

The Contender

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

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The First Resurrection, Part 1



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THE RESURRECTION OF SAINTS THAT HAVE DIED THROUGHOUT THE AGES OF TIME, HAS CAUSED AS MUCH SPECULATION, AND AS MANY ARGUMENTS AND DEBATES AS ANY BIBLE SUBJECT THAT WE COULD MENTION. PEOPLE HAVE ALL KINDS OF OPINIONS ABOUT

IT; BUT YOU SELDOM HEAR ANYONE SPEAK FROM A TRUE REVELATION ON THE SUBJECT. THAT IS WHY I FEEL LED AT THIS TIME, TO PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES THAT GO HAND IN HAND TO ANSWER THOSE MANY QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ASKED OVER AND OVER BUT HAVE SELDOM EVER BEEN GIVEN SCRIPTURAL ANSWERS. I BELIEVE THE END TIME CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD SHOULD BE ABLE TO FURNISH SOME SCRIPTURAL ANSWERS TO WELL MEANING PEOPLE WHO ASK QUESTIONS WORTHY OF AN ANSWER. WHEN WE SPEAK OF THREE PHASES OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION, SOME HAVE A HARD TIME UNDERSTANDING HOW THIS COULD BE. PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW ALSO ABOUT THE RAPTURE; WILL IT TAKE PLACE BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATION? THE

ANSWERS ARE ALL RIGHT HERE IN THIS BLESSED OLD BOOK THAT TOO MANY HAVE LAID ASIDE BELIEVING THEY CAN GET ALONG WITHOUT IT. WELL THEY CAN GO TO HELL WITHOUT IT; BUT THOSE WHO HAVE A DESIRE TO WALK WITH GOD, WILL HAVE TO DO IT BY THE INSTRUCTIONS WRITTEN SO CLEARLY WITHIN THE PAGES OF IT; AND THE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT IS AHEAD FOR THE BRIDE CHURCH WILL ALSO HAVE TO COME FROM IT.

LOOKING TO THE END OF GENTILE TIME ON THIS PLANET

Let us begin by reading from the 4th verse of Revelation chapter 20. We used this same scripture in our last message; but we more or less stopped in the middle of this verse; because the first part of it points to the bride church sitting upon thrones, judging the nations during the Millennium; but as we read the rest of that verse you will see a different picture altogether. We want to answer your questions in regards to the rapture, resurrection, and especially try to cover all the scriptures that refer to what we will read in a minute in our text, in what

constitutes the first resurrection. As I stated some time back, someone sent me a little religious brochure. It is a publication by someone who is trying to make out like this doctrine of the translation, or the rapture of the Church, as a secret event, did not come about until about 1800 and something, and that it is a false doctrine that has been embraced by certain realms of Christendom, but that there is actually no authoritative record that the early Church ever believed it like that. Well you know these educated doctors of divinity have a very unique way of putting things in printed form to make it sound very good to a certain element of people. However as I said before, I am not educated in a way they would accept. I cannot depend on my education. I would not know a Greek word if I saw a box car load of them sitting in front of me. Neither would I know a Hebrew word. I have to look at the whole thing from an altogether different viewpoint. I do not speak Hebrew. Neither do I speak Greek. Furthermore I do not speak English as well as a lot of people; but I do try to get the job done; and by the help of God I have come this far, so bear with me. The little circle you see on the chart behind me represents the planet you and I live on, the planet Earth. The next illustration represents a little cemetery, with a few broken tombstones. This signifies or portrays a resurrection. What we are going to find out as we deal in this subject, the first resurrection, is that it has three

orders, or phases to it. Can you prove that Bro. Jackson? I cannot; but the Bible will convince all who have the proper respect for what is written in it, that what we are believing is a true revelation. Let us go to the last scriptures in the Bible first, in Revelation 20. We are going to read the same verse of scripture we read when we were on our other subject, the regeneration, that we just finished, covering the throne of His (Jesus') glory. We will take the last part of verse 4, in Revelation 20; and go on into verse 5, where we will get our setting. Let us first acquaint ourselves with the time. The tribulation is over, the Lord has come. His saints are with Him, His Bride and Old Testament saints. Jesus has taken His throne; and there is a judgment procedure, and there is a resurrection event. Verse 4, "And I saw thrones, and they (plural) sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: (That is the authority given to the Bride of Christ when she will take her thrones throughout the nations of the world from whence she was taken when the rapture occurred, and authority through Christ, her Groom, given by God through that channel, has been delegated to her; and she is now in her delegated position over the nations of the world.) and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded (martyred) for the witness of Jesus, (This describes the foolish virgins left here when the rapture takes place, to go through the terrible tribulation hour. There are three sets of

scriptures in the book of Revelation that describe this group of martyrs. These three scriptures become witnesses against any theological concept held, that is contrary to what they `these scriptures' hold. I will only read this one right now; but as we reach the climax of the message, somewhere as God guides and directs, we will touch those three sets of scriptures in the book of Revelation describing the Gentile foolish virgins and the Jewish saints that go through the great tribulation.) and for the word of God, (That describes the Jewish saints that are martyred; and it tells us exactly when and where in time they met this terrible ordeal of martyrdom. Notice.) and which had not worshiped the beast, (now this is not telling us how saints were treated in the Dark Ages. It is telling us how saints will be treated during that terrible tribulation time. We know the beast system was Rome in the Dark Ages; but that puts us back there 500 and 600 years ago. This scripture is putting it precisely after they have gone through the terrible dark hour of tribulation, described by the prophet Daniel in chapter 9, verse 27.) and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, (The image does not occur until the ending of the Grace Age, as time goes into the prophetic week of Daniel. Then, is when the image really speaks, influences, and becomes as diabolical as her predecessor did in other eras of time.) neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;

(As you can see, all these wordings here tell us timewise, when these saints are martyred. Not in the middle of the Dark Ages, No. It takes place in the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. That is when the image of the beast speaks in a way that is just as diabolical as the system of Romanism she came out of. That is also when the mark and those things are applied, as it reads in the 13th chapter of Revelation.) and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Let me read that verse straight through. REV 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which 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." There has never yet been a time in the history of mankind when the stipulations in that verse could be applied. No one yet, has ever been faced with taking the mark of the beast; nor have they worshiped the image of the beast; but in the last half of that week of Daniel, when the old antichrist is on the rampage many will face those very things; and if they hold true to their faith in God, they will be counted among this great multitude John saw. Yes brothers and sisters, these are those martyred saints that were so brutally dealt with during that terrible three and one half years of

Satan's rule, when the antichrist shows himself to be the man of sin, the false prophet, the false prince; and the son of perdition. There are actually five titles in the prophetic word of God he is known by. I will name them again, because I have been asked in a letter to describe the differences in these various references. In Daniel 9:26 he is spoken of as the prince that shall come. The title prince, means ambassador of peace. We know that Jesus Christ is our prince of peace. We know also, that when He comes there will be true peace in the earth for the first time since the fall of Adam. His counterpart, which is the world's false prince, is Satan's man. He is a false ambassador of peace. He gives the world a false era and concept of what peace is. He is also called a false prophet. Again he is referred to as the antichrist that shall come. You take the apostle John in the little epistles, he speaks of him both as a false prophet and also as an antichrist. The apostle Paul spoke of him in the Thessalonian epistle as the man of sin and the son of perdition. In other words, he gave him two titles. The man of sin, and the son of perdition. The term son of perdition actually means, one ordained to lead something to destruction; and that is exactly what that fellow will do. To clarify that I will say this, if he is ordained to lead something to destruction, it is because he is the man of sin and has the anointing and ability to deceive. Through deception, he influences masses of people in the

world to believe in him, and trust in him; but Satan's objective behind that is, that through this agent and the anointing he puts upon him, millions will be led to an eternal destruction. He will be the world's false ambassador, or messenger of peace. Nevertheless five titles are wrapped up in one person; and that is none other than the pope of Rome. A lot of people do not want to hear that; but it is the truth, and I have to declare it. Jesus Christ is not coming back to get a bride that just feeds upon nothing but denominational tradition. His bride will know the truth about all of these things others just have a theory about. Remember this though, When it speaks here of these martyrs, that they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, this is not the Bride of Jesus Christ. The Bride was already on her thrones before this phase of the first resurrection occurred. That is the part where doctors of divinity today, depending on their theological learning, but without a spiritual revelation to inspire them and place things in their proper order, get way out on a limb. They just simply do not know where to put most of these things. Let us finish reading. REV 20:5 "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." That could be referring to none other than the wicked dead. (20:6) "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." The first resurrection is in three phases. The first phase was when Jesus and many of the dead saints at that time arose. The second phase is when the bride is raised for the rapture; and the third is when the martyred tribulation saints are raised. We are going to find out by the writing of the apostle Paul, that there is an order to the accomplishment of this first resurrection. Just notice how this is worded. It sounds like it is talking about another thing altogether; but actuality it is not. It is just worded that way because the second resurrection is only a resurrection of the dead that will have no life attributed to them whatsoever. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death (or second resurrection) hath no power, (no life) but they shall be priests of God (referring to the first) and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." That constitutes the final scriptures that declare the first resurrection is over, finished, and how do we put it together. Well, this only leaves in the ground nothing but dead, there are two identical things we must understand in this as we begin to go back into the Old Testament and watch these prophets and the scriptures pointing to this thing that we all look forward to, if it should be our lot to take our place in the ground.

