



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 45

Where on Earth Is God?

A Look at the Dwelling Place of God

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8a).

Think of it! Adam lived in a beautiful garden located in a place called Eden, which means *pleasure*. It was a place of breathless wonder. He lived there with a counterpart prepared especially for him by his Creator. But more importantly GOD was with him in the garden! Can you imagine that? He lived in a garden of *pleasure* **and** GOD was there, God walking on the planet. God in Adam's "neck of the woods." Could we find words to describe such a blessed situation?

Nevertheless, with one action there was a disastrous *turn* of events. Adam and Eve sinned against God their Creator. The very next portion of this passage reads:

*"And Adam and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (3:8b).*

The presence of God was on the Earth and Adam and Eve hid themselves from him. The presence of the LORD God became a fearful thing. How disastrous sin is!

*"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was **afraid**, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (3:9).*

The end result of this sad account is that God,

"... drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (3:24).

Life in the presence of God was over!

TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE

*"And let them make me a **sanctuary**: that I may **dwell among them**" (Exodus 25:8).*

Many years after the fall, God came to **dwell among** man once again. He came to live among the nation Israel. He instructed them to build Him a dwelling place, which was called the *tabernacle* in its temporary form, and the *temple* in its more

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Dearly Beloved of God.

We count it a true privilege to be able to keep in contact with you by way of this method. As articles are prepared and the BSN is printed, produced and mailed, our hearts and minds are constantly thinking over our many dear and precious friends – family! – fellow members of Christ’s body! Thanks for allowing us to have this venue together!

Pennsylvania Conference

We had a nice time at the PA conference. It was a joy as usual to see and fellowship with the saints. Our entire family was able to go this year, although we did have to attend in shifts to keep the store open here in Amherst (as well as keeping up with mail orders). Tom and Jane West graciously allowed us to use their truck to transport a portion of our family as well as a selection from our bookstore. This was a joint effort that allowed many to take advantage of a rich selection of written resources that have been produced by the Body of Christ.

Tracy Plessinger and the saints were very hospitable as usual, and those that attended surely found refreshment from God’s Word. This year the conference was at their new location and the theme was “Following Paul into the 21st Century.”

Tennessee Conference

After a week at home, it was on to the conference in Pigeon Forge TN. This was the third conference sponsored by the Dowell family in the Great Smoky Mountains. All but Susannah were able to attend. This was due to the kindness of the Locker family who provided us their vehicle to travel and take a selection of our books. Carollyn Locker and her children also came from PA to bring us their vehicle and stayed here to help keep things going on the home front. Carollyn even ran the store for us while we were away!

The conference was a week-long time of fellowship around the “Magnified Word.” We were able to fellowship with dear saints that we had not seen in a while, as well as ones that we had never met before. That’s always a joy!

It was also a time for family activities and fun. During the afternoons, and after the evening meetings, our family was able to enjoy some of the area attractions. The Dowells were truly gracious hosts. And their billing of a “fun conference” was not disappointing!

Illinois Conference

We were not able to attend the “Chicago” conference this year. But we were able to have a “representative” from the saints here in Gladstone attend. Maudie Ratliff brought back reports of encouragement. We were so glad that she was able to go.

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This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God’s purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “Movement,” “Organization,” “Mission,” or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all “saints.”

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God’s Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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(recompiled and edited)

permanent version (I Kings 8:12, 13).¹ The tabernacle and temple were distinctly known as “*the house of the Lord*,” “*the Lord’s house*,” “*the house of God*” (II Chronicles 7:1-2, 5). That’s because that’s where God dwelt. It was His **sanctuary** from the world that was at enmity with Him.

Imagine it! The children of Israel had the *True* and *Living* God, the God of the universe as one of their national residents, one of their neighbors. They were able to boast that God dwelt among them! When folks came visiting to Jerusalem, they could be taken over by *God’s house* to see where the Eternal God lived. What a wonder! Can you imagine that? Could any sightseeing attraction of the world rival that? God in Israel’s “neck of the woods.” What a blessed circumstance!

