

Caller: I have no problem with pointing out the fact that clearly, in the Scriptures, there is a very solid foundation of the reality of a thousand year reign of Christ, based on the Bible, the Bible and the Bible alone.

Mr. C: Alright. Now, let's look at that. Now, where do you read about a thousand year reign of Christ?

Caller: Oh, well, first of all, it says that we shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign on the earth.

Mr. C: In Revelation 20, we read that John saw the souls of those who have been beheaded. Now, these are the souls of those who have been beheaded, and where are we when we have been beheaded? Where are our souls? It doesn't say I saw the people who were beheaded. It says I saw the souls of them, like I saw the hand of the man who had been killed. Now, we're looking at disembodied souls. They're with Christ in heaven. The Bible says that these people lived and reigned a thousand years.

Of course, people are martyred during all different periods in time. And so, there is no possibility that it's saying that Christ is going to reign here on earth a thousand years. There is no possibility at all.

As a matter of fact, when it talks about the resurrection that you were speaking of, when all the believers will be caught up to be with Christ in the air, that is the last day. We read that four times in John 6, "*and I will raise him up at the last day.*" And when is the last day? It is the end of the world.

So, you see, this is the problem. The church is not the pillar and ground of the truth, and all kinds of churches believe these kinds of ideas, like a thousand year reign of Christ, but they are not trustworthy because they will not stand the scrutiny of the Bible.

Caller: I find it very scary that, in your book *1994?*, you wrote that you, with all your heart believed, sincerely believed that Christ would return, and you were sincerely wrong. And now you're telling people to get out of the churches and you are sincerely wrong again. II Thessalonians 2 says that first there will be a great falling away, and I think you're leading that falling away.

Mr. C: Well, I can understand why you say those things. Until we become better acquainted with the whole Bible, we obviously are going to be frightened at the idea of having to obey the command to leave the churches. And I can tell you, there is no pleasure on my part to teach

this. It's no pleasure at all. But I have to be faithful to what the Bible is teaching.

Now, when I talked about 1994, I said, yes, there's a very high probability that it could be the end.

At that time, I said a lot of things that I was wrong about. For example, I was still teaching, like all the churches teach, that water baptism and the Lord's table were part of the moral law. And yet, today, I know that's not true. They are part of the ceremonial law. At that time, I was not teaching that there would be the latter rain, that is, that God still had another plan to continue the evangelization of the world. I did not know that at that time. At that time, I taught a number of things that subsequently, as God opened my spiritual eyes, as well as the eyes of a great many others, I now can teach more carefully. And tomorrow, God will open my spiritual eyes to something else. That's the nature of the student of the Bible. We keep searching the Bible and learning.

Now, in the case of predicting a date, we always have to say we can't say this absolutely. The Bible absolutely says, and I've always said this and never changed it, no man can know the day or the hour. The Bible is very clear about that. The Bible does not say no one can know the year or the month. That's another matter. But no one can know the day or the hour. But the point is that as we look at the matter of the end of the church age, there is an enormous amount of information that we begin to learn about. And so, all I ask people to do is read the Bible, don't trust me, read it in the Bible.

Now, we can send you some material to help you search out these things in the Bible, and we often do as we teach on Family Radio, but you have to make your decision as to what you want to do. And it's a very, very important decision. I don't expect anybody to agree with me just because I said it. That doesn't mean anything. What *is* important is what the Bible says.

Caller: I have studied the Bible. And I disagree with you. I don't see what you're saying there. And I'm not going to go to someone who is wrong in the first place to give me new teaching again, after you were sincerely wrong. Can I quote what you said? You said "it seems extremely unlikely that we have overlooked something." And then you said with all your heart you believed that you were correct.

Mr. C: Now, I did not say, I never said with all my heart I believe that I was correct. I never said anything like that. Those are your words. The fact is, I wrote in the book *1994?* now, we have to be careful because there may be something that we have overlooked. And that

was correct. That was a correct statement. I only wish, in looking back on it, I had said that nineteen more times so that it was more clear. And I put a question mark in the title of the book, *1994?*

And so, now, I admit that this gives a convenient alibi to those who don't want to listen to anything else that might be taught on the Open Forum. That's their privilege. But you don't need an alibi. You don't have to excuse yourself because you don't want to trust what I teach. You don't need an alibi. It's between you and the Lord. You don't have to have a reason why you won't trust what I teach because I don't want anybody to trust what I teach. All I want people to do is to look at the Bible and read it more carefully.

We are living in a time when God is opening our spiritual eyes. My knowledge of the Bible is quite a bit greater today than it was ten years ago. And ten years ago, it was quite a bit greater than it was 20 years ago. And this should be the case of every Bible student. We ought to be growing in grace. We ought to be learning more and more from the Word of God.

You don't have to think of an alibi. I'm not forcing you to believe it. I'm not telling you I'm a guru of some kind and if you don't follow what I say, you're going to be in trouble. No way. I simply say this is what I read in the Bible, and I'll show you where I read this in the Bible. And that's all I can do. And it's up to you and your relationship with the Lord.

Caller: Well, I just want other people to realize that what you're saying could be sincerely wrong.

Mr. C: Well, but if it is wrong, then that's why I'm so delighted to talk about this right here on the Open Forum. It's out in the marketplace where anybody can call in and I'm waiting for them to show where it is wrong. But it has to come from the Bible. Have you got some verses that you would like to offer to show that what I'm teaching is wrong?

Caller: But where is it commanded to leave the church?

Mr. C: I've laid out the command. I've laid out verse after verse. I've written a book, *The End of the Church Age and After*, which gives an enormous amount of information. I'm asking you for one verse that says this is wrong.

Look at passages like Matthew 24, verses 15 and 16, where we read:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Now, what in the world could this be talking about? This is a command of God. And it's in the setting where He also says there will be great tribulation such as this world has never known. It's in the setting where He describes that tribulation as a time when false prophets and false Christs will arise with signs and wonders, to deceive if possible even the elect. It's in the setting where He says, and this is Matthew 24, verses 29 and 30:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

This is talking about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, that means that these verses are very pertinent to today.

