

ing themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

People who lead the false churches may look very holy, but the Bible warns that their end shall be according to their works.

Caller: Do you believe in miracles?

Mr. C.: I believe in the greatest miracle. Jesus was approached by the Pharisees in Matthew 12:38, where we read:

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign [miracle] from thee.

Jesus said to them, in Matthew 12:39-40:

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign [miracle]; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The big miracle is the miracle of salvation. Salvation is a fantastic, huge miracle, and it is the only miracle we can expect to see today.

The signs and wonders that Jesus and the apostles did, like raising the dead, multiplying the loaves and fish, walking on water, healing lepers, and so on, are not happening today anywhere in the world. These signs and wonders were done to underscore the fact that the Gospel is from God. Once the Gospel was implanted in the world, those signs were not seen.

Caller: Will you comment on Acts 2:17?

Mr. C.: We read in Acts 2:17:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

In this statement, Peter is quoting from the Book of Joel, and he said in verse 16:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

In other words, the last days have begun. The final era of God's work in the world began on Pentecost in A.D. 33. There is not to be another turn of the wheel or another dramatic development of some kind; this is the way it will be right until the end.

Prior to this, only occasionally was someone named as a prophet. Abraham was a prophet and David was a prophet, but the typical believer was not given a prophetic office. They were to teach their children, but they were not mandated to go into all the world and preach the Gospel; that era had not begun.

Then God was ready to explode the Gospel into the whole world, and in order to do this, He qualified every believer, man, woman, and child, to be a prophet. A prophet is someone who prophesies the Word of God, which since the Bible was completed, is the Bible alone and in its entirety.

When Acts 2:17 was stated, the Bible had not yet been completed, and so some of these prophets might have received divine truth from a dream, a vision, or an angel visitation, as it happened from time to time throughout the Old Testament era. When the Bible was completed, a few decades later, then the only source of divine truth was the written word, the Bible. Of course, it was a much bigger source of divine truth than had been offered to the people previously.

The big change is that every believer is commissioned and qualified to declare the Word of God to others. The believer is to be a witness. We might have dreams, everybody dreams, but we know today that it is absolutely not from God. God will not add to the words of His book; His revelation is complete. The Bible is His complete revelation. If we want to know something from God, the only place we are to look is in the Bible. Throughout the New Testament era, Satan goes about as an angel of light. He is allowed to break the silence between the natural and the supernatural. Frequently, the way he captivates people and captures them in his false gospels is by giving them some kind of vision that looks like Christ has spoken to them or entered their dreams; it might look like they are on the wavelength with God Himself. God says in Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these

things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This ended the possibility of any more divine revelation, in a dream, a vision, a tongue, an angel visitation, or anything.

NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

Caller: What do the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 mean in the Bible?

Mr. C.: The number 2, if it has any spiritual significance, is the number associated with the caretakers of the Gospel. This is shown by the two witnesses of Revelation 11, the seventy going out two by two in Luke 10, and other illustrations of that nature in the Bible.

The number 3 is used repeatedly to signify the purpose of God. The number 3 is featured 15 times in and around the time Christ went to the cross because it was the purpose of God that He pays for our sins. The number 4 signifies universality. For instance, the four corners of the earth and the four points of the compass. If it has any spiritual meaning, it signifies the whole world.

The number 5 signifies the grace of God or the judgment of God. They are two sides of the same coin.

The number 7 signifies perfection or complete perfection or perfect completion of whatever is in view. The seven days of the week and the seven spirits that God speaks of in connection with the Holy Spirit are examples.

The number 10 signifies the completeness of whatever is in view.

Caller: Do the numbers 17 and 23 have spiritual significance in the Bible?

Mr. C.: The number 17, if it has any spiritual meaning, normally represents heaven. One key place where we find this in the Bible is the 153 fish that were caught and the net did not break, right at the end of Jesus' ministry. The number 153 is the product of 3 times 3 times 17. The number 17 figures very prominently, and the number 3 invariably speaks about God's purpose. The 153 fish definitely represent all those

who will become saved. The number 17 focuses on the fact that it is God's purpose to save those He plans to take to heaven.

The number 23 speaks of judgment. For example, there were 276 who were shipwrecked in Acts 27. The number 276 is the product of 12 times 23, and 12 is the number of fullness. The ship that was wrecked is a picture of the judgment of God upon the church. The church is being judged in our day as it is being assaulted by false gospels, but of the true believers, represented by the 276, not one perished; they were all safe. As we go through this period in which God allows Satan to bring judgment upon the church, true believers are safe and secure.