However, once again, through the disastrous *turn of events* – the many spiritual whoredoms of the children of Israel – this house became *Ichabod* (“the glory is departed from Israel”).

AN AMAZING TURN OF EVENTS

Let’s take some of the *dispensational* principles that we know and some of the *identification* truth that we know, and see, not just **WHO** we are in Christ, but **WHAT** we are!

After the fall of Israel (Romans 11:11, 12), God through His chosen instrument Paul (Romans 11:13) turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 28:28). In so doing, He carried out His mystery plan which He had kept “*secret since the world began*” (Romans 16:25). The result of Christ’s finished cross work is that “*the riches of His grace*” are now manifested toward all those who trust in Him. As those “*in Christ*,” we are thus “*accepted*” (Ephesians 1:6), “*complete*” (Colossians 2:10), and blessed with “*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*” (Ephesians 1:30).

These wonderful truths are multifaceted. One of the many benefits of being “*in Christ*” – and

1. It was conceived in the heart of David to build such a permanent dwelling place for God; but God would have David’s son Solomon fulfill his heart’s desire (I Chronicles 22:6-10; I Kings 8:12-13).

there are many – is that we (those who were once “**without Christ**, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and **without God** in the world” (Ephesians 2:12) are “*now*” (2:13) an “**holy temple** in the Lord” (2:21), “*builded together for an **habitation of God** through the Spirit*” (2:22).

HABITAT FOR DIVINITY

Think of this! **WE** are the temple, the habitation of God. Now, that is significant, is it not? Something to get excited about, I’d say!

There is an honorable movement in our country that builds homes for the underprivileged. It is called *Habitat For Humanity*; but there is a far greater housing project underway today! It began some millennia ago. It is the **Habitat for Divinity**. God is actively building a house for His own dwelling. A temple, **not** of bricks and mortar made by hand, but of people – people who have placed their faith in the finished cross-work of Christ.

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is LORD of heaven and earth, **dwelleth not in temples made with hands**” (Acts 17:24).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16a).

“What? Know ye not that your **body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (I Corinthians 6:19).

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For **ye are the temple of the living God**” (II Corinthians 6:16a).

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto **a holy temple in the Lord**: in whom ye also are builded together for **a habitation of God through the Spirit**” (Ephesians 2:21-22).

*“But if I tarry long, that thou thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God**, which is **the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was **manifest in the flesh** ...”* (I Timothy 3:15, 16a).

Those of us who have trusted Christ, **we** – God’s living church – are the dwelling place of God! *Much more* than walking with God in the garden, *Much more* than having God as a neighbor, *much more* than having God in our “neck of the woods.” We have the **life of God IN US (manifest in the flesh)!** What a wonder! What amazing grace!

A STOLEN IDENTITY

For most of us, our true identity as the *temple*, the *house of God*, has been stolen from us – years before we were ever born. Human organizations and institutions, along with their brick and mortar structures, have taken for themselves *our* identity in *Christ*. These religious agencies for too long have been pawned off as having the identity of the church, the body of Christ.

The “Reformation” never did free the members of Christ’s body from this type of religious bondage and tyranny. Centuries later, in spite of all the truth that the body of Christ has been exposed to, it is still the common Practice to surrender our true identity to the religious system:

“Where do you go to **church?**”

“Remember that this is the **Lord’s House.**”

“Welcome to the **House of Cod.**”

“Be reverent when entering the **sanctuary.**”

When will we wake up and realize that our identity has been taken from us? When will we reclaim our *true* identity and live in the fullness of who and what we are “in *Christ?*” What does all this mean – to be the church, the temple, the sanctuary, the house of God?

LIVING THE TEMPLE LIFE

The Old Testament will reveal many aspects of temple life. Paul, our apostle under grace, will show us how these aspects are *now* true of us – we are to *live* the temple life.