And it's not only I, but all kinds of theologians, who have no interest in Family Radio at all, are saying we must be near the end. All kinds of people are teaching that. And they are correct. We are getting near the end. Maybe they don't understand the same things that we see here in Family Radio, but they recognize the fact that we are near the end.

Alright, that means that we have to understand "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the holy place, . . . Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." This has to be understood because it's a very important command of God, and where is the holy place? The only holy place, and this was true for over 1900 years, was the local congregations. That is where the Gospel was found. They were the custodians of the Bible. They were given the command to send the Gospel out into the world. And now, God is saying the abomination is standing there. What does that mean?

And then we go to the parable of the wheat and the tares. And we go to Revelation 13. We go to Jeremiah and Isaiah and Hosea and Joel and passages all through the Bible as God describes where we are. And if you don't want to believe that, that's your privilege. You don't have to believe it. But it's at your own risk because we are talking

about things from the Bible, not just from feelings or just some kind of sensing something.

These statements of the Bible are God's words. They were penned by God. They are from the mouth of God. They are not my words. They are God's words. Therefore, they are absolutely serious. And we have to tremble as we stand before the Word of God and ask, well, what does that mean? I better wonder about that because I certainly don't want to be disobedient to my Lord.

Caller: That's talking about the rebuilt temple and the antichrist.

Mr. C: That's not what the context is talking about at all. It's not saying that at all.

Caller: It's not talking about the rebuilt temple? That his image is going to be in the rebuilt temple?

Mr. C: The Bible does not teach that there's going to be a rebuilt temple. That is just not going to happen. In fact, mechanically, it could not happen because if the temple were ever going to be rebuilt, it would be built on the temple mound, and that's over there alongside Jerusalem. And the fact is, there's a Muslim mosque there, and if you would tear that down, you'd have four million Muslim people angry about it and ready to kill for it because that's their holy place. So, mechanically, it could never happen. But anyway, the Bible does not teach that it will happen. There is not going to be another temple. Now, there are those who teach that, and they teach a whole lot of things, but they are not reading the Bible carefully enough.

Caller: Mr. Camping, II Thessalonians 2:4 says he will sit in the temple.

Mr. C: But you see, God explains that the temple is where the living stones are, the precious stones, and the true believers are the precious stones. The temple of God consisted of the local congregations. They are the temple that Christ had been building for over 1900 years. And it is that temple that finally had been destroyed. There is not one stone left upon another.

Caller: I was wondering if you could read Matthew 13, verse 30?

Mr. C: In Matthew 13, verse 30, God is talking about the separation of the wheat from the tares. There we read:

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time

of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Now, what is your question?

Caller: What time is that harvest?

Mr. C: Well, the harvest is when the bringing in of the wheat and the grain is being completed. And we are in the final harvest. Actually, when we study the Bible we know that there were three periods of harvest. There was the harvest that had to do with what was available at the time of the Passover, and God particularly emphasizes this when they entered the land of Canaan. They ate of the old fruit of the land, and that was called the initial firstfruits or the first of the firstfruits. Then, about seven weeks later, there was the Pentecostal harvest, the spring harvest that is called the firstfruits harvest. That identifies, of course, with the church age, which began at Pentecost.

Then there was another harvest that came near the end of the year. It was the final harvest. It was celebrated by the feast of the ingathering, the ingathering of the harvest. And the product of that harvest was not called firstfruits because it was the final harvest. And during the final harvest, when the harvest season is closing off, and that is the time when the separation of the wheat from the tares takes place.

And as we have looked at this verse, anyone, and certainly this would include me, as I have looked at this verse and others like it through the years, I had no real understanding. I just knew that at some time in the future, there would be this separation. But now, as we see that the true believers are driven out of churches, or if they aren't, they are commanded to come out, we know there is a division going on, a very distinct division. God has placed us in a final test.

Now, God has tested people all through the history of the world. A very great test that we have just gone through is the matter of signs and wonders and tongues and so on. Are we going to listen to that kind of gospel or are we going to stick with the true Gospel, which is not nearly as glamorous as that kind of gospel. But now we have the final test. Are we going to obey God when He commands us to come out of the church or are we going to say no, we understand more than God, and we believe our church is still faithful, and we are going to remain there. And so, it's at this time that God is making that separation.

Caller: It says, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them."

Mr. C: Yes. You see, there are those who insist that we are safe and secure in the church, but remember that in II Thessalonians Chapter 2, God speaks about the same kind of event in the context of the man of sin taking his seat, that is, Satan begins to rule in the temple. And He says that He that restraineth has been taken out of the midst, and that is the Holy Spirit. And He says that God will send them a strong delusion to believe a lie. That is horrifying language because God is not neutral.

In other words, those who insist that all is well, and say, "I'm not going to be concerned about this matter. I've been in the church all these years, and I've been baptized in water, and I made confession of faith. I am a member in full communion, all is well, and I'm not going to look further," run the risk of having a strong delusion, which is equivalent to being bound. They are being readied for judgment day.

Matthew 7, verses 21 through 23, is scary language that I did not understand fully. But today, I am beginning to see it more and more clearly. It says there will be many in that day, that is, judgment day, who will say, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name and cast out demons in thy name and do many mighty works in thy name. And God will say, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity. And there are many who are confident that all is well because the church tells them, "Oh, we are a saved membership, after all, you made confession of faith, and you got baptized in water, so you've done all the things that are necessary, and all is well."

This is not a time to take refuge in any of that. We better start reading the Bible very, very carefully because God is a consuming fire and we better listen to him. There's an enormous amount of language that we have not puzzled over in the past, and now we should study it. We have to read all of the chapters that have to do with the coming judgment of God, where He used Israel and Judah as Old Testament examples, but where He is actually speaking of the churches and congregations of our day.

This is a time of great seriousness. Nobody should think lightly of these questions. There cannot be a time of greater seriousness, particularly for those of us who think we are believers. The proof of being a believer is that we want to keep all His commandments, and He has commanded us to come out, so we better come out of the churches, otherwise, it may be the evidence that we are not a child of God.

Caller: You give all this theology of your theory, but the fact is Matthew 13 is not talking about churches. It's talking about the harvest at the end of the world, and the reapers are angels. Are the angels reaping right now?