THREE STAGES OF REDEMPTION

We are going to find out that when God redeems things, He does it in three stages. I read a little article one time, in which it was stated, "I do not want installment salvation." Well we are not talking about installment salvation. That is sort of a derogatory way some people use to talk about things. Nevertheless when we look at God's plan of salvation in the scriptures, we can see this, The complete new birth to the soul of the inner man is patterned or typed after a natural birth. That is why Jesus used that vocabulary in speaking to Nicodemus, a religious doctor of divinity in that hour, as we read in St. John 3. We know this, Before there can be a birth, there is first conception, followed by pregnancy which is a period of growth. Birth is a reality when it is fully alive and on its own. It is separated from its origin of coming into existence. We all realize this, If there is not conception, there can not be birth. If there is not pregnancy, there can not be birth. You can not have birth without the other two. That compares with how God's grace works in redeeming us as lost sinners. First he convicts us, brings us unto repentance. He plants His word of conviction in our hearts. This is the stage of planting that seed of conviction. Conviction brings repentance upon the part of the inner

person, which opens the inner person's spiritual mind to receive what God is going to do next. As God then has planted the word to be received, the individual is conceived in that word, but this is followed by a period of pregnancy, sanctification, setting the person apart, cleansing by the blood, getting that individual ready for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. We do know that on the day of Pentecost, when the gospel was preached in its full truth and light of understanding, it was not like it is today. The reason we have so much of what you see out here in the world today, is because Christendom has gone through the Dark Ages with all this theological concept, taking the word of God and projecting it out here in such a dead letter way, it is hard for the human race to make it over all the obstacles. Regardless of all of that, we just simply do not change God's plan and purpose in any way. There are three definite works of grace, justification, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is God finishing His work which he started in justifying. That is bypassing all theology and putting it in its true concept. We do know this; In the redemptive work of Christ, God sent Him first to be a prophet. Being a prophet, His word is delivered. Next He became the sacrifice needed to pay our sin debt; and through that activated this word that had been brought. He also became the High Priest of that covenant and offered up the sacrifice

to God. That is the second office of the three offices or positions He holds. The third office is what we talked about in our last message. He comes back to earth to be King of kings and Lord of lords, to rule and reign over what He has redeemed from among God's creation. Therefore there is three offices by which it constitutes God's complete plan of redemption, both for people and for the earth.

WHERE PARADISE WAS - **WHERE PARADISE IS -** **WHO IS IN PARADISE**

Let us now go back into the Old Testament, to the book of Daniel, chapter 12. Daniel was the first prophet that seemed to have an insight about a resurrection, a physical, bodily, taking out of the ground something that has gone into the ground through death. As we go deeper into this subject, try to keep in mind what we started with, the three phases of the first resurrection. Before I read this, I want to bring in some other things that have been going on time wise in the plan of God. Looking at the first chart back here, the circle represents the planet earth. The inner portion represents the heart of the earth. We are not being dogmatic or anything, we are just using the scriptures to bring out a truth. When death was first introduced, by Cain

slaying Abel, we know that his body was placed in the crust of the earth by some kind of burial; but where did his soul and spirit go? Since we believe Abel was a righteous seed, it went into the heart of the earth, into a place referred to by Jesus as paradise. The spirit which incorporates the soul did not go into heaven, it went into the heart of the earth somewhere into that realm referred to as bliss, or paradise. This is described in St. Luke's gospel when he was giving the illustration of Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus had been brought many days, to lay at the gate of a rich man, begging alms. He had sores all over his body; and the dogs were licking him. From a social standpoint, this would not be a good scene for people to look upon. Nevertheless according to the words of Jesus, when Lazarus died, he was carried into Abraham's bosom. (paradise) Why? Because he was not only a Jew, which made him a seed of Abraham; but the fact that he was carried into his bosom meant that in Lazarus, (this poor sick man) lay the same faith, or belief in God that kept his outlook toward life and eternity, the same that was in Abraham. We do not want to picture this poor beggar being held in the arms of Abraham; because there is one thing sure, Once his spirit was separated from that feeble body, it would never need to be held and cradled any more. It was released from the suffering, pain and agony it had been going through while in that body. Nevertheless the fact that he was

in Abraham's bosom lets us know, he was enjoying the same state of bliss, and peace that Abraham, the father of that faith was enjoying, therefore that is the picture we must see, if we are going to look at it properly. He was with Abraham in a realm of paradise, which at that time was in the heart of the earth. However according to the Gospel writers, when Jesus arose from the dead and later ascended into the heavenlies, paradise was moved from the heart of the earth into the heavenly realm. Not only did Jesus come forth from the grave, but the scriptures declare that many of the other dead came forth also; and they are now in that heavenly Paradise. To continue with the illustration Jesus gave concerning Paradise and torment, listen to what He said about the rich man whose gate Lazarus had lain before begging. Later the rich man died and it says he was carried into a place called torment. Well the Greek word for hell, which is an English word, is Hades; but the Hebrew word is Sheol, a place of agony, a place of suffering, a place of torment. Somehow though the rich man could look afar off and see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. He begged Abraham, (Let us just read it in Luke 16:24-25) "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime

receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Keep in mind, What Jesus was telling those who stood by was, (because He had not yet been crucified) The perfect atonement sacrifice has not yet been made; so Paradise is still in the heart of the earth. Therefore from the slaying of Abel who went to that same place, to the time of Christ, all of those righteous souls that met death were carried into the heart of the earth, into the place called Paradise, the very same place where Lazarus is portrayed as being. From the time of the slaying of righteous Abel to Jesus' story about Lazarus and the rich man, would cover a span of approximately 4000 years. We perceive then that in the heart of the earth, both the righteous and the wicked were confined. Why? Death had placed them there; and man's sin is what brought death into the picture. When Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden; there was no such thing as death in the picture. If they had continued to obey their Creator, they could have enjoyed eternal life and still been alive today; but God had already warned them that partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring death upon them; and God always keeps His word. You cannot always depend upon natural man to keep his word; but what God has said He will do, He will do. We can look at Genesis 2:16-17, and see exactly what God said to the man He created. "And

the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." If sin originated on the earth, then the spirit of those that have been born into existence, becoming a partaker in the life structure by sin in that sense by hereditary, there is no way the spirit can be free from this earthly realm until there is a perfect atonement. That is typed in the Old Testament. In the book of Leviticus, as the children of Israel were coming out of Egyptian bondage, on the mount, Moses received the law as well as the ordinances and statutes that the children of Israel were to observe. We know this, in one of those ordinances they were to keep, when they were to come into the land of promise, and the time of the year has come for them to reap their harvest, barley harvest, before they were to reap the whole thing, the first thing they were to do, the owner of the field was to see that there was one bundle or sheaf of this crop selected to offer to the Lord. The farmer would chose, and we believe he would chose a very precise spot where the grain looked well matured, to reap that special bundle. He was not going to take some old dried up, dwarf type stuff that had grown in a poor place in the field, to offer to the Lord. He takes the best. He thrusts in his cycle, he cuts down a sheaf of standing grain and ties that in a bundle. That is put up to be

given to the priest, that when the Passover season would appear in that coming season. Then this Passover season that this thing typed, this sheaf of grain from each farmer, once the Passover lamb has been killed, and eaten, then on the following day after the Sabbath that occurs within that Passover season, and we know Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath, but in their calendar structure it was not called Saturday. That is a Greek term. The seventh day constitutes a week for them and Saturday was that seventh day. Therefore the Passover lamb that would be slain within a week, then whenever the Sabbath would come in that particular period, the next day, meaning the first day of the week to start, that is the next day. We call it Sunday because we are going by the Greek structure. Then the high priests were to take these sheaves and offer them unto the Lord. This types a resurrection of the first fruits that was to come from the dead. I hope all of you understand this. This sheaf offering as it is the first fruits of that farmer's field of grain, he is fulfilling a natural type, but the type projects forward to the time when the true Lamb of God, which was Jesus the Christ, God's own Son, and the first fruit from the dead, would offer Himself for the sins of the whole world. That is why Jesus, in His first advent had to come precisely in the calendar of time when the true sacrificial lamb of God would be crucified on Friday. Not on

Wednesday, like the Adventist's want to lead you to believe. Friday was the day. We know the Jewish day starts at sundown; so when sundown on Thursday came, Friday began. Remember, Jesus was eating the Passover with the disciples; but by nine o'clock the next morning, He had already gone through an ordeal of suffering in the night that had finally put Him on the cross. Follow me now. He was on the cross by nine o'clock. As high noon came, the sun started to tip toward the west, and somewhere in the afternoon hours, Jesus died. They took Him from the cross in haste, because the next day was Saturday, which is the seventh day of the Jewish week. They did not have time to embalm Him and go through all that rigmarole. Therefore they took Him down in haste and wrapped Him in grave cloths. They took Him then, and put Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. When sundown came on Friday evening, Jesus had already been dead a few hours. He was in the grave all through the night hours of Saturday, the seventh day of their week, which was their Sabbath. He was in the ground all through the dark hours of the night and through the daylight hours of Saturday. At sundown Saturday evening, the first day of the week starts. He was still in the ground. However somewhere in the early dawning hours of the first day of the week, Sunday morning, an angel came down. There was an earthquake. I referred to a publication I had read,

when we printed the message, or made the video about what happened in the garden. I read from that and referred to this evangelist in Colorado, how he attacked Bro. Branham's ministry and testimony, because of him referring to the angel. Those people do not even know what they are talking about. How many times have I heard that little man, as he stood on the platform, facing a large crowd of people, say something like, The angel of the Lord is no more than just a few feet away. The apostles in the book of Acts, (You can read it) ministered in many ways as angelic beings came and ministered in their way, to whatever God wanted to do in that hour. Did an angel have to do it? No. The power of God was ministered through angels. The scripture says in the book of Acts that Jesus was raised by the power of God. We realize this, that within that power realm, there is an angelic being dispatched from the presence of God to activate and carry out the plan and mind of God. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to them that shall be heirs of salvation. Again it says in Hebrews, (written by the apostle Paul) God made His angels ministering spirits, and his ministers, meaning his earthly messengers or preachers, a flame of fire. An angel came down and rolled away the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb; and He who was dead, came forth alive, never to die again. That is why you read in Luke and Mark's account, how that early in the morning on the first day of the week, (which is

the Greek Sunday) certain women came to the sepulchre where Jesus had been lain and found only an angel sitting inside the tomb; and he informed them of the fact that Jesus was no longer in there. In Mark 16:6, you find the angel speaking to them, saying unto them, "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him." That tomb was empty. Hallelujah! He came forth by the power of God the Creator, on the first day of the week.

