

**THE
RETURN OF
CHRIST**

**His different comings
and the events connected to them**

**A Biblical Exposition
by Missionary Ewald Frank**

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Foreword

I have decided to write this brief exposition because of the urgency of this subject. While at times certain subjects were only touched upon, more than 200 Bible references were used. This gives the reader the opportunity to search further and to be led by the Spirit of God into the unsearchable riches of His Word. While writing, two things were especially impressed on me, filling me with joy: firstly, for the great privilege and blessing of being able to look into the plan of salvation in such a deep way; secondly, for the fact that I do not need to defend any denomination or any school of doctrine. I can simply lay things out the way they are. I believe that (in so far as it is possible) God has granted me the grace to penetrate into His thoughts and His great plan for humanity. Like David, I could testify: *“Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name”* (Ps. 138: 2); and like Paul: *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”* (Rom. 13).

One of the great men of God who were used after the time of the apostles was Ireneus, who said, “To those who pleased Him, God showed His great architectural plan of Salvation.” One song writer put it like this, *“Let me be still, Lord, that is my prayer, still that I may see the wonders in Thy Word.”* The words of our Lord still apply today, *“It is hid to the wise of this world and revealed to those who willingly receive and are taught by the Spirit.”*

I pray that all readers will be spiritually blessed, and that they might be built up in the most precious faith of the glorious Word of God. Everyone should take the liberty of searching the Scriptures to see if things are so. Many books could be written if one were to endeavour to cover these themes thoroughly — this brief exposition is meant only as an introduction. The rest is between you and God. May His blessed Word be a blessing to all whom He has already blessed.

Krefeld, December 1988

The Editor

**THE RETURN OF CHRIST,
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and the events connected to them**

As with every Bible theme, we find the passages about the return of Christ and about His various other comings, scattered everywhere. These Scriptures must be properly put together and placed rightfully where they belong to. Indeed, there are several comings, but only one return of Christ, when He, the Heavenly Bridegroom, will meet the earthly Bride in the air (I Th. 4: 13-18) and take her home to the wedding supper (Rev. 19: 1-10).

The return of Christ was not mentioned in the so-called “Apostolic Creed” — of which the early apostles, of course, had no knowledge, as it was only formulated in the 4th century A.D. The taking away of the true believers (or “rapture”, to use the term as some expositors will do) — this great event which takes place at the end of the time of grace for the gentiles, was not even mentioned in that Creed. It says only, “...from hence He will come to judge the living and the dead.” The final judgment known as the “White Throne Judgment” will only be after the one thousand years reign (Rev. 20: 11-15).

The incorrect teachings about this theme were already introduced in the first centuries after Christ. We continue to find them — perhaps in a slightly altered form — even in some churches today. Augustine (354-430) who is very highly regarded by some church historians, taught that the new birth is the first resurrection. But Paul, who was held in high esteem by Augustine, was trying to attain the first resurrection as his final goal, even though he *was* already born again and was filled with the Holy Ghost (Phil. 3: 10-11). According to Augustine, Satan was already bound, and the church was looked upon as to be in the Millennial reign. The united power of state and church became known as the “God-state”.

We shall not take time to refer to what men have said through the ages, but simply set out the biblical standpoint. Strangely, not one of the apostles has dealt exhaustively with the subject of the return of Christ from beginning to end; rather, many Scriptures are scattered throughout the Bible and they have to be properly placed. The believers in the days of the apostles had the privilege of listening to many of the teachings and preachings on these subjects. Paul, for instance, could say that he was preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20: 27). Apparently, in their letters to the churches, the apostles took it for granted that these things were already known. They simply reminded them here and there of what they had previously taught in the different local assemblies. To paint a

complete picture of the subject, we have to search for the respective places in the whole Scriptures and put them rightfully together.

From the Gospel of Matthew right to the end of the Book of Revelation we find statements about the various comings of the Lord and about His return. Therefore, it is necessary to search carefully to find out on every occasion what coming is being spoken of. These scriptural references are not set in a chronological order.

To see how important it is to understand what is being spoken of, we will choose two Bible passages. Sometimes they may sound similar, and yet can be referring to totally different events or sets of circumstances. In Mt. 25: 1-10 we are told of those who would be ready when the Bridegroom comes and they go with Him **into the Wedding Supper**. In Lk. 12: 35-40 we read of those who wait for their Lord, as He **comes back from the Wedding Supper**. Between these two events is a space of years, and two different comings and two different groups are being spoken of. At the same time similar or even the same words — for example “Wedding Supper”, “lamps” and being “ready” — are found in both of these Scriptures.

Various events are connected with every coming of the Lord. It is important to keep in mind that there was the fulfilment of over a hundred prophecies at the first coming of Christ. As touching the New Testament church, she experiences three comings: The first time the Lord came as Saviour to redeem His own; the second time He comes as Bridegroom to take the redeemed home (which will be His promised return); and thirdly, after the Wedding Supper He comes with His own (Rev. 19: 11-16) to fight all the forces of the enemy, after which He establishes the millennial reign on earth.

We shall deal primarily with the return of Christ and the taking away of the Bride church at His second coming. The attainment of this highest goal is the longing of every redeemed. All true believers have waited to see that day, since Christ ascended to heaven. He said before leaving His own, *“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also”* (Jn. 14: 2-3). Time and again He has referred to this great event.

In Mt. 24 the disciples showed their master the beautiful temple. To their astonishment His response to this was, *“See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down”* (Mt. 24: 2).

After this they asked Him three questions:

- 1) *“Tell us, when shall these things be?”*
- 2) *“and what shall be the sign of thy coming?”*
- 3) *“and of the end of the age?”* All who read the chapter carefully will

note that Jesus answered those three questions. In reference to His second coming He said, “*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the **coming** of the Son of man be*” (Mt. 24: 27).

“*But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the **coming** of the Son of man be*” (Mt. 24: 37).

“*... and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the **coming** of the Son of man be*” (Mt. 24: 39).

“*Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth **come***” (Mt. 24: 42).

“*Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man **cometh***” (Mt. 24: 44).

“*And while they went to buy, the bridegroom **came**, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage*” (Mt. 25: 10).

“*Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man*” (Lk. 21: 36).

During the days of the apostles and the early christian era there was a living hope and expectation of the return of Jesus Christ in the hearts of those who believed. Many Bible passages give witness to this hope. Please consider also the following scriptural references prayerfully.

“*... when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall **send** Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you*” (Acts 3: 19b-20)

“*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he **come***” (I Cor. 11: 26).

“*... how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come*” (I Th. 1: 9–10).

“*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his **coming**?*” (I Th. 2: 19).

“*For the Lord himself shall **descend** from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*” (I Th. 4: 16).