Mr. C: Oh, well, the fact is that there is a harvest going on right now. There has always been a harvest but this is the harvest right near the end of the world. When we look at this in the light of all the Bible, we know we are in that final harvest.

And incidentally, I don't want anybody to trust me, but I want to at least point people to the enormous number of passages that speak of this issue, I've written a book entitled *The End of the Church Age and After*, which is free to anyone who requests it. It is available in English and in other languages. Of course, it is not the Bible, but it quotes the Bible extensively and points to the passages that we really ought to become familiar with as we puzzle over this question. It is the most serious question facing the church or the believer today. Is it true that we have to come out of the church or is it not true? It is deadly serious because the real issue facing the so-called believers today is not whether we have come to the end of the church age. The real issue is: Do we look upon the Bible as our final authority or do we look upon our church as the final authority.

And unfortunately, we have been trained by our churches to trust our churches. They have been here for a long time, and they have had eminent theologians who have written their confessions, and so on, and so, all is trustworthy. But now we are learning that all that is not nearly good enough. We have to make sure that we trust the Bible. This is a time when we should put no trust in anybody's church or anybody's doctrine. We have to put our trust in the Bible itself. And that's why I keep telling people; don't trust me, read the Bible. Read the Bible. Read the Bible. And keep reading and praying that the Lord might give you wisdom.

Caller: I'm hoping you can help me with a passage, Ephesians Chapter 4, verses 11 to 13.

Mr. C: In Ephesians 4, verses 11 through 13, we read:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

This is speaking about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and

teachers, and the fact is that throughout the church age, everyone who declared the Word of God, in one sense, was an apostle. Although, normally, when we think of the apostles, we think of the twelve apostles who were living at the beginning of the church. They were special in that they had personally been with the Lord Jesus here on this earth. And so, those apostles did not continue, that is, they died, but every believer is sent with the Gospel, and in that sense, that is the meaning of the word “apostle.” We do not normally use that word; we use the words “prophet” or “evangelist” or “teacher” or something of that nature.

Secondly, it talks about prophets. And ever since the beginning of the church age, and this will go on right till the end of the world, every true believer is a prophet. And what do they prophesy? The Word of God.

And during the church age, evangelists were those who were particularly named by the church to officially bring the Gospel, to hold evangelistic meetings, and so on. But the fact is that during this latter rain, every true believer is an evangelist. God is working through each and every true believer.

The same is true with pastors. The word “pastor” means shepherd. During the church age, we normally called the one who was preaching from the pulpit in the local congregation a pastor, a shepherd. And yet, every elder was a pastor and a shepherd, shepherding the flock. Now that we are past the church age, there are still pastors, that is, every true believer is a shepherd. As we share the Word of God with the world, for example, through Family Radio, and as we stand on a street corner passing out tracts, we are shepherding those who are the elect of God. We don’t know who they are but we are providing the food and drink to them that they need for spiritual life. And in that sense, the pastors continue.

It’s the same with teaching. Every time we are witnessing, we are teaching, and we may be teaching very simply because we don’t have that much knowledge of the Word of God or we may be teaching a little more in depth because we have a better knowledge. During the church age, there were those who were particularly called to teach classes, and so on, and we can still do that today. For example, a person can invite children or other individuals from the neighborhood to his home, and he can teach them the Word of God. But it is not in the setting of a corporate entity like the institution of the church. God is not using that any longer. But the principle that is set forth continues until the end of time.

Caller: Verse 13 says, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith.” Is that the last day?

Mr. C: No. The unity of the faith means that the moment people become saved, they are in the unity of the faith, that is, they are one with God. They are sons of God. They may not know each other, and they may have been independently reading the Bible, or someone has been teaching them the Word of God, and they have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the goal of the preacher, the pastor, the teacher, the evangelist, the apostle; that people might come to faith.

Of course, the only way they come to faith is by hearing the Word of God and through the application of that Word to their hearts by God Himself. And then we are one. There is only body of true believers. There is one eternal church and it consists of every true believer. We are not fragmented. We may have different nationalities and different colors of skin and speak different languages, but spiritually, we are one. Unity has to do with one.

Caller: So, then, I guess verses 5 and 6 tie into verse 13, as part of the context?

Mr. C: We read in Ephesians 4, verses 5 and 6:

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Exactly. It ties in very well. Whether we are saved in Nigeria or whether we are saved in India or Los Angeles, it makes no difference. If we truly have become saved we are one in Christ.

Caller: Recently, you had a caller who was talking about his wife and all that, and I’m trying to make my mind up about this church age stuff. Would you read Ephesians Chapter 5, verses 23 through 27?

Mr. C: Yes. We read in Ephesians 5, verses 23 through 27:

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: . . .

Now, I want to stop right here. What church is He the head of? He was the head of the corporate church, the external church, as long as it was used of God. But the church that He is the head of eternally, that church which is the bride of Christ, are those who have truly become saved. Within any corporate church there are some who are saved,

hopefully, at least some, and it might be only a few, like in the church at Sardis that we read about in Revelation 3, or maybe a few more. But the whole church is not the bride of Christ, it's only those who are true believers.

Therefore, when He's talking about the church as the bride of Christ, and that is the context of Ephesians Chapter 5, He is talking about the true believers. He is not talking about the corporate, external church because that cannot be the bride of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church decided that the church, the corporate body, the corporate entity, is the bride of Christ. And actually, the Protestant churches have essentially followed along with that idea, that is, that group of people who gather together each Sunday in their sanctuary, that is the bride of Christ. And that just is not true. The bride of Christ is someone who is eternally saved. And in many churches, there may be nobody who is saved. In some, there may be a few, and in some, there may be a few more, but they, the true believers, are the church that is eternal. And so, we have to keep that in mind.

Ephesians 5:23 says, "*Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*" And again, the body consists of all the true believers. They are the only ones who have become saved. There are lots of fellow travelers, there are a lot of people who think they're saved, but they are not eternally a part of the body of Christ.

Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

Now, there's the proof, you see. He gave Himself not for the corporate entity, the external body, He gave Himself for those who become saved. They are the ones whose sins have been paid for. Then we read in Ephesians 5, verses 26 and 27:

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

That can be speaking of only those who have truly become saved.

Caller: Well, do you have any Scripture that I could go to so I can distinguish between the former church body, the church we have in the world today, and this eternal church that you proclaim?

Mr. C: Well, sure. I quoted from Revelation Chapter 3, where we read in verse 1:

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

And this church was a bona fide congregation, just as much as any Baptist or Reformed or Methodist or Episcopal, or you name it, church that exists today. It was the church at Sardis, and God is telling us that the church was dead. Well, Christ is not married to a dead object of some kind. Christ is married to the living body of believers. But now notice, He says in verses 4 and 5:

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

And these are the true believers. And so, here is a church that's a dead church, and yet, it has a few believers. And it shows that any church can have a few believers in it and a great many who are not believers. Christ is not married to a dead church. The bride of Christ includes only those who have become saved.

Caller: Brother Camping, could you read Ezekiel 22, verses 17 through 22?

Mr. C: Let's look at that. We read in Ezekiel 22, verses 17 through 22:

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver [that is, the worthless part of silver]. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so

will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

Now, this is the Word of God. This is God speaking. And the Jerusalem that God is talking about is the local congregations. That's the setting of the prophecy of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. God is using ancient Judah and Israel as an example. But the prime focus is on our day. And those who are gathered in this Jerusalem and remain there and become hardened in their position there, they better read this because it shows they are under the wrath of God. That's why God tells us to get out. That's why God tells us to get away from this situation because we will be taking part in [or be subject to] the plagues that are coming upon us. And God uses this very lurid language, and He is not doing it for exaggeration, He is doing it because it's true. God is emphasizing that this is terribly serious.

In fact, every time I read these kinds of passages, and they are sprinkled all through the Bible, I tremble when I think that all the dear people in the churches and congregations are just blissfully going their own sweet way and thinking all is well when all is not well. This language of the Bible is being directed against churches and congregations. And my, if there were ever a time when every human being who is a member of a church or attending a congregation ought to be reading Jeremiah and Ezekiel and seeing the application to their own situation, this is the time because that is where the application really is. And it is awful language. It is terrible language. And it's because we are in the time of judgment. Judgment begins with the house of God. And it's going to transition to the last day.

The only difference is, and there is one big difference, and that is, it's still the day of salvation. It's still the day when God is saving a great multitude although it's outside of the local congregations that this is going on.

But once we get to judgment day, and we are only a short period of time from that day, we are in the final, closing events of the history of the world, and when we get to judgment day, there will be no more mercy. No more possibility of salvation. No more. It's all done. It's all gone. The only future that is left for the unsaved is hell and damnation. No question at all. And so, when we read these kinds of passages,

they're so lurid, they're so horrible, and yet, God is directing them right at our generation, at our time in history. And my, we better start listening.

Caller: In your book *The End of the Church Age and After* you cited Revelation 17:18 three times, Revelation 18:2 four times, Revelation 18:3 three times, Revelation 18:4 ten times. You did not cite Revelation 18:1 which is the premise for all these other Scriptures. Revelation 18:1 says, *“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.”* That is the Lord Jesus Christ. Verses 2-4, *“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and she hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”* Verse 1 is describing the Lord Jesus Christ coming back to earth, and verse 4, I believe, is His Father saying come out of her my people because clearly the Lord has come back.

Mr. C: Well, that would be a way that you could read Revelation Chapter 18, verse 1. But when Christ comes back to this earth, He is coming on the clouds of glory, and at that instant, all the believers will be raptured. We have to look at verse 1 in the light of a lot of other passages.

When Christ comes, the graves will open, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all true believers will be changed into their glorified spiritual bodies and be raptured, and all the unsaved will stand for judgment. Now, that is not what's being talked about in Revelation 18. So, we know that this is not talking about the time of Christ's return. It's talking about a vision that the Apostle John saw, and in this vision, God is telling us that His judgment is on the local congregations, and it agrees with other passages that speak of Satan ruling in the congregations so that they have become Babylon. But it cannot be at the moment Christ returns because then a whole different set of events will be taking place very rapidly.

Caller: Well, Mr. Camping, what exactly is Revelation 18:1 saying if it's not saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is descending from heaven and the whole earth is lighted with His glory? What other time could that be?

Mr. C: Well, you see, the fact is that the message of the Gospel and God's judgment brings glory to God. You may remember that when Achan was found guilty of stealing things, I think it was from Jericho, we read in Joshua Chapter 7, verse 19, that "*Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel.*" And immediately following that, Achan came under the judgment of God. And it's a glorious thing when God comes in judgment.

Now, we read in I Peter 4 that judgment begins with the house of God, or as we read in Jeremiah 25, God begins with His people. He judges His people first, and then He transitions to the final judgment. And so, the whole earth is filled with the glory of God because God is already bringing judgment. He is preparing for the final judgment.

And you are correct, of course, this angel is Christ Himself. Christ is the messenger and He comes through His Word to bring this glory. The fact that we are able to tell the world and tell the churches that judgment day is almost here is giving glory to God.

Caller: My question is in Luke Chapter 23, verses 28 through 31.

Mr. C: We read in Luke 23, and we'll start with 27 and read through 31, where God says:

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Now, Jesus is on His way to the cross, and these women are weeping and bewailing Him, of course, because He is going to be crucified. And Jesus says to them, don't weep for me, because there's going to come a judgment day; He is speaking of right now, of our time. Christ has come as the Judge in the sense that He is already separating the wheat from the tares in the congregations. He has come and He has fulfilled the statement of I Peter 4:17, "*that judgment must begin at the house of God*". And all those in the local congregations who remain there are being prepared for the Judgment Throne. They are being bound. They are being sent a strong delusion.

Now, if there are any of God's elect left there, in the congregations, they, in time, will be driven out or they will obey the command to come out, and this may go on right up until the very end. But it's a dangerous place to be. Those families who are there, with children, they think they are doing the best they can for their children because they have their children in church every Sunday, and they believe they are being taught the Gospel and so certainly, God can work through that to save them.