OFFERINGS TO THE LORD

Caller: Does Malachi 3:8-10 pertain to us today?

Mr. C.: There we read:

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

In the historic setting, this is talking about the ancient nation of Israel. They were to bring their tithes, from their crops and so on, into the temple treasury for the support of the priests of the tribe of Levi.

Spiritually, this passage is talking to all of us. The Old Testament tithes represented bringing in people who become saved. In other words, we are saved to serve; we are saved to make an increase. God saved us, and it is not God's intention that we simply say, "It is wonderful that I am saved. Now all I have to do is live with the Bible, pray, and live out my life, and all is well." That is not what God says.

God says He has saved us, and we are His ambassadors. We are to go out into all the world with the Gospel. There is to be an increase of the Gospel. There are other people who are to become saved. We are to be faithful witnesses so that others will become saved. When someone

becomes saved, it is like bringing that person as a tithe into the storehouse.

This passage is not speaking about money. Historically, it was talking about money, but for us today, it is speaking about bringing the Gospel so that people will become saved. As a matter of fact, in the New Testament, God does not want ten percent of our money, He wants it all. God says in Romans 12:1:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

We are to live very modestly and make everything possible available to help send out the Gospel so that people can become saved. Those who become saved are like tithes brought into the storehouse.

When we give our offerings to God, 10% is a good place to start, but God wants our whole life. He wants us to be witnesses of the Gospel.

Caller: I agree with you on the end of the church age. And as a matter of fact, the age of accountability was one of the doctrines preached at my church, and my wife and I just withdrew our membership. Our money is better spent being sent to Family Radio for spreading the true Gospel throughout the world, rather than expensive life-enrichment centers and things of that nature. And so, I hope the Lord blesses you richly as you continue your work.

Mr. C: Well, I can tell you, you know, we are delighted that we can join together with so many others and with one purpose, and it is not to adulate or get adulation for ourselves, nor to build fancy things for ourselves, nor to live in fancy homes or fancy buildings or whatever, we have only one purpose, and that is to use the funds that are sent to Family Radio so that the Gospel can go out into all the world. And that is a huge task because there are over six billion people in this world, and every true believer should have that desire because God says go ye into all the world with the Gospel. We should have the desire to reach as many people as possible with our funds, with whatever we feel we want to lay on the altar of service.

And so, I'm just delighted that we can join together in this kind of ministry. We are all servants, we are just humble servants serving Him. Each of us has a little part in it. Each of us does what we can and together we get a job done that a single individual could never do.

Caller: Hello. I have a question about tithing. I would like to know how you view tithing now, and to the church. It's like everybody has a different point of view, and I'd like to be clear on it. How do you view it?

Mr. C: Well, you see, the fact is that during the church age, the assignment or the task of evangelizing the world was laid upon the church and the local congregations. They were to use their efforts as best as possible to get the Gospel out into the world, and so it was very proper for believers to be members in that congregation. In fact, they were encouraged to be members and to tithe and bring their offerings so that those monies could be used by the churches to help fulfill their responsibility of sharing the Gospel with others. That was the set up that existed then, but now that the church age has ended, and God has assigned the task of evangelizing the world to individuals, and He is not using the churches anymore, that is not the place we want to take our tithes or offerings.

We still want to use our lives to the highest possible degree to send out the Gospel, so we are to use our tithes and offerings to support ministries outside of the church that have the true Gospel and are sending the true Gospel into the world. This is not just an idea that is being taught in order to take money away from the churches. That is not the point at all. The point is that the goal of the true believer starts with the fact, "I want to be obedient to Christ."

Secondly, as a believer, I am called to be an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ and to represent the Lord Jesus Christ to this world. Throughout the church age, God worked through the local congregations, and so I gladly gave my offerings and my tithes so that they could carry out that program. But the church age has come to an end, their work is finished, and now God is doing it all through individuals.

Now I can spend my money to buy tracts and stand on the corner and pass out tracts. I can use my money to provide Bibles that I can give out. I can use my money to support the collective effort of a great many others as we buy radio stations and radio time to broadcast all over the world. I want to use my funds to get the Gospel out.

Caller: OK. So, I wouldn't be under a curse if I chose not to pay the tithe at my church, right?

Mr. C: Well, of course not. The fact is that the church no longer has any spiritual standing with the Lord. God has indicated that the church age has come to an end. It has more or less faithfully served the Lord

for over 1950 years, and people have been burned at the stake in their faithfulness as members of the church, but that era has come to an end.

