

WILL THE CHURCH GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION?

WHY I AM A PRETRIBULATION PREMILLENARIAN

If you have been saved by God's infinite, marvelous abounding grace and faith in the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, then of course you should know that you have been baptized by a Divine baptism into the Body of Christ, and you should also know that members of Christ's Body are going to appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1 to 4), that the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Body is called the believer's 'blessed hope.' (Titus 2:13).

If you can give a ready answer to the question we are going to ask you, can you give the verses of Scripture to prove that you are correct in your decision? The question; "Are you either a 'Pretribulation' Premillenarian or a 'Posttribulation' Premillenarian?" Of course, if you are a Premillenarian, you believe that the Lord Jesus will come for His Church before he comes as the Prince of Peace, according to Isaiah 9:6 and 7, as the King on the throne of His glory described in Matthew 25:3. If you are a 'Posttribulation' Premillenarian, you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come for His Church before the millennium, but not before 'the great tribulation' of Matthew 24:21 and Jeremiah 30:4 to 11. If you are a 'Pretribulation' Premillenarian, you believe that the Lord Jesus will come for His Church before the Tribulation as well as before the millennium. This means that you do not believe that the members of the Body of Christ here on earth will go through, or even into, 'the great tribulation.'

Some months ago a pastor, who is a 'Posttribulation' Premillenarian, wrote me that he had written to more than 200 preachers and Bible teachers, including some of the outstanding Fundamentalists in this country, asking them to give to him the Scriptures that they were using to prove that the Church would not be in any part of the Tribulation. He said, with the exception of one uncertain verse (as to meaning), Revelation 3:10, he had received no replies, mentioning Scriptures that would prove the belief of the 'Pretribulation' Premillenarians. Another outstanding pastor, who lives not far from this brother who sent out the questions, recently remarked to me that the only Bible teachers who can prove that the Church will not go into the Tribulation are those obeying Ephesians 3:9 or who at least know what is meant by seeing what is 'the dispensation of the mystery,' 'which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.' Whether this be true or not, the truth concerning the MYSTERY proves that the Church, Which is Christ's Body, will not go through the tribulation. This we shall presently consider.

THE FOUR GREAT CHANGES WHICH WILL BRING WORLD PEACE

All Christians, who believe that we do have a more sure Word of Prophecy whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn (II Peter 1:19), believe that the Son of God is coming back to this earth, as the Smiting Stone of Daniel 2:32 to 46, as the Son of man in the cloud with power and great glory, to bring an end to 'the time of the Gentiles,' and for Israel's redemption (Luke 21:24 to 32 and Romans 11:26), in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7, to sit as the Prince of Peace, on David's Throne, with the government on His shoulder. Christ was born to take the throne of David (Luke 1:27 to 33).

Christ was raised from the dead to take the throne of David (Acts 2:27 to 33). Christ is coming back to take the throne of David (Acts 15:15 to 18). When Christ was born to take David's throne God's messengers proclaimed, 'Peace on earth' (Luke 2:14). When the rejected Messiah declared that He was going to Calvary's cross, and not at that time to David's throne, He said, 'No peace on earth.' (Luke 12:49 to 52.)

Pretribulation' Premillenarians, for some years, have been teaching that before there will be world peace and universal righteousness, there must be four great changes, in the following order . . . 1 . . . The Rapture of the Church . . . 2 . . . The Jews return to the Holy Land in unbelief . . . 3 . . . The Coming of Christ as the Son of Man to be King and Judge . . . 4 . . . The imprisonment of Satan in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1 to 3).

