

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part III

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (III)

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen (Rev. 1:7).

That part of the *apokalupsis* dealt with in the Book of Revelation — an unveiling of Jesus Christ, seen through an unveiling comprising the Book of Revelation — has to do with end-time events occurring immediately preceding, at the time of, and following the Son's return to the earth. And verse seven of the eight introductory verses brings this facet of the book into full focus.

That encompassed in verse seven has to do with more than just Christ's return immediately following the Tribulation. It also covers events immediately preceding the Tribulation, having to do with His return as well. And the whole of the matter surrounding Christ's return is to be looked upon as *one coming* or *one return*, not two comings or two returns as is often taught.

That is to say, *Christ's coming, His return*, encompasses not only events surrounding the removal of the Church preceding the Tribulation but also events surrounding Israel and the nations following the Tribulation. This is simply the way in which the matter is dealt with in Scripture, which can be clearly seen in the Book of Revelation.

Immediately after the statement in verse seven, connecting the unveiling from verse one with *Christ's coming*, is a statement having to do not only with the Son's eternity and deity but also with the Son's coming from the previ-

ous verse (*cf.* vv. 4, 8). Christ's coming, with attendant events, then immediately begins to be developed in the book (1:9-4:11), with much of the remainder of the book given over to events anticipating the completion of His return at the end of the Tribulation (chs. 5-20a).

(Individuals failing to understand the *singular sense* of Christ's return as presented in Scripture are sometimes led into a false teaching surrounding the timing of the removal of the Church. Some erroneously teach that there are *two returns*, one before the Tribulation *for the Church* and the other after the Tribulation *to deal with Israel and the nations*. Others correctly see that Scripture deals with Christ's return in a *singular sense*, but they often erroneously see this return occurring only at the end of the Tribulation. And viewing matters after this fashion, they sometimes seek to bring the removal of the Church into this singular sense of Christ's return by moving the timing of this removal to the end of the Tribulation, where it doesn't belong at all.

Thus, one error has fostered another, which is often the case when error in Biblical interpretation begins to surface. Remaining with Biblical terminology and understanding matters after the manner in which they are presented in Scripture is of vital importance. It is not necessary to understand all of the details in order to simply accept the matter as Scripture presents it. Details surrounding a matter can be progressively learned over time. The important thing is *to stay with truth and not be led into error.*)

Behold, He Cometh with Clouds

When Christ returns, whether at the time of the removal of Christians preceding the Tribulation or at the

time when He deals with Israel and the nations following the Tribulation, He will be accompanied by *angels*. In Scripture, God is seen using angels in all facets of His activity. God is seen *acting directly in all matters*, but such actions are invariably brought to pass *through angelic activity*.

God has established fixed laws, and angels act under these fixed laws. And, with angels acting under these fixed laws, their actions become God's actions.

There are a number of classic examples in Scripture, but two will suffice — the destruction of the cities of the plain in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen and the giving of the Law through Moses, beginning in Exodus chapter twenty.

In the destruction of the cities of the plain, in Gen. 19:13, two angels revealed that they would destroy these cities; then in Gen. 19:24 it is recorded that *the Lord* destroyed these cities. And it is a simple matter to understand exactly what occurred if one understands how God uses angels in all facets of His activities.

The two angels, acting under fixed laws established by God, destroyed the cities. And their actions, because of the manner in which they were performed, were viewed as the Lord's actions as well.

The giving of the Law occurred in the same manner. Though God is seen giving the Law in a direct manner — “written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18) — it was, as well, given “by the disposition [‘direction’] of angels” (Acts 7:53; *cf.* Deut. 33:2; Psa. 68:17; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

Exactly the same type interchange between God and angels is seen at the time of Christ's return. Though Christ will be directly involved with Christians, Israel, and the nations at this time, *angelic activity* is seen throughout.

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The voice of the archangel will be heard at the time of Christ's shout surrounding the resurrection and removal of Christians from the earth. And multiplied thousands, possibly millions of angels will accompany Christ, not only at this time but in connection with judgment to follow — a judgment dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation (*cf.* Matt. 16:27; II Thess. 1:7; Jude 14, 15).

Then, in connection with that facet of Christ's return when He deals with Israel and the nations, again innumerable angels will accompany Him (Rev. 19:14; *cf.* Deut. 33:2; II Kings 6:17; 19:35). It is specifically stated that the God of Israel, following Israel's repentance, will personally "return ['turn about'] and gather thee [the Jewish people] from all the nations" where He had scattered them (Deut. 30:1-3; Ezek. 34:13; 36:24ff; 37:12-14; 39:25ff). But it is also specifically stated that God will accomplish this task through angelic activity in connection with His Son's return (Matt. 24:29-31).