We will take neither the time nor space, at this point, to compare and contrast these points in detail. Instead, we will give an abridged concordance for your personal study.

WORSHIP

Old Testament Temple: Psalm 5:7; Isaiah 66:23;
Acts 7:48;
Revelation 11:1
Grace Temple: Philippians 3:3;
II Corinthians 7:3

SINGING

Old Testament Temple: Psalms 1 00:2; Amos 8:3
Grace Temple: Ephesians 5:19;
II Corinthians 7:5-7

TEACHING

Old Testament Temple: Matthew 21:23
Grace Temple: II Timothy 2:15

GLORY

Old Testament Temple: II Chronicles 7:1-2;
Grace Temple: I Corinthians 2:6-7;
II Corinthians 3:17-18;
4:6-7; Ephesians 3:19;
Romans 8:18

GIVING

Old Testament Temple: Malachi 3:10;
Nehemiah 13:4-5
Grace Temple: 1 Corinthians 16:1

SACRIFICE

Old Testament Temple: II Chronicles 7:4-5
Grace Temple: Romans 12:1-2;
Philippians 2:17

SWEET INCENSE

Old Testament Temple: Exodus 30:7
Grace Temple: Ephesians 5:2

THE TEMPLE TRIPLEX

The Old Testament will also reveal that there were three parts to the temple. There was the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. These three made up the temple of God. God dwelt in the innermost portion – the holy of holies.

Paul declares that we too – God’s grace temple – are a holy triplex, triune beings, made up of *spirit*, *soul* and *body*.

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

There is a correlation between the temple triplex under the law and the one under grace. Much rich study is to be found meditating on the similarities. Clarence Larkin in his most famous work, *Dispensational Truth*,² provides a simple and yet thought-provoking chart demonstrating these similarities.

Many beneficial works have been published which survey the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament. Most of them present, and rightly so, that they are a picture of Christ; but they often miss that they also picture Christ’s *body* – the church!

Once again, we won’t take time to compare and contrast these trinities in any detail – suffice it to say our identity in Christ can be seen, even down to the furnishings.

THOROUGHLY FURNISHED

*“**All scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and **is profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished** unto all good works”* (II Timothy 3:15, 16).

The Word of God will “*thoroughly*” (thoroughly)

2. Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth or God’s Plan and Purpose in the Ages* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin, 1918, 1920, p. 100.)

furnish the temple of God. Here is another abridged concordance – this time of temple furnishings – for your own personal study.

Ark of the Testimony (Exodus 25:10-22)

Strong’s Hebrew #727 – i.e., coffin. This was the base of the Mercy Seat and contained the two tablets of stone, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna (Hebrews 9:4). Mercy Seat is the propitiation (Romans 3:25), God is satisfied with the payment of the Son’s sacrifice and thus with His purchase – the church of God (Acts 20:28).

Table of Shewbread (Exodus 25:23-30) – this is the “bread of the Presence” (see alt. tr. Exodus 25:30). This bread was always on the table and thus called the “continual bread” Numbers 4:7 (c.f. I Corinthians 10:16-17).

Golden candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40) – its purpose was to give light unto the holy place (Leviticus 24:2-4) (c.f. II Corinthians 4:4-7).

Brazen Altar (Exodus 27:1-8; c.f. Roman 12:1-2).

Golden Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10) – this was located before the veil (Exodus 30:6, 7) (c.f. Philippians 4:18; Ephesians 5:2).

Brazen Laver (Exodus 30:18; 38:8) – this was a water layer made from “looking glass” (i.e., polished brass) which pictures the seeing (i.e., refection) of our true identity in Christ and the cleansing of our walk to match our identification, using the Word of God (c.f. Ephesians 5:26; I Corinthians 13:12; II Corinthians 3:18).

SO, WHERE ON EARTH IS GOD?