Certainly every minister of Christ should be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4), and as such, should so rightly divide the Word of Truth as to know the difference between God's present program, the making of 'THE ONE NEW MAN' of Ephesians 2:15, and God's next program to bring forth 'THE NEW ISRAEL' of Isaiah 62:1 to 4. 'THE ONE NEW MAN' is the 'Church of the MYSTERY,' which was PURPOSED in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 3:11 and 3:9), chosen in Christ before the world began (II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 1:4, 5 and 11). This Church was PREDESTINATED, but not PROPHESED. THE KINGDOM, which Christ announced (at hand) in Matthew 4:17, will be at hand when the Son of Man comes in the cloud with power and great glory (Luke 21:27 to 33), when He shall sit on the throne of His glory as King and Judge (Matthew 25:31), and His twelve apostles shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:27 and 28). Christ at the present time is far above all heavens, on His Father's throne in heaven, Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body (Ephesians 4:9 to 11 and Ephesians 1:19 to 23), while now on earth the MYSTERY among the Gentiles (no longer a mystery) is 'CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY' (Colossians 1:27). When the Son of man returns to earth to establish the KINGDOM of Matthew 25:34, it will not be that KINGDOM OF GOD (THE BODY) PURPOSED in Christ BEFORE the foundation (overthrow) of the world; but that KINGDOM PREPARED FROM the foundation of the world PROPHESED but not PREDESTINATED. It will not be the coming of Christ (the MYSTERY of I Corinthians 15:51 to 54), the Blessed Hope of Titus 2:13, His coming to remove His Body to glory, that will usher in the millennium; but the coming of the King to earth to take over the government of the world, to rule with a rod of iron, but in equity and justice. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Corinthians 6:2).

The PROPHESED KINGDOM OF GOD, which will bring to this earth universal peace and righteousness, will be both POLITICAL and SPIRITUAL; for the coming of God's Son from heaven to this earth will bring about the RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL THE HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN. (Acts 3:19 to 24 . . . Luke 1:67 to 77). It was after Christ ascended FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS that He gave gifts unto men, for THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (Ephesians 4:9 to 13); and it was by special revelation that Christ in heaven made known to Paul that this present 'DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD' is the 'DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY' (Ephesians 3:1 to 4 and Ephesians 3:9); that the Body which is a part of the over-all KINGDOM OF GOD, is SPIRITUAL but not POLITICAL. Concerning the making or building of the Body of Christ in this age of grace all of the Old Testament prophets were both silent and ignorant . . . "THE MYSTERY Which has been hid from ages and from generations; but now is made manifest to His saints." (Colossians 1:24 to 26). There is a great difference between God's

prophesied program, 'BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID' (Amos 9:11 to 15), and God's unprophesied ETERNAL PURPOSE 'BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST.'

Members of the Body of Christ, in this age and economy and reign of grace, are to be established according to Paul's gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25); and to this we shall presently refer.

Because of the fact that some Jews are now returning to Palestine and locating in that promised land (Genesis 17:1 to 12) before Christ's return for His Church, and because of the chaos in Europe and Asia, some Bible teachers and Evangelists, who were formerly 'Pretribulation' Premillenarians have become 'Posttribulation' Premillenarians. Therefore, they no longer believe in the imminent coming of Christ for His Church; but on the contrary they ridicule those who teach what they call, 'the any-moment theory.' With them the TRIBULATION is imminent, but not the RAPTURE of the Church. Perhaps, they have forgotten God's principle for this parenthetical period for members of the Body of Christ, who have been turned to God from idols, to serve the true and living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven (I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10), whose citizenship is in heaven and look for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to fashion their bodies like unto His body of glory (Philippians 3:20 and 21). That principle is to walk by faith and not by sight. (II Corinthians 5:7 and 8). They walk by 'SIGNS,' especially 'SIGNS' that pertain to Israel and their 'TIME OF TROUBLE' and their prophesied 'MESSIANIC KINGDOM.' They no longer believe that Christians should look for the Son and not for signs.

Of course, the 'Posttribulation' Premillenarians, who quote Daniel and Ezekiel and Malachi and Amos and Joel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and other Old Testament Prophets and find in Europe at the present time the fulfillment of those Prophecies, to prove that the end of this age of grace, or 'Body' age, is near at hand, but the Church will go into, or through, the tribulation, are more consistent than are the 'Pretribulation' Premillenarians, who quote these same Prophecies and fulfillment, to prove that the 'MYSTERY' coming of Christ, mentioned in I Corinthians 15:51 to 54, is at hand, but the Church will not go into any part of the tribulation.