WHY CHRISTIANS WORSHIP ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

INSTEAD OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

Well what about this thing of meeting for worship on Sunday instead of Saturday the Sabbath day? Saturday was the Jewish worship day; but you can read in the New Testament that it was the disciples which chose to worship God together on the first day of the week. That does not make us pagans, just because we worship God on the day of our Savior's resurrection. It is written in the writings of the antinicean fathers and all those other men of the early church period, that it was the disciples who chose the first

day of the week for worship, because Jesus arose on the first day of the week. Furthermore why would the apostle Paul say what he did to the Corinthian assembly, if they were not meeting on the first day of the week? Notice, (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." That is enough to let us know when that first age Church assembled for worship. They were taking up a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and bringing it in upon the first day of the week. Well that sheaf offering, as the priest would wave it and offer it unto the Lord on the day following the Jewish Sabbath, which would occur within the Passover period, set the type for what was to come later. Jesus, His advent had to come precisely where He would be crucified at the time the Passover lamb was to be slain. He was taken captive on Thursday evening, He would be on the cross by nine o'clock the next morning, and He would die in the afternoon hours. No, He did not lay a full three days and a full three nights in the heart of the earth. But He was supposed to, Bro. Jackson, He said He would, some people say. I know that is worded like that; but we do know this, If Jesus had been in the ground literally, a full seventy two hours, then decay would have set in, bloating and

breaking down the cells of the body. Is that not right? Well the psalmist David wrote, (under inspiration of the Spirit) that His Holy One was not to see corruption; therefore it was not to be allowed, that His body would experience any kind of degeneration. Listen to this, ACT 13:35 "Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." That was the apostle Paul testifying of the faith he had in Christ, and quoting that particular Psalm of David, to vindicate the fact that Jesus could not be allowed to lie in that tomb long enough for deterioration of His physical body to begin. Notice how the apostle Paul proves that David was writing about Jesus, and not himself. (Acts 13:36-37) "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, (died) and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (His body decayed, and turned back to the elements it was made up of.) But He, (Jesus) whom God raised again, saw no corruption." Why? Simply because He did not stay dead a full three days and nights. Does that discredit the accuracy of the scriptures? No. It just confuses those educated divinity students that try to interpret everything without any revelation of what God is doing, and what He seeks to accomplish by what He is doing. God had the scriptures written in a way that leaves the theology professors and students scratching their heads; because they cannot put the whole picture together.

Yet He reveals the true picture to those who are hungry for the truth of His word; and gives them something to grow on, spiritually speaking. Praise His name!

THE PROPHET DANIEL **WRITING OF OUR DAY**

The Christian Church has been in existence for almost two thousand years; and the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament concerning the things that are to take place in the time we live in, have been lying right here in the scriptures all of that time, with very little being understood about them, until this particular generation came upon the scene. After God anointed His prophet messenger to this age to fulfill his calling, He began to reveal through him (that messenger) the things the prophets had written of concerning the end of the age; and also many other things that for ages have been only topics for discussion and heated debates. We now know the truth about the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, the serpent seed, the prehistoric age, and the beast of Daniel's and the apostle John's writings. Let us now go to Daniel 12:1, and notice how this is worded. Daniel had been praying, and I want you to know, after we leave chapter 9, which gives us the chronology and order of

the seventy weeks of prophetic time left to the Jews, the angel of the Lord then takes him through these following chapters, breaking down the oncoming beast period, the Greek as well as into the Roman period. It culminates right out into the last days that you and I live in, when the antichrist, the world dictator will be on the scene. Now we are picking up the account as the angel spoke to Daniel. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, (Michael is one of the arch angels, just like Gabriel, but this angel Michael is more or less the guardian angel that watches over the nation of Israel.) the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: (Which is Israel. I want you to notice this 12th chapter of Daniel, and lay it beside the 12th chapter of the book of Revelation, and you are looking at the same nation; and seeing the same picture in both. You cannot help but notice that chapter 12 of both these books, contain the same things. Each one brings out a beautiful, and a perfect picture. The angel of the Lord is telling Daniel that this great angel will stand up for the children of Israel,) and there shall be a time of trouble, (That refers to the last three and one half years of the seventieth week of Daniel, which will be fulfilled to the Jews; but will affect many others that are not Jews. It is the world's great tribulation period, which is somewhere just ahead of us.) such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: (No matter what you read in history, and no matter how dark that

period of history may appear to have been, yet the whole world is destined to go through a three and one half year period which will be the world's darkest, most horrible, wretched time ever.) and at that time thy people (Israel) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Naturally that pertains to the ones whose names are (because of the foreknowledge of God) already written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. Not every Jew will be saved. Only those who receive the message of their two prophets will God set His seal of acceptance upon, of all of those who are in the land of Israel in that time of their ministry. Not every Gentile who goes to a "church meeting" regularly will be accepted. Only those who gladly receive the word of revelation truth for their hour of time, will God set His seal of acceptance upon. He is not seeking church members; He is gleaning His foreknown, predestinated seed from among the "religious" people of the world in this hour of time. In other words, There is no time left, for people of God just to play church. It is time for every true child of God to be as serious about serving their Creator in the spirit of revealed truth, as they have ever been about anything in life. It is he that hath an ear to hear, that God will speak to in this late hour of time, just before the curtain closes for Gentiles. Once the Spirit of God turns back to the Jew, no Gentile will ever be drawn to repentance again. The seven

years left to the nation of Israel will close out the Laodicean Age; and usher in the coming of their King, to rule upon earth for a thousand years, from the Jewish temple that will shortly be built in Jerusalem. We know all of this has to be taken in through the mind, and received into our spirit, in order for it to be a revelation we would be willing to die for; so it is just as it has always been. It is proclaimed to all; and only those whose spirit is conditioned to receive God's truth will gladly receive it. All of the rest who hear the word of God preached and appear to receive it, will fall into one of the first three categories Jesus mentioned in the parable of the seed sower, in the 13th chapter of Matthew. This is why when we go to the 7th chapter of Revelation, we see where an element of Jewish men making a total of 144,000, are definitely sealed away by the Spirit of God, they will have ears to hear the message of their two prophets, according to what John wrote in chapter 11, concerning their ministry. When will they be sealed away? They are sealed away during the first half of Daniel's seventieth week, them as well as a remnant of the whole nation which is characterized and portrayed to Bible readers as "the woman" in chapter 12. Those two things have to be accomplished within the first three and one half years. First the 144,000 are sealed. They are messengers. When the great break comes, and the great tribulation starts, then the 144,000 will flee to the

various nations they come out of, to preach the everlasting gospel to their brethren still in dispersion among the nations. However the woman that is represented by the other remnant which will be sealed away, will flee into some place God has already prepared to receive her and care for her until the storm passes over, and Jesus is back on earth in bodily form to rule and reign. Why will they have to flee? To get away from what? This terrible time of trouble Daniel wrote of, such as the world has never seen since Israel has been a nation, and will never see again. That terrible time of trouble is described in Revelation, chapters 8 and 9. It occurs under the last three woes. Let us finish reading here in Daniel. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Now if we did not have other scriptures in the Bible concerning this prophetic promise, we would not know how to digest it, nor to apply it and look toward a resurrection. Just this one scripture standing alone does not give us the whole picture. However when you take it and lay it alongside all the other scriptures that deal with the same thing, the picture clears up. Here is how it looks to the natural mind, just taking what the angel has told Daniel. It looks like, at that time, when many that sleep (that means in death) in the dust of the earth, shall awake, that there is definitely going to be a resurrection that will bring up both the

good and the evil ones that have gone by the way of death. It would sound like there is going to be a resurrection of the good, and a resurrection of the bad, all at the same time. However as we go on in this message, we will learn from other scriptures, and understand that this is not the order at all. This is a prophecy that conveys a promise, and that is all it does. There is definitely a promise of a resurrection, that gives people a hope and something to believe in and trust in, but who would know when or how this is all going to come about, if there was nothing else said about it in the Bible? This next verse gives us a picture of the living, how they will be affected. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." That is the state of what others that are living will be portrayed as, as their life and testimony and affect they have on society, goes on into that hour. What I really want you to notice above all else though, is that verse 2, speaks of a resurrection of something that was dead. Then I want you to pay attention to verse 4. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." It was another five hundred years before the advent of Christ, and time wise, the social, political, and material pattern of life did not change very much during all that time. However just look at the hour you and

I live in. Can you not say knowledge has been increased? There is hardly a thing that modern man has not thought of and devised. In fact he has become so intelligent in his own way of learning, he has forgotten all about God. The book that our founding fathers respected and believed in, though they did not understand very much of it, has been set aside. Modern man has no time for a book they say is full of myths. Though our founding father's did not understand very much of it, they trusted it because they knew it was the infallible word of God. I heard one of the T.V. News Broadcaster's say that our nation has reached 250 million in population. I am sad to say, We are living in a nation of millions of people that have no knowledge or concept of God whatsoever. They appear as though they do not even care whether there is a God or not. I tell you, when you know there is a God and you know His Word is true, and you know there is going to be an accounting of how we live our lives here on earth, you sure do not want to face that hour without our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on your side. Well this is the first prophecy we look at, that begins to give the believer in God something to hold on to. The Jewish saints who were given types and shadows of something that was coming in future time, knew there was going to be a resurrection; but they had no idea whatsoever when, or where, nor how. Well, we do know that in that long period of the Law

dispensation, when they were required to walk before God according to the word of their prophets, there were people raised from the dead, at various times. They were not raised from the dead into immortality. They were raised back into the same mortal state they had previously existed in. Therefore, somewhere, later on in life they died again. In other words, If there is any hope for the believer, it has to rest on the fact of a sure resurrection. We will be reunited with those that we have known in days gone by, if it be that we are all in the Lord Jesus. In Matthew 7:13, Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." You may see great numbers going to church every week; but very few of them have actually entered into the way that leads to eternal life. Just merely going to some church every time the door is opened is a far cry from having that gift of eternal life abiding in you. In Romans 8:9, the apostle Paul wrote, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Then he wrote, in verse 11, "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." Let me say this now, Those who outrightly reject the word of revealed truth for this hour, do not have the Spirit of Christ abiding in them. Would the very Spirit that is God, reject the word of God? That would be like denying Himself. Brothers and sisters, the scriptures do not lie. What God has said, He means; and what He has said He will do, He will do it.

