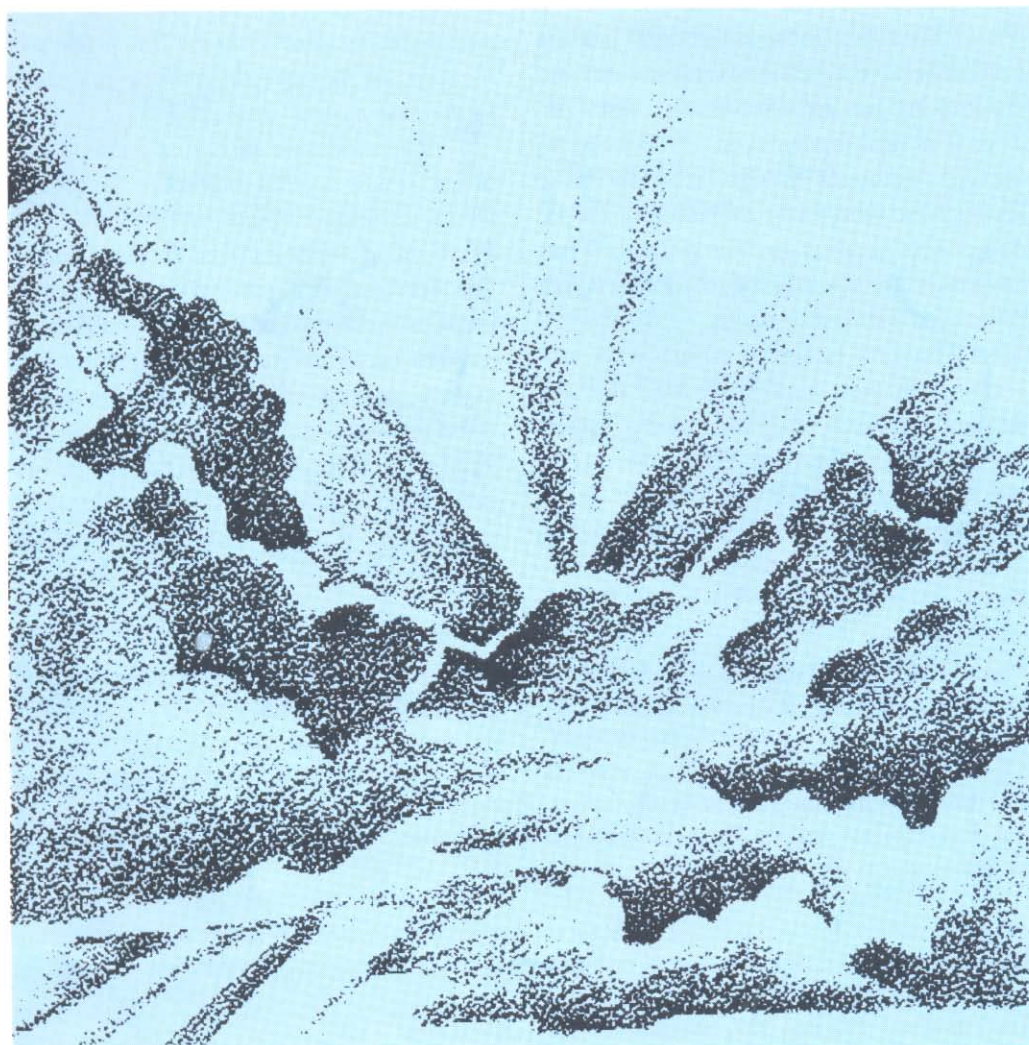


Latter Rain

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In my Father's house are many mansions
...I go to prepare a place for you"

Matthew 14:2.



From the Inkhorn...

World events in recent times have no doubt raised speculation in most minds about how much longer this World order will continue! Christians have to arrive at a balance in their own minds between hoping for a peaceful future for the World and understanding the many prophecies in the Scriptures about a turbulent time that will precede the return of Jesus Christ.

However, this edition looks beyond the potentially difficult times ahead to the Kingdom that we believe will be established on this Earth when Jesus Christ returns. This is commonly referred to as the Millennium. We trust you enjoy reading about the physical and spiritual changes that will accompany that event and the new order that will be established.

In any event, remember the words of Jesus when talking about the troubled times on the Earth just prior to His return: "Let not your heart be troubled" John 14:1, "In your patience possess ye your souls".

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"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left, two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"

Matthew 24:40-42.

THE MILLENNIUM

The Promised Rest

We have all heard of the ideal working conditions in which we could have six months holiday twice a year! This might sound impossible, but it looks like such a time is promised in the Bible! In Hebrews chapter four Paul talks about “entering into a promised rest”. He cites that, although promised, Israel did not enter in after coming out of Egypt, because of unbelief, and through lack of faith. He then speaks about God resting on the seventh day of Creation, as a culmination of the creation cycle. Note that the rest on the seventh day was just as much a part of the creation cycle as was, for example, the creation of light on day one. The rest was the pinnacle of the Creation process, perhaps indicating that all other things had arrived at a state of finalisation, and perhaps this was the way God sealed the completion of the process.

But Paul then clearly gives an inference that there is still yet to be another “day of rest” – presumably at the end of this phase of God’s creation plan – which will be enjoyed by those who do have belief and faith.

Paul makes the following points:

- To-day if ye will hear His voice – there is a personal immediacy,
- Jesus spoke of another day – the time had not then been,
- There remains a rest to the people of God – the time is yet to come, and
- Let us labour to enter into that rest – there are conditions attached.

Theologically The Millennium (the word means one thousand) is taken to be the thousand years spoken of by John in Revelations chapter 20 in verse 5, “*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*”, and is the time between the first and second resurrections.

What Is The Millennium

Although all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it is subject to various interpretations by scholars. In the case of the Millennium there are three main theological views of what it may be (of course with many variations in between) which are:

Post-Millennialism: this belief is that the Millennium started with the resurrection of Jesus, and covers the period to the end of the world – no specific time periods are usually considered. It has already started or been, and we are in the period after (post) its commencement.

Pre-Millennialism: this belief is that the Millennium will start with the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, and generally it is believed, will last for a literal one thousand years. In this case it has not yet started, so we are in the pre (before) Millennium period.

A-Millennialism: this belief is that the Millennium references are symbolical only and there is no expectation of a

physical return and reign of Jesus Christ to the Earth.

The teachings of the Christian Israelite Church fall into the pre-millennialist category, and we believe in a physical return of Jesus Christ to this earth at the beginning of a literal one thousand year period.

The Creation Cycle

Genesis sets out the creation cycle of seven days – six days of creation activity, and the seventh day as a day of consummation of the prior activities. We believe that after the Fall of Mankind, Satan was given a period of time equal to the Creation period (six days) in which to try God's Creation. On the seventh day God will rest again. Now history shows us that there was about 4,000 years from the Fall of Adam and Eve (and hence the beginning of the counting of their life in years) to Jesus, and there has been about 2,000 years since. If we take the key of Peter in 2 Peter 3:8, "*..one day is with the Lord as a thousand years..*" we see that this equates to six days (six thousand years) of Satan's reign, with the Millennium being the seventh.