THE SIGN PRETRIBULATION PREMILLENARIANS

I have just returned from the Western Coast, where I spent several weeks of the first part of this year (1948) in teaching the Word of God, endeavoring to establish saints according to Romans 16:25, and persuade sinners to be reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:18 to 21), to believe Romans 5:20 and 21 and Ephesians 2:8 to 10. What a privilege to proclaim the unmixed gospel of the grace of God and show poor, condemned, ruined, ungodly sinners, that where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; explain from God's Word how they can be saved without religion, works or worthiness. What a spiritual crime it is to endeavor to make God's grace salvation more efficacious by adding any of man's doings to the perfect redemptive work of the perfect Christ, Who, on the cross, said 'FINISHED,' and then and there put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 9:26). What blessed satisfaction and peace to trust and rest in Christ's perfect work, and thereby receive from God, as His free gift, His own perfect righteousness (II Corinthians 5:21 . . . Romans 10:4 and 10), His free gift, eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Romans 6:23); and then to know that the believer fulfills the righteousness of the law by walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:4), and finds God's abounding grace altogether sufficient to enable him to thus walk (II Corinthians 9:8 and Titus 2:11 to 14).

I could not refrain from comparing the messages which I heard some of the so-called outstanding Premillenarians deliver during my recent visit to that section of our country with those I heard when I visited the same section in 1930 and again in 1938. In 1930 many of the 'sign' Premillenarians were sure, or tried to persuade their hearers they were sure, that the revived Roman Empire was even nearer than just around the corner and the Church would be raptured very, very soon, if not sooner, because of the political activities of Benito Mussolini. Benito has come and gone and with his horrible death the 'sign' Premillenarians had to turn to Adolph. So in 1938 Hitler was the big sign; and surely he would be the long-expected 'Beast' of Revelation 13. Many of these 'sign' preachers are hoping that Hitler is not dead, but that he will suddenly be discovered and save them from more or less embarrassment. In the meantime they have a new 'sign' for their followers who must have signs (Matthew 16:4 and I Corinthians 1:22). Benito and Adolph did not fit the description of the 'Beast' as well as 'Joe' does; and now in 1948 'Stalin' is the big sign. What Stalin is doing in Europe and Asia, and what he is about to do, they say, is prophesied in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. So now all of the accepted Premillenarians must have some messages on 'Gog,' 'Magog,' 'Gomer,' 'Tubal' and the 'Prince of Meshech' and convince their hearers that what the ruler of Russia is doing is in fulfillment of Ezekiel's Prophecy and proof positive that very, very soon the Lord Jesus, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, will come for His Church, as the Rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 54 will take place. Shortly after the Rapture, they say, the 'lawless one' of II Thessalonians 2:1 to 11 shall appear; and with his appearing the 'great tribulation' of Matthew 24:21 will be on the earth. So they are 'Pretribulation' Premillenarians.

I would have my readers understand that I am a 'Pretribulation' 'Premillenarian' and therefore am anything but the scoffer of II Peter 3:3 and 4, who says, "where is the promise of His coming?" I believe with all my heart that the omniscient and omnipotent God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11); that He not only knew the end from the beginning (Acts 15:18), but that He chose before the foundation of the world those who are to make up the Body of Christ, the 'Joint-Body' (Sussomos) of Ephesians 3:6, Which is to be presented to Christ as the glorious, holy, spotless, blameless Church. (Ephesians 5:26 to 28 and Ephesians 1:4 and 5 and Titus 1:2 and 3). I know that God will complete His work, making 'THE ONE NEW MAN' of Ephesians 2:15 during this present age and dispensation; and that He will, in His own time, bring the culmination or consummation of Ephesians 4:13. Also, I am sure that the perfecting of this masterpiece of God does not depend upon what Mussolini or Hitler did, or what Stalin is doing, or what the UN will decide to do concerning the partitioning of Palestine.

In a sense we are living in a timeless, a religionless and a signless age. But we should know, according to God's sure Word of Prophecy, that blind Israel and unbelieving Gentiles have a real cause to very much fear the future; for "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power: When He SHALL HAVE COME (ELTHE) to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (II Thessalonians 1:7 to 10). The word 'ELTHE' properly translated, 'SHALL HAVE COME,' most assuredly suggests that the Church SHALL HAVE BEEN RAPTURED before the Lord Jesus comes to the world of unbelievers and ungodly sinners to execute wrath. When the Lord Jesus comes as 'the Son of man,' according to Luke 18:8, He will not find faith on the earth. Why? Because He will not find the Body of Christ here. Christ is not coming to this earth, as the