*“One **God** and **Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and **in you all**”* (Ephesians 4:6).

God is in us! The God of the universe lives in you

and me. He is in everyone who has trusted in His Son for salvation. We believers are His dwelling place on earth today, and we take Him with us everywhere we go. What a blessed privilege that is. If folks are going to meet God, they are going to meet Him in us.

BEHAVE THYSELF

*“But if I tarry long, that thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God**, which is the **church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was **manifest in the flesh**”* (I Timothy 3:15-16a).

We often hear parents tell their children to “behave!” Yet the fact is that all children *behave*, though sometimes they just behave badly.

How are we as believers to behave? Paul teaches us to behave like who we are! We are in the body of Christ, God’s *living church*. Behave accordingly! This way, the God who lives within us can be manifested out through our flesh (*i.e.*, His temple).

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us ... Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the **life** also of Jesus might he **manifest in our body**. ... that the life also of Jesus might be made **manifest in our mortal flesh**”* (II Corinthians 4:7, 10-11).

Paul did not stop there – with Christ being *manifest*. His desire was for something even greater, that Christ would be **magnified**.

*“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall he **magnified in** my body, whether it be by life, or by death”* (Philippians 1:20).

We behave ourselves as members of Christ’s body when **He** is manifested and magnified in **His** holy temple, “*which temple ye are.*” Behave thyself! ■

Growth on the Basis of Love

by – T. Austin-Sparks

If I am going to grow spiritually, I shall only do so on the basis of love. I shall never grow because I get a lot more teaching. You do not grow by teaching ... No, all the teaching does not necessarily mean that you grow. It is necessary as a background, but we grow by love. Do not let anybody think we can dispense with the teaching and have the love and can get on all right. That would be a contradiction of the Word altogether. The teaching has it’s place, it is absolutely necessary; but though I have everything and have not love, I am nothing (I Corinthians 13). So all is based on this.

Denominationalism

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"... Let us make us a name ..." (Genesis 11:4)

The body of Christ has long been plagued by the sectarian spirit and division of denominationalism. Webster, in his 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, defines *denomination* as:

"The act of naming ... A class, society or collection of individuals, called by the same name; as a *denomination* of Christians."

Denomination comes from the word *denominate*, which is defined by Webster as:

"To name, to give a name or epithet to ..."

During the current dispensation, God is using the glorious gospel of grace to call out a people unto Himself. Those who respond in faith to His message of Christ's finished cross-work are placed into living union with His Son. God has given this organism a name – the church, the body of Christ.

Throughout the dispensation of grace, many members of Christ's body have failed to *fully* understand and appreciate their Divine completeness in Christ (Colossians 2:10). They have therefore become dissatisfied with being what and whom God made them in Christ. They have sought to establish their *own* institutions and

have given them names of their *own* choosing.

Such human enterprises have often found *acceptability, honor, prestige and respectability* before the world. But the question we should ask is, "Does it bring glory to God to rival His organism and name with an organization and name of our own?" Is it not the *SON*, and the body that is identified with Him, that brings glory to the Father?

Paul wrote:

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

When asked, "To what church do you belong?" or "Where are you a member?" why do we feel *inadequate* with simply being members of Christ's body? Why do we feel the need to go beyond what God has done? Are we *ashamed* of only being identified with what He has done, and is doing with the church, the body of Christ?

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3). ■

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Pope Gregory XIII) and it is admittedly inaccurate even though most of the world has standardized to it. ... God is certainly not bound by our errant man-made calendar. For this reason, people who think the years 1999 or 2000 have some special spiritual significance are probably mistaken."³

The Dating Game Continues

In issue #29 of the BSN, we carried an excerpt from Andrew Miller's *Short Papers on Church History*. We

3. *The Y2K Weatherman*, Millennium Insights LLC, 1999.

learned that the organized "church" was consumed with the year 1000. They expected "the end of the world." Reread his remarks, it was a sad time in "church history." It was a time that did not have to be. It was all because of the "dating" systems of man. Let's not be a part of a repeat performance.