But they are disregarding the fact that God the Holy Spirit has absented Himself from the local congregations. There is no one of the Godhead to apply the Word of God that is being preached, however faithfully it might be preached, to the lives of these little ones or anyone else. It's like they are being prepared for the slaughter. It's typified by the terrible language that we find, for example, in Lamentations, where we have an historical copy or pattern of what is happening in our day, except that it's a physical killing instead of a spiritual killing. We read in Lamentations Chapter 2, verses 11 and 12:

Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom.

Now that was an ugly, physical destruction when Judah was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 587 BC, but that typifies the spiritual destruction that is going on in the local congregations at this time.

Caller: I became a Christian as I listened to the radio. There is a church quite a distance from my place, and my work keeps me very busy, so, if I read the Bible, pray, and believe on God at home, is that OK?

Mr. C: Well, you know, it's very significant that as we study the Bible, we see that during the church age, the church had the task of sending out the Gospel to the world. And we have to get this information from the Bible, this isn't some philosophy or some idea coming out of the minds of men, but as we study the Bible, we find that, indeed, for a period of over 1950 years, God gave the task of sending out the Gospel to the local congregations.

And therefore, during that period, those who became saved should have tried to become attached to or become involved with a local congregation. That was God's plan. And it was in the local congregations that the Holy Spirit was working, and that was the place where children or parents could hear the Gospel and become saved. And that is where individuals who had become saved could hear the Word of God so they could grow in grace. But now, we have come to that point in the timetable of history, which the Bible speaks of as the time of great tribulation, which is the final program, God's final program for the world prior to judgment day itself. And that brings us very, very close to judgment day.

But at the beginning of this period called great tribulation, God also indicates very clearly in the Bible that the church age had come to an end. For over 1950 years, the church figured very prominently into God's plan of evangelizing the world. It was the key because it had become the steward. It had become the custodian of the Gospel, and God gave it the task, or the assignment, of going into all the world with the Gospel

But finally, there came a time, coincidental with the beginning of the great tribulation, and all the evidence indicates that we are presently in that time of great tribulation, that God was finished with the churches. And now, His final harvest of souls, the final bringing in of those who are to become saved, is outside of the church as the Gospel is being ministered to the world through individuals.

And therefore, if we have become saved, as we were listening to radio, or however we have heard the Gospel, if God laid it on our hearts and made us His child, we do not want to go to church. We do not want to belong there because the Holy Spirit is no longer operating there.

And as a matter of fact, all through history, even during the church age, salvation was not a function of the church. The church was the environment in which God was doing the saving but God still had to save. God is the only one who can save.

Everyone's salvation, at any time in history, at any time during the 13,000 years of the history of the world, was a personal matter between an individual and Christ. And once we become saved, we are safe and secure. And we are not safe and secure because of a church, we are safe and secure because we have become a new creature in Christ. It's because we have received eternal life. It's because God has promised that nothing can snatch us out of Christ's hand. And that was true throughout the history of the world and it is true today.

But today, it is more significant because we don't look to any organization, any divine institution, as a protector. We look only to the Bible.

And through the Bible, we look to the Lord Jesus Christ. God has stripped all the other things out of the picture, and He has brought us right back to the bare bones of what salvation is. And that is, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. However we hear the Word, if we hear it by radio or by Internet or satellite broadcasting or through a tract that we receive, God in His good providence, if He so desires, He can apply that Word to the hearts of those He plans to save, and they do become saved.

Now, the wonderful thing is that as we become saved as an individual, God has given us a program whereby we will have time to read the Bible. One of the complaints of people is that, "I'm so busy with my work. I don't have time to read the Bible."

Well, you know, the Bible teaches very clearly that each and every Sunday is the day set aside as the Lord's Day. God says it is "my holy day" in Isaiah 58. It is not for our pleasure; it is not for our work. It is not for what we think is important. It is for our spiritual benefit. We have a day when we have no obligation of any kind to work. We can spend the day reading the Bible. We can spend the day in prayer. We can spend the day sharing the Gospel with others. We can spend the day visiting others who need encouragement.

In other words, it's a day God has given us for spiritual activity. And we don't want to intrude upon that. That is God's plan that He wishes for us. And so, if you are out there in the hinterlands of China, and you've been hearing the Gospel by radio, and the Lord has opened your heart, praise God that you have a day when you should not be thinking about work at all. And each Sunday you can spend the day just listening to the Word of God as you read your Bible, and you can be praying and doing these other things. How wonderful it is that God has given us an answer to that kind of question.

It's very practical today because when the church age came to an end, it was a world-wide phenomenon, and it means that no local church has the blessing of God. And therefore, that is not the place where someone who is concerned about salvation wants to be.

But my, we want to be close to the Word of God because faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The more we read the Bible, the more we learn about the kingdom of God, the more we learn about the Lord Jesus Christ, then the more we learn about our sins and our need for the Savior. We also learn that if it's God's good pleasure to save any one of us who is still unsaved, it will be through the hearing of the Word of God. So, as we study the Bible and meditate on it, and pray for wisdom, and pray for understanding, and pray for obedience, then at the same time, we have placed ourselves in an environ-

ment where God can save us if that is His good pleasure.

Caller: I believe that you and I can agree that long before the world began, God chose those who were going to be saved, is that correct?

Mr. C: That is correct.

Caller: Predestination and election. So, how can you take my all-encompassing God, He's omniscient, He's omnipresent, He's omnipotent, and say that if, a guy named Jim goes to a particular church, and he has been elected by God, why put God in such a little box that He will not come into that church and save Jim at a given time that He predetermined before time began?

Mr. C: Well, here is another way of looking at your hypothetical situation. Here is an individual who was elect of God, her name was Ruth. She was a Moabitess. There was no Gospel amongst the Moabites. They were looked upon as people who could not have salvation, and yet, she was one of God's elect. And mysteriously, God worked through a family in Bethlehem, the father's name was Elimelech and the mother's name was Naomi, and they had two sons.