“*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (I Th. 5: 23).

“*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him*” (II Th. 2: 1).

“*... that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the **appearing** of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (I Tim. 6: 14).

“*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only,*

but unto all them also that love his **appearing**” (II Tim. 4: 8).

“For yet a little while, and he that shall **come** will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10: 37).

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the **coming** of the Lord ... Be ye also patient, establish your hearts; for the **coming** of the Lord draweth near” (Jas. 5: 7–8).

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ ...” (II Pet. 1: 16).

“... 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**?” (II Pet. 3: 3–4).

“Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall **appear**, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I Jn. 3: 2).

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his **coming**” (I Cor. 15: 22-23).

It will actually happen

This listing of many Bible references shows us the importance of that great event. Not too long after the death of the apostles, men rose up who spiritualized the return of Jesus Christ. The same thing is happening right up to this day. Men die, but the spirits do not. They seize those who are ready to propagate wrong doctrines. The theory of the organization which claims that the Kingdom of God was born and established on earth in 1914 is quite commonly known. Similar teachings in connection with the setting of dates were in circulation before and after this time. Once again the phrase “the parousia of Christ” is presently in common usage. Those who teach the “parousia doctrine” assert that Christ has come already and that He is now judging and so forth. Again the actual return of Christ is being spiritualized, and those who do this speak about a special revelation, special faith, special this and special that and say that these things will be known only by a special group. The same is claimed every time. Preaching is being done with much enthusiasm, and people don’t realize that they are actually being taken away from the Truth, and robbed of the glorious hope.

Such assertion may sound very pious, but they are wrong and misleading. The Greek word “parousia” in itself means “presence” which always makes a personal appearance or coming necessary. Para-ousia means “present substance”. For instance, if the president of the United States

enters the White House, that is parousia. Parousia is not fantasia; actual parousia is only existent after the visible and bodily coming of a person. Therefore there is no parousia of Christ without Him coming personally. Such a doctrine is simply nonsense. As His first presence or “epiphany” (parousia at His first coming) was truthful and real, in the same way His personal bodily coming (“parousia” or presence) at His return will be equally truthful and real. A doctrine about the parousia of Christ without Christ personally appearing has no logical and no biblical foundation.

The return of Jesus Christ and the events connected with it are not imagination or doctrine, they are realities. Paul writes, *“Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”* (I Cor. 15: 51). Everyone can read in Mt. 17 from verse 2 what changing or transfiguration means and how it transpires: *“Jesus was transfigured before them; and his face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light.”* John saw our Lord with the same countenance on the isle of Patmos, *“His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were like a flame of fire”* (Rev. 1: 12-18).

The transfiguration involves that *“this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”* (I Cor. 15: 53). In this completion and perfection there will be no growing older, but eternal youth. In Job 33: 23-28 we find the thought expressed that we shall be changed so that we are youthful again. There we read about the atonement and the intercessor: *“one among a thousand”*. Then in verse 24 the ransom which was found is described. In verse 25 it says, that the chosen would return to the days of their youth, in verse 26 that they shall pray to God, and that He will be favourable to them. Yes, we shall be brought back into the prime of our youth in the resurrection body. The changing will happen, *“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”* (I Cor. 15: 52).

This great event does not only concern the living at that time, but also those who went before us with this hope of glory. Job also expressed the resurrection by faith and said, *“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”* (Job 19: 25–26).

At the return of our Lord those who sleep in Christ will receive a resurrection body, as it is written, *“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body”* (I Cor. 15: 42-44).

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him**” (I Th. 4: 14). Whoever teaches that Christ has already come must tell us where those are whom God brought with Him. Secondly such a teaching places the living into a direct advantage compared with those who are asleep and this would contradict the clear statement of the Holy Scriptures: *“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord **shall not precede them who are asleep**. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ **shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air**” (I Th. 4: 15-17).**

Notice, the Lord does not return to the earth, but the overcomers, those who are asleep in Christ, will rise first and those who are alive will be changed, and together they will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. *“... and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Th. 4: 17).*

The Lord is present throughout the time of grace, as He promised, in spirit form. He is with His own, and where two or three are gathered in His name, He is in their midst. On the day of Pentecost He came in the Spirit to dwell in the redeemed, as He promised (Jn. 14: 18). *“... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2: 6).* The true believers are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, they seek the blessed city whose builder is God. At the same time they are already, *“fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2: 19).*

At the return of Christ all who are ordained to be in Glory, whether they are asleep or whether they are alive, will receive immortality by the quickening power of God and will be taken up to meet Him in the air. All, from His first coming right down to His return, who truly believed the Word of God preached in their day and experienced it, will meet Jesus Christ Who was their hope of glory. Amen! Paul puts it like this, *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Tim. 4: 8).* In every church age there were those who believed what the Spirit said unto the churches and believed that the return of the Lord would happen in their generation. They used the word “Maranatha”—the Lord cometh, because the longing was so deeply rooted in their hearts. They prayed, “So come, Lord Jesus.” They were not mistaken, neither were they disappointed. They just went before us and are waiting until all have come into the Kingdom of God. Right now, at this very end of time, a total harmony

of Word-Bridegroom and Word-Bride is taking place, so that finally the Spirit and the Bride say the same thing (Rev. 22: 17).

The chosen ones of the Old Testament period rose with Christ according to Mt. 27: 51-54. *“And these all, having received witness through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, **that they without us should not be made perfect**”* (Heb. 11: 39-40). They are waiting in paradise anticipating the hour, when **all** will see the completion. At that time the elect from the Old and the New Testament period will be at the great supper in Glory. Our Lord referred to it when He said, *“And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt. 8: 11).

Realized Longing

*“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God ... And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the **adoption, that is, the redemption of our body**”* (Rom. 8: 19+23).

According to Gen. 1: 27, *“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.”* This creation was in the spiritual body. Later the Lord God made man from the earth. *“And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground...”* (Gen. 2: 7). It was in this body of flesh that man fell. Therefore God who is Spirit had to become man in the Son to redeem us from this body of death and restore us back to be sons of God into divine fellowship with Him. Finally we shall be in His image, in the spiritual body. *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son”* (Rom. 8: 29).

“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15: 47-49).

Those who truly believe are longing to have part in the first resurrection, the changing of the body, and the taking away from this earth to glory.

“For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom. 8: 24). Through the once and for all accomplished work of redemption on the Cross of Calvary we are actually placed back into the same state we were before the fall. We are totally redeemed and are just waiting for the translation of this body.

Paul expresses his desire to participate in this privileged resurrection in the following verse: *“That I may know him, and the power of his re-*

urrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3: 10-11).