Think on these things. ■

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Those Turning from the Church Should Turn to Jesus Christ

by – Otis Q. Sellers (edited and abridged)

There is, in the world today, a great multitude of sincere people who after giving it a fair trial have come to the conclusion that they want no part of the religious system that calls itself “the church.” They have determined to be free from and live apart from all that travels under this name. They have opted for complete freedom from all organized religion.

These are God-fearing men and women who fully believe the Biblical record God has given of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so their emancipation declaration has not been so that they will be free to live irresponsible and hedonistic lives. Their highest desire is to live lives of godliness and righteousness in harmony with God’s present purpose toward mankind. Many of these have turned irrevocably to the Lord Jesus Christ and are now finding complete satisfaction in Him.

So on every hand we hear of those who are turning away from every form of organized religion that travels under the canopy of “the church.” They say that “the church” has nothing to offer them that they really want, that it does not fulfill their needs, especially their need for a deeper and more accurate knowledge of the Word of God. They see the church structure as being nothing more than a business, run by professional clergymen, whose aim is to get more members, get more money, get greater influence, and gain more control. As one man sees it:

“Certainly no exegetical talents are needed to quickly discover that most Christian activities have no Biblical base. With great sacredness we carry out the ritual of Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, and choir singing accompanied by an instrument better suited for Friday night roller skating. We talk of membership, pledges,

reverends, missionaries, and Wednesday night prayer meetings as though God had sent some extra-Biblical agenda to instruct us how to behave.”

As a minister (dispenser) of the Word of God who has no connection with organized religion, I have had much correspondence from priests, pastors, and church members (some young, others middle-aged, and many elderly) who state their present disenchantment with the churches with which they have long been associated. They say their denominations are trying to lead them down certain political and social-action paths on which they do not wish to travel, and into certain activities with which they do not wish to be involved. They find many of the “program” and “make-work” activities to be puerile and repugnant, saying that these use up valuable time which could be better spent in other ways.

A church member says: “I went to this church because I was told that the minister was a Bible expositor. This was true, and I enjoyed his messages. But before I knew what was happening or had a chance to refuse, I was made president of the men’s bowling league, and this was solely because someone had seen me bowling with my grandson at one of the local alleys. They said it was their way of bringing me into the work. I resigned at once, but since then I have been treated with a coldness which I will no longer endure. So I will soon be on the outside.”

“To stir up emotions and create great excitement two or three times a week is the supreme purpose for which my church now exists,” a black brother declares. “The minister is expected to serve as a cheerleader to whip up the people, and if enough of them get an emotional high it is declared to have been a wonderful meeting, one on which God has

poured out His Spirit. My family and friends love it, and they try to drag me into it, but I think it is bad, very bad, and I am going to protest against it with my feet. ... I'm getting out! Now what do I do? Where do I turn? I'm not an agnostic; I am a Christian, a lover of the Lord Jesus."

My answer to these questions is that it may be for him a very rough road and could even be a lonely road, but all he can do is turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Him that he will find the true meeting place between God and *man*. It is a difficult position in which he now finds himself, but He will surely find that it is God which worketh in him "*both to will and to do His good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:12, 13).

Ever since the days of the so-called "Church fathers" there has been a multitude of Churchmen who have sought to establish by the process of constant repetition the idea that "Jesus Christ and "the church" are a single package and that you cannot have Christ without taking "the church." They would have us believe that "the churches" are the sole dispensers of Christ and that none can receive Him without coming to them. These errors are constantly repeated every year from many pulpits in thousands of messages under the title of "I Believe in the Church."

In these messages they set forth their accolades concerning "the church," pronouncing their encomiums as to what they believe "the church" to be, then calling upon all hearers to think or believe the same as they do about organizations that call themselves "churches." They take everything praiseworthy that the Spirit of God has said about the ekklesia and apply it to *their* "churches."