In Latter Rain Issue No 25 there was an article on 'Sabbatical & Jubilee Years'. This article gave details of the extensive references in the Bible to the special commands of God to Israel to keep every seventh year as a special year, and then every 50th year as another special year. During these times the Israelites who were slaves and wanted to be free were released from slavery, and in the Jubilee Year, all property returned to the families who initially owned it. In the same way, during the Millennium, those who have sought to God will be freed from the power of Satan, and all things will be restored. In this analogy we see both the physical earth and

the bodies of those who believe (remember man's body was made of the dust of the ground – the earth) delivered from Satan's power and restored to their rightful owners.

Other Scriptural References Supporting a Literal Millennium

King David was promised that his lineage would sit on the throne forever (1 Chronicles 17:11-15), and believers looked forward to a physical kingdom in which peace would prevail (Isaiah 65:17-18). There was always great expectation that Jesus (Great David's Greater son – Luke 1:32) would set up a physical Kingdom on the Earth. Jesus explained at his ascension, however, that the timing of this was in God's hands. (Acts 1:6-7)

Jesus told many parables about the Kingdom of God, and how it would be established. Many of these supported the concept of a literal period of reign of peace and joy.

The Bible sets out a principle of Restoration. Jesus, of course, was God's gift to mankind to allow us to be restored or reconciled to God following the separation caused by Satan and sin. Under this principle it is not unreasonable to expect that God will also restore the physical Earth to the condition it was in when first created – see Romans 8:20-22.

Restoration of The Earth

The concept of Restoration of the Earth includes the possibility that during the Millennium God will restore the physical earth to the condition that it was in at the Garden of Eden. Remember in Genesis that when first created the Earth was enclosed in a water canopy, and was not watered with rain, but with dew upwards from the ground. (Gen 2:5) It would also seem that there was one land

mass and one water mass, called sea. When one looks at the globe of the Earth, it is easy to see that the continents appear to have separated from each other, and with a mammoth shaking of the Earth could well be pieced back together. And the mountains did not appear until after The Flood. Initially there were waters above the Earth and waters under the Earth – all of which exploded at the time of Noah's flood.

Other scientific speculation suggests that when in the water canopy the Earth's atmosphere may have had a higher oxygen content (closer to 30% rather than 23%) and a higher atmospheric pressure (perhaps 18 mmHg rather than 14 mmHg) thus supporting animals such as dinosaurs which would not be able to survive under the existing conditions now because of their small hearts and large size. Under such conditions the Earth would seem like a large terrarium and one would expect rain-forest like vegetation everywhere.

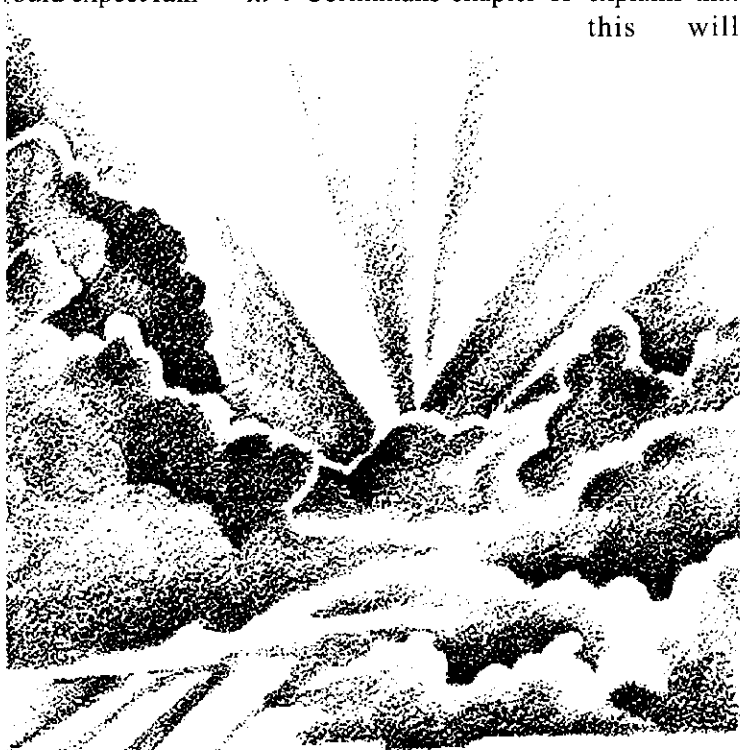
When the Scriptures talk about God changing the face of the Earth, 'changing its clothes' as it were, it may well include such physical restoration. See Hebrews 1:12, and Rev 6:14. Even the Old Testament prophets looked forward to this time – see for example Isaiah 41:18-19; Zeph 3:15-17.

There are also references in the Old Testament to cataclysmic changes to take place to the

physical planet such as in Haggai where God says: "*Behold I will shake all nations...*" see Haggai 2:6-7. Subsequent to these changes we would anticipate that the earth itself will enter into its rest, as God had created it, without the cycles of corruption and decay which now control it.

Rest From What

After a person has been busy it is good to stop and have a rest. The question arises as to whether one would enjoy the "rest" if they had not been doing something to rest from. When we think of our life here on Earth the greatest problem we have is resisting the evil. Satan attracts the evil within us and causes us to sin, and the wages of sin is death. If Satan's power were taken away, or bound, we would rest from this prime work of wrestling against the powers of darkness in this world, and could enjoy the pleasures of God's Creation. Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 explains that this will



mean the resurrection of those who have died, and continuing life for those who are alive at the return of Jesus. We believe that the return of Jesus Christ to this world will in fact be the heralding in of the Millennium.

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" 1 Cor 15:52.


How Do We Enter

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" Revelation 22:15. We must do his commandments, that is attain to a standard of true obedience to God's laws and commands, if we are to be of those who will physically enter into the City – the place where the promised rest will be available.

In Hebrews 4:11 Paul says that we should labour to be accepted to enter into the rest. We should be seeking to live a life

patterned on the way of life shown by Jesus Christ. He kept all His Father's commandments, and to this extent it should be a good example for us to seek to follow the way of life set out in the whole of the Scriptures – both the Old and New Testaments.

The Scriptures indicate that the Earth will be physically restored and changed to enter into the promised rest. To be eligible to enter into The Millennium physically we must seek to God to remove the elements of mortality from within us and attain to a standard of righteousness in this life that will enable us to go forward into the next precisely at the time when Jesus Christ returns.

However, it is all based on having adequate belief and faith, demonstrated by works, which we must ask God to perform in us now, so that we might be eligible to enjoy the rest when the job is complete. 