It is very much like what happened in the days of the apostles. Prior to the resurrection of Christ and His ascension into heaven, God worked through the synagogues and the temple. When people brought their tithes, they brought them into the temple or into the synagogue, and that was all very proper.

Then the Holy Spirit was poured out, in Acts 2, and God began to use the churches that would spring up all over the world, and the believers were not to take their money into the synagogues any more because God was not using the synagogues. Their tithes and offerings should be available to the churches so that the churches could get on with the task God assigned to them, that is, to evangelize the world.

But once the church age came to an end, again we find there is a major shift, and God is not using the churches any more, He is using individuals. So, now we have to think as an individual, how can I most wisely donate my money to get the Gospel into the world? I can buy tracts, I can buy Bibles, I can support a ministry like Family Radio where many of us combine our efforts and resources so that together, we do things we cannot do individually. These are the proper places in which we now lay our life down on the altar of service.

OLD TESTAMENT CEREMONIAL LAW

Caller: I believe we are supposed to keep the Ten Commandments, including the ceremonial laws and the seventh-day Sabbath. What do you say?

Mr. C.: We are to keep all of the commandments of God, and that includes the fact that the ceremonial laws are not to be observed any more because they were a shadow of things to come. The Bible is very clear that the fourth commandment was part of the ceremonial law, and it was such an important command that God highlighted it by placing it with the Ten Commandments, but it was a shadow of things to come. We read in Colossians 2:16-17:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

The question is: Are you going to obey the commands of God or are you going to obey the teachings of your church? That is the important question. Read Exodus 31 and Ezekiel, and other places in the Old Testament, and you will see that the seventh-day Sabbath was clearly a sign; it was a token, a reminder, a representation of the fact that we are not to do any work to try to get ourselves saved. The seventh-day Sabbath was part of the ceremonial law as were the blood sacrifices and the burnt offerings.

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

Caller: In Genesis 32:24, who was it that wrestled with Jacob?

Mr. C.: The Bible identifies who it was that wrestled with Jacob. Let us read Genesis 32:24-30:

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he [the man] said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he [the man] said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

In other words, God took on the appearance of a man, He did not actually become a man, and He wrestled with Jacob. Actually, God could have won the wrestling match in a split second because who can wrestle with God?

God allowed Jacob to wrestle with Him all night, and Jacob insisted “*bless me.*” Jacob realized that it was some kind of heavenly being, and in fact, finally, he realized it was God Himself. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, which means “prince of God.”

Thus, we know that the man who wrestled with Jacob was God. From time to time, God would take on the appearance of a man in order to communicate with man.

Caller: Will you comment on I Samuel 16:14-15 and 23?

Mr. C.: We read in I Samuel 16:14-15:

But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

I Samuel 16:23 tells us:

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

We have to look at this situation in the light of everything the Bible teaches. We know that before we are saved, we are under the rule of Satan, who is an evil spirit. He cannot be everywhere at the same time, but there are many other fallen angels with him, so that he can sometimes give the appearance of being in a lot of places at the same time. Satan can do with any unsaved person only insofar as God will allow him to do. Saul was a farm boy, and God anointed him to be king over Israel. It was an awesome task, and Saul had no qualifications to be king. There was no protocol, no palace, no court of the king, and Saul had to develop all of these things. God the Holy Spirit came upon Saul to qualify him to be a king. However, the Holy Spirit did not come to Saul in the sense of giving him salvation; that is another matter altogether.

Then Saul began to show rebellion against God, and so God left him. The minute God left Saul, since Saul was unsaved and still under the authority of Satan, who in turn is under the authority of God, God allowed it, and an evil spirit easily entered Saul. God can restrain that from happening, but in this case, God did not restrain it. God allowed an evil spirit to enter Saul, and He even takes credit for it. An evil spirit from God was upon Saul which indicates that God is in control of the evil spirits; evil spirits cannot indwell anyone unless God allows them to do so.

Ultimately, God rules over the unsaved as well as the saved. When an evil spirit came into Saul, Saul became much more sinful. This happens

in the lives of people; God gives them up to their sins, and they become more and more sinful.

This does not mean that God is the author of evil in any sense. God is fully aware of Satan's intentions, and any time God removes Himself, Satan is right there to fill the void.

OTHER GOSPELS/RELIGIONS

Caller: Why do you say that all gospels except the one you preach are wrong? You make me angry.

