***Answer***

It has always puzzled me over the years that so many people have asked this question. The passage clearly says who these people are. They are twelve thousand Jews from each of the twelve tribes of Israel who are marked, preserved and protected and probably mightily used during the last three and one half years of the antichrist's reign of terror. Perhaps what people are really unsure about is why these people are sealed rather than who they are. They are Jewish people who some people think may be supernaturally converted to Christ at the resurrection of the two prophets in Revelation eleven. Since some Christians have never been taught why they are converted they have appointed some special function to them for the last days. That function

although not clearly outlined is thought to be the preaching of the gospel during the last few years of the antichrist's rule. The bible does not actually outline a specific purpose for them as it is commonly taught but it does, however, give a specific reason for their lives being preserved. That reason is the keeping of a promise that God gave to them repeatedly over the centuries. The promise is that he would save a remnant of them for himself. After centuries of chastisement for missing the time of their visitation God will look with favor on the Jews and pull out a remnant for his own name. Luke 19:44, Isa. 10:21f I am glad that God keeps his promises and I am also glad that these people who have suffered so severely will finally see their Savior and enjoy the rewards of serving him in one of the highest places in the entire scheme of things.

### *Question*

What is the mark of the beast, the now world famous 666?

### *Answer*

There is more controversy flying around this loaded question than I care to address, but for the sake of those who have no knowledge at all on this subject I will try to break it down in terms that are understandable. What can be known about it for certain is that it is the mark that represents the antichrist's economic system. Those who don't have this mark will not be able to buy or sell anything. Whose name it actually represents, is too soon to say. It does seem to be a representation of the trinity of Satan, Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet being the constituents of that trinity.

An interesting development of late has been something called recommendation 666. This is one among many recommendations being adopted by the emerging government of the EU. This particular recommendation was introduced by the European Unions present security minister, Mr. Javier Solana. It is a matter of concern for many people for two reasons. The first is that the final vote on the European constitution is only about a year away. The second reason is because recommendation 666 seems to be worded in such a way that it gives emergency war powers to the leader of the EU if he has been sufficiently apprised of a terrorist threat or the country has actually undergone an actual terror attack. I have thoroughly read every word in this document and while I'm not sure that it something to worry about, it certainly is something to keep an eye on.

My strongest sense of conviction is to go with what we know about this dreaded number and keep a watchful eye on what develops hereafter. Using biblical numerology to point to some particular person is highly questionable and has only failed so many times before. A cautious and thoughtful approach is highly advisable, and a large application of watchful patience will win the day on this subject.

### *Question*

If the pre tribulationists are mistaken, and some of us are called upon to die at the hand of the antichrist, how will we be able to face this terrible and fearful matter?

### ***Answer***

Years ago I showed the movie that is now part of Billy Graham Ministries, called *The Hiding Place*. The movie is about Corrie Ten Boom who was delivered to tell her story to the world after spending time in the notorious German prison camp named Ravensbruck. Besides seeing her parents and her siblings die under the Germans, over ninety thousand women met their death in that dreaded camp. In one of Corrie's books she tells a story about a question she asked her father when she was just a little girl. Her question to him was *how will I be able to find the strength or courage to die if I should be asked to die for my faith in Jesus Christ?* Her father answered her question with a question of his own. He said, Corrie, you go to see your aunt in the country every summer on the train, when do I give you the ticket to board the train? Her reply was "you give me the ticket the day when I'm boarding the train." Her father said, that is correct, and Jesus will give you the strength and the courage to die for him if you have to, on the day you are asked to die. I have never heard a better answer anywhere over the years. God's grace for living will shift to God's grace for dying as it is needed, and not until then.

### ***Question***

Is the world wide rise of Islam something told about anywhere in bible prophecy?

### ***Answer***

Jesus said that in the last days many false Christ's and false prophets would appear around the world along with their spurious and ridiculous teachings. (Mt 24:1f) The rise of Islam is only another part of these last days offering of other roads on the broad path to destruction. The popularity of Islam can only be fully appreciated by taking another look at the nature and purpose of the one who makes all the other roads available. Among the many names used for Satan in the bible few of them show his nature better than, 1 Peter 5:8, Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Islam is not only a product of the arch deceiver but it is roaring around the globe with its message of death and destruction.