And they were disobedient to God because they fled from Bethlehem at a time of famine and went into the land of Moab, and then, they were even more disobedient, those two sons married Moabish girls. One was named Ruth and the other was Orpah. And to make a long story short, in the end, Ruth became saved because she heard the Gospel from momma, Naomi. And all of that happened in order that the Gospel might come to Ruth because she was one of the elect.

Now, by the same token, here's someone who is in the church today. And they are not saved, and yet, they are of God's elect. Believe you me, they are not going to stay there. Before long, for one reason or another, they will be driven out or they will want to come out. If God is going to save them, He'll save them outside of the church. God will see to it that the proper steps are taken in God's own timetable to do this.

Caller: My call is in regard to Matthew 24, verses 1 and 2. Could you read that?

Mr. C: Yes. We read in Matthew 24, verses 1 and 2:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of

the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Caller: OK, and you have interpreted these verses differently and with several contradictions. And I would like to offer an alternative, and you don't have to take it, but I will ask you to listen to me offer this comment. These verses are very mysterious. The building itself, even though it is a physical building, in John 2:19 and 21, Jesus said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spake of the temple of his body.*" He related the temple to His body, the body of Christ, in several verses, just to mention two, I Corinthians 3:16 and Colossians 2:9. Many other places, refers to the body of Christ, the church. Now, when He says there won't be left any single stone, and as you have said, stone refers to genuine believers, therefore, when we interpret this, this prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled at His death, and when He arose in three days.

Mr. C: Well you are tying this to John 2 but you can't do that because we read in John 2, verses 19 through 22:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

The temple that Jesus is talking about in John 2 is not the church. He is talking about Himself, that He Himself would be destroyed. He was going to be put in the grave or in the heart of the earth, to use the language of Matthew 12, for three days and three nights, and that is a separate issue altogether.

Now, some people find this verse, that says not one stone will be left upon another in the temple, very controversial. However, a passage that is parallel to Matthew 24 is Mark 13, and there we read in verses 1 through 4:

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and

what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Now notice that God is focusing not only on the word “temple” but also on the word “buildings,” what buildings are here. And He said, “*Seest thou these great buildings.*” And the same word is employed in I Corinthians 3, verse 9, where we read:

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.

It’s the same word that is used in Mark 13. We read in I Corinthians 3, verses 10 through 12:

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

In other words, the believers are building blocks in these buildings that God speaks about here and in Mark 13. It is also called the temple but we don’t even have to quarrel with the word “temple” because God has built a broad foundation so that we can understand this. He not only talks about this, He not only talks about the temple, which we are, in a spiritual temple, but He also talks about the buildings, which we are, and He says that not one stone will be left upon another.

Then He identifies this in Matthew 24. It is a sign that will take place at His coming at the end of the world, and today, we are very near the end of the world.

Really, the Bible has given us enough information. The problem is that people do not want to accept the idea that God is finished with the local congregations. They are having the same problem, and it is understandable, that the Pharisees and the priests had when God was fin-

ished with the synagogues and the temple at the time Jesus went back to heaven. They wouldn't buy that. They thought they were at the place where you found God, and yet, outside of the synagogues, God began the era of the local congregations.

And today, we still have synagogues, but there is no possibility of finding Christ there. And today, we still have local congregations, but according to the testimony of the Bible, God has abandoned the local congregations, and we are not going to find Christ there. Christ is going to be talked about there, and those dear people think that all is well, but God has absented Himself from the local congregations.

In the local congregations, which had been the building of God or the temple of God, take it either way, there is not one stone left upon another. There are no faithful congregations anywhere. If they were faithful, as a matter of fact, if a congregation was faithful to the Word of God, it would disband immediately because a faithful congregation implicitly wants to obey the Word of God. And the Word of God teaches that the church age is over and that God's wrath is upon the local congregations. Judgment has begun there, and God has set up the mechanism to separate the true believers from the unbelievers, within the congregation, the wheat from the tares, which is the command to come out of her. Revelation 18:4:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

And so, if a local congregation claims that they are faithful, altogether faithful to the Word of God, and they are not obeying that command, then they are not being faithful. They have set up their own system of truth or what they want to believe. They are not ready to be broken altogether before the Word of God.

You can't have it both ways. You can't be a faithful congregation and remain a congregation. That's an impossibility because, if you are a faithful congregation, you have an intense desire to be obedient to the whole law of God, and the law of God prescribes that now that we are at the end of the church age, we have to come out of her.

Caller: I heard you recently when you defined a false teacher. You said it's anyone who says, thus saith the Lord, when it is not from the Lord, it is only from their minds, and they have been shown that from the Bible but they refuse to change, so they are a false teacher. Now, what you understand from the Bible is what you say God has said when

God has not said, and here is how I substantiate that. For example, you have said that the Holy Spirit has departed from the church, but would you read Jeremiah 50:19 and 20?

Mr. C: Jeremiah 50, verses 19 and 20. There we read:

And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for; and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Now what is your question?

Caller: That's a promise. Now, in these verses, God has said that the sins of this nation will be sought and will not be found because all the punishment is put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, then, where do you see the sin of the genuine believers in the church?

Mr. C: Well, isn't it interesting that in this passage, and every word is important, and we read in the last part of verse 20:

. . . for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

That is, there is a remnant that God is saving. There was a remnant of national Israel that He saved while the rest remained in unbelief. There is now a remnant coming out of the churches and congregations, those who have been driven out or have been commanded to come out, and because they have truly become saved, they are the remnant that God has reserved. That is what God has in mind here. It follows the same truth, the same pattern that He applies again and again. But they are not being saved within the church. They are being saved outside of the church.

Caller: Well, OK. Now, would you read the verse that I was looking for earlier, concerning the Holy Spirit? It's Isaiah 59, verse 21.

Mr. C: Isaiah 59, verse 21. Let me begin in verse 20, where we read:

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that

turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

This is the language of salvation. In this chapter, the next chapter, and in some other chapters in Isaiah, God is talking about the whole New Testament era, that salvation would come. Notice Chapter 60, verse 9:

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

The statement, “Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far,” directly identifies with the church age. The Holy Spirit is always required for anybody to become saved. During the church age, God applied the Word of God to the hearts of those He planned to save within the jurisdiction of the churches. He had assigned the churches the task of bringing the Gospel. Now, since the end of the church age, the Holy Spirit does not operate within the churches, He is operating outside of the churches because obviously, nobody can become saved unless God the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to their hearts.