Just as it is certain that an earthly body is taken to the grave, in the same way we can be sure that a spiritual body will be resurrected. The true believers living at the time of the return of Jesus Christ will be changed and receive the resurrection body. *“Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I Jn. 3: 2).*

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified and buried, rose bodily on the third day. After this He was with His disciples forty days, teaching them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. He ate with them and had fellowship with them (Lk. 24: 36-49; Acts 1: 3). *“And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Lk. 24: 50-51). “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1: 9-11).***

As already mentioned, the return of Jesus Christ will be a reality, not a religious fantasy, but an undisputable fact with visible marks which will accompany that great event at the end of the time of grace. That which we read in Lk. 17: 34-36 will become a bitter reality to many: *“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”*

The Shout

According to I Th. 4: 16 three things will take place at the actual return of the Lord: 1) the shout 2) the voice of the archangel 3) the trumpet of God. This will all happen as the Lord descends from heaven to take the redeemed into glory.

In Jn. 11 one can read about His cry being a command. It happened in His earthly ministry: *“And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth” (vv. 43-44).*

When our Lord was dying, He cried with a loud voice, *“And, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two ... and the earth did quake, and*

the rocks were split; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept were raised” (Mt. 27: 50-52).

In Jn. 5: 25 He said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.”*

The word of our Lord is a command; it is the word of the Almighty. Whatever He says happens, and what He commands appears. His Word never returns void, but accomplishes that which it is sent for. In fact, He is upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1: 3). The Greek word shout (χρλευσματι) which is found in I Th. 4: 16, comes from the military language and denotes a commanding order. This happens as He starts descending from heaven. The word “shout” is also translated as a “commanding cry”; those who are asleep will be called forth by this shout. After this the bodily change of those who live in Christ will take place. In this the Lord of Lords shows His sovereignty and authority, as He is Lord over the living and the dead.

In Heb. 12: 26 we read, *“... whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”*

In Mt. 25 we are told about a cry which goes forth at midnight just **before** the coming of the bridegroom, *“Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”* This is the last and mighty cry **on earth** to awaken those who are spiritually asleep at the time of the return of Christ. Those who wake up, prepare their lamps and get ready for the coming of the Bridegroom. The impact of this cry will catch the wise and the foolish virgins alike: *“Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps”* (Mt. 25: 7). The foolish, of course, will be on their way to meet the Bridegroom as well, but then realize that they do not have enough oil to carry them through, and therefore cannot go in to the Wedding Supper.

With an open mind we need to compare the word “cry” (χρραυγη) of Mt. 25: 6, which in the Greek signifies the awakening call of the living who sleep spiritually, with the word “shout” (χρλευσματι) used in I Th. 4: 16. One can easily see that two totally different words are being used. The “cry” of Mt. 25 signifies the urgency of a message which will be among the believers living at that time on earth, and the “shout” of I Th. 4 will be the command as the Lord descends from heaven to call out those who are asleep in Christ.

Without any shadow of doubt the cry of Mt. 25 is now going forth. It is the last message through which the believers are awakened before the return of Christ. They hear the living Word of God and receive the fresh manna — the promised Word for today. God’s message is the Word for this hour which contains all the promises for the endtime. Only those

who now believe according to Scripture and thereby take their stand with God, will also experience the completion of the promises.

With regard to the messenger who was sent before the first coming of Christ, we read, *“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness ...”* (Isa. 40: 3). Every Bible reader knows that this prophetic utterance was accomplished through the ministry of John the Baptist. He testified of himself, saying, *“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet, Isaiah”* (Jn. 1: 23).

Now, before the return of Jesus Christ, the message of the revealed Word (which was preached through the messenger of the last church age of Laodicea) is still sounding forth. The cry is going forth and those who take heed are waking up from their sleep and cleaning their lamps. The wise virgins are filling their vessels with oil. They have both Word and Spirit. They come to the realization that God is now completing His work, and take heed to the actual message, the prophetic Word for this time. In this way they are being prepared for that glorious day.

John the Baptist, who was the forerunner at the first coming of our Lord, said, *“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled”* (Jn. 3: 29). In the same way the Bride now must hear the voice of the Bridegroom, which is the Word with all the promises for this time. Just as there was a prophetic message at the first coming of Christ, so now, before His second coming, there is a prophetic message. That is the cry which is going forth at this present time — the promised Word of the hour, the message of this day by which all the hidden mysteries in the Word of God needed for the Bride are made known.

The cry to awaken those who are spiritually asleep, the calling out and the preparation must take place before the coming of the Lord. The apostle John, while on the isle of Patmos, saw the Bride in a preview and wrote, *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”* (Rev. 19: 7).

The Voice of the Archangel

The mention of the voice of the archangel in I Th. 4: 16 is also very significant. Angels are *“ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation”* (Heb. 1: 14). At the time of the rapture the Redeemer takes the redeemed up into Glory, while Satan with all those who follow him is cast down to earth. This will mark the accomplishment of that which John also saw in a preview, and which he described as though it had already happened: *“And there was a war in*

heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12: 7-9).

Our Redeemer has once and for all conquered Satan and overcame all evil forces. “And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2: 15). He conquered death and hell, took captivity captive (Eph. 4: 8), and rose victoriously on the third day. “*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*” (Rev. 1: 17-18).

Satan is still the accuser of the brethren. Therefore Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, remains as High Priest and Advocate until the bride-church is completed. The moment all the redeemed appear in the Presence of God without spot or wrinkle Satan cannot accuse them anymore. At that moment he will be thrown down with the host that follows him.

As we have noted in Rev. 12: 7-9, it will be the task of the archangel Michael to raise his voice and show the conquered enemy his limits. It was also Michael who disputed with Satan about the body of Moses (Jude 9). Finally, he will stand up and fight for the children of Israel, as it is written, “*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people*” (Dan. 12: 1). I would not be surprised if he is the one spoken of in Rev. 20: 1-3 who will get hold of Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit before the commencement of the one thousand years reign of Christ. The doctrine that the archangel Michael is Christ is absurd. The truth is that Yahwe of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament, the same Lord — yesterday, today and for ever. Michael and Gabriel are — in the New Testament — who they were in the Old.

There is no need for another battle between the Conqueror of Calvary and the conquered forces of the enemy, which are still battling in the air (Eph. 6: 10-17). “... *from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool*” (Heb. 10: 13). At His return the Bridegroom will only concern Himself with the Bride. He will have no other commitments at that time.

Gabriel is frequently mentioned when special announcements or informations pertaining to the plan of salvation were given (Dan. 8: 16; Dan. 9: 21). Gabriel also announced to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist (Lk. 1: 19) and then the birth of our Lord and Saviour to Mary (Lk. 1: 26). In the (future) battle involving the enemy and his forces, Michael, the archangel, prevails.