The many reasons that are being given as causes for turning away from "the churches" are too numerous to be examined in detail. It may be that to take any one of them and segregate it from the rest would make that reason to seem petty and insignificant; but when these are considered in their totality they make up a force that is sweeping many true Christians out of and away from "the churches." The tragedy is that some of these now feel that there is nothing in the future for them but despair and unbelief

God will never allow anyone to feel satisfied until they find satisfaction in the Lord Jesus Christ. In all my ministry I have never told anyone to leave his "church." However, I will always tell those who are turning away from "the church" that they should turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seed & Bread (Brief Biblical Messages)
#158 – December 10, 1982

Not Try, but Trust

by – George C. Stebbins

Not saved are we by trying,
From self can come no aid;
'Tis on the blood relying,
Once for our ransom paid.

'Tis looking unto Jesus,
The Holy One and Just;
'Tis His great work that saves us,
It is not Try, but Trust.

No deeds of ours are needed
To make Christ's merit more;
No frames of mind, or feelings,
Can add to His great store.

'Tis simply to receive Him.
The Holy One and Just,
'Tis only to believe Him,
It is not Try, but Trust.

George C. Stebbins

The Seven Millenium Theory

by – Otis Q. Sellers (edited and abridged)

In the quarter century that preceded the year 1000 A.D. the minds of many were dominated by the idea that the year 1000 would mark “the end of the world.” There were no sound reasons for this belief. Its only support was that “1000” was a nice round number, and that it would be appropriate for God to end the world at that time. This view spread like a prairie fire. It was even accepted by the ungodly, resulting in a wave of immorality almost without parallel. Men determined to have their final fling before the holocaust descended; but the year 1000 came and went, and nothing out of the ordinary happened.

Since that time, in the religious world, date setting has been the favorite occupation of many. These attempts to “fix the time” have as a rule been related to something called “the battle of Armageddon,” the second coming of Christ, and the beginning of the millennium. Men have set their dates, supported them by elaborate charts, and shouted them from the housetops. In the past two centuries thousands of men have set as many positive dates for the return of the Lord, but when the date arrived, nothing happened. Thus, on the basis of experience alone, a teacher of God’s Word should not be limited when he emphatically denies relationship to any other teacher who attempts to set a date for the end of the dispensation of grace, or for the second advent of Christ, or for the beginning of the millennium. I, for one, cannot extend sympathy to any man who claims to have knowledge of the times and seasons which is greater than that which the Lord Jesus gave to His twelve apostles (Acts 1:7).

In 1953 I wrote a study on this same subject repudiating the ideas of certain who were setting the year 2000 A.D. as being the date for the beginning of that glorious millennium of human history when Satan will be bound and Jesus Christ will be personally present upon the earth. Their theories were not new to me. I had first come upon them in 1923 and as a young student was momentarily intrigued by them. Yet after careful study I rejected them, feeling they were founded solely upon inferences and not upon any direct teaching in the Word of God. They were linking an erroneous human calendar with the errorless Word of God.

These theories hold that God’s complete program

for the human race, so far as it is revealed, is to be worked out in seven millennia; that is, in seven one-thousand-year periods. It is held that from the creation of Adam to the beginning of the new heaven and new earth is to be exactly seven thousand years, and that the last of these would be the thousand years that follow the return of Jesus Christ. Since, according to the commonly accepted chronology, as established by Archbishop Ussher, nearly 6,000 years have now passed since the creation of Adam, this leaves little time until the first day of the seventh millennium begins. Since these men readily admit that there is a seven year period, the seventieth week of Israel’s seventy weeks, this now leaves just little time before the covenant is made that marks the beginning of that seven-year period, and for the complete setting of the stage for the acting out of the great drama of that seventieth week. Israel must be restored, the temple of God must be rebuilt on its ancient site where a Mohammedan mosque stands today. So, all this means that an enormous amount now has to be accomplished soon. Could it be that the “temple of God” which the man of sin desecrates (Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:4) is jerry-built?