Son of man, to take the members of the Church of the Mystery, the Body, to appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1 to 4). Christ is not 'the Son of man' in His relation to the Church, as 'the Head of the Body.' He is not coming to the earth to rapture the Church. The Church is going to meet Him above the earth. If the Lord Jesus should come to the earth for His Church at any moment now, He would find on this earth more faith, more intelligent Bible-taught Christians than ever lived on this earth before. Christ would also find millions of religious church-members going religiously to everlasting perdition, and a great multitude of apostate preachers and pastors and seminary professors, who are propagating 'Christianized agnosticism' in the name of evangelical, Protestant Christianity, using Bible phraseology and terminology to lead their unwary victims to the ditch with them. They call themselves 'Modernists,' seemingly ignorant of the fact that a 'Christian infidel' is an impossible paradox. Christ would also find a great multitude going to the same endless and conscious perdition in some metaphysical cult, also giving forth their satanic vagaries in the name of Christ and Christianity. These false prophets were foretold and foreordained to this ministry. (II Peter 2:1 and 2 . . . Jude 4 . . . II John 7 . . . II Timothy 3:1 to 5 and II Timothy 4:3 to 5).

IS NOT THE FALLING-AWAY A SIGN OF CHRIST'S COMING?

Before the close of the first Christian century John wrote: "it is the last time . . . even now are there many antichrists, whereby we many know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18) . . . "many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I John 4:1). There are many false prophets and antichrists in the world today. So have there been in every Christian century since Paul and John died. The early centuries were pretty dark ones spiritually. How about the years of Martin Luther or the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England and Europe? The saints during those years had no 'Bill of Rights'; and many of them were imprisoned and even tortured. They did not have a million printing presses and millions of Bibles. During those centuries the 'foundation' doctrine of 'Justification By Faith' was recovered. Then later the truth of the 'One Body' and the 'Blessed Hope' of Titus 2:13. Now here and there a few persecuted servants of the Lord, in the midst of the sectarianism that is playing havoc with Christians, opposed by religious leaders who are more interested in established traditions and denominational programs than in any desire to obey Ephesians 3:9, are trying to recover or uncover the most wonderful truth in all of the Bible; that which was 'THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL' (Ephesians 1:9 . . . Ephesians 1:15 to 18 . . . Ephesians 5:26 to 28) until the glorified Christ in heaven revealed it to and through the apostle of the Gentiles, the Lord's prisoner for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 4 . . . Colossians 1:24 to 26 . . . Romans 11:13).

In spite of the fact that there are more spiritual, faithful, intelligent Bible students in the world today than ever before, and although in many respects this is the brightest and most prosperous age ever known to man, there is an awful apostasy on the earth, and this century has seen two of the bloodiest and most brutal wars in the history of the human race. Whether we are Postmillenarians, Amillenarians, Pretribulation' Premillenarians or 'Posttribulation' Premillenarians, it is wonderful to know that there is going to be on this earth a warless age, according to Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3. Also regardless of which of these 'Millennial' groups we belong to, we should know that we are the children of light and the day of the Lord should not overtake us as a thief in the night. (I Thessalonians 5:1 to 6).

SIGNS AND THE ANY-MOMENT COMING OF CHRIST

When we intelligently and diligently consider the inconsistency of the 'Pretribulation' Premillenarians, who try the impossible, to reconcile their teaching that the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in present-day European political affairs proves that Christ's coming for the Church is very, very near at hand, with their statement that they have always believed in the 'Imminent' coming of the Lord for His Church, as have other faithful saints of God down through the Christian centuries, it is not to be wondered at that the 'Posttribulation' Premillenarians ridicule what they call their 'Any-Moment Theory.'

In one message concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church, the messengers, we refer to as 'Sign Pretribulation Premillenarians,' will persuade their hearers to believe in the 'Imminent' (any-moment) coming of Christ because many outstanding, spiritual, faithful Christians in other generations and centuries looked for the return of Christ in their time, and in the very next message they endeavor to convince their hearers that they should expect to be raptured any moment because Ezekiel 38 and 39 or some other O.T. Prophecies are being fulfilled by Stalin and other world rulers. Surely, if Mussolini, or Hitler, or Stalin had to come on the scene and do certain things to fulfill certain O.T. Prophecies before Christ could come to call His Body to be with Him in glory, then those Premillenarians of the seventeenth or eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, who expected Christ at any moment, years before Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin were born, did, greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, not being good discerners of signs.