In the rapture only those who belong to the bride will take part, as it is written, “... *and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage*” (Mt. 25: 10). Satan cannot enter in through the door, because Jesus Christ is the door. He gets in through another way, because he is the thief and the robber (Jn. 10: 1) — but he will be cast out.

In Mt. 22 we find the description about the wedding supper, and the guests present. “*And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (vv. 11-13). Some stumble, because our Lord uses the word “friend”. Notice, however, that Jesus also spoke to his betrayer Judas, into whom Satan entered, in the same way, “*Friend, why art thou come?*” (Mt. 26: 50). Satan can appear in a white garment and present himself as an angel of light (II Cor. 11: 14), but he can never have a wedding garment. Only the Bride will be privileged to be dressed “*in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints*” (Rev. 19: 8).

About the overcomers we read, “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*” (Rev. 12: 11). If we truly follow Jesus Christ as God’s obedient children our feet are placed into His footsteps. In this way the following scripture is literally fulfilled in us and through us: “*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord*” (Rom. 14: 7-8). Paul and all who died with Christ could say, “*Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*” (Gal. 2: 20). It is not sufficient to preach, to sing or to speak about it, it must become a true experience in our lives if we wish to enter into His glory.

The Trumpet

According to I Th. 4: 16, the trumpet will sound at the return of our Lord. This is not simply a trumpet, but the trumpet of God. In the Old Testament a trumpet was blown on special occasions. When the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, the people saw the lightning and heard the mighty thunder claps as well as the trumpet sound (Ex. 20: 18). The Jubilee, the fiftieth year, wherein everybody could go free, was also announced on the day of atonement by the trumpet sound (Lev. 25: 9).

Every time we read in the Holy Scripture about the sound of the trumpet, very special events took place. We read about the trumpet of

God in connection with the return of Jesus Christ. At that time the Lord completes His great plan of redemption for His elect. Christ will return in the same way as He went to heaven. In Ps. 47: 5 we read, “*God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.*” When the trumpet of God sounds, the redeemed will be called to the great feast in Glory. The apostle Paul describes the details of how this great event will take place, “*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound ...*” (I Cor. 15: 52).

Jesus Christ returns with a mighty command — a shout, accompanied by the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. The chosen ones, whether they are asleep or alive at that time, will be taken away before the wrath of God — the judgments — are poured out in the great tribulation. Immediately after this important event pertaining to the plan of salvation (“the taking away” of the Bride) the time of grace for the nations will terminate, and God will turn to His people, Israel — the Jews. The prophet Isaiah also speaks about the great trumpet which will sound at this particular time (Isa. 27: 13).

The return of the Lord will be sudden — as a lightning appears and in the twinkling of an eye. At that time the dead in Christ shall rise first, after which those who are ready will be physically changed (transformed). Together they will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air and go with him into glory. As Enoch, the seventh after Adam, was taken away and not found on earth, so also now at the end of the seventh, the last church age, those who will participate in the rapture will not be found on the earth.

The condition

To achieve this highest goal, we are told about the conditions which must be met, “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*” (Rom. 8: 11). Here we are not told about an anointing which millions have received, but rather about an “**indwelling**”. The word “**if**” in this verse is of very great significance. **If the power of the Spirit dwells** in us, the “**quicken**ing” of the mortal body will happen; if not, it just simply won’t work. According to the Word of our Lord, just before the second coming there will be many false Christs, “false anointed” ones, some even performing great signs and wonders, presenting themselves with their so-called anointed ministries, which are actually rooted in the doctrines of the false prophet (Mt. 7: 21; Mt. 24). Those who call Jesus Christ the Lord should do the will of the Heavenly Father.

Biblical faith is always anchored in the respective promises which are given to us in the Word. *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”* (II Cor. 1: 20). True faith comes by the preaching of God’s Word. *“So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10: 17). This is the case with regard to salvation, healing and all the other promises, and it is the same with rapturing faith. It comes through the timely message of the revealed Word, wherein our expectation and hope lies. *“And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us”* (Rom. 5: 5). *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Heb. 11: 1).

The Word and the Spirit of God always work together in the redeemed. The Spirit of promise comes upon those who receive the Word of promise. The anointing of the Spirit is not enough — He must **dwel**l in us. The Spirit rested on Christ and **dwelled** in Him, the Firstborn, after it came upon Him (Mt. 3: 16). Thereby His body was claimed, and the same applies to our natural bodies. We must have the birth-right and the first fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 23). *“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (II Cor. 3: 18).

Whoever desires to experience the changing of this earthly body must receive God’s power of immortality within himself. Eternal life is attainable by the real experience of being born again and having received the seal of the Holy Ghost. *“In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”* (Eph. 1: 13-14).

The translation of this body will not happen from the outside, but rather starts from the inside and brings about the change. First, our soul, in which the Spirit of God makes His abode, must be renewed. Then finally our mortal bodies will be changed by His living Spirit who **dwells** in us. The Holy Spirit is the actual power in us through which it will happen.

There is a big difference between the anointing of the Spirit, which is being experienced by many, and the sealing by the Spirit unto the day of our redemption. This can only be experienced by those who will actually participate in the translation of this body. Abraham was chosen and became “the father of faith”. He received promises, believed and obeyed God. This was counted to him for righteousness. After he believed the promised Word given to him, being justified by faith (Rom. 4) God gave him the seal of circumcision.

The sealing by the Holy Ghost can be experienced only by those who are called out as Abraham was. They receive a circumcision in their hearts and partake of the divine nature, (the substance, the Word of promise for today) and believing it they are justified. Isaac, the predicted son of Abraham, was the actual fulfilment of the promise, and he became heir of all things. Paul writes about such believers, “*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise*” (Gal. 4: 28). “*That is, They who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed*” (Rom. 9: 8). The Word of promise (Rom. 9: 6) and the Spirit of promise (Acts 2: 33) will be received by those who are called “the children of the promise” and will be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8: 15-17).

Because of His foreknowledge God could ordain those who would believe to eternal life, and predestinate them to be His sons (Eph. 1: 5). They are to be transformed into the image of His Son (Rom. 8: 28-30).

Many believers experience an anointing of the Spirit and can boast of great things, but walk on in their own ways and do not even consider bringing their lives into agreement with the Word of God. Such people remain entrenched in their traditional views and overlook the promises which are given to the church for this period of time. In this way they testify of themselves — that they have no part in the final work which God is about to complete. Only those who believe the promised Word for the hour can walk with God. To please Him we must be in total harmony with the Word.