At the time I wrote on this subject in 1953, some of the brethren who were advocating this theory were then allowing 33 years for the setting of the stage, and others were allowing only 16, but both of these groups have now run out of years and their charts and schedules now mock them.

The major argument that was then and still is being presented for the beginning of the seventh millennium in 2000 A.D. is taken from II Peter 3:8. Here we read:

“But beloved, he not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

There are some who see in this passage a mathematical formula, some sort of a code-breaker for determining when an event will take place. They think that God is here establishing fixed values. Then they go to the first two chapters of Genesis where they find God actively working for six days and resting on the seventh, and “presto,” this gives them the theory that God’s program

for man covers seven days or seven thousand years; and since the seventh day was the Sabbath, it follows in their reasoning that the seventh one thousand year period has to be the millennium. Now the flood-gates of imagination are opened and out flows outrageous and anti-biblical results.

I am not able to put my eye to the keyhole of a simple passage such as II Peter 3:8 and see the far-reaching propositions that these men claim they see. Furthermore, I know that what they are presenting is not taught in this passage, even when it is combined with the opening chapters of Genesis. I have studied and expounded many times the chapter in which this passage appears, and in it have found many truths such as:

- 1) A divine promise is as certain of fulfillment in a thousand years as it is in one day. A human promise always becomes weaker the longer it remains unfulfilled.
- 2) Time with God has none of the limitations that it has with us. With us a day is a day and a thousand years is exactly that.
- 3) A long time with God may be a very short time with us, and a short time in God's sight may be a very long one in ours.
- 4) God can either execute in a day or spread out over a thousand years any purpose of His mind or action of His hand.
- 5) In Psalm 90:4 we are told that a thousand years in God's sight are but as yesterday when it is past, even as a watch in the night. A "watch in the night" among the Hebrews would have been four hours. Therefore, a thousand years can be either twenty-four hours or four hours. Thus, the Spirit of God has set up a safeguard so that none would think He was establishing fixed values.

The proponents of the seventh millennium theory also hold that the seven days of Genesis 1 and 2 are typical of the seven millennia of earth's history, six of which have already about run their course, and that the creation week has a prophetic character. Yet if each day is examined as to its character, and the six one thousand year periods of human history are examined, it will be found that there is no correspondence in any of them. This is especially true of the seventh day when it is compared to the prophesied character

of the personal presence of Jesus Christ for a thousand years – the time usually called the millennium.

On the seventh day God ended His work and rested (Genesis 2:1). This we are told is a foreview of the millennium. but when the facts are faced there is no correspondence, likeness, or identity of character between these two. Whatever the character of the millennium will be, it is not in any sense a Sabbath. This thousand-year period is inaugurated by the second coming of Jesus Christ. This coming will result in His *parousia* or personal presence for a thousand years ... His coming will not be in order to rest but to begin a glorious new work. This event does not end God's work; it will mark the beginning of what is probably the greatest period of divine effort. In these thousand years, Christ will work. It will not be a Sabbath for God, and it will not be a Sabbath for man ... The millennium has no correspondence with the seventh creation day when God rested.

Space does not permit the examination of other passages which are called into the witness box to give testimony in support of this theory. Nevertheless, when these passages are carefully examined, it becomes plain that they have been misinterpreted and do not support the theory being advocated. One of these is Hosea 6:1-2 where the people of Israel say:

"Come and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight."

The "one day equals a thousand years" equation is applied to this passage, and in order to make it come out right these "two days" or two thousand years are started with the birth of Christ. However, it is my conviction that these two days are two twenty-four hour periods that begin with God's assumption of sovereignty and Jesus Christ is unveiled. Israel will then know the One whom they have so long rejected, and this will begin two days of mourning and depression as they wait to discover what will happen to them. It is not until the third day of divine rule that they are revived and begin to live in His sight.