Surely we should all be agreed that God is making in this age and dispensation of grace 'ONE NEW MAN' (Ephesians 2:15); that God will complete the Body of Ephesians 4:9 to 13, Which He is building up, before Christ calls that Church to meet Him in glory; and that completing that Body does not depend in any way upon what Stalin does in Europe or Asia, or what the Jews and the Arabs do in Palestine. God will surely bring the end described in Ephesians 4:13 and then Christ will do with the Church what is recorded in Ephesians 5:26 to 28. After that hundreds of Old Testament Prophecies will be fulfilled. But every spiritual, intelligent student of the Scriptures knows that there is a sense in which the clock of prophecy has stopped until after the 'MYSTERY' coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:51 to 54).

Not only Pastor C. T. Russell, with his 'millennial dawn' scheme, but some men of God, sound in evangelical truth, have tried to fix the date of the coming of Christ, reckoning from some dates they thought Daniel had fixed, 'the seven times'. They multiplied 7 x 360 and added 2520 years to the year the King of Babylon invaded Jerusalem (about 606 BC); so the Lord was to come not later than 'the feast of trumpets' in 1914 AD. When He did not arrive, they guessed again, saying they should have dated from Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion. Pastor Russell and others died guessing; but the guessing has not ceased.

Down through the years Christians who were not looking for the blessed hope, the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, were not faithful and obedient Christians. But if the date of that appearing was fixed at 1914 AD or 1927 AD or 1950 AD or 2000 AD, or if Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin had to be born and commit their crimes before the Rapture could take place, then it was neither an act of obedience nor intelligence nor merit on the part of the Christians who looked for the Lord's return before the beginning of the twentieth century.

And now if the Church is going into the tribulation before the Rapture takes place, members of the Body of Christ should either harden themselves for that awful time of sorrow or pray that they and all their loved ones and all of the members of the Body of Christ will die before the beginning of the tribulation rather than look for the RAPTURE of the Church, which

cannot be. The Bible has led sane, spiritual Christians to believe that the coming of Christ for His Church, to take the members to heaven without dying, is far more to be desired than to be overtaken by death; but not if members of the Body are going to suffer tortures and cruelties under the Dragon and the Antichrist far worse than death. If the tribulation must come before the Rapture, certainly no Christian should obey Titus 2:13 or Philippians 3:20 and 21, or believe that there was any 'MYSTERY' to 'the twinkling of an eye' appearing mentioned in I Corinthians 15:51 to 54.

THE TRIBULATION AND THE MYSTERY

In Colossians 1:23 to 26, in writing of his distinctive ministry, the apostle Paul (to whom Christ had committed a dispensation . . . I Corinthians 9:17), who called himself 'the prisoner of Jesus Christ' 'for you Gentiles' (Ephesians 3:1 to 4 and Colossians 4:3 and 4), wrote that the dispensation committed to him was a 'deposit' (II Timothy 1:12), a Divine Secret, 'the mystery of God's will' (Ephesians 1:9); that which completed, or filled-up, the Word of God; 'THE MYSTERY,' which hath been hid from ages and from generations.' When God sent blindness upon Israel and set them aside, to remain in that state 'until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in' (Romans 11:25), and then began a new 'RECONCILIATION' movement (Romans 11:15 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 and Romans 5:11), and ushered in a new 'DISPENSATION' for the nations, it was not an afterthought with God. It was rather a Divine program which God had 'PURPOSED' in Christ before the world began. (II Timothy 1:9 . . . Titus 1:2 and 3 . . . Romans 8:28 to 30 . . . Ephesians 1:4 and 5 and 11 . . . and Ephesians 3:11 and Ephesians 3:9).

Surely any minister of Christ, who claims to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4), should know that there is a great difference between 'the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:19 to 21 . . . Romans 11:26 to 29) and 'THE MYSTERY,' Which was not spoken by the mouth of any prophet since the world began; but was God's own predestinated, but untold SECRET, 'Which hath been hid from ages and from generations.' (Colossians 1:25 and 26).

The 'GOSPEL' of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 was made known to and by God's prophets since the world began; for Christ died for our sins and was raised the third day, 'ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES' (Acts 13:29 and 30). But the 'MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL' (Ephesians 6:19 and 20), for which Paul suffered as an evil doer in the Roman jail (II Timothy 2:7 to 9), was never made known to or by any servant of the Lord until the risen, glorified Christ, far above all heavens, revealed it to His prisoner, the apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle of Reconciliation. Paul was not in jail in Rome for preaching the prophesied 'GOSPEL,' but for telling a Secret, for proclaiming the unprophesied, predestinated 'MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.'

