



OUR FINEST HOUR

OF course, having the benefit of history, we now know better. Winston Churchill had no idea of what the Third Reich had planned for the world in the spring of 1940, not really. Yes, the man with the little mustache had written a book while in prison, and there were reports that his nation had already steam rolled much of western Europe, but he couldn't believe such things: it must be Fake News. So he had simply given an address to the nation in which he hinted that the Allies were actually *winning* on the mainland. No one wanted to believe that they were on the verge of another world wide conflict: no one.

Some would charge him with lying to the people dependent upon his leadership. Yet he simply could not believe that the French had been completely flattened by the German blitzkrieg; they *must* have a plan for a counter-attack. Surely they were not going to take this lying down!

French Generals thought him delusional, while his own political party and leadership (in the know) were urging accommodation for the man with the little mustache. After all, Germany was a nation with a rich heritage: one of the most educated, sophisticated, and *intelligent* in the world! Will Chamberlain had returned from a conference with Mr. Hitler that gave him assur-

ances of Great Britain's being safe and secure.

Italy, Germany's ally stood willing and ready to act as an intermediary—and yet something wasn't right. Churchill sensed deep in his heart that Hitler was really up to no good. No, he had no solid evidence; certainly no knowledge of the holocaust that was about to be un-leashed across Europe (which some, even today with *solid evidence*, still deny).

Even so, he would humble himself, go the low road, and submit to common sense: he would admit what he simply believed the man on the street would (in hindsight) one day recognize as a true evil in our world. Facing down evil, it seemed, would one day pay rich dividends,

in their nation’s future. Churchill had made up his mind. He would gird his nation for trials and even great tribulation in the resistance of a great evil—soon to result in their nation’s undergoing a conflict that would mark Great Britain’s “finest hour”—even if, he believed, it might cost them everything.

It was worth the effort to simply do what he knew to be right.

Today, Christians in the West are beginning to realize that we are facing new challenges that “do not set right” with our consciences. The cost of resistance is increasingly unsavory. Warnings within our holy Book speak of a conflict that is simply too dark and unpleasant (with great trial & Tribulation); that is simply too emotionally charged for “decent people” to even consider when reading the pages of that Book. Many have opted to believe that in the West we must all escape, and maintain “peace in our time.” Yet . . . is this true? Is the way forward, the way of honor and righteousness, to be one without trial and tribulation for the faithful? What do the words of our Book actually *say*? For Jesus clearly states that within this world we will have Tribulation: and He said this just before going to the Cross (John 16:33)! Is God abandoning us to a dust bin of history . . . or offering us an opportunity to engage in what will one day be known as the church’s *finest hour*?

*Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For
the trumpet will sound, and the
dead will be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.*

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

FOR BELIEVERS ONLY!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has a benefits package that is out of this world. Crafted by the Creator of the universe to provide for the “health care needs” of (former) illegal immigrants (to Heaven), this package provides for the maintenance and upkeep of incorruptible bodies that will not get sick, grow old, or be destroyed by any enemy: foreign or domestic (upon earth or by Hell itself).

Such is no mere pipe dream for, as the apostle Paul clearly explains within his letter to the church at Corinth (quoted from above) the down payment on this promise has already been certified and demonstrated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Such certification was held secret and uncertain from the beginning of human creation to the time of Christ’s coming. For although the prophets of the Old Testament had hinted and intimated at such a possibility (or outright stated it, in passages like Isaiah 26:19, or Daniel 12:2, for example)

this “care package” for all of the faithful within this world was not offered in a forthright and clear manner until Jesus Christ arrived and removed all doubt concerning the matter by raising several people from the dead—as with Lazarus’ return to life after four days in a tomb—and then arising from the dead Himself after a barbaric and brutal crucifixion upon a Roman cross.

And yet, the God of the Bible is also the God of glorious extremes, as well: not only granting His children a spiritual existence beyond this life (which would, in and of itself be wonderful, by allowing us to maintain our consciousness, without merely melding into oblivion with the molecules and dust all about us)—but to actually restore to each believer a better “tent” or new body that is not only fully functional, but superior to the bodies we now live in. As the apostle Paul describes it:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

Then, in a letter to another church in the Greek city of Corinth, he also explains how we are to understand the lives Christians will live beyond this one: both asking and answering a simple question:

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.³⁷ And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain.³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

The apostle continues:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44)

In other words, just as a seed must fall into the ground and die, so too will we all one day lay our present bodies down, into the ground, to allow it to pass away as God gives (to the believer) a far superior new body. The seed, by comparison, was bland and relatively without form, while the flower that it becomes far excels in beauty, compared to the nature the seed had before its placement into the ground to die to its old self.