The preceding should shed light on something extensively seen throughout most of the Book of Revelation. This book deals far more extensively with angelic activity in connection with God's activity than any other book in Scripture. Though such activity exists throughout these other books and is, at times, mentioned or dealt with, the Book of Revelation stands alone in fully opening up and revealing this activity for all to see. And this would be in complete keeping with the fact that this book completes *the full revelation, from the Old Testament, of not only the Son but the Father as well* (Rev. 1:1; 10:7).

The Son seen returning "with clouds" in Rev. 1:7 may very well be a dual metaphorical reference to both *deity* and *angels*. "Clouds" are sometimes used in Scripture in connection with deity (*e.g.*, Ex. 13:21, 22; 14:19, 24; 19:9; Psa. 104:3; Isa. 14:14; 19:1; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 17:5; 26:64; Acts 1:9; I Cor. 10:1, 2). And the reference to "clouds" could very well include *the myriads of angels* (*i.e.*, clouds of angels, connected with deity, with their actions being the Lord's actions).

The former (deity) is undoubtedly

referenced through the use of the word "clouds," and the latter (a possible reference to accompanying angels) may be included as well. But to contend for the latter as also being referenced is unnecessary, for other Scriptures provide this type information.

(It is often taught and, consequently, understood by many that Christians will return back to the earth with Christ at the end of the Tribulation. The basis for this type teaching is taken mainly from a statement in Rev. 19:14:

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Some expositors seek to limit this reference to Christians alone, and others seek to see a reference to not only Christians but to angels as well. The matter, either way it is viewed in the preceding respect, presents a twofold problem:

1. Any time those returning with Christ are identified, they are *always identified as angels*, sometimes referred to as "holy ones" [Heb. *kodesh*; Gk. *hagios*; *cf.* Deut. 33:2; Matt. 16:27; Jude 14]. The translators of the Septuagint [Gk. version of the O.T.] rendered the word *kodesh* in Deut. 33:2 as *aggeloi* [angels] rather than a plural form of *hagios*, "holy ones." Thus, they provided commentary rather than a translation of the word, knowing that the use of "holy ones" was a reference to *angels* in this text.

2. Biblical typology would show the fallacy of the teaching that Christians [forming Christ's wife in that day] will return to the earth with Christ. For example, when Joseph dealt with his brethren, his wife was in another part of the palace. And Moses' wife only went part way with him when he returned to Egypt to deal with His brethren [Gen. 45:1ff; Ex. 4:20-31; 18:2].

In like fashion, Christ's wife will not be with Him when He returns to the earth to deal with His brethren in the antitype of that seen in the accounts of Joseph and Moses. Moses' wife returning part way with him may show Christ's wife also returning part way with Him, but remaining in the New Jerusalem above the earth while Christ, accompanied by angels, returns on to the earth to deal with Israel and the nations.

Aside from the preceding, Christ's wife in that day would not be described as "the armies which were in heaven," as

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written by the editor.*

seen in Rev. 19:14. This is a description used of *angels*, not of a bride or wife [II Kings 6:17; Joel 2:11].)

1) Every Eye Shall See Him

Christians will see Christ following the removal of the Church, preceding the Tribulation; and those surviving the judgments of the Tribulation, among the nations of the earth, will see Him at the completion of His return following the Tribulation.

Sometimes the words "every" or "all" are used in Scripture in a sense which is not necessarily all-inclusive. For example, Matt. 3:5, 6 states that "Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan" not only went out to hear John but "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." But in the very next verse (v. 7), that stated about the Pharisees and Sadducees clearly excludes them from what would appear to be an all-inclusive statement in the previous two verses. Thus, it is evident from the context how the word "all" is being used.

Something similar is seen through that stated about the signs being manifested in Israel's presence in Matt. 4:23-25. "All" is used several times in these verses, and, again, it is evident from the context that the word is not used in an all-inclusive sense. Rather, the word is used in a more exclusive sense, having to do with activity where Christ was ministering or where word concerning His ministry had spread, not necessarily as a reference to every single part of the region or to every sick person in that region.

And the same could only be true concerning Christ's return, with "every eye" seeing Him. People seek to envision how this will occur, seeing it perhaps occur-

ring via TV or other means. But all the speculation is unnecessary. "Every eye" may not necessarily see Christ as some may think of this *at the exact time of His return at the end of the Tribulation*. He will return to a point in the Middle East (to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem), and individuals at that time will be residing at various places worldwide.

Activity will be centered in the Middle East, and those there will see Him in a very personal manner, particularly those present when He treads the winepress (Isa. 63:1-6). The Gentile nations coming against Israel and Israel's Messiah in that day will be brought into complete disarray, followed by the complete and utter destruction of Gentile world power (Psa. 2:1-5; Ezek. 38:18-23; 39:1-8, 21-23; Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:8-14; Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff).