The Lord Jesus Christ, on earth, was a Minister of the circumcision (Israel) to confirm promises made to Israel (Romans 15:8) God never promised to Israel that they would obtain mercy, in the dispensation of grace, through the mercy of Gentiles (Romans 11:31); that Christ would remain far above all heavens for more than 1900 years as Head of the Church, Which is His Body (Ephesians 1:19 to 23); that during this present unprophesied age and dispensation God would build a Body to be presented to Christ as a glorious, holy, spotless, blameless Church (Ephesians 5:26 to 28). Because this was God's 'before-the-world' 'PURPOSE,' not revealed to His prophets it was God's 'SECRET' or 'MYSTERY. In His 'CONFIRMATION' ministry on earth Jesus of Nazareth did not confirm 'the dispensation of the mystery' (Ephesians 3:9),

because it was not included in the promises which God made to the fathers by the prophets (Romans 15:8).

While on earth Christ did confirm to Israel the promises of God made to their fathers by the prophets concerning 'THE TREE' . . . 'THE TRIBULATION' . . . 'THE THRONE'. Israel had been promised the resurrection OF the dead: they had that hope (Acts 28:20 . . . Acts 23:6 . . . Acts 24:15 . . . Acts 26:6 and 7). They knew that there would be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15); but they did not know the 'MYSTERY' coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:51 to 54), the hope of the 'MYSTERY' Church, the resurrection OUT FROM AMONG the dead. Yes the 'TREE' (Calvary) was in fulfillment of Prophecy. (Acts 13:29 and 30). The 'THRONE' (David's THRONE . . . the THRONE of Christ's glory on earth) will be in fulfillment of many Prophecies. The 'TRIBULATION' will be in fulfillment of several Prophecies, such as Jeremiah 30:4 to 11.

In Romans 11:33, the words, 'PAST FINDING OUT,' should be translated, as in the Revised Edition, 'PAST TRACING OUT.' This means that the truth of Romans 11:30 to 32 was not 'PROPHESIED' truth; for no prophet of Israel prophesied or knew the truth of Romans 11:30 and 31, which God's people must understand today, if they are going to obey Ephesians 3:9 and know the difference between the 'CONFIRMATION' ministry of Jesus of Nazareth to Israel and the 'REVELATION' ministry of the apostle Paul to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8 and 9).

Remember it was not a hidden 'MYSTERY' that the Lord Jesus would come, and shall yet come, as the Son of man for Israel's redemption. Note in Romans 11:26, the words, 'AS IT IS WRITTEN.' The Jews require a sign. (I Corinthians 5:22). Members of the Body of Christ walk by faith. (II Corinthians 5:7). Now abideth faith, hope and love. (II Corinthians 13:13). Even the 'sign-gifts' passed away. (II Corinthians 13:8 to 11). God's spiritual program for members of His Body was somewhat changed after the sudden closing of the Book of Acts several years before the death of the human author of Acts (II Timothy 4:11). And most assuredly this new spiritual program, covered by Divine Truth, called the 'UNSEARCHABLE' (Past-tracing-out) riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8), was never contemplated by any prophet of Israel. And most assuredly the coming of Christ for this Church of the Mystery was never contemplated by any of those prophets or told to God's people in other ages and generations. The 'TRIBULATION' and the coming of 'THE KING' to redeem Israel, to build again the tabernacle of David, and to plant Israel in their own land (Amos 9:11 to 15), and establish His prophesied KINGDOM, and reign as PRINCE OF PEACE, were certainly prophesied by Israel's prophets and were included in the promises which the Minister of the circumcision came to Israel to confirm. As the prophesied THRONE will not be set up on this earth until after God has accomplished His ETERNAL PURPOSE in this age and dispensation, neither will the 'GREAT TRIBULATION,' 'THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE,' be on the earth.

God's people would not be so confused as to the time of the 'Blessed Hope' and how to otherwise walk worthy of their vocation, if God's servants would teach them the truth of Romans 16:25; but alas! God's people have to remember I John 2:27, and learn God's Truth of this 'grace' age from the Holy Spirit and Scriptures, and not follow the confused leaders. Note carefully and prayerfully Romans 16:25:

"NOW TO HIM THAT IS OF POWER TO ESTABLISH YOU ACCORDING TO MY (PAUL'S) GOSPEL, AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH WAS KEPT SECRET SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN."