Yet, there is also a glorious way this will take place that will make gardening look like a pop gun compared to dynamite. For at the conclusion of the age, the Scriptures tell us, this transformation will take place in an instant: even explosively. As the apostle continues to explain to the church at Corinth (quoted in our opening text): this

event will take place in a moment of time: quite literally in an *atom* of time—so that, by definition, **NO EVENTS WHATEVER WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN THE TIME GOD CALLS THE SAINTS TO LIFE, AND THE MOMENT WE EXPERIENCE OUR NEW BODIES!**

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

Or, as Paul explained to the Thessalonians:

Behold, I tell you a mystery:



¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together*

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DEEP "WATERS"



... as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 24:3

The Christian concept of grace (undeserved favor with God) is firmly established upon a foundation of justice, and of God's Law. It is similar to describing the job of a fireman, as the agency by which our culture rescues people from a houses that are on fire. Those who followed Jesus understood this reality, as well as the statement that He had just made, that actually prompted the above question.

Obviously, they world that Christ was describing was an era of a world history with its "house on fire:" a time of divine judgments, and of very great peril. For Christ had just told them that their beloved temple, which King Herod had taken over 40 years to build, and which had foundation stones weighing several tons apiece, would one day be so violated that not one stone would be left standing upon another.

Thus humankind's doorway back into Paradise, that was not only closed, but blocked and locked (so to speak) by Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden . . . would now require a massive infusion of spiritual power, as was introduced by the arrival of God Himself, through the Messiah . . . coming as a baby. **And yet even the very event of the Messiah's birth was announced within the context of judgment and devastation.** No kidding, just listen to the words that lead up to Isaiah's beautiful pronouncement of that babe in the manger:

⁵ For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be

used for burning and fuel of fire.

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:5-6

So that when Israel's Messiah (Jesus, Whose name *Yeshua*, in Hebrew, means "Yaweh is Salvation") begins His reply to inquiring disciples, He first warns us not to be deceived. He also warns of "wars and rumors of wars" (vss. 4-6).

Such an opening was to be expected. Was it not? As with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel? Jesus was not saying anything strange to the hearing of those gathered around Him for advice. His manner was gracious, yes, but Jesus was clearly couching His teaching on divine justice—with Himself as the escape hatch into both hope and peace. "I am the Way," He told disciples, "no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). In another place He had stated plainly that He is **the Door** and the **Good Shepherd**, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

*Then Jesus said to them again,
"Most assuredly, I say to you, I
am the door of the sheep"*

John 10:1,2,7

Jesus, The Good Shepherd:

Whenever following the Master, it was always understood that His way was one of both restriction and of liberty at the same time(!): like sheep who follow their shepherd and are protected—so long as they keep close by their Shepherd's side. He would leave the 99 to find that one lost sheep, yes, but once found, it was understood that the little lamb was then to amend its way and stay close by the shepherd's side. It's a dangerous

world out there, with wolves and thieves everywhere, seeking to steal the most valuable possession that we have, *our very souls*. Yes, Jesus is the Good Shepherd and He wants only what is the best for us. For although the Way is glorious, and ultimately leads to the golden streets of Paradise, it is yet a restricted path, with dangers lurking on every side for those who go astray:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

Matthew 7:13

It is within this context that Jesus also spoke of a "thinning process" or "shake down" if you will, at the end of the age, which we better understand as we examine how He described (what we Christians now call) the rapture, within this discourse atop the mountain on which He then sat and to which He will soon return in the sky (Zech. 14:1-3)! There will be false christs and false messiahs, Jesus warned, and very many false teachers preceding His returning in the skies.

²³ *Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.*

Matthew 24:23-25

So how *will* He return? Of course, we know. No longer walking around upon the earth incognito (vs. 24) — Jesus will return in the sky!