Hymn No. 57

(Isaiah 6:5,17-19)

**O! Isr'el, hear, and learn to understand,
The wond'rous things that do on record stand;
The time is come in which they'll be revealed,
And from the sons of men no more conceal'd.**

**The present heav'ns and earth will pass away;
New heav'ns and earth will then created be;
Which will be fill'd with righteousness and peace
And they who're born anew will them possess.**

**Th' old heav'ns, the pleasures of the earthly mind,
Th' old earth, the fallen bodies of mankind;
New heav'ns will God and man united be,
The earth that's new will take of life's fair tree.**

Who Will Enter the Millennium

I would like to speak of the groups outlined in the Scriptures which are to enter into the Millennium as detailed in Revelation chapter 7. We are all going forward, whether we like it or not, so we must keep a forward vision. How far is your vision focused? Is it today, tomorrow, or forward to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, or further to the events that will take place beyond them. Just as today followed yesterday, and as tomorrow will follow today, so the Bible contains prophecies relating to Jesus' return, and to the events beyond then, and they are each certain. We can be short-sighted and just live for today, but even our governments tell us we should be saving for our retirement, some days or years ahead. Similarly, we need to consider what God has planned for this creation, which includes you and me.

In Deuteronomy 30:15 God made the statement that "life and good and death and evil" were set before mankind. This statement, coupled with other Bible passages indicates that this world is a trial ground on each individual, testing their allegiance to God Almighty.

Revelation chapter 7 speaks of troubles coming in the world, when the destroying angels are sent, but they were stopped from their destruction by another angel who said, "*Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads*" (v 3). So those who choose life and good will be sealed, not to be hurt by the coming destruction. These people will have sought to do the complete will of God, seeking for their physical bodies to have eternal life without physical death because Jesus tells

us this is possible through the spiritual strength that He promised.

From Revelation 14:1,4-5 comes the answer, "*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads....these are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruit unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God*".

There are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Each tribe is numbered by the name of a son of Israel (Jacob), except that Dan is omitted and the two sons of Joseph are given as two separate tribes. In this passage it refers purely to 12,000 from each tribe, but in the early Hebrew reckoning an individual male was reckoned as himself, his wife and his young children, so even though we say 12,000 from each tribe it would be many times that number.

Now after listing the twelve tribes by name, it says (v9-10), "*After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*". God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has extended salvation to all mankind, and here they are

Levels of Salvation

The Lamb

144,000 families from 12 tribes of Israel

Judah	Reuben	Gad	Asher	Naphtali	Levi	Manasseh	Simeon	Isacchar	Zebulon	Joseph	Benjamin
12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000

Great multitude of nations

gathered before His throne, from all nations, all kindreds and all people, and all tongues; how much more broadly do you need to express it to include everyone?

The level of salvation to have their souls saved, even though they have lost their physical bodies (Hebrews 11:39) is supported in other Scripture. St. Paul wrote to Timothy, *"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe"* 1 Timothy 4:10. See also Isaiah 45:23 and Romans 14:11. In Romans 11:32-36 we are told, *"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."* Again in Philippians 2:10-11 it reads, *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that*

every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father". These verses do not conflict, but each implication needs to be considered.

There is no question that God will not let this world go on in its present condition indefinitely. God has ordained a period of time for mankind to have a choice between Good and Evil, and at the end of this time, according to His plan, everyone will bow their knee to Him. So the ultimate finish, through the course of events God is allowing to take place, is that all mankind will bow the knee to Him.

Now before this time we have all been concluded in 'unbelief' so that mercy can be shown upon all. This has been a stumbling block to some, but consider the force of Good, manifested by God's actions, and Evil, shown by Satan's actions, as being two kings warring one against another.

Satan is currently appearing to win because he is confining all mankind by death physically to the prison house. Satan tempts us and causes us to sin, and then he reports to God that we have not been obedient to the Word of God and therefore should go to the grave; but I ask you, When

Satan is conquered by God what will God do with all of Satan's prisoners? Logically He will free them and the only prisoners He will hold are those who have fought with the Devil and are the host of Satan. God, in His love and mercy has said that even if these spirits are able to accept His love shown through Jesus' sacrifice, they will be forgiven for their wrong.

God is still in charge. Satan is only an officer under God, but he has been given tremendous powers and scope so that he cannot say to God that people have only done good because God had protected them. Read in the case of Job how Satan was given power over Job's possessions and his children and then even given permission to afflict his body, but he was limited in that he was not allowed to take Job's life. Read the record in the book of Job chapter 1, verses 9 to 12. Satan was and still is God's Officer, and can only act when we break the commands that God has given. If we, through God's Spirit giving us strength, do not break the commands, Satan will have no hold over us.

This was the group of all who have accepted Jesus' sacrifice before they died. *"...What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? ...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"* Revelation 7:13-14, see also Revelation 7:15-17.

Now as well as this group our text reads, *"...And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."* Revelation 7:11-12.

We do not know exactly how these different groups relate to each other, but we do know that Jesus spoke of many mansion in his Father's House (John 14:1-3) and that Paul in 1st Corinthians 15:51-54 speaks of those who will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and that there will be people living, mortal, who will put on immortality, and people who have died, corruptible, who will put on incorruption. These statements help us to understand this picture from Revelations chapter 7 so that we can make a broad statement based on what we have read:

1. There are to be 144,000 heads of families who will have sought to live without fault, and they will be changed from mortal to immortal;

2. there will be an innumerable number who have believed in Jesus, and though they have died, they will gain the salvation of their souls, the corruptible part of man having put on incorruption; and

3. there will be a number of Angels (or heavenly beings) all performing the work of God.

Where is your vision focused? Are you looking to be one of those who will live physically in the Millennium after Jesus Christ returns when the 144,000 will show the power and love of God, their mortal bodies overcoming Satan's tool which is the power of death over man's body?

This is a worthy ambition and worth any sacrifice we may need to make to obtain it. It is an invitation God has extended to us. Let us claim it as our own. In Revelations chapter 22 verse 17 we read:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." [📖]

Service

"I haven't a single talent,' the mother said with a sigh,
"And I want to work for the Master, as the days go swiftly by;
To bring Him honour and glory for He knows I love Him so,
But what can I do in His service - I haven't a talent, I know.

"Some folks can serve at the organ, but I never learned to play,
And some can sing in the choir, but I wasn't made that way,
And some take a class of children, I know I am no use there,
Some speak for Him at a meeting - I can't even take a chair.

"But the dear Lord knows about it for He understands my heart,
And sees how in fields of service I long to take my part;
But I've only my little children to clothe and feed and teach -
I've not time for other people, lost souls I can never reach.

Only the children, Oh mother, that night when the girls and boys
Had gathered around to tell her their little sorrows and joys,
Little Bill pulled her down and whispered, "I told the Lord Jesus tonight
I would love and follow Him always, coz my Mummy said I might."

Then Nell, gentle Nell, said shyly, "I'm following Jesus, too;
I am going to love Him always, and, Mummy, it's just through you -
You told me all that He suffered on the Cross at Calvary,
And I cried myself to sleep then, 'cause you said it was for me.