What a great difference between the Divine Truth preached by the Twelve apostles, on the day of Pentecost, Truth foretold by all of God's prophets SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN (Acts 3:24 . . . Acts 3:19 to 21), and the preaching of Jesus Christ, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY, which was kept secret SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN. What a pity that outstanding Fundamentalists, to whom God's people are looking for leadership, are neither establishing themselves nor the people, because they do not know the difference between Peters' Pentecostal Restitution message and Paul's Gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, ACCORDING TO REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY. As we carefully, diligently, spiritually study the Divine Truth in the first eleven chapters of the Book of Acts, during those first years after Pentecost when Peter was using the keys of the kingdom of heaven and preaching what Joel, David, Samuel, Moses and Amos and other prophets had foretold, certainly Peter and the Eleven were not preaching 'Jesus Christ, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY' (Romans 16:25). They were not preaching the "MY GOSPEL" of Paul, for which he was in chains, (II Timothy 2:7 to 9 and Romans 16:25). The Lord Jesus Himself, in His recorded ministry in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, was not preaching HIMSELF, according to the revelation of the mystery, kept secret since the world began. Even the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews instructed the believing Hebrews to leave the first things spoken by Christ and go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1 to 3), and even the truths which the Twelve could not bear until the Holy Spirit came down from heaven (John 16:10 to 14) were not sufficient to establish members of the Body of Christ, as they were, and are, to be established by Paul's Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. Members of Christ's Body cannot be established by preaching they do not understand; and they cannot understand the truth by which they are to be established until and unless they pray the prayer of Ephesians 1:15 to 23.

In the days of Moses it is recorded, 'God spake all these words,' and centuries later Paul declared that Christ was speaking in him (II Corinthians 13:3). All members of the Body of Christ should know that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. No Scripture is unimportant, unprofitable or uninspired, and every believer should diligently study every word in the Bible, under the direction, of the Holy Spirit; but in rightly dividing the Word of Truth every believer should know that much of God's inspired Word does not refer to the hope and calling of the members of the joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, the Church of the Mystery. The workman, who is not ashamed, studies, interprets, appropriates and applies all other Scriptures in the light of 'THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST' (Ephesians 3:8); and seeks to be established by the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, kept secret since the world began, the 'REVELATION' ministry of the apostle Paul. When Paul wrote of that which was given us 'BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN' (II Timothy 1:9) he added that he was appointed messenger (II Timothy 1:11). Eternal life promised 'BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN' (Titus 1:1 and 2) . . . 'WHICH IS COMMITTED UNTO ME (PAUL)' (Titus 1:3). "How that by revelation He (Christ) made known unto ME (Paul) the MYSTERY." (Ephesians 3:3). "I (Paul) have laid the foundation." (I Corinthians 3:10). "The MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL for which I am an ambassador in bonds." (Ephesians 6:9 and 20 . . . Colossians 4:3 and 4). "Whereof I (Paul) am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given unto ME (Paul) . . . THE MYSTERY, which hath been hid." (Colossians 1:25 and 26).

These wonderful truths are to be understood and taught by faithful stewards of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4), every one of whom is to do his utmost to make all saints see what is 'the dispensation (not fellowship) of the mystery.' (Ephesians 3:9).

And surely no true, spiritual, intelligent, faithful steward will teach that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God’ unless they add (and know why), ‘to them who are the called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.’ (Romans 8:28). He is a workman that needed to be ashamed who does not know the difference between Divine Truth, ‘ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES’ (Prophecy) and ‘ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE’ (Predestinated but not prophesied).

Regardless of what the leaders and pastors teach, or do not teach, let each of us, who are saved by the grace of God, be established by the preaching of Jesus Christ, ‘ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY,’ which had been hid from all men until the risen Christ revealed it to the apostle Paul and gave him his gospel by revelation (Galatians 1:11 to 13 . . . Ephesians 3:1 to 4).

If we really believe that the prophesied spiritual-political kingdom of heaven has been postponed and that the clock of prophecy really stopped with the fall of Israel, after Paul’s warning in Acts 13:40 and 41 and the great turn of Acts 13:46, let us be sure that the Lord will have the Church of the Mystery (unprophesied) safe in heaven before the awful time described in Luke 21:25 to 33 and Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 to 13.