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THE YEAR 2000

As the end of this century draws to a close, there is increased interest in Bible prophecy. The year 2000 (for reasons other than just the Y2K computer concerns) seems to stir thoughts of some prophetic outcome. After all, is not the *seventh* millennium about to begin? But I would encourage us to reconsider all of this *man-made* “dating” game.

Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656)

Sometimes we take things for granted. One of them is the chronological timetable of Biblical events. The notes of many Bibles date the creation of man at 4004 B.C. But where did this date come from? It was calculated by Archbishop James Ussher in 1654 (*The Annals of the Old and New Testament*), and thus is not a part of the actual Bible text itself. In fact, it was not placed in the margin of an *Authorized (King James) Version* until 1701.

To arrive at his conclusions, Ussher assumed that the Bible genealogies were complete and without omissions or gaps. His new scheme became known as *the short chronology*. But there is evidence that Bible genealogies may often omit certain generations, and some who have allowed for these gaps have arrived at an earlier date for the creation of man.

It would appear to be best for the Bible student to avoid dogmatic conclusions concerning the date of creation of man. As cautious a Bible student as Griffith Thomas has written:

“... The chronology is probably not complete, as there are ten generations before the flood and then afterward, indicating a summary only. The Jews often shortened

(continued from page 486)

Maudie moved from Hannibal Missouri in April. She will soon be settling in as our closest neighbor. Our hearts have been encouraged by Maudie and her love for God’s truth and the saints. We are truly graced to have her here among the saints.

Articles in This Issue

This issue of the BSN has two articles by Otis Q. Sellers. I personally appreciate the written ministry left behind by this dear brother. We ran two articles in the past by him. In BSN #3 we had his article *You Need a Savior*. Then in BSN #5 we had *God’s Present Purpose: The Dispensation of Grace*. Both of these are superb works.

In this issue we are glad to present more outstanding material from the pen of Brother Sellers. *The Seven Millennium Theory* is a very timely article, even though it was written many years ago. It complements the remarks from our last BSN editorial letter. The other one, *Those Turning From ‘The Church’ should turn to Jesus Christ*, supplements well the other articles in this issue: *Where on Earth Is God?* and

their genealogies (see Matthew chapter 1), so long as the connection was clearly maintained. The antiquity of the world and the human race is not a Biblical problem, and no commutation is found based on any figure prior to the time of Abraham.”¹

Ussher May Have Not Been Accurate

Bible students who accept the historical interpretation of Genesis, but believe that more time is involved than Ussher assumed, point out that he constructed a chronology using the genealogies of Genesis chapter eleven (11) and assumed these all to be father-son relations.

There appears to be scriptural evidence that these were not always father-son relationships. For example, when comparing the genealogy of Ezra 7:3f. with I Chronicles 6:6-10, we will find six names omitted between Meraioth and Azariah.

More convincing evidence comes from another genealogy in the Bible. Luke, in the third chapter of his Gospel, traces the genealogy of Christ back to Adam. And in that genealogy he mentions a name which is not recorded in the account of Moses in Genesis (Cainan). This *could* be evidence that Archbishop Ussher’s theory was wrong.²

Then There’s the Gregorian Calendar

“What most people don’t know is the Gregorian calendar we use today didn’t even come about until 1582 (under

(continued on page 491)

1. William H. Griffith Thomas, *Through the Pentateuch Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) p. 35.
2. John W. Klotz, *Genes, Genesis and Evolution* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1955, 1970) p. 89.

Denominationalism. It is our prayer that the truths presented in these articles will speak to your heart and encourage you in the Lord.

New Web Site

Thanks to Clyde III our new web site is up and running. We are adding new material almost daily, so we encourage you to visit our site often. Also, please pass on our web address to others. Our address is www.pilkingtontonandsons.com

Until the next issue, may each of you enjoy who you are in Christ.

Your brother-servant,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.