Then the Mother's heart grew lighter as she gazed at her children fair -
No longer she yearned for talents for she knew that her work lay there;
And she prayed, "Lord, give me wisdom to train my children for Thee;
To do in, at least, some measure, this work for eternity."

Oh mothers, so often weary - so tired of the children's noise,
Remember it's for the Master, you are training these girls and boys;
Don't crave for the lesser talents, when to you the joy has been given
Of leading the children to Jesus, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lilian G. HEARD

What Will Life be Like in the Millennium?

Most Bible students have heard of and look forward to the Millennium. Another article in this magazine addresses "What is the Millennium". The word Millennium means 'thousand' and we believe that the Millennium will be a period of 1000 years during which Jesus Christ will reign on this earth after His return. In this article we want to look at what will be different about life during the Millennium. The Bible has numerous passages scattered throughout that give us a hint of what this new creation will be like.

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" 2 Peter 3:13. Here is the first clue. This new creation will dwell in righteousness – in other words there will be no sin, no death, no corruption. All the things that cause misery in this creation will no longer exist and everything will live according to God's Will thus emulating His righteousness. Imagine that, a world without pain, heart-ache, death, sin, destruction – all those elements that cause us so much pain now will no longer be there.

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow

and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea...and it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left...and from the islands of the sea...and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth...and there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people..." Isaiah 11. What a promise especially for the remnant of Israel and Judah. Finally they will be rewarded for their faithfulness and for keeping their eye true to God, and Christ will reign over them, as the 'firstborn amongst many brethren' for eternity. That which the remnant has for so long looked forward to will finally come to pass and an eternal era of peace will exist. Those that are of Israel will be gathered from the four corners of the earth, not just the land of Israel, this is the scattered remnant spoken of throughout the pages of Scripture.

John the Apostle, in the Book of Revelation tells us *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride*

adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" Revelation 21:1-4. Here in the new creation, God will be the one to comfort His people. No longer will they be separated by unbelief and sin, but God will be the ever-present focus of their lives guiding them in righteousness.

This chapter in Revelation is very similar to Isaiah chapter 65. In this chapter in Isaiah we are given a detailed picture of the serenity of life that will be during the Millennium and

**In the new creation,
God will be our
focus... not ourselves**

the promise that a 'remnant' will be saved, deathless, as a reward for their faith and righteousness in this world. *"As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all"* Isaiah 65:8. This blessing is expanded in verses 17-25 with God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Throughout Israel's apostasy (the word apostasy means a revolt, a defection, an abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion or departure from one's faith, principles, or party [The Lexicon Webster Dictionary]), there has always been a remnant of faithful people who have retained their belief in God and adhered to His laws – for these people chapter 65 offers real hope. Those that did not believe

or listen will be destroyed, *"And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name"* (65:15).

Now comes the message of hope for the remnant, or those that adhered to their belief. This passage gives a vision of the New Jerusalem and the coming Millennium as a message of hope for those faithful believers who through good and bad times have kept their eyes focused towards God. We start in verse 17 with a new creation. As with the first creation in Genesis 1, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"*, we are told that *"I create new heavens and a new earth"*. This new earth

or re-creation of Eden, will hold no reminders of the old earth and those that dwell in this new earth will have no memories of their former lives on the old earth, nor will they want to remember

any of their former lives. Why? – because the old memories will be eclipsed by the joy of the new life.

Unlike the former creation which was abused and forsaken, we are told to *"rejoice forever in that which I create"*. In the new world God's creation will be a source of joy and those that dwell in it will not forget who created it and will glorify God for His work. Instead of being beaten and destroyed, Jerusalem will come *"a rejoicing, and her people a joy"*. Very different to the grieving people mourning the burnt city in chapter 64. The familiar voice of crying and weeping that the city of Jerusalem was so familiar with (and indeed still is) will no longer be heard, but be replaced with laughter, joy, peace, happiness because God is the focus of this

creation and all the glory goes to Him. God refers to the people of the New Jerusalem as “*my people*” instead of “*its people*” of previous verses, showing a possessiveness and paternal concern that had been severely tried and tested before. The New Jerusalem mentioned here is the same as the Heavenly Jerusalem – the Bride - mentioned in Revelation 3:12; 21:2; 21:10. Galatians 4:25,26 tells us that “...and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all”. Some believe that these quotes in Isaiah, Revelation and Galatians show that the Holy Ghost is a female spirit and that Jerusalem which is above is a reference to the Holy Ghost or female spirit. When Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem wailing and mourning it could well be referring to the Spiritual Mother, just as an earthly mother would be upset at any friction or discontent between her children’s relationship with their earthly father, the Holy Ghost (Jerusalem Above) is distressed and upset when her children depart from their Father’s (Christ’s) ways.

Instead of being angry with His people for their actions, God will “*rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people*”. It gives a picture of happiness and spiritual prosperity that Israel has never experienced in this world nor has been on this earth since Eden. Thus we have Jerusalem rejoicing, the people of Jerusalem ‘a joy’ instead of ‘a sadness’, God rejoicing in Jerusalem, and no more the sounds of grief are to be heard in Jerusalem. To have no more grief would mean the absence of illness, death, poverty, all those things that cause grief. This is echoed in verse 20, “*no more thence an infant of days, nor*

an old man that hath not filled his days”. Little children and babies will no longer die prematurely and death itself will be eradicated completely for the old man will be able to “*fill his days*”. Many people comment when an elderly person died that that person had a ‘full life’ – here Isaiah is saying that death at any age stops a person from having a full life. In the New Jerusalem sin and death will not be possible, but Isaiah is saying if it were at all possible, ‘*the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed*’.

It would appear that life in this New Jerusalem will go on in a similar way as it did on the old earth. Believers will build houses and live in them, they will plant food and vineyards and harvest and use the crops

of them. Life will be right with God both in the home and in the fields – everywhere. Motyer suggests that they used the analogy of a vineyard because a vineyard takes the

longest time of any crop to grow and mature into a productive state thus showing that settled conditions were required for these vines to be planted and grown successfully. Death not being part of life, all will live without death to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Whereas in this world we often work and others benefit from that, in the creation we will benefit from our work. Or if looked at spiritually, with the absence of death, we will enjoy the rewards of our spiritual labours without being cut off from God’s presence by the grave. “*And mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands*” shows that the remnant or ‘*mine elect*’ without death will enjoy their labours because all their work is done for God – the ‘elect’s’ temples are a figure of their

**We will become a ‘joy’
to our Creator rather
than a be a misery.**

bodies which will not see corruption and therefore they will enjoy the fruits of their labours. None of their labours will have been for naught because all will be done for God's glory – they will have no trouble having children (ie. No miscarriage, still birth, etc) because *"they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them"*. Children will be born during the Millennium but without the pain and grief often associated with childbirth in this creation. All part of the New Jerusalem will be God's elect and so will their children.

God will be so in tune with His people that He will answer their prayers before they have asked them. In other words there will be nothing they need to ask of God because God will have already done it for them. There will still be prayer or communion with God but perhaps on a higher level than as we now have.

