

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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Unrest and Tragedy in the World

The last few months have seen an upsurge in trouble and unrest in the world. First, there was an earthquake in New Zealand in February that killed 65. Then unrest spread to Tunisia, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries toppling dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, and leaving Libya in the midst of a civil war. Then came Japan's mega earthquake and tsunami that killed over 14,000, left 12,000 still missing, and forced many to evacuate due to the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

According to Scripture, these types of events are an evidence that we are in the last days of this present evil world. "Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (Luke 21:11).

The last days do not mean the end of the literal earth, or man's life upon it, as some suggest. It means the end of the current order of imperfect nations and governments—to be replaced by Christ's earthly kingdom. That is what the Apostle Peter meant when he wrote in 2 Peter 3:7,10: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

In this passage, Peter uses the terms "heavens" and "earth" symbolically to describe the religious and civil order, respectively. The first heavens and earth, the religious and civil order of Noah's day, passed away with the flood (2 Pet. 3:5,6). The second religious and civil order

passes away in Armageddon (Rev. 16:16-21). The third heavens and earth, wherein dwells righteousness, will be Christ's earthly kingdom that will last forever (2 Pet. 3:13).

Our Lord prophesied of our day, and how fearful men would become at the impending destruction of the present order. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25,26).

The reason for much of this trouble is man's selfishness. The Apostle Paul wrote about this in 2 Timothy 3:1-4: "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." This description sounds like our day.

This selfishness leads to a time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). Our Lord predicted that if these days were not shortened, "there should no flesh be saved" (vs. 22). Man would destroy himself. However, Jesus promised that "because of the saints those days will be made short" (Matt. 24:22, *Darby*).

Who are the saints, or the elect? They are Christ and his church, the 144,000 who are faithful in following Jesus unto death and, thereby, win the crown of life (*Continued on page 3*)

Two Salvations

*“We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”
—1 Timothy 4:10*

When we examine the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, we find much confusion of thought. Some preach: It is ALL grace, we can do nothing. God through Christ does it all. These would quote in proof, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that [grace] not [because of any merit] of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9). Others declare: It is grace truly, but unless you do works in harmony with it, you never will be saved. These would quote “present your bodies a living sacrifice,” and “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:12). When we mix works and faith, then faith decreases in value and works become all important. That diminishes the value of Jesus’ sacrifice.

When we examine the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, both are true and both are supported by the Scriptures. The difficulty has been a failure to note the two ages to which the two doctrines apply—election according to God’s favor during the Gospel age, and free and complete favor to all during the Millennial age. The same is true with the doctrines of Faith and Works—Belief as a ground of salvation, and Sacrifice as a ground of salvation. Both are true. We must rightly divide the word of truth in order to see the harmony (2 Tim. 2:15).

Those belonging to many Christian churches will argue that there is only one salvation. They believe that those who accept Christ now will be raised to life after they die, but do not think this blessing will be extended to unbelievers. They are mistaken. During his first advent, Jesus told those in Galilee who had seen his mighty works and did not repent, “I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (Matt. 11:24).

Jesus taught that there would be two salvations via two resurrections: a resurrection of the good

and a resurrection of the not so good. John 5:28,29 says that “ALL they in the tombs . . . shall come forth,—they who, the good things, have done, unto a resurrection, of life; but they who the corrupt things, have practised, unto a resurrection of judgment” (*Rotherham*). The Apostle Paul speaks of these two salvations, when he says, “We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 4:10). Paul also describes these two salvations in 2 Timothy 1:10: “Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

God has provided two distinctly different salvations—a spiritual one for the church in the Gospel Age, and an earthly one for the world in the age to follow this, the period of Messiah’s kingdom. The spiritual salvation is represented in the previously quoted verses by the phrases “resurrection of life,” “specially of those that believe,” and “immortality.” The earthly salvation is represented by the phrases “resurrection of judgment,” “of all men,” and “life.”

Since these two salvations differ, so do their conditions differ. The only conditions for the earthly salvation are a recognition of Jesus who bought us with his own precious blood and acceptance of the salvation provided coupled with their best endeavors to abstain from sin. No works can be here added to the work of the Redeemer to merit this recovery of that which was lost.

How happy are we to remember the words to Abraham that also speak of these two salvations—“I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Gen. 22:17). God’s oath to Abraham promised these two salvations—the “stars of heaven” and “the sand which is on the seashore.” Since it is impossible for God to lie, we can be confident that these two salvations will take place (Heb. 6:18). ■

Power Over the Nations

“He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”—Revelation 2:26,27

This prophecy refers to the reward of those who overcome the weaknesses of their own fallen flesh and the allurements of the great Adversary to become faithful followers of Jesus and, thus, members of the Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9,10). To these, the Lord has promised the crown of glory, honor, and immortality (Rom. 2:7). The overcoming Church will have a share in the work of overthrowing the powers of this present evil world, and the establishing of Christ’s earthly kingdom. Then they will participate in that kingdom’s work of uplifting mankind to righteousness and perfection, so mankind can live forever on a restored perfect earth (Acts 3:21; Rev. 3:21).

For Christ’s kingdom to be established on the earth, the present order of things must first be removed. This will involve the execution of vengeance (chastisement) upon the earth. In the Time of Trouble, the Lord will break the kingdoms of this world into pieces, “as the vessels of a potter,” as pottery is shattered by the blows of an iron rod. All nations will be in opposition to Christ’s kingdom, and all together they will be crushed. Nothing shall stand in the way of establishing the coming kingdom of God. “This honour have all the saints”—to execute the judgments written. (Psa. 149:9)

When Christ and his church assume dominion of the world, the willing of mankind will be transformed into obedient, earthly children of God, and those who refuse to obey will be destroyed. “When thy [the Lord’s] judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet” (Isa. 28:17).

“He [Jesus] must reign, till he [God] hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and every tongue . . . confess” (Phil 2:10,11). While this force will in no way interfere with man’s God-like quality of free will, it will prevent men from thwarting God’s plan, and from hurting and harming one another (Isa. 11:9). ■

Gospel of the Kingdom

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Unrest and Tragedy in the World *(continued from the front page)*

(Matt. 16:24; Rev. 2:10). They win a spiritual reward, becoming priests of God and Christ, and with our Lord will reign over the earth for 1,000 years (1 Pet. 2:9,10; Rev. 20:6).

The purpose of this reign is to bring mankind back from the dead, teach men righteousness and bring the obedient of mankind back to perfection of heart, mind, and body, and to harmony with God (John 5:28,29; Isa. 26:9). The result will be that man will recover all that was lost by Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden—perfection, sonship with God, and everlasting life.

Sounds too good to be true? This is what is promised in the Scriptures, and what we should expect from a loving Heavenly Father. **Want more information? Please see our offer for the booklet “Armageddon, Then World Peace” on the back of this newsletter.* ■

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Calendar of Events

Orlando Bible Students Convention

October 29-30, 2011

South Seminole Masonic Lodge
122 Triplett Lake Drive
Casselberry FL 32707

[Free admission, no collection]

For further information contact:

Orlando Bible Students
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Or contact us at our website:
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The Orlando Bible Students is a nondenominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings at the South Seminole Masonic Lodge, Casselberry, FL and in area homes during the week.

For further information call: (407) 831-2098

Special Offer

We would like to send you a complimentary copy of the booklet, **“Armageddon, Then World Peace”**. This booklet describes how God overrules Armageddon to bring peace to all mankind through Christ’s kingdom.

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