God says in Revelation 7, verse 9:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

And then it goes on to describe the fact that they had become saved and had come out of great tribulation. It simply means that outside of the churches, where they had been driven, and which they had been commanded to leave, that is where God is saving, and the Holy Spirit is very active, applying the Word of God so that many people are being saved.

Caller: That is what you understand but that's not what the verse says. Isaiah 59, verse 21, says, "My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

Mr. C: Well, excuse me. It is true that when we become saved, we are eternally saved. The Holy Spirit will never depart from us if we are truly saved. But that is not talking about God's methodology of saving. For example, we read in Acts 2 that the Holy Spirit was poured out and a great many were saved. The fact is, if we are saved it is because the Holy Spirit has applied the Word to our life and He indwells us. God Himself indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit. That is what this verse is talking about. We have eternal life. He will never leave us. But this verse is not getting into the mechanics of God's evangelistic plan for the world as He shifted from the nation of Israel in the Old Testament to the church age in the New Testament and then shifted again from the church age to individuals. That simply is not in view in this verse.

Caller: Mr. Camping, that's what you understand, but I see it as from this time until the end, His spirit does not depart, so, when genuine believers are gathered together, the Holy Spirit is with them. That goes with the New Testament where Jesus said in John 15, "I am the vine, ye *are* the branches." When Jesus is there, the Holy Spirit is right there with the believers when they are gathered.

Mr. C: But, you see when Christ says, "I am the vine, ye *are* the branches," He is talking about a vineyard, and if you read Isaiah 5, you will find that this vineyard was totally destroyed. Throughout the church age this vineyard flourished to some degree but it finally brought forth a stench, as we read in Isaiah 5. And yet, in another sense, we always find our strength in the Lord Jesus just as the branch finds its strength in the vine.

We have two issues here. We have the issue of what is required for salvation and salvation requires the activity of the Holy Spirit. That is an eternal action. We are never alienated from God the Holy Spirit if we have become saved. That is the issue emphasized in Isaiah 59, verse 21.

The other issue is God's master plan or His big program for the evangelization of the world, and in this plan, we find that God has various seasons and times. In the days when Jesus preached, for example,

the Holy Spirit was not operating to save many people, so very few became saved even though Christ was the perfect preacher. We cannot deny that. The Bible is crystal clear about that. Then at the beginning of the church age, the Holy Spirit was poured out and about 3,000 were saved even though the preaching obviously was quite inferior to the perfect preaching of Christ.

God is illustrating the fact that the time of Christ was one “time,” the season of the church age was a “season,” and another “time” would immediately follow the church age, that is, the beginning of the great tribulation, and again, it would be a time when the Holy Spirit was not applying the Word of God. That time would be followed by the last season, the season of the harvest time, when the Holy Spirit would be working to apply the Word of God to the lives of a great multitude which no man could number. That is the final season in which we are now living.

Caller: According to your understanding, are you saying that the vine, which is the true vine, Jesus, is destroyed? Are you saying that the Lord Jesus Himself is being destroyed?

Mr. C: No. The vineyard that God is speaking about is the church. The whole church age is called a vineyard just like the nation of Israel was called a vineyard, and then God gave it to another husbandman, namely, the churches, the local congregations, and that vineyard is finally destroyed. Now, the true believers within it cannot be destroyed because they have eternal life. But those who are living at the time of the end of the vineyard are driven out because that vineyard is being destroyed. They are still safe in the vine, which is the Lord Jesus, that is, they are still completely identified with the Lord Jesus, but they are no longer part of the vineyard which is a picture or a figure of speech that Christ had assigned to the local congregations.

DEATH

Caller: What happens to the believer when he dies and what happens to the unbeliever when he dies?

Mr. C.: The Bible is quite clear about this matter. In II Corinthians 5:8 we read:

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Similar language is found in Philippians 1. When we become saved, we are given a brand-new resurrected soul in which we have eternal life. Physical death is the separation of soul and body, so our soul leaves our body, which goes into the grave, and our soul goes to live and reign with Christ in heaven. We read in I Thessalonians 3:13:

To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

In I Thessalonians 4:13-15 we read:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Christ will come with all His saints, all those who have believed on Him who have died and lived with Him in heaven. On the last day, their bodies will be resurrected, and they will again be a whole personality.

On the other hand, an unsaved person who dies has not received eternal life in his soul, so he cannot go into heaven when he dies (or ever), but his soul will separate from his body. His body will be put in the grave, just as the believer's body is put in the grave when he dies, but the unbeliever's soul goes to a place of silence. He has no conscious existence until judgment day when he will stand as a whole personality at the judgment throne of God. God says in John 5:28-29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life [the believers]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [the unsaved].

Those who die unsaved will be resurrected to stand for judgment

and they will be judged along with all the unbelievers who are still living on the earth when Christ returns. They will all be judged and sentenced to eternal damnation. The unsaved cannot go directly to hell when they die because they have not been officially judged yet; they will be judged on judgment day, the last day.

We desperately need salvation because the alternative is too horrible to contemplate.

Caller: I have heard you say many times before on the radio, that those who are not believers, when they die they go into a place of silence. You have cited Psalm 115 and also Rev. 20:5. I am wondering are there any other verses. This is a controversy we engage frequently with people and it just seems like we could sure use some more verses to help us.

Mr. C.: No, there are none that I am of aware of. However, when we think it out, we can learn quite a bit about what salvation is.

For example, when the Bible says of the Christian that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord Jesus Christ, then we know that it is in our soul existence we went to be with Jesus because the body is put in the grave. We know that is true because we have been given eternal life at the time we became saved. If it is eternal life, it has to be eternal life. Physical death cannot end that. It means that we go to live and reign with Christ in order to continue with that eternal life.