The passage finishes with the beautiful picture of *"the wolf and the lamb shall feed together"*. In the new creation no part of that creation (be it human or animal) will have any enemies. The enmity and strife of this creation will be left behind, and as with humans, the animals will have no memory of their former life and thus all former hatreds will have gone. The lion will no longer hunt other animals but will eat the grass or straw. The serpent, being a direct reference to Genesis 3:14, *"Because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life"*, being Satan, has no peaceful rest during the millennium. Isaiah 65:25 has a message of hope for God's remnant and the

animal life, but for the serpent *"dust shall be the serpent's meat"* – the original sentence still stands during the Millennium for Satan. In the New Jerusalem there will be no destruction or hurt is the final refrain of the passage – what a hope for those of us that hold true to God's Holy Word and His Promises. The holy mountain mentioned here is the same as mentioned in Revelation 21:10 *"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"*. We will all come into our own rewards or glories, and during the Millennium those who adhere to their beliefs now, in this life, will be blessed by living a joyful, sin-free existence with God Himself.

After the terribly depressing earlier chapters of Isaiah, chapter 65 is like a breath of fresh air, bringing fresh hope for those who believe in God and Jesus Christ. We are told that through the persecution those who adhere to the faith will be rewarded by entering the Millennium to exist in a society and culture ruled by God and with God as the focus. Sickness, death, misery, hurt – all those negative aspects of this creation will be gone and joy, peace, happiness, contentment will replace them. It is a message of hope, especially as many believe in these times that the Millennium is imminent, and this hope helps believers keep their focus on God and attempt to understand why things in this creation sometimes get so 'out of hand'. But in the next creation all of this hurt and grief will not even be remembered.📖

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Revelations 22:20.

Forgiving

Do you know what forgiveness means? When people are nasty to you, you should try to forgive them, that means you should try to forget about it and not be nasty back to them. This is a story about a little girl who learned how important it is to forgive.

“Susie,” said mummy, “We must sit down and write out the invitations for your birthday party. It’s only one week away so I want you to hand them out at school tomorrow.”

“I’m so excited about turning eight, I don’t think I can wait till next week,” said Susie.

“Well, I can’t wait any longer to make up this list,” said Mother impatiently, “So you’d better come and give me the names of the people you’d like to ask.”

“All right,” said Susie, “There’s Jenny, Sally, Katrina, Julie, Peter, Mark, Anne, Lisa, Tommy, Sarah and Megan.”

“But you didn’t mention your best friend, Debbie,” said her mother, “I know she’s first on the list.”

“No Mummy, I’m not asking Debbie and I don’t want her to come,” said Susie, and with that she ran off to her bedroom.

Mother was very puzzled; Susie and Debbie had been best friends for years and they did everything together. Mother went into Susie’s room and there was Susie lying on the bed, crying.

“What is it, darling?” asked Mother, “Tell me, what’s wrong?”

“It’s Debbie,” said Susie, “The other day she asked all my girlfriends round to her house but she didn’t ask me - we always ask each other!”

“Oh, I see,” said Mummy, “And you’re going to get back at Debbie by not asking her to your birthday party!”

“It’s only fair, Mummy,” said Susie, “Can’t you see that?”

“O Darling,” said Mummy, “I’m afraid I can’t!”

“I want you to tell me the prayer you say every night to God,” continued Mother.

Mummy and Susie said the prayer together, "Our Father, who art in heaven," began Susie and Mummy helped as it is a hard prayer to remember.

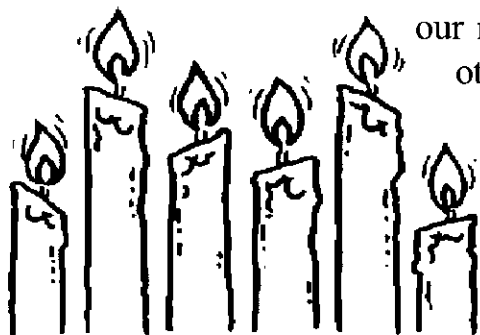
When they got to the lines, "Forgive us our sins for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us," Mummy asked Susie to stop.

"Do you know what 'forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us', means? You ask God to forgive you when you do wrong things and you tell Him that you will try to forgive other people when they do wrong things."

"What a wonderful thing," said Mummy, "That God will forgive us when we do wrong things as long as we try to be good and not do those wrong things again."

Susie thought of all the times she had been naughty; the times when she was nasty to her little brother, the times when she had been cross and said horrible things and the times she had done things her Mummy and Daddy had asked her not to do. Oh yes, there were so many things she wanted Jesus to forgive her for.

"But how can we ask God to forgive us of our many sins, if we don't try to forgive others when they do something wrong?" asked Mummy.



Susie knew what Mummy was getting at. She had to forgive Debbie for not asking her round the other day. It was hard, but she told God in her prayers that she would try to forgive

others and she didn't want to break her promise - especially a promise to God. Anyway, how could she ask God to forgive her if she couldn't forgive others?

"All right, Mummy," said Susie, "I'll invite Debbie to my party, and I'll try hard to forgive people."

"Good girl," said Mummy, giving her a big hug.

The party came round in no time and they all had a wonderful time, singing and dancing and playing games together, eating and drinking. The time came round for opening presents. Susie received

a few little things, games, books, and other gifts. Then Debbie came forward with a tiny little present for Susie. Susie opened it up and inside was the necklace she had so much wanted. She and Debbie had seen it down the street and it came back to Susie that as they looked at it together, she had told her how much she would like to be able to get it for her birthday.

“Oh! Thank you, Debbie. It’s wonderful but how could you afford it?”

“Well, I’ve been saving for a long while, ever since we saw it together but I still couldn’t afford it, so last week I asked all the girls to come to my house and we pooled our money and went down the street and bought it,” said Debbie.

“Oh, you’re all so lovely,” said Susie, and she hugged them all, especially Debbie. Just then Susie remembered she wanted to thank someone else. She put on her necklace and ran into the kitchen and thanked her Mummy with a big kiss.

“Thank you, Mummy, for helping me to see how important it is to forgive.”

“Wasn’t I being a silly girl, Mummy,” said Susie, “I’m so pleased you helped me to understand. What a wonderful surprise everyone has given me,” said Susie.

Forgiveness is like that. You often find that if you forgive someone, everything turns out well and you also know that you are doing what God wants. Forgiving is not always easy, but just as we want God to forgive us, we must try to forgive others.📖



Puzzle Page

Hidden in this puzzle are 24 Christian virtues mentioned in the New Testament.