Mr. C.: I understand your anger. At the point that I step on someone's toes because of their doctrine, they do not like what I say, and I am the enemy. We must remember that I am not the one who comes with truth — it is the Bible. The Bible is truth. I repeatedly refer to the Bible.

It is not my idea or my thinking that I teach. If anything depended upon me, I would be as blind as anyone else. God has given us the Bible and the Bible is the sword of the spirit, and that is where we are to go for truth.

The problem is that a sword cuts, and we do not like to be cut, but that is what happens when the Bible, the Word of God, as the sword of the spirit, comes against us. You do not have to argue with me, you have to argue with the Bible. All I claim is that the Bible is the Word of God, and I keep saying, "Go to the Bible." I hope that you are angry enough to check out the verses I have quoted. We do not like to be told that what we have been taught is wrong, so check out what I say in the Bible. Read carefully and slowly, and ask God to lead you into truth.

Caller: There are many people who believe in a religion other than true Christianity, like Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Hindu. Are they all going to hell?

Mr. C.: That is a terrible thought and a question we do not like to face. The only way we can escape hell is if we can find someone to pay for our sins. The people in the religions you mentioned do not have anyone to pay for their sins. They will have to pay for their own sins, and the penalty for sin is eternal damnation.

The only one who came to pay for sins is God Himself, who came in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Acts Chapter 4, verse 12:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The reason why Jesus is the only name whereby we can be saved is that He is the only one who could, and did, come and bear the sins of people and be punished in their place. Unless we trust in the Lord Jesus, no matter how fine a religion we have, no matter how diligently we serve God as we understand Him, we are still under the wrath of God. We are so glad that we have opportunities to tell people all over the world about the Gospel of the Lord Jesus so that they might be saved.

Caller: Do you believe in any of the teachings of Catholicism, for instance, that the Pope is God's interpreter for the people?

Mr. C.: We must remember that there is only one true Gospel, but there are many different false gospels, and they have different doctrines.

The first important consideration and the first important identification that must be found within any organization, any church, any denomination, or any group of people who claim to have the true Gospel, is that their divine authority is the Bible alone and in its entirety. The Bible insists on this.

Thus, any organization, regardless of how old it might be, or how large it might be, if it claims that the Bible is the Word of God and it also claims that God has spoken in other ways, for example, through dreams or visions, or if they have added books to the Bible, then it is not the Gospel of the Bible. It is a false gospel. Therefore, anything and everything that organization teaches is not to be followed.

The Bible alone and in its entirety is the divine Word of God. Unfortunately, the Catholic Church has tried to add a whole lot to the Bible; their authority includes the "Hidden Books," the Apocrypha Books, which they believe are part of the divine canon. They believe that some of their people have received visions from God. They believe that the head of their church can speak as though God Himself was speaking through him. So, on many counts, they do not identify with the true Gospel. They identify with some other gospel, and it is not the Gospel of salvation. God says in Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the

words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This is a very ominous and forceful warning. If we believe there is more to divine truth than the Bible alone, then we are still under the wrath of God.

Caller: I used to attend a Pentecostal church, and after hearing the truth on Family Radio for a few weeks, I am in shock. I feel like a bomb went off in my body. How can they teach so much wrong doctrine? I do not understand.

Mr. C.: You are terribly devastated because you were taught things that are not in accordance with the Word of God and yet you were told they were, so you feel used and abused. Also, there is a deep sense of horror in your life when you think of all the dear people that you are leaving behind. You must remember that you cannot blame anyone else. You cannot blame your teachers or the church. When we fall into sin, we must remember that “It is my sin.”

By nature, man is blind, and so the potential to get snared into a false gospel is exceedingly great. On the other side of the coin, God in His mercy can open our spiritual eyes, and we see the truth. The wonder of it all! In His marvelous mercy we rejoice. You can fill your heart with thanksgiving and joy that God has opened your spiritual eyes, and you can pray that Christ will be your Savior in accordance with the true Gospel. Also, you can pray for and witness to the people in your former church as you have the opportunity.

PRAYER

Caller: What does God mean by, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” which we read in James 5:16?

Mr. C.: We read in James 5:16:

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

We read in Mark 9 about the healing of the young man who had an

evil spirit, and we saw that this was a picture or a representation of someone becoming saved. We read in Mark 9:29:

And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

God works out His salvation plan in the presence of the Gospel (that is the fasting and the elders coming to minister) and in the presence of prayer. That is why it is so wonderful that we can pray for one another. I have unsaved loved ones, and again and again and again, I count it a huge privilege that I can go to the Lord and pray, “O, Lord, I know that you are very merciful. O, Lord, have mercy. Have mercy on this loved one and that loved one who appears to be unsaved. O, Lord, you do your perfect will because whatever you do is perfect.”