Paul was the apostle who wrote about the manifestation of the sons of God, and he emphasizes very clearly the most essential part associated with it, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Rom. 8: 14). Jesus said that the Spirit of Truth would come and guide us into all Truth and would reveal things to come (Jn. 16: 13). Those who really are God’s children and have received the Holy Spirit will believe and obey every Word of God. To them is given the admonition, “*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4: 30). They are the only ones who will hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. But whosoever follows his own thoughts and imaginations will not recognize that God has had seven messengers during the seven church ages; neither will they recognize that God has given His message to the church through the respective angel of that age. Each of the seven messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2 + 3) opens with the following words: “*And to the angel of the church ... write ...*”; and closes with these words, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*”

Time-table

The prophet Daniel was enlightened regarding God's time table for Israel. Whoever understands the various times given here, will also be able to place the events which happen between the rapture and the commencement of the Millennial reign. In Daniel 9: 24-27 we read about seventy "weeks", which are not weeks of days but weeks of years, as understood by every Bible reader. Prophetically speaking, these are seventy weeks of years, and as can be clearly seen from verse 24, this pertains only to Daniels people, Israel, and to the holy city Jerusalem.

Three time limits are given: firstly, seven weeks of years; secondly, sixty-two weeks of years; thirdly, one week of years. It is most essential to understand this correctly, because Christ, the Messiah, was to be cut off **at the end** of the sixty-two weeks subsequent to, or following the seven weeks already described (in verse 26). In verse 27 we read, "*And he (the prince, the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many **for one week**; and **in the midst** of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*"

From the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem (445 B. C.) until Messiah, the Prince, is cut off (i.e., crucified) were seven weeks and threescore and two weeks, which is exactly $69 \times 7 = 483$ years. As soon as the time for the gentile nations is over God starts the last week; the first three and half years for the ministry of the two witnesses and the second part for the great tribulation.

As soon as Satan, the old dragon, is cast out of heaven, the Bible has this to say: "*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time*" (Rev. 12: 12). Evidently this scripture refers to the short span of time between the taking away of the Bride and the ushering in of the Millennial reign. During this period Satan will pour out his indignation upon the earth through the antichrist. Then he will incarnate in his vicar, the wicked one (II Th. 2: 8). He did not succeed in devouring the elect, the Bride church, which has come "*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*" (Eph. 4: 13). Because of this Rev. 12 speaks of a "*man child*". The great Dragon (Satan) will be angry against the church — the woman who will remain behind but had given birth to the man child "*who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*" (Rev. 12: 5). This promise "to rule all nations" is not only given in reference to Christ but it is also one of the seven promises given to the overcomers. "*And he that*

overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2: 26-27).

In Biblical prophecy the symbol of a wife is used in the Old Testament for Israel and also for the church in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation we see two totally different churches: the one of Christ and the other one of the antichrist. The true church is shown in Rev. 12 and the antichrist-church in Rev. 17.

John saw a woman clothed with the sun. This signifies that the New Testament church is clothed with Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness. The moon under the woman’s feet is the foundation upon which she stands: the prophetic word which went forth during the time span of the Old Testament. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so is the Old Testament illuminated by the Sun of righteousness to show us the fulfilment of its prophecies in the New Testament. The woman’s crown of twelve stars represents the doctrine of the twelve apostles with which the New Testament church is crowned.

In every age there have been the chosen and the called ones. The multitude of the overcomers are made up of the elect. The church which remains behind is composed of the called ones. They are also clean and holy as our Lord refers to them in the parable of Mt. 25 as virgins, but foolish ones (in comparison to the others, who were the wise virgins going in to the marriage).

The church which remains behind does not fall into the hands of Satan, but will be sustained and fed as Israel was in the wilderness, *“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days ... that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent ...”* (Rev. 12: 6+14). Even the exact span of time she will be taken care of is given.

After this we see the third group *“And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Rev. 12: 17). It is the same seed, but of different categories. Those mentioned here can only be the 144,000 Israelites. In order that all might know that a woman in prophecy represents a church, we shall briefly discuss the 144,000, of whom it is written, *“These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins”* (Rev. 14: 4). This means that the 144,000 will never belong to a Christian denomination or church, but will actually be called out and sealed under the ministry of the two prophets, after the taking away of the bride-church but before the great tribulation and persecution (Rev. 7: 1-8).

According to Rev. 11 the two prophets will have their ministry for the space of three and a half years, through which the 144,000, out of all the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7: 3-8) will be sealed. In verse 3 we read, *“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”* This means that during the three and a half years no judgment of God can fall until the sealing of the 144,000 is completed. At that time the prophecy given by Zechariah will be fulfilled, that the Spirit of grace and of supplications will be poured out upon Israel, *“and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him ...”* (12: 10-11).

The Jews did not recognize their Messiah at His first coming and therefore did not receive Him (Jn. 1: 11). In the same way as Joseph of the Old Testament made himself known to his brethren on their second visit to Egypt, at which time they recognized him, so will it be with the Messiah, when He comes to Israel the second time: they will look upon Him whom they have pierced. Joseph left his bride whom he had taken from the Gentiles, in the palace, dismissing everyone while he made himself known to his brethren. *“Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren”* (Gen. 45: 1).

In the same way, Christ has chosen a Bride from the nations; He will take her to the Wedding Supper, leaving her in the heavenly palaces to return alone to reveal Himself to His brethren as soon as they are all sealed. **This will be His first coming after His return and the rapture.** John saw the Saviour as a lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion. Mount Zion at that time will be the central point from which God’s mighty works will be known throughout the world. *“And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations”* (Isa. 25: 7).

At that time Israel will recognize the covenant which God made with them as still valid. When God came down to give the law on Mount Sinai, He appeared in the visible form and shape of an angel. Therefore He is being spoken of as the “angel of the covenant” (Mal. 3: 1). Stephen, speaking of Moses referred to the angel of the covenant in Acts 7: 38, *“This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the **angel** who spoke to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers.”*

After the Lord has made Himself known to His brethren, the Jews, He will put His feet upon the earth and the sea as the original owner and claim it according to Rev. 10. **This will be His second coming after the return and the taking away of the Bride to Glory.** *“And I saw another mighty **angel** come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as though it were the*

sun, and his feet like pillars of fire" (Rev. 10: 1). The rainbow in the Holy Scriptures signifies the token of the covenant (Gen. 9: 13-16). In fact, the word "covenant" appears 7 times in that chapter and the rainbow is spoken of 5 times as the token of the covenant.

The prophet Ezekiel saw the Lord on the throne and states, *"I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about"* (Ezek. 1: 27b-28). Almost the same description is found in Rev. 4: 2-3, *"Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald."* The rainbow above the head of the mighty Angel is to make plain, that the New covenant is valid for Israel. *"For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"* (Rom. 11: 27; Heb. 8: 6-13).

