

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 2

September 2014

The Time of Trouble

Everywhere we look today, we see trouble. The civil war in Syria has claimed over 150,000 lives, created over 2 million refugees, and given rise to a new terror group, ISIS. In the Ukraine, there is a civil war between that country's government and those in its eastern provinces who would rather be aligned with Russia. There are economic troubles throughout the world and an increasing disparity in income between the rich and everyone else. New illnesses (Ebola) threaten the health of mankind.

Both Jesus and the Prophet Daniel prophesied these troubles. Daniel wrote, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Dan. 12:1 *New American Standard Bible*). Jesus said, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matt. 24:21,22, *NASB*). Both identified the trouble as an evidence that Jesus had returned (Michael arising) to establish his earthly kingdom.

This trouble comes from the increase of knowledge interacting with man's fallen nature and selfishness. This leads to strife between nations, religions, ethnic groups and social-economic classes.

The selfish, raging masses of mankind bring the trouble as Joel writes in Joel 2:1-3 (*NASB*): "So there is a great and mighty

people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it ... A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them. But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them." Joel later calls these people, "His [LORD's] army" (vs. 11, *NASB*).

While the trouble seems to be growing out of control, the Heavenly Father and our returned Lord are in control. The psalmist writes, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee [LORD]: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10).

The purpose of the trouble is to bring this present evil world and its selfish institutions to an end so that Christ's earthly kingdom can be established on the earth to bless all mankind. The Apostle Peter describes this in 2 Peter 3:10,13 (*NASB*): "The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up ... But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

The heavens and earth that pass away are the churches, religions, and civil governments and institutions of this world. The Lord replaces them with a new heavens [new spiritual government led by Christ and his church] and a new earth [new earthly government] led the ancient worthies [Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc]. To learn more, see our ad for the booklet *Hope for a Fear-filled World* on the back page. ■

The Fall of Man

The book of Genesis tells the story of creation, including that of Adam, the first man. Adam was formed of the dust and given the “breath of life” and thus “became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). He was created in the mental “likeness” of God (Gen. 1:26). God took a rib from Adam and created Eve (Gen 2:23). Together, they were given the opportunity for everlasting life in Eden, a place where “the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:9 *New International Version*). Adam and Eve enjoyed, with free will and innocence, a beautiful paradise and perfect life.

The first parents were given one rule, a test of obedience, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Gen. 2:16, 17 *NIV*). In Genesis 3 Eve is deceived by the serpent and Adam chooses to join his wife in disobedience. God banished them from Eden in order to enforce the penalty of death (Gen. 3:23).

Mankind was also cursed by God for their sin. Woman was cursed to be subjected to man and to have pain in child birth. Man was cursed to live a toilsome life of working the ground (Gen. 3:16-19). All humanity inherited sin and this penalty of death (Rom. 5:12). The fall launched humanity down a long path of suffering, pain, sorrow, and iniquity that continues to plague us today.

Isaiah 46:10 says that God knows the end from the beginning, meaning he gave this test with the knowledge that mankind would fail. In his wisdom, God allowed the fall to take place with the end in mind. At the end of the age, when the resurrection takes place and all who are in the grave hear the voice of our Lord and come forth (John 5:28,29), the experiences gained from the fall will show humanity the grand love of God and provide the experience needed to choose obedience and go up the highway of holiness to perfection and harmony with God. ■

Abel's Sacrifice

We are told in Genesis 4, that after Cain and Abel became young men, they brought offerings to the LORD. “Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.” His younger brother “Abel was a keeper of flocks, . . . Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions” Gen. 4:3,4 *NASB*).

In response to these offerings, “the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell” (vs. 4,5 *NASB*). God regarded Abel's offering because it pictured the eventual offering of Jesus, his only begotten Son, who as “the lamb of God . . . taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

While we are not told explicitly if Cain and Abel understood this symbolism, the Apostle Paul writes, “By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous” (Heb. 11:4 *NASB*). One noted Bible scholar wrote, “It was not by custom nor by accident that Abel chose his sacrifice. (*Continued on next page*)

The Logos

When the Heavenly Father was creating everything, after each creation we are told, “it was good” (Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25). Everything created was perfect in God’s sight.

At the end of the sixth day, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). Here, we get our first glimpse of God’s only begotten Son, the Logos, with the use of the words “us” and “our.” Then in John 1:1-3 (*Emphatic Diaglott*) we are told “In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God and the Logos was a god. This was in the beginning with God. Through it every thing was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done.” According to Thayers’s Greek dictionary, “Logos” means the essential Word of God, Jesus Christ, his minister in creation of the universe.

Revelation 1:11 describes the Logos as “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” the only direct creation of God. Other scriptures describe him as God’s “only begotten Son” (1 John 4:9; John 1:14,18; John 3:16).

All of the rest of the creation was made by him using God’s power. Proverbs 8:27,29,30 (*NASB*) states, “When He [God] established the heavens, I [Logos] was there ... When He marked out the foundations of the earth; Then I [Logos] was beside Him, as a master workman.” “There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and one Lord, Jesus Christ through whom are all things” (1 Cor. 8:6 *NASB*).

One can imagine how touched the Father was when his “only begotten Son” stepped forward and volunteered to be the ransom sacrifice for Adam. Jesus “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name” (Phil 2:7-9 *NASB*).

Because of his faithfulness to God, God has entrusted him with “all authority ... in heaven and earth” to bring God’s plan of salvation to its glorious conclusion and bring mankind back to perfection and harmony with God (Matt. 28:18 *NASB*). ■

Abel’s Sacrifice *(continued from previous page)*

Evidently, he had been seeking the mind of the Lord, and had found it.” This event teaches us the lesson that to be pleasing and acceptable to God, we must approach him on his terms and not our own.

The symbolism of a sacrificed lamb continued with Israel’s Passover. It was the blood of an unblemished lamb splashed on the doorposts and lintels that protected Israel’s firstborn and led to the nation’s deliverance from Egypt. The lamb pictured the perfect man, Jesus.

Revelation 5:6 (*NASB*) describes the resurrected Jesus as a “Lamb standing, as if slain.” In heaven, myriads of heavenly beings say “with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing’” (vs. 12 *NASB*). Jesus’ willingness to humble himself, give up his spiritual glory as the Logos and be made flesh, and then humble himself again unto the death of the cross earned the glory and honor spoken. Like a meek and obedient lamb, he followed the Heavenly Father’s will offering his life as ransom for father Adam. Because of this, “all who dwell on the earth will worship him, ... the Lamb who has been slain” (Rev. 13:8 *NASB*). ■

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Calendar of Events

Orlando Bible Students Convention

October 25, 26, 2014

South Seminole Lodge
122 Triplet Lake Drive
Casselberry, FL 32707
(407) 831-2098

[Free admission, no collection]
For further information contact:

Orlando Bible Students
PO Box 180216, Casselberry, FL 32718-0216

Or contact us at our website:
www.orlandobible.org

The Orlando Bible Students is a non-denominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings at the South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL and in area homes during the week.
For further information call: (407) 695-6815

Special Offer

We would like to send you a complimentary copy of the booklet,

“Hope for a Fear-filled World”

This booklet describes mankind’s current troubles and how Christ’s return brings them to an end. For your FREE booklet, call (407) 695-6815 and request a copy, or fill in your address below and mail this coupon to:

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