Regardless of what deception is offered on the supper table of the devil, it is always a recipe for his ultimate purpose, destruction. One of the most naive and subtly destructive notions in the world is that Satan will use anything to deceive people, but must stop short of anything labeled or recognized as a religion. We make a distinction between cults, heresies, the occult, and recognized and old established religions of the world. The question is why. The truth is that Satan does not stop short of using religions to deceive people, but rather they are one of his major tools and devices to destroy the souls of men. He isn't called the arch-deceiver by mistake. He uses any and all means at his disposal to bring down the souls of men, and carry them with him to hell, religions of the world notwithstanding.

Another book could be written on why Islam has nothing at all to do with the salvation of men, fortunately for us since nine-eleven many good writers and teachers have undertaken to write such books. My best advice to anyone today is that they take the time to read a few of these revealing books.

### ***Question***

Isn't there any safe place in the world, a country or an island of the sea where the rule of antichrist won't reach?

### ***Answer***

No, there is no safe place in this world from the reach of the antichrist. Revelation 13:7 says he will rule every nation, tongue and tribe. Yet, there is one safe place to hide although it is not of this world and that is in the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 10:28-29

### ***Question***

Of all the questions addressed here or anywhere else what is the most important one of all?

### ***Answer***

The answer is none of the above. The most important question ever asked by anyone at anytime throughout history is the question asked by the Phillipian jailer to the Apostle Paul in Acts 16:30, Sirs, what must I do to be saved. Paul's answer is also the single most important answer in the world. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:31 Instead of seeing the rapture as the great escape hatch in the sky by which we will be instantly pulled to safety during the coming troubles, we must recognize that our faith in Christ is the way out, and nothing else. Jesus has made us invincible in a manner of speaking. He has said if we're dead we're yet living, and if we're living, we can't die. (John 11:25-26) This being so, the antichrist can only affect the place of our abode but never the eternal life that has been granted to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND CHANCE**



I have never heard anyone even mention this most important aspect of the second coming, much less preach or write about it. I would be negligent and remiss if I failed to emphasize this to virtually anyone who will listen. How it seems to have escaped people is beyond comprehension. It would seem that as we approach the fulfillment of the Second Advent, that every believer the world over would be keenly aware of this important part of the bible message. I can only surmise that we must be overly involved with our own welfare and our own responses to the ensuing events. It is almost an attitude of, we made it out of here, so who cares what happens next. Caring like God cares covers what God's caring covers, and that is all men, at all times, past present and future.

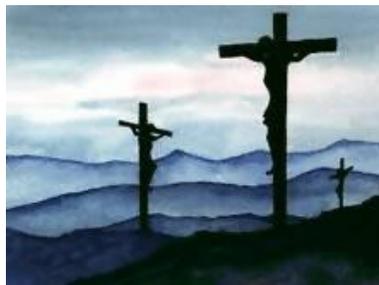
Practically everyone has heard a story at some time of a praying mother or father who died

without seeing their children come to the Lord. Sometimes decades after they have gone their child or children will turn their lives over to the grace of God. They will in many cases attribute their salvation to the persistent prayers and constant speaking of the faith that their parents made. The witness of a loving mother may lay dormant in some child's heart until they reach their extreme in life and are nearly broken, or conversely when in some quiet moment they re-consider the words that were so carefully implanted in their conscience. The Mothers presence is not at all necessary.

I am no more certain of when the rapture or the catching away will be than I am about the way the wind will blow tomorrow. But God has given me a clear picture of the nature and intensity of the events in the near future. By telling an unbelieving person all I can about Christ's return I am providing them with knowledge by which to identify the various events as they unfold. If the rapture has occurred, what I took the time to tell them of the ensuing events will be the only viable witness they will have to refer to, in the troubled times ahead. But being told does leave them a witness, an explanation a chance. Perhaps they may have to lay down their lives to retain it, but what a horrible tragedy if they couldn't see it coming at all. I can't help but think that our nonchalant attitude about second coming wouldn't make us somewhat culpable if anyone we had spoken to weren't given this precious second chance to make their move toward God.

It makes little difference whether the pre-tribulationists are correct or some other view because someone will still be alive and making life changing decisions even seconds after we are removed. To give them aide in making the right decision is important before or after we are gone. I can imagine someone saying, Hey, this man ruling in Europe is doing some of the things I was told about by my friend before he left. If your words remain then you remain, the result is the same, the saving of a precious soul.

The more studied and balanced we are about the second coming of Christ the greater chance we have of providing others with a second chance. As the events unfold it has become more important than ever in history to choose solid teachers and sound teachings on this vital subject. It is becoming more of a responsibility than a mere side interest or something to otherwise intrigue the casual buff. The clearer message we leave behind the greater chance to add precious jewels to our crowns, even retroactively.



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