IS THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL OF MAN THE SAME THING?

As we leave the book of Daniel, let us keep in mind, every righteous soul that has died, no matter how they died, their spirit and their soul has left that body of flesh and bones. Every righteous soul rests in Paradise awaiting the time for its ultimate reward; and every wicked, or unrighteous soul has gone to that place of torment. That place represents total separation from God. I have been asked the question so many times, Bro. Jackson, is the spirit and the soul the same? I will use this to illustrate, Just suppose there is a glass full of water sitting here. The glass represents the body that contains that water. That water is clear. It is liquid. The water in that glass types the spirit of life. That life that you are made up of, came from God. God took of Himself, and as He separates that

measure allotted to you, He does that in order to begin the beginning of what He wants as a son or daughter that will have certain attributes and likeness of Him. First we need to understand that this which is life itself, is what the water represents. Just suppose though, that we want to turn this into a drink that has a flavor, and color, and that has certain nutrients in it. This means we will have to take some other elements and incorporate them into it. For the sake of illustration, just say we are going to make an orange drink. We take something that has the orange flavor, whether that is an extract or dried powder, or something that carries that orange flavor, and we are going to put that in the glass. The minute we put that in the glass, we are going to notice two things. First it has color. It is going to be an orange color. Then it is going to have flavor. It will no longer taste like water. It now has an orange flavor; but now we want to get rid of a lot of that acid taste, so we put some sugar in. The minute we put that sugar in, it dissolves. It does not make the orange color any more orange than it was already; and it does not make the taste of orange any stronger. It just blends away that acid taste and gives it a sweet taste. The sugar in there, is what gives it that "I want some more" taste. What have we done? It is still just a glass full of something to drink, like it started out. Well when God made you and me, He first took of Himself that measure of spirit that was to be our human spirit. Then He incorporated

into that, those characteristics that portray you and me as we are. All people are not alike in their human makeup. Some are ever so timid, and others are very bold. He did not make us all to look alike. You wonder where He could get such differences that no two of us look exactly alike in every detail. He puts these different attributes in us, like the five senses. These five senses that He puts into the spirit, that gives the inner life person you are, an outlet through the flesh. We see, hear, taste, smell and feel. That is how you make contact with things of the earth. Without those senses, your life here in the earth can be very handicapped. If you cannot hear, many times you can walk right into the path of danger, simply because you do not have eyes in the back of your head. Many times we can hear what we cannot see; and there are other times when we see danger and do not hear a thing. Therefore good hearing and good eyesight are things to be very thankful for if we have them. What about the sense of feel? You can feel hot and cold; but you cannot see nor hear either one; so it is a blessing to be able to enjoy the sense of feel. Smell and taste are both very useful also. It is true, one can live without these senses; but such a person is very handicapped. Therefore those five senses need to be in there. Then there is the ability to receive and retain knowledge, incorporated into our makeup. The knowledge capability we have, is what helps us understand things that relate

to our earthly being, while we are here in this life. If you did not have the ability to retain what you just saw, felt, heard and so forth, you would go from day to day, having to go through the same things all over again. The ability to learn, to understand, and to know how to relate your life here to the things around you is wonderful; but above all else, it is through that ability to retain knowledge that we associate ourselves to our Creator. I am using this to help you understand the difference between soul and spirit. When God separated from Himself that spirit of life, and put inside it those attributes and characteristics that are attributed to you, that is the soul. The spirit, and those characteristics that make you what you are, cannot be separated. When death separates you from the flesh, those attributes and senses are not separated from the spirit. The spirit and the soul are completely inseparable. So death puts the body in the ground, in the outer crust of the circle we have on this little chart representing the earth. The good part is, death puts the inner spirit person you really are, in paradise. Which up until Calvary was in the heart of the earth; but since Calvary, is in the heavenly realm. That is why you hear some people say, "It is either heaven or hell;" there is no in between. There are people in this world that spend much hard earned money, paying some priest to pray a loved one out of Purgatory; when there is no such possibility. If death comes knocking on your door

when you are in a state of separation from God, that is how the story ends for you. No one else, no matter how righteous they are, can ever change your state of separation from God, if you fail to make that change yourself. God gave King David an insight into this thing of our state after the breath of life goes out of us. Even though he made mistakes, he still walked with God; and it is written, that he was a man after God's own heart. Notice a few words of David, here in Psalms 16, verses 8-11. "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One (meaning Jesus) to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. He said his flesh could rest in hope, simply because he could see a resurrection. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," lets us know those in the paradise part of what is commonly referred to as hell, went into it with a sure hope, that one day they would come out of there. When he said, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," his thoughts jumped all the way from himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the way those Old Testament prophecies were; the prophet would be looking at a present condition; and all of a sudden he would prophesy something way off

into the future. We have already covered that particular thought when we were speaking of the fact that Jesus could not be allowed to lie in that tomb for a full 3 days and 3 nights, lest His body would for sure, see corruption. Even Job, the prophet that lived 1500 years before Christ, had the revelation that there would be a resurrection. Notice his words in chapter 19, verses 25-27. "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: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." He knew that in that fleshly body he would be resurrected. That is the same hope we have, that if death overtakes us before the Lord Jesus comes again, we will still be in the rapture; because the apostle Paul wrote that the dead in Christ would be raised, and those still alive would be caught up together with them to meet the Lord. Therefore with these scriptural insights, and with this explanation about the spirit and the soul, I believe we should move ahead with our subject.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT **ABOUT THE FIRST** **RESURRECTION**

We will leave the book of Daniel and move on to the advent of Christ; and we will look at St. John, chapter 5, first. Jesus really opened up the subject of the resurrection, as He spoke here in this setting. As we read, please notice who is doing the talking. Jesus has been talking about resurrection and so forth; and says this, (verse 20) "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. (be surprised) For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; (makes them alive) even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." Now in this phrase of speech, He is talking about things, we will say, that pertain to the dead being made alive again. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." This would be a good place to go right off into a thought on the Godhead; but we will forego that at this time. This lets us know what Jesus said, there, concerning Himself and the Father. The Father is one object of thought. The Son is another object of thought. Yet as Jesus is speaking this, we must believe that the Father, the first and foremost, who is the Creator, the life giver, the life supplier, is in the Son, in the fullness of all His expressed attributes, to show lost mankind His mercy and grace and ability and

willingness to save those that are lost. We do not mean to be bypassing the Son; for all things have to be brought through the Son. Therefore He that honoureth the Son, and seeth the Son in the true picture, cannot help but see the Father also; but he that wants to honour the Father and say, We see no need for the Son, is missing the whole picture. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." He is talking about a spiritual death in that sense of the word. Notice this, "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." That was right then, and now, they that hear the word and understand it in its right way, can immediately have resurrected, or eternal life in their soul, and He was not yet talking about a physical resurrection. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." He is talking about judging sin for what it is, because it is the unbelief that rules and dominates man's unwillingness to hear or see what Jesus is talking about. Now He leaves that frame of thought and notice what He says. "Marvel not at this: (What did He mean by that? Do not be surprised. Do not become confused.

Do not let this statement shake you up.) for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. (Now what is He talking about? Is He talking about the same thing as in these other verses? No. He has left that frame of thought. He is now turning to a physical death situation.) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." That is exactly why the Jewish society today, having only the Law and the prophets coming up through Daniel, they look for a general resurrection, because that is the way they interpret Daniel, chapter 12. If we just take what Jesus said here, once again it almost sounds like Jesus is talking about a general resurrection, both of the good and bad, all at the same time; but we already know this, as we go on in this message which we are titling "The First Resurrection," that this is not how it is going to come about at all. It is important that we understand the order of these things we are looking at, so we will go into it from a little different standpoint shortly; and ask, When does the rapture take place? and where is it applied. The rapture does not take place in Revelation 20:4-5, where we read a while ago. Absolutely not. The rapture has already taken place long before Revelation 20, verse 4. While we are looking at this particular point, let us go to Matthew, chapter 27, and we will notice what happened when

Jesus' earthly ministry was finished. The words Jesus spoke in St. John 5, were spoken in the early days of His ministry, without any further explanation to the disciples, and without giving them anything to look to for the revelation. He just left them with that promise, "The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall come forth. They that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." That did not put it in any order of fulfillment or anything. It was the truth; but the revelation of when and how would have to come later. Now we will look at what is recorded in Matthew 27; and this is not the words of Jesus; this is the writing of the apostle Matthew, as he recorded what happened after Christ rose from the dead. If Christ rose from the dead, and we know He did, what was He fulfilling as pertaining to the Law? Well the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." He was not the first fruits, unless there was a plurality that came up with Him. Will you not agree? I must say it that way, because, If He was the first fruits, then it is because others came out of the graves with Him, or at the same interval of time. If others did not come with Him, then He was the first fruit from among the dead. Well nevertheless the Law of Moses contained an observance that pointed exactly to that. We are in Matthew 27.