Contentment (Heb 13:5)

Gentleness (2 Tim 2:24)

Honesty (Rom 12:17)

Kindness (Eph 4:32)

Meekness (Tit 3:2)

Peaceableness (Heb 12:14)

Respect (Rom 13:1-7)

Thankfulness (Eph 5:20)

Diligence (2 Pet 1:10)

Godliness (2 Pet 1:5-7)

Hospitality (Heb 13:2)

Liberality (Rom 12:13)

Obedience (Matt 7:21)

Prayerfulness (1 Thess 5:17)

Sympathy (Rom 12:15)

Truthfulness (Eph 4:25)

Faith (Mark 11:22)

Holiness (1 Pet 1:15)

Humility (1 Pet 5:5)

Love (Matt 5:44)

Patience (Heb 10:36)

Purity (Matt 5:8)

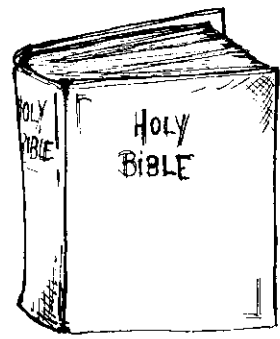
Temperance (1 Cor 9:25)

Zeal (Titus 2:14)

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Debug Your Bible:

Wait...and Do What?



Tucked away in the Epistle of Peter are some simple instructions to believers on how to live in expectation of the Millennium. 1 Peter 4:7-9 gives us 4 instructions or guidelines for our lives in anticipation of the imminence of the coming of the New Kingdom. Peter says, *"But the end of all things is at hand"* and then proceeds with his instructions:

1. *"..be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer"*
2. *"..above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins"*
3. *"Use hospitality one to another without grudging".*
4. *"..as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards to the manifold grace of God"*

Firstly we are told to be 'sober' – steady in our habits and our temperament. Maintaining a calmness that manifests itself in your peaceful countenance. One of the best ways to remain calm is to take all your troubles to God – pray, and pray often. Enter into relationship with God and allow Him to control and steer your life. Prayer reminds us Who has the controls. Often people write from experience and Peter is no exception. He had learned the power of prayer the hard way. Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asked him to 'Wait here and pray, while I go over

there to pray", but when Jesus returned to them, he found Peter asleep. He asked Peter, "Could you not watch with me one hour?" After just bragging about his commitment to Jesus, he couldn't even stay awake and pray. Jesus rebuked him, "I left you to pray, and you fell asleep". Again we are given the same instruction, "Watch and pray" but we have the example of Peter to stay alert, not fall asleep.

Secondly we are instructed to show *"fervent charity among yourselves"*, in other words, Christians 'stay close', support each other through both good and bad times. This verse starts in an interesting way with the words, **'above all'** to show the importance of this particular instruction. Fervency is a sign of determination so Peter wants us to be determined in our love for each other. In loving one another Christians actively show compassion and understanding and learn to forgive each other. Proverbs tells us that *"Hatred stirs up strife but love covers all transgressions"*. All Christians are as if on a stage, observed by cynics, agnostics and unbelievers ready to criticize actions and deeds in their work against God. This is where Christians have to be aware and display the fruits of the spirit as given to us by God in recognition of our faith in Him. Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian nationalist leader, once said, "I like your Christ but I don't like your Christians.....They are so unlike your Christ." Christ is characterized by love and forgiveness. Another famous

quote is: “We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive.” What is God doing for us constantly – forgiving us. This instruction of Peter’s is a plea for steady affection, not roller coaster affection. And it is an instruction not only to love those that are easy to love, but also those that are difficult. There will always be those who are easy to get along with and fun to be with, but what about those that are just that little bit harder – yes, we are to love them too, and not forget to include them.

Thirdly we are told to be hospitable to one another without complaint. These days this one seems to involve the most inconvenience. When it comes to hospitality, most people complain about the time it takes to prepare everything, the special shopping involved and basically the invasion on your time and space. Hospitality takes effort and planning and it also interrupts your privacy. When love opens the door though, hospitality is never a hassle. There is a great side effect of hospitality – hospitality disarms enemies and draws them into an environment that reflects God’s glory. To be hospitable means a number of things. It means you make room in your life to be interrupted! This is often the hardest thing to do is this day and age – to just give of your time. Many of us are overworked, stressed and rushing from one activity to another with children in tow and houses to keep. But Peter tells us that this worldly giddiness is not important – the most important thing is to take time out for each other, and in the midst of these Christian relationships dwells God’s Spirit guiding us in fellowship and keeping our focus on Him. There is something special about someone that takes the time and makes the time to listen to a friend, acquaintance or even someone once regarded as a foe. Hospitality though

should never be abused, as in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 when Paul had to admonish the early Christian group for giving up their jobs and literally living off other believers, because they thought the end of the world and return of Jesus was so close.

The fourth and final instruction by Peter is “*as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another; as good stewards to the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*” Every Christian person has at least one gift that has been given to them by God for the work of God. Each gift we have has to be used in serving one another to the glory of God – that is how we become good stewards of our gifts. It is through the use of these God given gifts that we can truly show the Glory of God. What are these gifts. The spiritual gifts are listed in Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Romans 12:6-8.

“*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*” Ephesians 4:11,12.

“*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret. But covet earnestly the best gifts*” 1 Corinthians 12:28-31a.

“*Having then gifts differing*

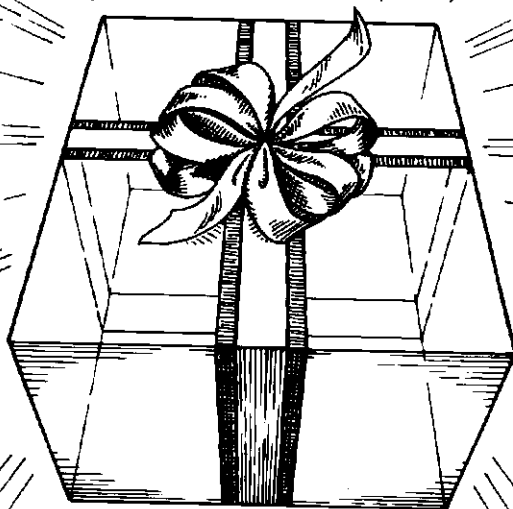
according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" Romans 12:6-8.

Look at these quotes. Where do you best fit in these lists? What gifts do you have that can be used for the work of the Spirit. In discussion offer God's word, not your own opinion. Those with a gift for teaching can lead Bible studies, children's workshops, etc. Many gifted people serve behind the scenes with encouragement, support and prayer. Others have the gift of mercy or compassion and come into their element giving to the sick in hospitals or working for the poor and less fortunate. Others have the gift of evangelism and with it the ability to communicate about God's Word to the masses. All believers' gifts are used again and again by God to draw more people to Him. There are many other ways in which the gifts of the Spirit can be used to enhance your relationship not only with Him, but with your co-worshippers too. All these gifts, though, do have something in common – they come alive in serving other

people. When we employ our spiritual gifts others benefit.

In the "Body of Christ" (the Church or Group of Believers) each will contribute their own gift and will also recognize the importance of the gifts of others in bringing the Church to maturity.