Like Lightning Flashes:

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Matthew 24:27-28

That reference to lightning flashing, and of eagles being gathered together, was the first New Testament reference to the rapture of the saints. The "eagles" (a reference to those who believe in, and wait upon the Lord — Isaiah 40:31) represent the faithful who will be gathered to His side in the sky as Christ returns in a visible and literal body ("carcass") in the sky. **It is also an indirect reference to another event, that will be taking place on the ground,** as the armies of this world will gather against the

nation of Israel, and Jerusalem begins to be overrun as they decimate that tiny nation in one last "final solution" (or, so they think) to this old world's problems.

—So that while the world around us will continue to deny the reality and the eternal Glory of Christ as they declare Him to be a mere "carcass" (dead and lifeless) it is *their* carcasses that will litter the fields at His returning. And yes, this venal denial, and anti-Christian bias, will have finally resulted in the rise of the one commonly called the Antichrist: whose ultimate "fake news" will suffer a death blow.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Note that I am *not* referring to CNN, or Fox News, here. I refer to the ultimate deception, at the end of the age. (Yes, I know, we really are getting into deep waters, here . . .).

Just one more (somewhat unpleasant) reality that must be breached, before we get to Christ's ultimate description of His coming, after making repeated warnings

throughout this discourse of His final return at the end of the age. It is an unpleasant reality that is restated throughout the New Testament: describing the fake news within a spiritual "deep state" of sorts, as deception proliferates even among God's people (see the very next chapter opening, in Matthew 25:1-10, for one famous example, — or Paul's letter to the Thessalonians 2:1-3, for another). This will be the ultimate shake down, if you will. It will involve a separation of the wheat from the chaff, and a separation of the "fake" from real Christians. Jesus described this in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew within His kingdom parables.

Jesus & His Parables:

Jesus loved to use parables: Now, a "parable" is a word picture, or illustration, of a serious event or spiritual reality. In this case, He is describing an ominous event scheduled to take place within the church at the end of the age.

True, what follows is a general description, yet the prayerful will seek God's face for its ultimate application, for there can be no doubt whatever; **IT IS A WARNING!**

This parable starts, as they so often did, with a farming illustration of sowing seed. In this case however, there is something wrong with some of the seed sown in the field.

(Continued)

This is the first New Testament reference to the rapture of the saints. . . as Christ returns in a literal, physical body (. . . in the sky)

²⁴ *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."*

Matthew 13:24-25

Counterfeit Christians & the "tares"

As Jesus continues His story line, it becomes increasingly evident that the tares (plants that, at first, look like the intended wheat to be harvested) are spread out everywhere within the field. These are, what we might call "counterfeit Christians." The ministering workers who have planted the good seed recognize the counterfeit plants, and ask if they should begin weeding the garden, to keep the final harvest clean and neat. Jesus however, like the good shepherd that He is, cares so much for the little lambs, and is so concerned over the effects that the "deep state" might have upon the faithful in the field—cautions against being too critical and "picky" at this point. "No," Jesus advises, "lest you also uproot the wheat with them." He then gives us a peek into a future "shakedown."

"Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

Matthew 13:30

With this background of a Final Separation behind us (where the counterfeit are grouped together, to be judged) we are now ready to examine, and to explain, Christ's final description of the rapture within Matthew's twenty-fourth chapter, as we tip-toe into the deep waters of His description of Noah and the flood as an example of His returning at the end of the age.

Noah's Flood, as a "Parable"

With Noah's flood, you may recall, only a few were rescued within Noah's Ark. It is irrefutable that those in the Ark represent those who will be rescued at Christ's returning: these are the faithful. There has been confusion over the language used to describe what will be happening outside of the Ark of safety, however, and this is where our earlier explora-

tion of a final "shake down" will be beneficial. To quote our Savior:

³⁷ *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,*

until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² *Watch therefore, for you do not know what*

hour your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:37-42

... getting lost in deep water . . . ?



The Final Separation

Some seem to "get in over their head" (get lost in deep water?) with this passage, and yet the explanation can be easily understood: When the passage says "one will be taken and the other left" *within the context of Noah's flood*, some seek to infer that those "taken" are the ones actually left on the ground, waiting to be washed away by the flood—and they are right, to a degree. For *all* on the ground being "washed away" are the tares in the field, and false believers, who WILL NOT BE "TAKEN" INTO THE ARK of safety!