If the reference in Rev. 1:7 is thought of in the sense of "every eye" seeing Christ at *the exact time of His return*, the matter should undoubtedly be thought of in more of a relative rather than absolute sense. But, if "every eye" seeing Christ is thought of in a larger context (over ensuing time), then the matter could only be understood in an absolute or all-inclusive sense.

Christians throughout the present dispensation (both those raised from the dead and those removed without dying) will, individually, stand before Christ as He sits upon His judgment seat, with *every Christian* seeing Him. Then, after *numerous individuals* in the Middle East have personally seen Christ, He will reign for 1,000 years both on and over the earth, where *every individual* living during that time would be able to personally see the One Who, at long last, will have brought peace to a troubled earth. And then *all of the unsaved dead* will one day see Him at the Great White Throne judgment following the Messianic Era.

Thus, if the statement is not to be understood as all-inclusive surrounding events *at the time of Christ's return*, it can only be understood as all-inclusive if viewed in a broader sense.

2) They Also Which Pierced Him

Then Israel is specifically singled out from among the nations of the earth, from among those on the earth who will see Him in that day. And if *every single Jew* still alive and on the earth does not

see Him at the exact time of His return, such is immaterial, for they will see Him at later points in time.

Something often overlooked in connection with Israel and the nations seeing Christ at the time of His return is the fact that Israel will be regathered from a worldwide dispersion *before* Gentile world power is destroyed.

To set the stage for the preceding, in the middle of the Tribulation the Jews in the land of Israel, forming the present nation of Israel, are going to be uprooted and driven out among the Gentile nations once again. An Israeli nation, as it exists in the Middle East today, *will not exist* during the last half of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; cf. Joel 3:1-8; Rev. 11:2).

Israel's future removal from the land and dispersal among the nations once again will occur, if for no other reason, *because God has decreed that He will deal with His disobedient son, His adulterous wife, out among the nations, not in the land*.

Once all of the Jewish people have been dispersed out among the Gentile nations again, occupying the position depicted by *the harlot* in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen (17:1, 15), God will then deal with the nation in such a manner that *Israel's harlotry will be done away with* (17:16; 18:8-10, 21). And to accomplish this, God will use Gentile persecution of *such an extreme nature* that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved"; but "for the elect's sake [for Israel's sake, *for whom this type Gentile activity will exist in that day*], those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:22).

(For a detailed discussion of *the harlot* in Rev. 17, 18 in the preceding respect, refer to the editor's book, THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE.)

Israel, through Gentile persecution of this nature, will be brought to the place of repentance. Then God, in accord with His promise (II Chron. 7:14-22; cf. Ex. 2:23-3:12; Lev. 26:40-42), will send the Deliverer, Who will not only remove His people from the nations but will then destroy Gentile world power.

Ezekiel chapters thirty-three through forty-eight present a somewhat complete picture of the whole of the matter—from the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles during the days of Nebuchadnezzar to

that future time when the Messianic Kingdom has been established. The material throughout chapters thirty-three through thirty-nine present different facets of Israel's past disobedience and Israel's future deliverance. Then chapters forty through forty-eight present different things pertaining to Israel during the Messianic Era.

The timing of events depicted in chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine are often misunderstood, mainly because of a misunderstanding of the nature of the existing Israeli nation in the Middle East today (often incorrectly understood as God regathering his people in accord with the prophecies seen in the preceding chapters of Ezekiel [chs. 33-37]).

In short, there is *nothing* in these chapters (chs. 33-39) having to do with the existence of the present Israeli nation in the Middle East or with the return of millions of Jews from the Gentile nations of the earth, comprising this present Israeli nation. The regathering in these chapters in Ezekiel's prophecy has to do, not with any type present return of the Jews, but with the Jewish people removed from the nations *after Israel's repentance and after God has sent His Deliverer back to a repentant nation*.

(The only relationship between *the existence of an Israeli nation in the Middle East and end-time events* is the fact that a nation [of a nature which presently exists] *must exist* in that part of the world for events during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week to be fulfilled.

But, to associate the present return of a remnant under a Zionistic movement with God's promise to one day restore His people to their land is a *mistake in Biblical interpretation of major proportions, resulting from a complete misunderstanding of the purpose for the Times of the Gentiles as it relates to Israel* [ref., "The Death of the High Priest," Appendix I, in the editor's book, ESTHER].)