Peter was writing about the coming of the New Kingdom, the Millennium, and advising believers on how to live their lives in expectation of this great event. His advice is even more pertinent now than it was then. Paul enforces Peter's teaching by giving us a list of the anti-God actions and feelings that will rob us of our hope – the Life of the Body. In Romans 1:29-32



*Every good endowment and
every perfect gift is from above...*

JAMES 1:17

Paul details clearly those actions which will surely “bring you death”, he states that “...being filled with all

- . unrighteousness,
- . fornication,
- . wickedness,
- . covetousness,
- . maliciousness;

full of

- . full of envy,
- . murder,
- . debate,
- . deceit,
- . malignity,
- . whisperers,
- . backbiters,
- . haters of God,
- . spiteful,
- . proud,
- . boasters,
- . inventors of evil things,
- . disobedient to parents,
- . without understanding,
- . covenant breakers,
- . without natural affection,
- . implacable,
- . unmerciful:

who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Paul felt the warning was important enough for him to repeat it in Galatians 5:19-21. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,

heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things **shall not inherit the kingdom of God**”. A definite warning for Israel. As Christian Israelites hoping for the Life of the Body these are the actions and attitudes that can most endanger this hope. These actions lead to death. Instead, Christians and most especially Christian Israelites who are following the example of Jesus Christ, should manifest the Fruits of the Spirit as set out in Galatians 5 which display evidence of their relationship with Christ in their everyday life. These are:

- . love
- . joy
- . peace
- . longsuffering
- . gentleness
- . goodness
- . faith
- . meekness
- . temperance

So with the Second Coming closer than ever we should heed Peter’s warning and follow his guidelines and watch and wait patiently living lives prayerfully focused upon God’s Will for us and letting Him guide our hearts to develop a relationship with Him. Let your Fruits of the Spirit grow through the maturing of your faith and others will benefit. Focus on your individual Gifts of the Spirit and use them to glorify Him who gave them to you and watch your life change!📖

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise, sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity” Psalm 98:4-9.

Expand Your Bible:

Go Ye Out To Meet Him



The year 2000 was heralded in with great fanfare and celebration. It marked the beginning of a new year...a new century...a new millennium (some said). No longer would we write for the date of the year 19___. The 19's had gone and the 20's were in !

And then of course the controversy began. Was it really the beginning of the millennium – or was 2001 the actual start? There were very valid arguments for both dates, and now that the millennium is well under way did it matter that much? On our calendar a new millennium is on its way.

When we consider it, to be there at the commencement of a new millennium is a big event and a privilege. After all it only happens once in a thousand years and has only happened twice since Jesus' birth.

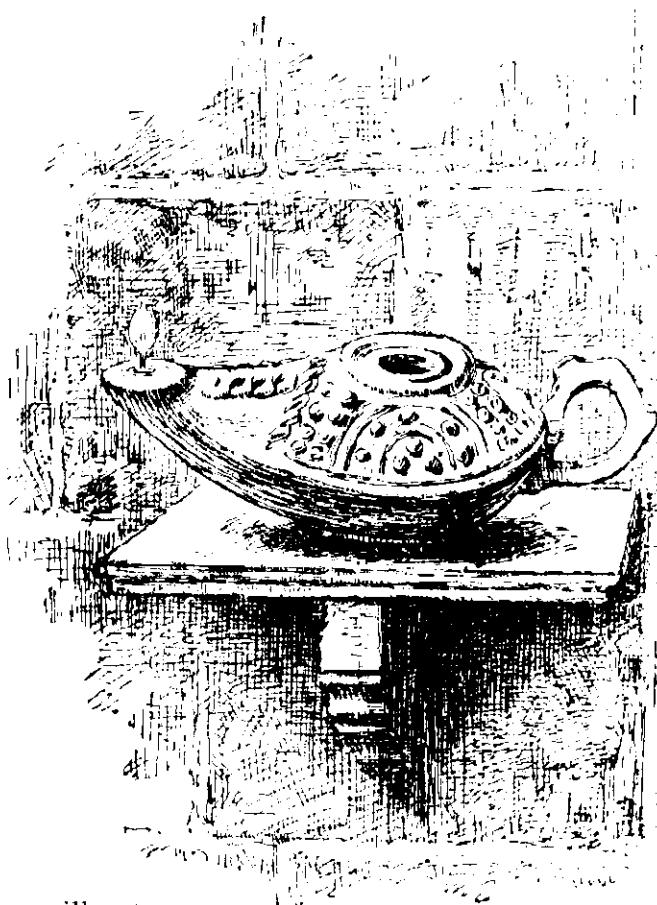
And what changes have taken place in the last millennium. In the year 1000 Australia was an unknown country and unheard of in the known world. Even 300 years ago there was no electricity, no phones, no computers, no planes. There have been so many discoveries. Even in the last 20 years knowledge has increased amazingly. A book which has been written about what it was like to live in the Year 1000 was introduced by a Radio Announcer recently and in a talkback session listeners were asked "What would you miss most if you lived in the year 1000?" Some very interesting answers were given. What would you miss most? There are so many choices I don't know which is the most important.

Our thoughts, when we think of 'millennium' turn to the millennial period

written about in the Bible (Revelation chapter 20). When does it start? Does it have a commencement date? Is it entered on the calendar – "Millennium start here". How and when does it begin? What will happen during this time?

There is a story (parable) told in the Bible about a wedding. A group of guests were waiting for the Bridegroom to arrive to escort him into the wedding feast. For some reason he was delayed – maybe they had miscalculated his E.T.A. – so they waited and waited. Some of the group were vigilant – not only did they have their lamps filled with oil, but they had stocked up with extra, in case of delay. The others didn't bother to be prepared. As we read in Matthew 25:3, they had their lamps but no oil. They all slumbered and slept while the Bridegroom delayed his arrival. Suddenly the cry went out "He's here...Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." All are familiar with how the story ends...the Bridegroom arrived...those who were ready went with Him into the feast, while those who were not missed out. They made a last minute hurried trip to be prepared (in this story to buy oil for their lamps) but when they were ready to join, the celebration was closed and they missed out.

When Jesus (the bridegroom) returns to this world to sort out the problems and set up His Kingdom who will be ready and waiting to meet Him? At this time the millennial period will begin – one thousand years in which man



will get to know God and to follow His ways and enjoy the blessings this brings. People will learn to live in peace and harmony with others and their surroundings. Satan will not be around to tempt them to evil and hatred. This is a time which we cannot imagine.

When does this time begin? Like those people in the story who waited for the Bridegroom, we don't really know

when Jesus will return. We read prophecies from the Bible that point to a certain time and we believe this time to be very close at hand. There is a warning given in 2 Peter 3:3,4 which reads, *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?..."*. We count time, but to God time is nothing. But then Peter also warns us in verse 9, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness..."* He has promised to return – He surely will! To conclude his discourse about the last days and as a final instruction, Peter writes (v10) *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"*. This is Satan trying to catch us unawares and unprepared so that we will fear Jesus' return.

So, like the people in the parable, and like our forefathers, we await Jesus' return, knowing it will happen at some appointed time.