Jesus has been crucified. We know there was a great earthquake and the veil of the temple was rent; but do we really see anything in that? Verse 51 says, "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain." This veil was that inner partition that separated the sanctuary part of the temple, or the front part of the temple from the little room, or that area which was called the Holy of Holies. This veil separated the two areas and only one priest, once each year, went behind, or beyond that veil. However out there in the sanctuary part where the table of shewbread sat, and the Menorah, (the seven golden candlesticks) and all those other things, other priests would come in there and burn incense, and offer prayer at certain times of the day. Of course all those things were types. Only one priest, once each year, on the day of atonement, took the blood of that atonement sacrifice that had been offered upon the altar, and went beyond the veil into the very presence of the ark of the covenant where the Shekinah glory was. (This priest typed Christ.) He went right into the very presence of the Shekinah glory, which typed the deityship of God invested in the person of Jesus, who is the Christ. As that priest went into that setting on the day of atonement, we know this, his prayer, and his presenting himself there, only pushed the sins of the believers ahead. It did not eradicate the sins. It pushed them ahead for one more year of time. It was just like a bank renewing a bank note for another

year; God renewed the note by making them feel guiltless, they were forgiven. However when Jesus died on the cross, He who was the fulfilling of all that which was types, oh brothers and sisters, as He died and the earth was rocked with that earthquake, God was saying, This is the end of the types and shadows, because the veil was rent. Never again will that veil mean anything. Well Bro. Jackson, will the Jews build a temple. They absolutely will; but that has nothing at all to do with changing the structure of the Old Testament types. Keep in mind, the Jews were blinded to this, in part. God knew this. It was all a part of His plan. The fact they were blinded to it, was so God could eventually turn to the Gentiles, this bunch of filthy Gentiles that had always worshipped pagan gods; and give us the hope and promise of eternal life. Then as He turns back to the Jew, sure He will pick right up where He left off; but they will not crucify the Savior again. When that veil was rent, that was God's way of saying to the old covenant, it is finished. That is why it is written, Christ is the end of the Law to everyone that believeth. Let us just watch. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." There was definitely a

resurrection; so I ask you, At that time, who could they be that were resurrected? Only righteous, saintly people that had died, all the way back from the beginning of time. That would take you right back to Abel; and come right on down through the various centuries of time, to the time of Christ's first advent. I will say this, We have to realize that some of those bodies had been lying there for hundreds of years. I am sure of this one thing also, Abel was not buried in Jerusalem. Abel was buried somewhere else. We are talking about before the flood. How many understand what I am saying? It was at Jerusalem, the focal point, where this great event of a resurrection is going to first be set in order. There at Jerusalem will sin be atoned for. There at Jerusalem will the Redeemer appear. At Jerusalem will the resurrection start. Now it does not tell us whether there were other saintly people resurrected anywhere else in the Middle East areas of the world. Furthermore since it does not tell us that, we do not have to let our mind's even drift into such a trend of thinking. The main thing is, God took out of the ground, and out of paradise, righteous spirits of those that had died before that time. One thing is sure, When Jesus rose from the dead, and later went into heaven itself, this destroyed this part of hell. Whether all the righteous bodies were taken out at that time is immaterial. It did take all the righteous spirits of those that had been held in

that portion of hell. That is where Paul, years later, could write in the Ephesian letter and say what he did. That is where we will pick up now; and go into greater detail.

WHY THERE IS CONFUSION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

I am asking the Lord to help me put the rest of this message together in a way to make it an enjoyable thing for us to know. If I had time to relate some of the confusion that is going on right now in the religious world, over the very thing that we are on, this resurrection and the rapture, you would better understand why I say, It is important that we get the picture straight in our thinking. You have never seen the like of controversy there is in the world today, among the religious realm of humanity, about anything else in the Bible, like it is about the resurrection, the rapture, and a secret translation before the tribulation period, or whether it takes place after the tribulation has started, or after it is ended. The one article I read, tries to lay the blame all on a Jesuit priest back in 1800's, a priest from Chili, saying that he is the one that concocted this idea. They try to tell in this article that there was no such thing as the secret rapture, taught by

the first age Christians. Well I will have to say, Any mind that talks like that, left the track before reaching their destination. You would have to be blind, not to see it here in the Bible. We have touched many of these things already, on paradise, hell, and the place of torment. We are trying to bring this all in, What does redemption in Christ accomplish in the fact there is to be a resurrection, when we know according to Daniel chapter 12 and St. John chapter 5, both of those scriptures would leave us with the thought that there is going to be a general resurrection wherein some are raised to life and some to eternal damnation. However when we go further in the New Testament, after the advent of Christ, it is then that we begin to feel like the revelation began to drop upon the Church. Later in that first age, the Church began to deal with the subject, and to divide the events that all constitute this thing of the first resurrection. We want to say this, The resurrection of the body you and I have lived in, in this life, is as much a part of redemption as the redemption of the soul and spirit of mankind. That is why we read in Romans 8, where the apostle Paul is speaking of the redemption of the purchased possession, that the manifestation of the sons of God can not and will not be until after the body has been changed from mortal to immortality. Therefore they would have to be a resurrection of those that are dead in Christ and those that are alive in Christ at His coming.

Then and then alone will there be an era of that time taught by Paul in Romans 8, that there will be a manifestation. Now the word manifestation or manifest, means to put on display, to reveal, or to make known. Therefore in that sense we can see the Millennium age coming up, which covers one thousand years of time. It is a dispensation. That is when the manifestation of the sons of God will be a reality. They will be revealed, made known to the whole creation the world over, simply because redemption has constituted that. Therefore the Millennium is a furtherance of redeeming the earth, restoring back to the earth, regenerating the earth, as we taught in the other subject. When the Millennium is over and we see the second resurrection, we will see in closing out this subject, that the second resurrection is a resurrection of everything that has death attributed to it. No matter whether it goes from the beginning of time to the end, everything that is laying in the ground will be considered lifeless, and have no eternal life attributed to it at all. We are going to go back and pick up the scriptures in Matthew 27 and deal with the 51st verse, to lay down the thought of what took place at the resurrection of Christ. As we said earlier, In the heart of the earth, up until the advent of Christ, there were two realms in which the spirit of all that died on the earth due to the penalty of death imputed to mankind because of

Adam's sin, went. The righteous went into a place called paradise and the wicked went to a place called Hades. The whole thing was hell, which simply means, a place of imprisonment. Even the righteous were in hell, in that sense of the scriptural term.. We have a lot of church going people today, their mouths drop wide open when you say something like that; because they automatically think hell is a bad place. They do not realize that hell meant a place of the imprisonment of the soul and spirit of the inner person. Therefore as we read here, God's redemption through Christ has come. He has been crucified, and hung on the cross, died for the sins of the whole human race, past, present, and future. Death has taken His life. His body is taken and laid in a tomb in the earth's surface. But we know according to the Psalm, the inner life of Jesus did not go to the tomb. It descended into hell. Since it descended into hell, we quoted this earlier, from the 16th Psalm, verses 8-10, where David was inspired to write this Psalm, and he had a revelation. That revelation inspired him to speak these words in the Psalm, prophetic words, where he said he foresaw the Lord always before his face, meaning he kept the Lord constantly before him in everything he endeavored to do, The Lord was his means of existence and strength and such like. Because of that, then God gave him the assurance of his glory, or that his flesh would rest in hope,

having a promise and assurance that though death one day would take him, and he would go to hell, God would not leave his soul in hell, that place of imprisoned spirits. Because of that, he could see that neither would God, the great eternal spirit, allow His holy One, His means of redemption to see corruption. That means His physical body would not go beyond the hours of decomposition and breakdown. As we read here, we want to take this verse of scripture, and see what it actually points us to. We have to realize, Matthew was writing the account years after the event was all over. Therefore he was squeezing developments together. He tells in the 51st verse, the very hour that Christ died on the cross, "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, (It literally shook. That is what is signified here. The earth's cracks open here.) and the rocks rent; (busted apart) And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Notice that it does say saints, plural; and nothing at all is said about the wicked and unregenerate element of mankind. It is speaking of saints, people who believed and trusted in God. We do know that as the children of Israel eventually came out of Egyptian bondage and settled in the land of Palestine, later as God chose the city of Jerusalem, the place to reveal His name, this would lead many Jewish people who were trusting fully in God, to want to be buried near or

around the Jerusalem area. Somehow they had a glimmer of insight, that one day there would be a great event take place there. We can go back to Job and see how related to that. However before the event actually took place, no one knew exactly where, when, nor how this great event would begin to unfold. many. I would never attempt to be dogmatic about some of these things we have so little written about; but what is written clearly, I believe it is alright to teach. I just do not believe we should try to get so technical about some things. People will say, Bro. Jackson: When the graves were opened at the time Jesus arose and many of the saints came forth, did that include all of those who believed in God, all the way back to Abel? I will not go so far as to say that. I will say this, We need to let God do a few things the way He has purposed to, without us having to have all the details. Some people are forever trying to learn something new about the scriptures, and they devote very little time to trying to live their lives according to what they know already. He took out of the ground every major patriarch and saint that He saw fit to take, those who would bear an infallible testimony for His glory and honor. I am persuaded of that. Remember this, In heaven, when the apostle John was taken up, and saw the four and twenty elders sitting around that throne, we have said this before, they were all earthly men. There would be twelve from the Old Testament,

twelve from the New Testament. Therefore if there is twelve from the Old Testament, we are not saying who they are. But they are definitely going to be patriarchs, one's that have stood out in time. That has to come into the mind and plan of God. Concerning those bodies that arose, the question can be asked, Were they raised in a mortal state, like they had previously been in, before they were buried, or were they raised in an immortal state? If we look at this picture in a sensible way, we are going to have to come to the conclusion, that they were raised in an immortal status. Think of it. If God would have went to the trouble of raising a saint that has been in the ground, six or seven hundred years, you know the body would have been completely decomposed. There is no problem with God raising it from the dead and restoring all the atoms and molecules back to the original status; but you would have to ask, What would that accomplish? Those who believed the word of God already knew He could raise dead people back to mortal life; and that they would die again in due time; but this resurrection that took place at the time Jesus was raised, I am persuaded, had a much higher purpose. It says they appeared in the city; so if they were in the city, they were no longer hanging around the cemetery. They were not ghosts. They were real flesh and bones people; and they were raised up for a purpose. The scripture says they appeared in the city and were made known to many.