Surely the ‘MYSTERY’ should convince any spiritual, intelligent student of the Scriptures that members of the Body of Christ will not be here on earth during the prophesied period called ‘the great tribulation.’

We should not expect anything but confusion, in any explanation that the Church will be saved from the tribulation, from Bible teachers who teach that ‘the dispensation of the mystery’ (Ephesians 3:9), ‘the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles’ (Ephesians 3:1 to 4), began on the day of the Pentecost several weeks after the death and resurrection of Christ. The great events foretold by Joel, David, Moses, Samuel and all the prophets, including Amos, and proclaimed by Peter and the Eleven, ‘the times of the restitution of all things’ (Acts 3:19 to 21), had nothing to do with God’s purpose and grace given to Gentiles in Christ before the world began (II Timothy 1:9). The grace that Peter preached, he wrote, was prophesied grace. (I Peter 1:10 and 11). There was no mystery in what God began, or continued, with Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost. Little wonder then that Premillennial brethren, who teach that the mystery began with Acts Two, are becoming ‘Posttribulation’ Premillenarians. If Paul told the truth, that the MYSTERY was revealed to him, surely it was not revealed to him before he was saved. Paul told Gentiles to be saved by grace and be raised up to sit with Christ where He is, in the heavenlies. Peter preached to Israel to repent and God would send Christ back to earth where they were, in their land. (Ephesians 2:5 to 8 and Acts 3:19 to 21). Even a babe in Christ should know the difference between the ‘Restitution’ and the ‘Rapture.’

BEHOLD THE FIG TREE (LUKE 21:29)

Is the ‘FIG TREE’ of Luke 21:29 now shooting forth? Is Israel’s redemption nigh? The ‘sign’ Premillenarians say that nothing like this present return of the Jews to Palestine has taken place since Titus, in the year 70 AD destroyed the holy city, in fulfillment of Matthew 22:7, since which time the Jews have been scattered all over the world, in fulfillment of Luke 21:24. Behold the other trees. (Luke 21:29). See what is going on in the U.N. and the ever-increasing power of the Northern Kingdom and the inability of the nations to settle their differences by any peaceable arrangement. Can there be any possible solution other than the return of the King? Must that coming not be preceded by the reign of the Antichrist?

The talk about the atomic bomb may cause many to fear and have heart-failure, looking after those things that are coming on the earth (Luke 21:26), and there is no doubt that political leaders all over the world seem helpless and hopeless. Surely God is going to plant His ancient nation in their own land and they are never to be plucked up again (Amos 9:11 to 15), but are we to believe that God is going to lead them there through the deceit, trickery, violence and bloodshed now carried on by the Jews?

And again we ask the question, what about the Premillennial saints of God, in the nineteenth, eighteenth, seventeenth centuries, and even earlier centuries, who had Scriptural right to believe in the any-moment appearing of Christ to remove them, as living saints, to glory? They all had plenty of signs and many of them in certain centuries thought they were in the great tribulation.

Last week I read the testimony of a Bible teacher, who wrote 100 years ago, and he was sure that the end of the 'Church' age was at hand. He saw plenty of signs.

The people, who are instructed, in Luke 21:28, 'look up, and lift your heads; your redemption draweth nigh,' are Jews in the midst of the tribulation, with signs and wonders on earth and in the heavens. They are there in the time of Jacob's trouble. This is right before the coming of the Son of man to earth; for judgment and for Israel's redemption. The day of redemption for members of the Body of Christ the realization of the blessed hope, the mystery coming of Christ in a moment in the twinkling of an eye (Ephesians 4:30 . . . Titus 2:13 . . . I Corinthians 15:51 to 54) is not the 'redemption' mentioned in Luke 21:28. This is agreed to by most Premillenarians, who are 'grace' preachers, but many of them ask, whether it is not possible and probable that members of the Body of Christ might see some of the signs of the coming of the Son of man to earth, and should they not, with the warning in I Thessalonians 5:1 to 9, knowing that the Church will be raptured before God pours out His wrath and fury on the nations, believe that this proves that the rapture is very, very near? We again mention Romans 16:25. But whether we walk by faith or by signs, let us be looking for the blessed hope, the appearing in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, at any moment.