To be honest, therefore, we must acknowledge that the above passage is actually describing the Final Separation, earlier spoken of by Jesus, where those who are taken . . . are the ones to be lifted up (above this world's troubled waters) to meet Christ in the air as He is returning in the skies over Jerusalem.

So then, what is the conclusion of all these matters? It is this: we must be watchful, so that we are not among those who are *swept away* by the forces of judgment, but instead are *swept up* INTO THE LORD'S PRESENCE, forever more, on that Great Day!

(Continued from page 3)

= For Believers Only! =

*with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Please consider with me, if you will, a few details revealed within this glorious declaration:

1. Paul, a Jew, says to Gentiles that “we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together” with those believers who have died before we have: to join Christ in the air as He descends from the heavenly realm, to our earth. —This revelation relates to *both Gentiles and believing Jews*.
2. Some imagine that all of this will take place secretly, even silently, because Scripture also states that when Christ returns He will do so “as a thief in the night” —yet a similar passage also explains *within the very same sentence* that “the heavens will pass away with a great noise (1 Peter 3:10). Further the apostle Paul notes that . . . No, let us allow Paul to speak for himself, shall we?

*For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*⁴ *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*⁵ *You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*⁶ *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

1 Thessalonians 5:3-6

And the Apostle Paul continues:

⁷ *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*⁸ *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

⁹ *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

1 Thessalonians 5:7-9

In other words: Scripture clearly teaches that:

- Both Jewish and Gentile believers will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air, at the same time.

- Believers are *not* promised escape from tribulation (Jn. 16:33), but *are* promised deliverance from God’s wrath.

So as this old earth will be rocking and rolling as Christ descends to the Mount of Olives and it splits in two (compare Acts 1:11, Zech 14:3,4 & Isaiah chapter 24!!)—the faithful will be safe and sound at the side of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thes. 4:17,18). For as He descends we, with our new bodies, will suddenly become “weightless” and join Him in the sky with our incorruptible bodies, having suddenly been transformed from living in bodies that are corruptible, weak, and prone to decay and death, into immortal persons: alive, with new bodies like the angels (superior, actually) as we prepare to live and reign with Him throughout all eternity.

Yes, yes, I know: I’ve given you the “Cliff Notes” version of this phenomena known by Christians as the “rapture” (referring to our being enraptured and caught up to the side of Christ). Yet this amazing secret and supernatural prize, was reserved as a “surprise gift” for revelation to the Church after Christ had ascended into heaven from the Mt. of Olives, where two angels stood by as He was ascending into the heavens, saying:

. . . "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

—Which matches the prophet Zechariah’s description of Christ’s returning, exactly: For they were standing at the Mt. of Olives (Acts 1:11,12), where one day:

. . . the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

⁴ *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.*

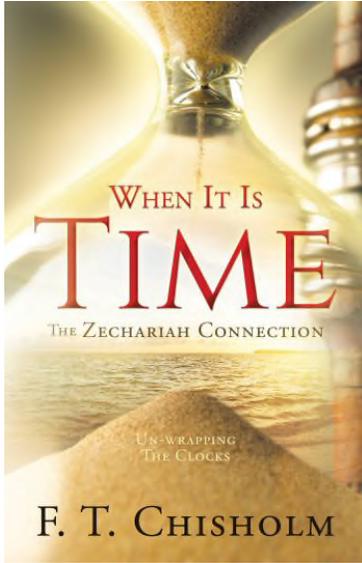
Zechariah 14:1-4 [emphasis added]

And now you know the rest of the story: or, at least, have a much better idea of how all of this brouhaha within our present mixed up world, will finally come to an end. Yet remember, that at the time of Christ’s ministry on earth, disciples had no idea of these details pending in our future. So, how would Jesus prepare His disciples for this mystery??

That is the subject of our second article.

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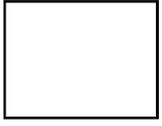
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A Comprehensive Approach
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What Must I Do?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”
 Acts 16:31

How?

... If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:9,10

In Other Words

Acknowledge: your need

—as a sinner (Romans 3:23, II Cor. 5:14-15)

Accept: His work on the Cross —to be your Savior

Confess: your acceptance of His lordship over you.

Live for Him: with your new life.

For the scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed.”

Romans 10:11

ENDNOTES;

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