That is not going into great detail and becoming too technical, to say that, nor to say this, If they were not raised in a glorified body, then how do we explain what happened to them after being raised up, back to a mortal state of flesh? Did they live on for several more years and die like Lazarus did? Remember Jesus raised people from the dead during the time of His ministry; but He never did raise anyone into immortality. It was not time. He raised Lazarus from the dead, when he had been dead for days; and was already stinking; but He did not raise him to immortality. He was raised in the mortal state; therefore he died again later, and was buried just like any other mortal person. On the other hand, none of these saints it speaks of here, were ever identified again as such. Nowhere is it written, what happened to them after they were resurrected. Where did they go to? Well we have to put the picture together in our mind, that this was the beginning of God fulfilling His type which is written in Leviticus 23:10-16. We will read the whole 7 verses. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without

blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord." I have already brought this in, how that once the children of Israel were in the land of promise, when the spring of the year would come and their crops were ripe and ready for harvest, the owner of the land, before the reapers come and cut the crop, would go into the field. I do not see him going in to a shallow, poor ground. I see him going where it stands out so vigorous, right to the best he has. He cuts a bundle, a sheaf of this grain. He ties it in a bundle. What is this for? In the natural, it is the first fruits of his total harvest. He takes that to the priest at the temple, or at the tabernacle, whatever the case might have been. We know it was a tabernacle at first, later it became a temple. The priest was to pile that up,

and on the morning after the Sabbath, (All of this typed the beginning of God's resurrection plan.) this bundle was to be brought by the priest and waved before the Lord as the first fruits of the harvest. As the priest, on resurrection morning, went and did that in the natural, with those bundles of grain, that is why it is written in Mark's gospel, St. John's gospel, Matthew's account, that early in the morning, dawning toward the first day of the week, just before the rising of the sun, came Mary Magdalene and those other women, with spices. They wanted to see if they could prepare the body of Jesus for proper burial and future entombment. However when they got there, He was no longer in the tomb. They were met by an angel of the Lord, which said, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. We know this, Jesus is the first fruits of those that were dead. Therefore if these graves were literally opened, and fulfilled at the resurrection of Jesus what I believe they did, as Jesus was on earth about the space of forty days after His resurrection, personally giving vindication to His existence and resurrection, I believe those other resurrected saints did likewise. I believe they also appeared from time to time, to give testimony to some of those living Jewish people, that something had happened that vindicated the hope they held dear to their heart's. They could see, and they could recognize who those old saints

were. That left a sure testimony for them, of the fact that what they had been believing was coming to pass. Those first age Christians had sure testimony of what God was doing; and it is by their word that we also can be sure of what God is doing; and of what He will do, as time closes out. At this time, the time of that phase of the first resurrection when Jesus and those Old Testament saints arose, those saints came out of paradise. That is where their spirits came from. Their spirits did not come from heaven, like we would expect today. Their spirits came out of paradise, which at that time was still in the heart of the earth. Let us go to Luke's account, to show you what I mean. Luke wrote concerning when Jesus hung on the cross and the one thief looked over and began to criticize and try to humiliate Jesus, the other thief just merely said, (Luke 23:42) "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." For that, Jesus made him a promise. Let me just read it to you; so you can get the whole picture together. (Luke 23:39-43) "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say

unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Where would that be? In the heart of the earth of course. One criminal recognized who Jesus was; and the other one saw nothing to distinguish Him from any other man that might be hung from one of those old crosses. That is how it is. The gospel is preached to all, some believe it and receive a revelation; and the rest just hear words that mean nothing to them. Therefore this one said, We deserve to die; but this man has done nothing. What did Jesus say to the one that defended Him and said, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom? "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Jesus knew the minute His life would separate from the body that was going through this terrible ordeal of suffering for man's chastisement and sin offering, where He would be. He was going to hell. As He went to hell, He knew this man that had been defending Him, would be going with Him. In other words, The spirit of that thief was going to go with Him.

WHAT PETER WROTE ABOUT JESUS-AND WHAT HE DID IN HELL

We will go to the Epistle of 1st Peter. Peter, the apostle to the Jewish circumcision, just as Paul was the

apostle to the Gentiles, gave his own expression of what the death of Jesus accomplished in the plan of God. Neither one of these men, even though they had different revelations at a certain juncture of time concerning this event, said anything that would contradict what the other one said, or would say. Peter brings in a thing about Christ Jesus after the death on the cross that no one else expressed exactly the same way. Peter brings it out like this, 1st Peter 3:18. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, (That means the sins of the whole world.) the just (He was the just one) for the unjust, (The unjust is people like you and me.) that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, (the flesh He lived in) but quickened (made alive) by the Spirit: (that which was of God that dwelled in Him. It is that Spirit that would quicken and make Him alive again.) By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison." That is why we can say that at that time, this whole realm was hell, a place of the imprisoned soul's of mankind. He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, in hell. "Which sometime were disobedient, when once (meaning during that period) the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." This sets the type for water baptism, because the water, the flood water covered the earth in that realm where mankind was. Wherever man was, he had corrupted

his surroundings and sinned against God upon the earth. That is why God, in that judgment, covered the earth with water, to get rid of the traces of sin that man had given over to. He (God) purposed just to wash it all away; because He wanted to look upon a clean earth. It set a type. As we go on with this, let us watch some things. We know that Noah preached for at least a hundred and some odd years; so just think for a minute. He is referred to in the New Testament as a preacher of righteousness. Well if he was a preacher of righteousness, then there were no doubt times when these unrighteous mobs would come around to humiliate him; and belittle him because of this thing he was working on; for every year it was getting larger, as Noah continued to build on it. This no doubt is what would give God an opportunity to anoint Noah, to preach to this multitude of critics and rejectors of God. Think for a moment though, of the fact that some no doubt died during that long period of time; and were placed in the ground. I believe it would be reasonable to assume that there were people dying by natural causes during that time. Why do I make this point? Simply to say this, It is very possible that there were a few of those old ones scattered through that hundred and some odd years that died believing what Noah was preaching. They were not the ones that were going to perish in the flood. They died by natural causes because they believed what that old man said. All those

critics that somehow or other were young enough, and God would leave alive long enough to taste the very means of this terrible catastrophic judgment, they heard the same things these others that had died by natural causes heard; but they went to the torment part of hell. They heard the same thing and they just kept on laughing, making fun and so forth. They continued right straight on through to that terrible hour of judgment. What about those others, the ones that died by natural causes? They had nothing to compare Noah's preaching to. There was no law in existence then, Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not. That was the first time there had ever been a man talking, or preaching like that; but they believed what he was saying. When Jesus went down into hell and began to preach to those spirits, we can say this, the righteous ones that had died in the period of time this terrible evil was going on, it cleared up the picture for them. Jesus did not have to preach to righteous Abel. How many understand what I am saying? There was no need to preach to Abel because Abel did not live when sin had multiplied and come to such an ungodly state. For quite a long period there were others of Abel's category; but once that terrible ordeal of evil set in, others who walked with God, had to do so in the midst of the whole rotten mess. Just think of Enoch; and the time he lived in. He gave his son a name Methuselah, which meant, When he is gone, it

(judgment) will come. That man lived 969 years though; so just think of all the sons and daughters that were born in those years before the flood finally came. From then on to the flood you had thousands upon thousands born and lived in this terrible period. Some turned away from the evil and died by natural causes. Others, and I would have to believe there were multitudes of them, were just like so many are today, Everyone else is doing it, so I see nothing wrong in doing what everyone else is doing. That is what you hear from a lot of children today, when you attempt to correct them. The great difference between then and now, is the fact that there was no law written. They had nothing to go by. Nevertheless they were without excuse; because God had Noah on the scene, preaching righteousness. Nevertheless to clear up the picture, Jesus went right down into hell and preached to all of them. I hope this gives all of you a little better picture of why it was necessary for Jesus to go preach to those imprisoned spirits. He certainly did not have to preach to Abel nor any of his kind. There was no need for. It was those spirits that had lived during the time of this terrible evil environment, without anything they could look to, that would tell them it was wrong to do as the general trend were doing. That is why Peter wrote what he did in this Epistle. Jesus preached to them. "By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were

disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited (tarried) in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (It set a type of baptism there.) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." So when we accept Christ as our Savior we know it is His blood that was shed to make an atonement for our fallen nature. Nevertheless because I have lived in this mortal flesh on this earth, in this evil environment, then the evil things I have done living in this flesh that causes this flesh to carry out the works of the flesh, the fruits of unrighteousness and so forth, then the baptism of our body in water, is that in the eyes of God we stand as though we had never sinned. The remembrance of my smoking, my drinking, my cursing and all that is put out of His mind, when I obey from the heart the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the blood that atones for the inner man of course; but it is that water that washes away the things that I have done in this body of flesh. That is why Jesus says in St. John's writing, "Whosoever sins ye remit, to Him they are remitted." That is what remission of those things is tied to.