Are we ready for this millennium? Do we welcome or fear it?☐

*"...the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. **Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh**"* Matthew 25:10-13 (emphasis added).

Statement of Belief

The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures. Here is an outline:

We Believe

- * In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- * In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- * That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6)
- * That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- * That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were "for their good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- * That all have sinned and come "*short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19).
- * That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- * That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:44).
- * That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- * That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20)
- * That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21)
- * That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9).
- * That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- * That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation chapter 19).

We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.

Lazarus

Who was Lazarus? Well, from our Bibles we know that he was the brother of Martha and Mary and that he was from the town of Bethany (John 11:1,2). Jesus describes Lazarus as ‘his friend’ and tells of his love for the family at Bethany (John 11:5). In John chapters 11 and 12 we read of Lazarus – the sick man who Jesus raised from the dead. What stands out on first reading of these chapters is the obvious affection with which Jesus held Lazarus, *“Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick...Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus”* John 11:3,5. The sisters (Mary and Martha) had such faith in Jesus, that when their brother got sick, they sent to Jesus to tell Him so He could come and heal Lazarus. But Jesus did not depart straight away for his friend’s bedside. Our Bible tells us that, *“When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.”* John 11:6.

Why the delay in reaching his friend’s side? Jesus tells his disciples that Lazarus is sleeping. Jesus doesn’t see death as a finality, but rather a time of slumber when the soul sleeps. In Matthew 27:52, *“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many”*, and Acts 7:60, *“And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”*. It would appear that ‘sleep’ is the death of those who believe in Jesus Christ because sleep is incompatible with suffering, weariness, or pain and when viewed in the light of Luke 16:19-31 (the parable of the rich man) it

can be seen that those who go to hell, do not sleep peacefully but are tortured constantly by what they have missed out on – eternal life with Jesus Christ. The disciples question this, as with most of the Master’s analogies they were locked into the physical rather than opening their hearts and minds to the important spiritual message He was trying to impart. Jesus explains that Yes, Lazarus is dead, but it is only a sleep. By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany Lazarus has lain in the grave for 4 days.

Lazarus was the **3rd person** Jesus had raised from the dead. The **first time** was in Luke 8:49-56 when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus while her body was still in her father’s house. *“While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.”*

The **second time** was in Luke 7:11-16 when Jesus raised the widow’s son from Nain. Jesus and his disciples were travelling and they came upon the dead son of a widow’s funeral procession. *“And it came*

to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." The passage actually states that the son was on a bier. (A bier is a wooden frame, partly resembling a coffin and partly a hand-barrow. The dead were carried out in this with the feet bound, the body wrapped in grave clothes, and a shawl over the face. Four men carried it on their shoulders by two poles projected at each end from the corners.) So the dead son was on a bier on his way to be buried. Lazarus, though, had lain in his grave for 4 days.

If you look at the above 3 instances you notice a progression. The 1st child had only just died from illness, the body probably still warm, so fresh had been her death. The 2nd person (the son) had been dead at least long enough to have been prepared and anointed for burial, wrapped in burial clothes, a bier made and a funeral procession started, so you could safely say he had been dead about 2 days. And finally, the 3rd person, Lazarus had been dead 4 days. The period of time the recipients of this miracle had been dead (or asleep) became longer as Jesus' ministry came closer to fruition.

The raising of people from the dead was not a new concept to the Israelites. In Old Testament times both Elijah and Elisha had raised people from the dead.

Elijah raised the son of the

Zarephath widow from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24), *"And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth".*

Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-37).

"And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child: and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called

Gehazi and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out."

A man was raised from the dead when his body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:20-21), *"And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood upon his feet"*.

These miracles of Elijah and Elisha's though, required a lot more physical activity than those performed by Jesus Christ, who literally just laid hands on them or simply spoke.

So, what happened to Lazarus after he was raised from the dead. Well, we know that after the death of Jesus many of the disciples scattered and many sources document that Lazarus was one of the occupants in the boat without oars, cast adrift by the Romans, with Joseph of Arimathea and many others on board. This boat eventually followed the currents and ended up in Britain. Articles on these subjects have been written before, so I won't rehash the history here. Suffice it to say Lazarus was responsible for the bringing of the Christian message to England and later Joseph of Arimathea is said to have sent Lazarus to Gaul to spread the Gospel there. In Britain he is credited with the authorship of *"The Triads of Lazarus"* and these are still preserved in the ancient Celtic records of Britain. Lazarus went direct to Marseilles, where the drifting boat had first arrived. Roger

of Hovedon, writing of Marseilles, says: "Marseilles is an episcopal city under the domination of the King of Aragon. Here are the relics of St. Lazarus, the brother of St. Mary Magdalene and Martha, who held the Bishopric for seven years". The ancient church records at Lyons confirm the same: "Lazarus returned to Gaul from Britain to Marseilles, taking with him Mary Magdalene and Martha. He was the first appointed Bishop. He died there seven years later". Lazarus is remembered in France and is regarded as the Apostle of Gaul. Monuments, liturgies, relics and traditions to Lazarus still remain today at Marseilles, Lyons, Aix, St. Maximin, La Sainte Baume and other places.

Lazarus was the first of the Josephian boat group to die - as stated above he died a natural death 7 years after returning to Marseilles. He is said to have died around AD44 and 45.

Raising people from the dead did not cease with Jesus' resurrection. Peter and Paul both performed this miracle in their mission work. **Peter raised Dorcas** (Acts 9:36-41), *"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth,*

and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.” and Eutychus was raised from the dead by Paul, “And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul

went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted” Acts 29:9-12.

Over the years the word “Lazarus” has crept into our language to indicate someone who haws had a second chance after appearing to have failed at something.📖

Vegetarian Recipes

Vegetable Curry

1 medium broccoli, cut into florets
1 medium onion
2 medium garlic cloves, pressed
2 carrots, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 small can of crushed tomatoes

1 tspoon curry powder (mild or hot)
1/2 tspoon cumin
1/2 tspoon turmeric
tamari to taste (or soya sauce)
1 cup plain yoghurt
2 cups cooked brown rice

Saute onion and garlic in a little oil for about 5 minutes. Add celery, carrots and broccoli. Saute another 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, spices and tamari. Cover and cook till broccoli and carrots are tender (don't overcook leave the vegetables a little crunchy). Add yoghurt right before serving. Spoon over rice and serve with other Indian side dishes such as dahl, cucumber salad, etc.

Cheese & Lentil Wedges

225g red lentils (washed and rinsed)
450 ml water
1 lge onion
25g butter
100g grated cheddar cheese

1 tspn mixed herbs
1 egg
25g breadcrumbs
salt & pepper to taste

Cook lentils in the water until soft and all liquid absorbed. Chop onion, melt butter in saucepan and fry onion until transparent. Combine all ingredients together and press into an oiled 23cm sandwich tin. Bake in 190degC oven for 30 minutes. Serve hot or cold, in wedges.