"And he had in his hand a little scroll open" (Rev. 10: 2). This signifies very clearly that the book which was sealed on the backside with seven seals at the time of this **coming** was already opened (Rev. 5). He now puts His right foot on the sea and His left on the earth and cries, *"with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth."* Here we see the change from Lamb, which speaks of redemption, to the Lion which signifies the King.

To the 144,000 who are sealed He comes as the Lamb-Redeemer. *"These are they who follow the Lamb wherever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb"* (Rev. 14: 4). In the same connection the prophet Hosea writes, *"They shall walk after the Lord; he shall roar like a lion; when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west"* (Hos. 11: 10). Similar words are found in the prophet Amos, *"The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem"* (1: 2). *"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel"* (Joel 3: 16).

In Rev. 5: 5 our Lord is also spoken of as a lion, *"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose its seven seals."* When Jacob blessed his son Judah, he spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit this prophetic utterance, *"Judah is a lion's whelp ... The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Gen. 49: 9-10).

"And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices" (Rev. 10: 3), not before! Whenever God speaks, it is like a roar of a thunder. *"Hear attentively the noise of his voice ... God thundereth marvellously"*

with his voice” (Job 37: 2-5). “Then came there a voice from heaven ... The people, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered” (Jn. 12: 28-29). What the seven thunders uttered was sealed and not written. Therefore it can never be preached, as it did not become a part of the written Word of God. It simply pertains to the final and secret doings of God at that time. At this occasion the mighty angel raises His right hand towards heaven, “and swears by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, and the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things which are in it, that there should be time (delay) no longer” (Rev. 10: 6).

The prophet Daniel in chapter 12 saw the same event in a preview. He asked, how long it would be until the end of these wonders. The reply was very clear, “... he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven and swore by him who liveth forever, that it shall be for a **time, times, and an half**” (v. 7). Based on this Scripture it is clear that from the time of the oath of this mighty angel, there are exactly three and a half years to the consummation and the ushering in of the Millennial reign. Amen.

May we now briefly summarize: The two prophets will have their ministry for three and a half years. During this time no one can touch them because they have absolute divine authority, “... fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies ...” (Rev. 11: 5-6). Their ministry reminds us very definitely about the two special prophets Moses and Elijah. The assertion that Enoch would be one of the two witnesses does not fit the picture here. Enoch was the seventh from Adam and therefore a perfect type of those who will be transformed and taken up at the end of this age without tasting death. Moses and Elijah also came down on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17). Both are mentioned in the last three verses in the Old Testament.

As a result of the preaching and prophesying of the two witnesses, at the end of their ministry the 144,000 Jews are shown sealed on Mount Zion. To them the Lord comes and makes Himself known as the Messiah, the Lamb of God. At that time those Israelites (the 144,000) become fully aware of the New Testament covenant’s validity. They recognize the Antichrist, who then breaks the covenant (Dan. 9: 27). At this moment in time the great tribulation and the persecution set in. “... and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months ... And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (Rev. 13: 5-7). The prophet Daniel prophesied about those saints of the Most High, “... they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (7: 25).

After the two witnesses have come to the end of their testimony they will be killed (Rev. 11: 7). During this horrible time of persecution the

144,000 will be slain as martyrs, as foretold in the fifth seal. They will have to give their lives as their brothers did who went before them. In reference to this we must read Rev. 14: 12, *“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”* This will take place and will be in force at that time, *“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them”* (v. 13).

Our Lord has foretold the scattering of the people of Israel among all nations. He also informed us that He will bring them back from the ends of the earth to the promised land. In connection with this we may read, *“Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”* (Lk. 21: 24).

In the fifth seal (Rev. 6: 9-11) we read about the souls under the altar who were killed for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. Those martyrs did not have the testimony of Jesus Christ. They held to the Word of God, but they had no revelation that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. They had not recognized Him. Therefore this group is composed of all the Jews who were murdered and slain just because they were Jews throughout the period following the first advent of the Messiah. Because they had not experienced salvation, they were crying for revenge. Those who are redeemed will pray, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.”* These under the fifth seal cry, *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”* God, the righteous Judge, let everyone have a white robe; *“and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”*

The word “servants” in this connection has no association with the New Testament gentile church ages. We are the sons and daughters of God. That is our relationship to our Heavenly Father as His children. In Bible prophecy the Israelites are called servants and handmaids and not sons and daughters. Without any doubt the 144,000 spoken of in the Scripture (Rev. 6: 11) are the fruit of the ministry of the two witnesses and will have to go through the terrible three and a half years of tribulation and persecution by the Antichrist.

The Revenge

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light” (Isa. 13: 10; Joel 2: 30-32; Rev. 6: 12-17), *“and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of*

the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mt. 24: 29-30).

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory” (Lk. 21: 25-27).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” (Rev. 1: 7).

We have already noted that after the Lord returns to take the Bride home to glory, He comes and reveals Himself as the Lamb to the 144,000. After this he appears as the Angel of the Covenant according to Rev. 10: 1-6. At the end of the great tribulation **Christ comes for the third time after His return** to destroy the Antichrist (also described as “the lawless”). According to the exposition given by the apostle Paul, it is evident that he that hindereth the Antichrist must first be taken out of the way, before the Antichrist is able to manifest his full power. The one who prevents him from doing this is the Holy Ghost which is right now manifested in the Bride. When the Bride is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and taken up to glory, *“then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of **his coming**” (II Th. 2: 8). “...and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked (the Antichrist)” (Isa. 11: 4).*

Another **coming** of the Lord is being described very specifically in Rev. 19: 11-16. At that time He comes on a white horse, and those who are with Him follow Him on white horses. This description in itself speaks of the fact that He is moving right into the great battle at that time. He was called “Faithful and True”, and His name is called “The Word of God”. He judges and fights with righteousness. *“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (v. 15).* A similar account is found in Rev. 14: 17-20, *“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.”*

Of this great and final revenge we find many prophecies in the Old and the New Testament:

“For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies” (Isa. 59: 17-18).

Thus saith the Lord, *“For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come ... And I will tread down the peoples in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth”* (Isa. 63: 4+6).

“Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden of it is heavy; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue like a devouring fire ... And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones” (Isa. 30: 27+30).

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation is past” (Isa. 26: 20).

“The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is thoroughly dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a booth; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24: 19-23).

“Thus saith the Lord GOD: An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come; it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come ... The time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the joyful shouting upon the mountains” (Ezek. 7: 5-7).