HOW THE WORLD LOOKS UPON THOSE WHO WALK WITH GOD IN TRUTH

As we continue on, Peter was speaking here in the 4th chapter, after saying in the last verse of chapter 3, concerning Jesus, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him," which lets us know He is now high priest, interceding for all who believe, "Arm yourselves." Why would he say that? Let us read the whole thing, and you will see. Look at chapter 4, verse 1, to begin. (1) "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; (2) That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. (3) For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: (4) Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: (5) Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. (6) For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live

according to God in the spirit." In verse 4, Peter is bringing out how the world looks upon the believer today, just like you are some kind of queer, odd ball, misfit that just does not fit in with their crowd. In verse 5, he makes it clear that all will have to give account of their actions and deeds before that righteous Judge of all ages. Notice, "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Therefore for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, (Where were they? They were in hell.) that they might be judged according to men in the flesh." He was preaching to those people that had perished, or that had died during that period of time when such a terrible evil was in existence on the face of this earth. We can ask this, Was the Holy Spirit around? Yes; but they did not know how to recognize Him. You would just have to say this, When that old man began to say some of the things he did, somehow or other there was a feeling come over those people, a feeling they did not understand. It was just a strange feeling they got ever time they heard that old man speak. It was not associated to a law or writing of any kind of commandment. This is why Jesus preached to them. "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." You and I know those that were in torment in hell, He was not going to preach a salvation message to them. He was there to plainly tell them, The man you heard, and ridiculed,

blasphemed, and humiliated was a servant of God, giving you a chance to repent; and because you counted his words as words of a mad man, and rejected sound council, you are in this place of torment. Surely you remember that strange feeling you had, yet you ignored it. It was Jesus who now stood there in person telling them, That was the Spirit of Almighty God warning you; giving you a chance; but it is too late now. Was there redemption for those in hell, and Hades? No sir. Only those that were in the righteous realm in paradise. That is how we have to understand this. He is not giving these in Hades any salvation message; He was just simply informing them of why they had to be where they were. He was only reminding them, you are here because you refused your opportunity, when you were still alive on earth. When Cain himself died, the one who slew Abel, (the Bible does not tell us when Cain died) he went right there; and was hearing the words of Jesus, as He preached to all of them. Furthermore Cain is still there. Judas is there. We could name a lot of them; simply because the Bible has identified a lot of them who refused the counsel of God. This is not theology. It is the only scriptural, spiritual way we can get the picture of why Jesus went to hell, and why was it necessary for Him to say anything to anyone. It was not to give anyone a second chance. It was just like the apostle Peter wrote, "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God

in the spirit." Only those that are here are the ones that are going to fall in that category. This is Peter's description of what went on down in hell during the interval of time while Jesus' body was in the tomb, and His Spirit was down there. We will now go back to that account in Matthew 27, and read only one verse. A verse that lets us know where those other saints that were raised, established their testimony. Verse 53, says, "And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." There is only one city scripturally, that can be referred to as the holy city; and we all know that city is Jerusalem. These bodies came out, and made their appearance. We can say this, for the sake of the message as we go on with it, We do not say how many thousands or anything, but the question has been asked, Bro. Jackson, If righteous saints of the Old Testament period were resurrected, is it possible that this reached back in time, where they were buried in other places? Absolutely. It was only those that were buried in the Jerusalem area that it was necessary for them to rise and make their appearance in the city; because it was in the city of Jerusalem where this great event of redemption was being perfected. This was typed when Melchizedek and Abraham met that day; and Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine. The Bible refers to this Melchizedek as the priest of the most high God; and it was this very city where that event took place; only it

was not known as Jerusalem then. It was known as Salem, a Jebusite city. When Abraham was coming back after the slaughtering of the kings that had captured his nephew Lot, and the delivery of Lot and so forth, this type was instituted. Melchizedek typed the manifestation of God that would be represented in the person of His Son; who came first as a prophet, died at Jerusalem, and ascended into heaven as High Priest, a position He still holds today. He comes back to Jerusalem and takes His third office work as King of kings, and Lord of lords, to be King over all the earth in the glorious Millennium, that is not very far in the future now. Therefore since that was typed by Melchizedek, then it had to be fulfilled in and through the person of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son; because the typed event is now transpiring. What we are saying also, is that not only were there righteous bodies in the cemeteries of Jerusalem brought forth when Jesus arose from the dead; that could also have been the picture all the way back through time in the various other areas where saintly people in the other periods of time have lived. Where you do not have scripture to establish a thing for sure, if you say anything at all about it, you just have to use common sense, scriptural reasoning, without saying, Thus saith the Lord.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN
JESUS LED CAPTIVITY
CAPTIVE-AND GAVE GIFTS
UNTO MEN?

After reading what the apostle Peter wrote, explaining Jesus' purpose for going into hell to preach, we need to go to Ephesians 4; where the apostle Paul finished the story, so to speak. Remember now, Just as David said in the 16th Psalm, God would not let his soul in hell, neither would He leave any other righteous soul in hell, the place of imprisonment, after the way was made for them to be set free. Naturally if his (David's) soul would not remain in hell, he meant that part of it which is paradise. The other part of what is referred to as hell, remained right there. What would God do with those who came forth from hell? That is the question to be answered; and we go to an Epistle written by the apostle to the Gentiles. Naturally Paul also was a Jew; but he was known as the apostle to the Gentiles; even though Peter was the first to preach to Gentiles, when he went to the house of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion that believed in God, but needed to be enlightened as to what faith in God really meant in the light of the New Testament covenant. Let us go to Ephesians 4:7, and continue with our thought. As the apostle Paul relates what God has revealed to him in explanation of the

purpose for the Lord Jesus going into hell, he referred to it as one descending into the lower parts of the earth. He did not refer to it as hell, just as the lower parts of the earth. That meant going into the bowels of the interior realm of the planet Earth. We find it here in the 4th chapter, and we are aware of the fact that he was speaking to Gentiles, who years later, after the resurrection of Christ, have been brought into the faith. They are to understand the resurrection of Christ and what was constituted in the fact that he went down into the bowels of the earth. Notice how he brings it out. Verse 7, "But unto every one of us is given grace (God's imparted favor) according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The word Christ, in this singular usage, would mean according to that measure of the Spirit of Christ, which in reality is the Spirit of God, that God has allocated to each one of His redeemed, born again children. Now he begins to explain. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, (That points us to the person of Jesus the Christ, who has ascended into heaven.) He (meaning Jesus) led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." What is Paul actually saying here in this verse? That Jesus, in order to give gifts unto men, first did this. He has gone into hell just as Peter said, he has preached to the imprisoned spirits, both the righteous and the unrighteous; but He has taken out of hell, out of the heart of the earth, or the lower parts of the earth, all of those righteous ones

Satan had held captive; and in so doing, He has literally conquered death, hell, and the grave. That is what hell was, a place of captivity. He had been holding those righteous spirits in captivity. When Jesus took them captive, He led them out of there. Now that He has taken them captive, we can understand why redemption had to unfold in this fashion. He had to conquer hell first before the grave could be conquered. Do you understand that? Hell itself had to be conquered. He had to do here on the earth's surface, by suffering and dying like a man, what no other man could do. Then He had to go lower, further in this thing than any other mortal being could go. He descended into the very bowels of hell and preached to those spirits, both to the wicked, showing them why they will suffer such a terrible judgment at the great white throne, as well as to the righteous that are heirs of eternal life. There had to be a spirit going along with the words of Noah that made them feel funny, and made some go away, rejecting his message. He (Jesus) overcame hell first; then He came forth out of the grave, or tomb. His own testimony as He appeared to John was, "I am He which liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." He overcame hell. As He came forth from that experience, it was the early morning hours of the first day of the week. Do you realize what else there was for us to think about? Lying

there at the temple was those piles of earthly grain, those bundles of the first fruits of the farmers' harvest. Just imagine all the farmers that brought those bundles there to fulfill a ritual, that in their minds they understood little about its true significance. What a ritual. It served its purpose until that which it pointed to was manifested. A lot of people would love to be able to find salvation by doing things like that. They would rather work their head's off for it, than to exercise faith to receive it as a free gift. Well we will go down to the temple for a look. The priest was getting up early; because he had a big job to do on this first day of the week, which was the morrow after the weekly Sabbath that falls within that Passover period. The priest had awakened; and was waking up his helpers, the lay priests. Get up Boys, we have a big job ahead of us this morning. While they were getting up and getting ready to fulfill the festivity and the ceremonial ritual of what all that typed, an angel came down from heaven; and as his feet touched the earth, he was standing right before this tomb that Joseph of Arimathaea has dug out of the side of a hill. Never had any man lain in it before. There had been a huge rock rolled over the entrance to make sure no one tampered with the corpse inside. Well when that angel appeared on the scene, the old stone covering the opening lost its significance. Notice what Matthew wrote about that. Matthew 28:1-7 "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to

dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you." Let me just say something here. Those who like to criticize Bro. Branham for talking about the angel that accompanied his ministry, ought to criticize Jesus also. Every place He went, angels were present to minister to Him. They ministered to Him in the wilderness. They ministered to Him in Gethsemane; and here was one ministering to Him by coming down to roll the stone away from the door of the tomb. How did he do that? By causing an earthquake that did the job for him. This was another earthquake, different from the one that rent the veil of the temple. You might say this, Since it was just a few hours later, God just timed that last tremor to serve that purpose. The first one split the veil of the temple; and this last tremor brought