However, we also know that the unsaved have not received eternal life. There has been no change in their life. They are spiritually dead. They can not come into heaven. Where are they going to go? They are going to a place of death because the Bible says that they will be resurrected to face judgment. Resurrection means coming to life after having been dead. Absolutely they are going to be resurrected. We read in John 5:28,29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Those who come forth to the resurrection of judgment, they are the unsaved, the spiritually dead. Again, we read in Rev. 20:12:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and books were opened: and another Book was opened,

which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:

Now the word “death” in this verse has to do with those who have previously lived and died unsaved. They are dead and now they are resurrected. The word “Hell” has to do with those who are living. Everyone who is not saved automatically is under the wrath of God.

The character of hell is to be under the wrath of God; that is they identify with Hell. So death, that is those who have previously died unsaved, they are standing there. And hell, those who were under the wrath of God as they lived out their lives and had not yet died, they are standing there. Both were judged according to their works and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. In other words, all these who came from being physically dead or under the wrath of God because they were still alive, are all cast into eternal damnation. This is the second death.

So, some of this is by implication though Psalm 115 does say that the dead do not praise God nor do any that go down into silence. When you try to think of any alternate arrangement, there is none that is possible. We know that physical death is separation of soul and body. Where could that soul go? It can not go into heaven. It is not going to go to hell, because they have not stood at the judgment throne as yet.

Caller: What is the Christian position on cremation as opposed to burial of the body?

Mr. C.: Cremation is reputed to be less expensive than burial because a plot is not needed.

The fact is that death and burial are reminders to us that judgment day is coming. Nevertheless, when God wants to particularly underscore the awfulness of hell, given the fact that God is a consuming fire, and He calls hell a lake of fire (which is one of the synonyms God uses to refer to hell), therefore, God uses cremation, or striking down people by fire, as a dramatic picture of hell.

In II Kings 1, when the captain and fifty men came to take Elijah, fire came down and destroyed them. This is a particularly vivid picture of hell.

In Revelation 20, we read that the camp of believers is surrounded by the enemy, and fire from heaven comes down and destroys them.

To be destroyed by fire is cremation. Ordinarily, a believer would not want to be cremated. A believer who has a loved one who dies would not want to have that body cremated. Of course, it does not make any difference insofar as the resurrection is concerned. When I die, if someone cremates my body and spreads the ashes all over the ocean, I will still be resurrected on the last day. That would not change.

The picture that is painted by cremation is particularly focused on the certainty of hell. Therefore, I encourage people to have a proper burial. If they have a loved one who has died, and they say they are too poor to have a burial, I say, “Go to your friends and relatives, and try to scrape up a few dollars here and a few dollars there, and tenderly put his or her body in the ground. Do not go the cremation way.”

FIGURES/PARABLES OF THE GOSPEL

Caller: Does every book in the Bible have the three levels of meaning, that is, historic, moral, and spiritual or salvation?

Mr. C.: That is a very good question. The answer is, “yes,” but some statements might not be couched in such a way as to teach history. For example, in the Book of Proverbs (the word “proverb” means “parable”), the focal point will be on the moral principle; it is not making a statement about history. The real action in the Book of Proverbs is on the spiritual meaning. Until we find the Gospel in a statement, we have not really understood what God is teaching.

On the other hand, some books of the Bible, for example, I Kings and II Kings, I Chronicles and II Chronicles, have all kinds of historical statements with lots of moral applications, and from time to time, we can see the Gospel application. One of the limitations in discovering these spiritual applications is our own ability.

Caller: What do you mean when you say that David and some other people are “a picture” of Jesus Christ?

Mr. C.: God wrote the Bible, and we read in Mark 4:33-34, for example, that Christ spoke in parables:

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

God illustrates this truth. For example, Jesus gives us the parable of the sower who went forth to sow. He says in Matthew 13:3-8:

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Then He explains that the seed is the Word of God, and the soil or the ground in which the seed is sown is the hearts of men. Some of the seed fell on good ground and took root, which is like someone who becomes saved.

Other seed fell on rocky ground, and the seed could not get a good root, and so a little after the plants began to grow, they died because they had no root, which is like a picture of those who think they have become saved but they are not rooted in Christ, they have not really become born from above, and they fall away. God speaks in many places in the Bible using these kinds of figures of speech or using this kind of word pictures.

In the Old Testament, God speaks of Christ as David. King David was a great king who ruled national Israel a thousand years before Christ; he also was a shepherd. David is a portrait, a picture, a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through studying some of the things that happened to David, we can see some of the things that were going to happen to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, Moses is used as a picture of the law of God and as a picture of Christ, depending upon the historical event that is recorded. Through these pictures or portraits, it is like going into a beautiful gallery, and you go from one picture to the next, and you study each picture, and through them you can see the Gospel. You see the cohesiveness of the Bible, and you see how the Bible gives consistent answers, and you know that the Bible is the Word of God because otherwise, these word pictures could not have been painted in this way.

GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES

Caller: Who created God?

Mr. C.: The Bible teaches that God is from everlasting past. He is not created. He is a mysterious being who created time and this universe. He gave us the Bible so that we can know a lot about God and the universe, but we do not understand God, who can speak and bring this marvelous universe into existence. We are not to think for a moment that someone created Him.

Caller: Is Jesus God?

Mr. C.: Absolutely. Jesus is God. Jesus is God who took on a human nature in order to be our Savior. That was required for God to have a people for Himself. A human being had to pay the penalty for the sins of His people, and so God Himself took on a human nature in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be our Savior. Jesus is eternal God. The Bible says of Jesus in Colossians 2:9:

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

There is one God and yet God reveals Himself as three distinct persons, and that is something we cannot understand. God has not given us minds that are able to understand our great God, and so we just read it and accept it because the Bible says it is so.

We will always be bewildered and confused when we try to understand God. When you look at a little baby, as complex as that baby is, or when you look at a leaf of a plant, or a little animal like a cat or a dog, or anything in this creation, just remember that God spoke and brought it into existence.

Caller: Will you comment on Isaiah 45:7?

Mr. C.: We read there:

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

This is a declaration of God. The phrase that troubles people is that God said He creates evil. In our minds, frequently, we associate evil with sin, and sin is very evil.

God uses the word “evil” in a lot of different ways. He uses the word “evil” in connection with judgment day at the end of the world; that