The judgment upon those forces which try to fight against the Lord God will come in one day. *“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”* (Rev. 16: 15-16). The **coming** spoken of here is obviously in connection with the great battle of Armageddon. The prophet Ezekiel has already described the same, *“And I will enter into judgment against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his hordes, and upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone”* (38: 22). Si-

milarly, Zechariah 14: 12-15 testifies of the judgment which will come upon the nations who will fight against Jerusalem at that time: *“Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass, in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.”*

The great victory over the Antichrist and the final judgment on those forces who fight against God is also spoken of in II Thess. 1: 7-8: *“... when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* This falls into the period of the “Day of the Lord”, which will be after the time of grace and the day of salvation is finished. Apostles and prophets referred to it.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; the day that cometh shall burn them up ...” (Mal. 4: 1).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are in it, shall be burned up” (II Pet. 3: 10).

The Transition

After the Lord has poured out His wrath upon those enemies, that which He spoke through the prophet Zechariah, will be fulfilled: *“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives ...”* (14: 4). This **coming** is also being described in detail. He does not come alone, but those who are with Him join Him, *“... and the LORD, my God, shall come, and all the saints with thee”* (v. 5b). (The Marriage Supper in glory at that time will be finished). This **coming** will take place just before the commencement of the Millennial reign.

Before the reign the Lord will set up His tribunal and will pronounce His jurisdiction at that time. *“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them who destroy the earth”* (Rev. 11: 18).

Because the proclamation of the Gospel was so different in the various church ages, an administration of justice has to take place and all have to acknowledge that which in reality is valid before God. This judgment

does not mean condemnation, rather, divine justice is administered by the Lord.

Then the following Scriptures will find their fulfilment, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (II Cor. 5: 10). *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Rom. 14: 10-12).

Before this completed righteous group can judge with the Judge and rule with the King they themselves have to stand this judgment and receive their crown. The crowns will be given to the overcomers. The Scripture speaks of the crown of rejoicing (I Th. 2: 19); the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4: 8); the crown of glory (I Pet. 5: 4); and the crown of life (Js. 1: 12; Rev. 2: 10).

In Daniel 7: 26 we read, *“But the judgment shall sit ...”* This is in accordance with Rev. 20: 4, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ...”* The overcomers were given the greatest promise of all, *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne ...”* (Rev. 3: 21). During the Millenium they will not only reign with Christ and rule over the nations (Rev. 2: 26-27), they also will take part in the judgment. Paul writes, *“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”* (I Cor. 6: 2-3). In the book of Jude we read about the prophecy of Enoch who spoke about this particular **coming** of the Lord, *“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly ...”* (v. 14+15).

In Mt. 25: 31-32 we also find reference to this **coming**, *“When the Son of man shall **come** in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”*

In Isa. 2: 2-5 this judgment which concerns the nations is also spoken of, *“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”* Almost the same wording can be found in Mic. 4: 1-5.

As touching the people of Israel, it is written, *“And it shall come to pass, that he who is left in Zion, and he who remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem”* (Isa. 4: 3). At that time when those who survived the great tribulation and persecution, will have to face judgment, there will be a reward for

those who during that time of trouble have given their lives because of the testimony of Jesus Christ, "... and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20: 4). Although these people had no part in the Wedding Supper of the Lamb they will also be in the Millennial reign. They will come back to life before the commencement of the reign of Christ on this earth, and therefore are part of the first resurrection. In this connection we also have to read the twofold application Paul is referring to in II Tim. 4: 1, "*I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at **his appearing and his kingdom.***" Amen.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20: 5-6).

At that time, that which the Lord swore by Himself will also be fulfilled: "*I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD I have righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed"* (Isa. 45: 23-24).

"And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1: 6).

"... 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" (Phil 2: 10-11).

At that moment all who believed in Christ will be rejoicing, "... when he shall **come** to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Th. 1: 10).

With thanksgiving hearts, the redeemed who are then present will join in the praises with the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures and the angels who are before the throne. Together they will cry out like in a great, majestic choir, "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever"* (Rev. 5: 12-13).

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4: 8).

Anyone who has read carefully will have noted that in this passage the Lord is not spoken of as the Son of Man, but as the Almighty God. The prophet Isaiah has expressed this in the following words, *“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation”* (Isa. 25: 9).

The One Thousand Years Reign

During the Millennial reign the Lord will be the universal King, and those who were with Him in the Wedding Supper will reign with Him on earth. The 144,000 which are also part of the first resurrection will join them (Rev. 20: 4-6). At that time the fullness of the Jews will be added to the fullness from the nations. The same promise given to the great Overcomer who brought us the victory through His death and resurrection, as found in Ps. 2: 9 is also given to those who overcome, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ...”* (Rev. 2: 26-27).

The Bride will be in the New Jerusalem which is her eternal home. She is identified with it in the Scriptures, *“And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”* (Rev. 21: 2). After the marriage she is not called “the Bride” any more, but “the wife of the Lamb”. Even there one can see how precise and perfect the Word of God is, *“Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God”* (vv. 9b-11).

Jerusalem on earth at that time will be full of the glory of God, because the New Jerusalem will descend right above the old, *“And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence”* (Isa. 4: 5).

As already said, the New Jerusalem will come down, but not touch the earth. It will hover over the old, and its glory will fill the whole earth. The measurements of the New Jerusalem are given in Rev. 21: 16 and it will be in a form of a pyramid, standing right up into the heavens.

The believers who remained faithful to the Lord and gave up their lives during the great tribulation will be brought back to life together

with the Jewish martyrs before the commencing of the Millennial reign. *“And I saw ... them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”* (Rev. 15: 2-3). In this passage two groups are specifically identified: those who sang the song of **Moses** (the Jews) and those who sang the song of the **Lamb** (the believers from the nations). The faithful ones will not accept the mark of the beast nor the image, nor will they take the number of his name.

Only the overcomers will take part at the Wedding Supper, but during the Millennial reign the other redeemed will also be present: *“These are they who came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them ... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”* (Rev. 7: 14-15+17). The wording used here — that they will serve Him in His temple by day and by night — most certainly does not refer to eternity but to the time throughout the Millennial reign. Eternity has no day and no night.

In the purifying judgment the proud, all those who are ungodly, and declared enemies of the Lord God and of Israel will be destroyed. They will be like straw and stubble, and the day that cometh and burneth like an oven will destroy them. Only ashes will remain (Mal. 4: 1+3). Some have not read the Scriptures pertaining to this carefully and took it for granted that everyone except the Bride and the 144,000 will be destroyed. This would, however, be quite contradictory to many other Scriptures. Those people of all the nations who are left over after the judgments and the last battle will live on earth, and we shall reign over them. *“And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”* (Zech. 14: 16). How could they come year after year, if they were not living on the earth during the Millennial reign?

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts: It shall yet come to pass that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8: 20-23).

“... and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2: 2-3).

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand for an ensign of the peoples; to him shall the nations seek, and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa. 11: 10).