The setting for events in Ezekiel chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine, both textually and contextually, has to do with a *repentant and converted nation back in the land following Messiah's return*, not with an unrepentant and unconverted remnant in the land today. Thus, the timing of events in these chapters can only be *after Messiah's return, after Israel*

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has been regathered from the nations, and at the time of the destruction of Gentile world power — something repeatedly seen, not only in these chapters but in previous chapters leading into these two chapters (cf. 38:8, 14-16; 39:4-8, 21-29).

Then the natural flow of events is on into chapters forty through forty-eight, depicting Israel in the Messianic Era following their regathering and the destruction of Gentile world power.

The sole reason for the Times of the Gentiles, wherein Gentile world power is exhibited, is Israeli disobedience. Not only is the existence of Gentile world power the result of Israeli disobedience but the matter has been designed to bring Israel to the place of repentance in order that Israel's calling relative to the nations *might be realized.*

And this is something *not being realized at all through the remnant presently in the land.* In fact, with the sceptre still in the hands of the Gentile nations, the existence of a remnant in the land today (a remnant which has returned before it is time for the nation to return) is only *making matters worse (actually, much, much worse)* in an already troubled world (ref. to the editor's article, "The Intractable Middle East Problem").

Once Israel has been brought to the place of repentance, there will no longer be a need for Gentile world power. In fact, Gentile power of a nature which exists today *will have to be done away with,* for, during the Messianic Era Israel is to hold the sceptre, with the nations being both subservient to and blessed through Israel. And this *cannot occur* as long as the Gentiles hold the sceptre, as they have done for over 2,600 years, since the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

All upon the Earth Shall Wail

When Christ returns to the earth at the

end of the Tribulation, He will return to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, to a land which will then be inhabited and controlled by the Gentiles, not by the Jews. But He will not immediately overthrow Gentile world power. Instead, His actions will be directed first and foremost toward His brethren, the Jewish people.

In accord with the order of that foreshadowed by three of the seven Jewish festivals in Leviticus chapter twenty three (Passover, First fruits, and Pentecost), the national conversion, resurrection, and regathering of the Jewish people will then occur. Israel has *slain the Lamb*, but the nation has yet *to apply the blood*, which they will do in that day; *the resurrection* of multiplied millions of Old Testament saints will then occur, followed by *the regathering* of the Jewish people back to the land, with the resurrected dead returning with the dispersed living (cf. Gen. 50:24-26; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32).

Then, once the Jewish people have been regathered back to their land, Christ will deal with the Gentile nations. Gentile world power will be completely destroyed, and the sceptre will be given to the one nation — God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:22, 23) — whom God recognizes as *the only nation, among all the nations, possessing the rights of the firstborn.* Then, the Gentile nations will not only be subservient to Israel but will be blessed through Israel.

1) Jew

The Jewish people, in that coming day, when they see their Messiah at the time of His return and realize what the nation did at the time of Messiah's first appearance (rejected and crucified their Messiah), are going to be troubled beyond a degree which words can really express. They are going to be as Joseph's brethren at the time Joseph revealed himself to them (Gen. 45:1-3), or as Paul when Christ revealed Himself to him as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6).

Note Zechariah's description of their

reaction to Christ's presence in that day:

"In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem [a reference to the Jewish people]... And the land [again, a reference to the Jewish people] shall mourn, every family apart..." (Zech. 12:11a, 12a; cf. v. 10).

Matters will then continue exactly as seen in the types. As Joseph brought his brethren into a state where they went forth proclaiming "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:26), Christ is going to bring His brethren into a state where they will go forth proclaiming "Jesus is yet alive, and He is governor over the entire earth." Or, as seen in Paul's conversion and his carrying this message throughout the Gentile world of that day, Israel will do exactly the same thing in that coming day.

2) Gentile

But before Israel goes forth with this message, Gentile world power will, of necessity, be destroyed. And the Gentile nations, *having held the sceptre for over 2,600 years*, are not going down without a fight (actions to be exhibited by Satan as well, *having held the sceptre since time immemorial*). And, under Satanic leadership, the nations' actions will be directed against *God's two firstborn Sons, Christ and Israel.*

But the battle will be completely one-sided as the nations come against Christ and His brethren. That which will occur in that day is revealed in a succinct manner in Rev. 19:17-21, though dealt with in more detail numerous places throughout the Old Testament (e.g., Psa. 2:1-6; Isa. 63:1-4; Ezek. 38, 39; Dan. 2:44, 45; Joel 3:9-17).

And though the Gentile nations will have no knowledge of the fact at that time, all of this will occur, not to their detriment, but *for their ultimate good.* Major changes will be necessary, allowing all things to be aligned with God's designed plan for mankind. *Only then can blessings flow forth through Israel to the nations of the earth.*

— To be Continued —

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