Jesus from the tomb. It was probably a process of the same development going on down in the bowels of the earth; but it was according to the plan of God. Naturally the angel of the Lord was right on schedule; because as he rolled the stone away, Jesus was on His way out of hell; and who did He have with Him? All those righteous saints, the spirits of them, from all ages of past time. He was bringing them forth from their imprisoned state as He came out. To say that they are all coming up in their glorified bodies, I am not telling you that. I am not giving anyone the idea that I know all about that. I am looking at this strictly from the finished picture. I do know this, there were enough of those Old Testament saints appeared in their glorified bodies, to establish an infallible testimony that God had started the first resurrection. While those priests were down there at the temple still projecting the type, Jesus was fulfilling it. He was no longer dead. Furthermore He had brought others from the dead with Him. This testifies that Christ was the first fruits, not the singular fruit. I will finish reading this portion of scripture here in Ephesians 4. (4:8) "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Yes He only took those that were in Paradise; He took nothing out of Hades. Now notice verse 9.) Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" That was Paul's way of

referring to Hell. The man that died on the cross with Him, was with Him when He came forth from hell also. He took those imprisoned souls captive. Then He took them away from the devil. When did Jesus give gifts unto men? After He reached His position in heaven; for it was only after the Holy Spirit descended upon the believers, that the gift distribution started. In verse 9, Paul began to rephrase what he had just written. Why would he do that? Because he was writing to Gentiles that did not have the understanding of the resurrection, that the Jews had. To talk about resurrection to Gentiles, was like talking about mysticism. That is exactly what the point is. The Jews had seen prophets of old raise men from the dead; so they knew what was meant by the term resurrection. They expected that there would one day be a resurrection; they just did not know in what fashion, nor when. On the other hand, the Gentiles had nothing to relate the term resurrection to. They had no books. They had no dealings with God. They just lived in myths and all sorts of superstitions. That is exactly why Paul went into so much detail to explain it to them. Verse 10. "He that descended (He that went down into the lower parts of the earth) is the same also that ascended." I cannot help but wonder how we would have reacted to words like this, if we had been back there in Ephesus almost two thousand years ago, having been pagan Gentiles that had grown up in life worshipping

all kinds of deities? Then here comes a man preaching about a man named Jesus, a man that bore the sins of all mankind in His own body, and offered Himself as a sacrifice to the only true God, the Creator of everything that man knew anything about, to set man free from the bondage of sin and estrangement from his Creator. What do you suppose you would have thought? To hear someone preaching about Christ being man's Saviour, Deliverer, and soon coming King; and in Him one day we have the hope to be resurrected, I believe we would have needed a little extra explanation also. Would you not agree? I am sure we would have had a lot of questions. Well that is why Paul felt that he needed to deal with the subject in the manner he did. He wanted those Ephesians to know, that the same One that went up, was the One that first went down. Then to turn it around, the same One that went down, is the One that ascended up above all things. In other words, We do not have one god for death, another for life and so forth. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." In other words, everything would focus on Him, because He was, and is God's means of redemption. Now that Jesus sits in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father, then we know this, redemption has destroyed this realm of hell. Being the very sinless Son of God, it was not possible that death could hold Him captive. King David

knew his flesh could rest in that hope and promise; and so did Job. There is no such thing as paradise in the heart of the earth any more. It is destroyed forever. The place called Paradise, is in heaven now. As we follow this through, this will help us understand why it is correct to say there is no such thing as an eternal hell. That place where the spirit of man began to be imprisoned, whether in paradise or torment, had a beginning; and it has an end also. Why did God leave them there? Because it was on the earth that sin was first committed by man. Therefore because of sin, the flesh of no man could come into the actual presence of God, as long as that sin was not atoned for. That is why sin, death, and all that was contrary to God's righteous plan, had to be dealt with on the planet you and I live on. Therefore, Jesus had to die for our sins on this planet where sin came into the picture. The life that was in Him came from God; but He was just as much a man, as anyone else you know. Though He was the Son of God, He was in the likeness of man, lived as a man, walked on earth as a man, was tempted in every way any other man is tempted, died as a man would die, then going further than any other man ever could, in overcoming death, hell, and the grave, He perfected forever a plan whereby lost mankind could be reconciled to his Creator. When He rose from the grave, he arose victorious over Satan, never to die any more. Therefore Paradise is all

wrapped up in Him, because He took all those righteous spirits with Him. All those bodies that did come forth, came forth in immortality, never to die any more. They are in glory with Jesus today, and have been all down through this dispensation of what we call the Grace Age.

PAUL REASONS WITH THE CORINTHIANS

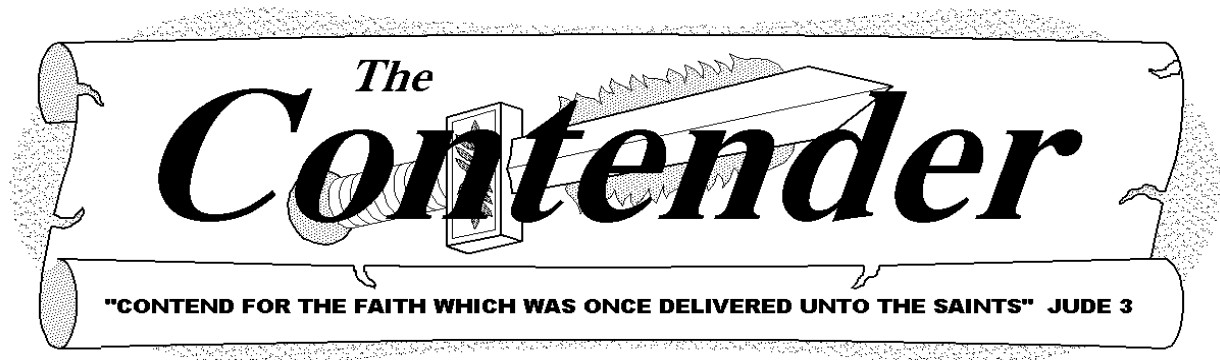
Let us take a look at to 1st Corinthians. We will read a verse of scripture; then we will follow Paul's reasoning. He was at Ephesus, having just finished that great revival there; and was thinking about where he would go next. During that time he received a report from Corinth that made it necessary for him to write this letter which we know as 1st Corinthians. In the 15th chapter, verse 12, we find these words, "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, (This is how the apostle Paul opened up the subject of the resurrection to the Corinthians, by giving them this ominous thought. He was the one that had taught them that Jesus had been raised from the dead; so we know what he believed about it. This was just his way of approaching their questions and doubts.) how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Anyhow that lets us know what

those Corinthians were being affected by. They were Gentiles. They had been pagan deity worshipers of just about every description; and the Christian teachings were still not as plain to them as they are to us today. That is not saying every one in that Corinthian church believed like these who had the questions. No doubt there were some that could see what Paul had presented to them, but there were others saying, That is impossible, there is no way a person can come back from the dead. They believed the spirit lived on somewhere else; but not that it could ever come back into the same body; and certainly not that the body could be given immortality. Nevertheless notice how Paul approached the subject with them. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: (He was really building a story for them to consider.) And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Let me just read a few more verses, so you can see the complete reasoning he laid out before those who had questions about the resurrection of the dead. (Verse 15) "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." If you caught what Paul was getting at there, you know

yourselves, that if the resurrection of Christ Jesus did not take place, there is nothing for us to place our faith in. All of our hope, rests completely upon the fact that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, conquered death, hell, and the grave; so if that is not true, what are we doing here? We have no hope. In verse 18, he said this, (based upon the negative side of the argument he has just related) "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." There was no doubt in Paul's mind about whether Jesus Christ arose from the dead. After his experience on the Damascus road, he never doubted anything preached by those other apostles who walked with Jesus. Anyhow when he got through laying this whole thing out before those Corinthians, he just the same as said to them, Go on back to your pagan temples and worship your pagan gods, if you cannot accept the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Besides that, you are calling us false witnesses of God; because we have testified to you, that God raised up Christ. The problem those Corinthian people were having, is the same problem so many people have yet today, they try to figure it all out with their mind, before they will accept it. Let me tell you saints, you will never be able to figure out how and why God does things; you first have to accept by faith those things that God does, and has done; and then, in due time, He will give you a revelation of what you need to know for your spiritual growth in the stature

of Christ. This Epistle to the Corinthians was written in 59 A.D. When you compare that to the book of Acts, where it tells about the time the Corinthian church was started, some of those saintly people of Corinth had died already, when Paul wrote this. Therefore that is what Paul was implying when he said, "Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." In other words you have been believing and going through all this rigmarole and it is worthless, utterly useless, if there is no resurrection of the dead. Then he summed it up by saying this, "If in this life only we have hope (this is how the Gentiles lived) in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (What a miserable state to exist in.) But now is Christ risen from the dead, (Now he is laying out the emphatic fact to them.) and become (notice the word) the first fruits (plural) of them that slept." That is what happened; and we read of in verses 51 and 52, of chapter 27, of the Gospel of St. Matthew. Right out of hell, (that portion of hell called paradise) came all those righteous spirits with Jesus. Not only did Jesus raise from the dead, He Himself was with those disciples off and on for 40 days, bearing witness to the fact that He was alive. He did not leave the witnessing totally up to someone else. Then after going in and out among them for 40 days, He ascended into heaven, and took all those others that had risen, with Him. That fulfills what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4, concerning

God's first fruits from among the dead. Not only was that portion of the earth's graves emptied out, that portion of hell was done away with. It will never be needed again. Redemption was really in progress. That fulfilled the first phase of the first resurrection. There is still two more phases of the first resurrection yet to be fulfilled before the Millennium starts. As you can see, there is still much to be said on this subject; but we will have to continue it later. May the Lord bless you. We are getting very close to the closing of this dispensation of grace. Time is running out. I am thankful to God to be a child of His.



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