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isa. 66: 23-24) “It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk. 9: 47-48). This statement of our Lord cannot be interpreted arbitrarily but must also be taken in context with the rest of His prophetic word.

In Isa. 65: 20-25 the circumstances of those nations who remain and will live during that time are described. Children will be born to them, etc. These people will build houses and dwell therein; they will have their vineyards and eat the fruits thereof; they will plant and reap. Satan will be bound throughout that period, and therefore no evil will take place. “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent’s food” (Isa. 65: 25). A similar description is found in Isa. 11: 6-9.

Because these peoples which are left over are not converted — that is, they are not born again — they can be disobedient, become sick and even die, as it is written, “And it shall be that whoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zech. 14: 17). “... for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed” (Isa. 65: 20).

With overwhelming clarity the things during the Millennial reign are still described as timely elements which will not be found in eternity. In Ezek. 47: 12 we read as follows, “And by the river upon its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to its **months**, because their waters issued out of the sanctuary; and its fruit shall be for food, and its leaf for medicine.”

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street

*of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded her fruit every **month**; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22: 1-2).*

During the one thousand years reign we see God’s Kingdom on earth and the whole creation will have a part in it (Rom. 8: 18-22). Then will be fulfilled that which the prophets predicted: *“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zech. 14: 9).*

“My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I, the LORD, do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezek. 37: 27-28).

“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” (Rev. 21: 3-4).

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 25: 8).

The End of Time

“And when the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20: 7-8). This event takes place after the one thousand years reign, but before the second resurrection and the White Thrown Judgment. It refers to the nations which live on earth during the Millennial reign but at no time have become part of the great plan of God for humanity. If one reads the book of the prophet Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39 carefully, it is easy to note the connection between the two great decisive battles: The one at Armageddon will take place just before the Millennial reign starts. The other one (“Gog and Magog”) will take place immediately after the one thousand years are over. There is a great similarity between Ezek. 39: 17-20 and Rev. 19: 17-21. In fact, both times the same peoples who will come against Jerusalem are spoken of. Because Satan is bound during the one thousand years reign, everything remains quiet. The moment he is loosed great trouble begins and his influence will be again upon the unregenerated.

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out

of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20: 9-10).

Before time merges into eternity, the final judgment (according to Rev. 20, from verse 11) will take place. All people who ever were born into this world and lived on earth will be resurrected and will have to appear before the eternal Judge. At that time the books will be opened, and all will be judged according to their works. It is very encouraging to read that the Book of Life will also be opened at that second resurrection. There will be people whose names are written in the Book of Life, although they were not found in the Lamb’s Book of Life. It is the same book but contains two different categories. One pertains to the first resurrection and the other to the second. Those who are found in the Book of life certainly believed, while living on earth, in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and therefore received eternal life. They did not believe the promises for their day, perhaps were kept in the dark in various denominations, and therefore could not participate in the Wedding Supper and missed the Millennial reign with Christ. But all who really believed in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour will go into eternal life.

The Word of God also speaks very clearly of the final doom of those remaining who appear in the final judgment, *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire”* (Rev. 20: 15). The lake of fire is mentioned as “the second death”. The Scripture is very clear on this point, *“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death”* (v. 14). At that time Satan, the false prophet and the beast are already in the lake of fire. About the duration of their torment it says, *“And shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* It can be ages. Regretfully, the Bible translators render the Greek word “aeon” many times as *eternal* or *eternity* or *everlasting*. But in actuality the word “aeon” describes a space of time and not eternity .

Although no one can predict when it would be, there will come a future moment when time will cease. Time will be abolished, and those things which were — during “time” — will not exist throughout all eternity. Those things which had a beginning, will of necessity have to have an end. It would be easier for us to understand this difficult concept, if Bible translators had been divinely enlightened on this subject. Things pertaining to God never had a beginning — they were eternal and will “be” throughout all eternity. Things which had a beginning or were created, will somewhere also have an end.

Remember, the lake of fire is spoken of as “the second death”. The first death happens to a person when the soul leaves the body. The second death will be, when the spirit of life leaves the soul. Then that which God

said in His Word will be fulfilled, *“Every soul that sinneth, it shall surely die”* (Ezek. 18: 4+20). Strange but true, there is not a single place in the Holy Scriptures stating that man has an immortal soul. Only of God, the Eternal One, we read, *“... who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto”* (I Tim. 6: 15+16). In reference to this truth those who search it and are honest in their hearts, have to agree with the Word of God. Our Lord and Saviour made the statement, *“I said, therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (Jn. 8: 24). Moses spoke about the ministry Christ would have as the Son of Man, “the Prophet”, and stated, *“And it shall come to pass that every **soul**, who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people”* (Dt. 18: 15-19; Acts 3: 21-23).

Only in Him do we have eternal life. Only those who have received His eternal life by a true experience of the new birth can live eternally. Eternal life is God’s own life that was manifested in Christ here on the earth. As stated, the life of God never began, and therefore it can never end and will be throughout eternity. Read the following statement carefully, *“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”* (I Jn. 5: 11-12).

It should be emphasized that no man will be lost because he was born in sin and lived in sin. The sin question was settled once and for all when Christ was made sin for us, that through Him we might become the very righteousness of God (Rom. 3: 21-26). Only those who do not believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, forgiving all our sins and trespasses and receiving us as His own sons and daughters, will die in their sins (Jn. 8: 24).

True faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour, is not a religious matter, but it is a part of God’s eternal plan for humanity. In Him alone God was personally manifested, and thereby, eternal life came to us. Hence, it is absolutely essential to believe in Christ, if one wishes to receive eternal life, *“... that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life”* (Jn. 3: 15). Whosoever does not believe during his lifetime is condemned already (Mk. 16: 16). Those who remain in the sin of unbelief separate themselves from God. If the reader wishes to be with the Lord for ever, don’t try it in your own way and through your own works, but acknowledge the mighty work of redemption which was accomplished in Christ, and find your eternal salvation and rest in God.

After the final judgment at the White Throne, God will create the new heavens and the new earth. All who will live therein will never

remember the old things that were during their life time. That will be glorious eternity, no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death, no more tears. Blessed are those who will live eternally in that bliss of glory. In the end, serving the Lord in this earthly life will be worthwhile. To those who have this glorious hope, there will be a reunion with all the loved ones who went before us. They will meet the ones who loved and obeyed the Lord, and who also loved one another. Remember, only perfect love — the Love of God — will enter there.

The new heavens and the new earth were already promised in the Old and the New Testament and will come into existence when time will be finished, after the one thousand years reign is over and the final judgment at the White Throne has happened. *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*

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Our address is:

Rev. E. Frank
 P.O. Box 100707
 47707 Krefeld
 Germany