I can certainly express the desires of my heart to the Lord. When God saves someone, He does so in the presence of the prayers of those people who are praying as well as in the presence of the Gospel.

I am so glad that we can look at these big issues. These issues are not about whether we will feel well tomorrow, or be healthy day after tomorrow, or whether we are going to have political freedom or not. Those are not the issues.

The big problem that faces mankind is that because we are sinners, we are under the wrath of God, who created us. Whether we like it or not, whether we admit it or not, whether we dare to think about it or not, it makes no difference. The fact is that we are under the wrath of God because of our sins. Every sin is rebellion against God.

It is also a fact that God has provided a way of escape through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the love of God, which is beyond our understanding. Wonderfully, we can beseech the Lord. We can beg Him for His salvation; God is a merciful God.

It is so wonderful that we can pray for those with whom we share the Gospel. Whether it is a loved one at home, people in a country on the other side of the ocean, whoever it might be, it is so wonderful that we can bring their needs to the Lord. God saves in the presence of those prayers as well as the presence of the Gospel.

Caller: In the Lord’s Prayer, in Luke 11:4, what does God mean by, “And lead us not into temptation”?

Mr. C.: The disciples asked the Lord Jesus to teach them to pray, and Jesus gave them a model prayer. This does not mean that we have to pray these exact words all the time, but we are to look at each of the petitions

and statements in this prayer in order to get an idea of what our prayers ought to be.

Notice that the prayer begins, and we read Luke 11:2,

When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

We are to address our prayers to our heavenly Father because He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. The greatest gift that He has given us is the gift of salvation.

“*Hallowed be thy name*” means that He is holy God. He is not just a “hey there,” and he is not just any kind of god. God is not someone with whom we can be careless or superficial. God is His Eternal Majesty, holy, and set apart, the God who rules over everything in this age and in the age to come.

We read in Luke 11:4:

And forgive us our sins [our debts]; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

This is a prayer for salvation. Salvation is the great need of mankind. Then we read in Luke 11:4:

And lead us [bring me] not into temptation [trial]; but deliver us from evil.

This also is a plea for salvation. The word “*temptation*” means “testing” or “trial.” Every time we are tempted, we are being tried, whether we will be found faithful or not. God wants us to be concerned about the trial of the last day.

If someone is suspected of committing a crime, he is brought before the judge to be tried to determine his guilt or innocence. If he is found guilty, the judge will pass sentence, as indicated by the law, and that man or woman will have to pay the penalty demanded by the law under which that judge rules.

By the same token, every human being is subject to the law of God; every human being is subject to being tried on the last day to discover how guilty we are or if we are innocent. We are all sinners, so the unsaved will be found guilty, and we know that the penalty is eternal damnation. The penalty for sin is to be cast away into hell and be damned of God forever. That is a terrible punishment because sin is so terrible.

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “Bring me not into trial.” In other words, it is a prayer for salvation. When we pray, “forgive us our sins,”

we are praying, “O, Lord, save me.” The next phrase further develops the plea for salvation. When we pray, “*Deliver us [me] from evil,*” from what evil do we want to be delivered? The evil of God’s wrath that we so rightly deserve. The evil of our sins that brings us under the wrath of God. The evil of being a slave of Satan and a citizen of Satan’s kingdom. “*Deliver us from evil*” is a prayer for salvation. It is a prayer that we might be delivered from the wrath of God. It is a prayer to be delivered from our sins. It is a prayer to be delivered out of the kingdom of Satan and brought into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we read what we call the Lord’s Prayer very carefully, which is found in Matthew 6 and Luke 11, we learn that it is essentially a prayer for salvation. Salvation is the great need of all mankind. If we have become saved, we have eternal life; we are safe and secure, and we have the highest good possible.

Caller: I heard a preacher say something about “praying in the spirit.” What does “praying in the spirit” mean?

Mr. C.: A lot of preachers have the wrong idea. They think that “praying in the spirit” means that you have to pray in some mysterious, heavenly language called a “tongue.” That is not possible because God is not bringing any kind of additional words or messages to us. God has given us His whole revelation in the Bible.

To “pray in the spirit” really means that we pray in a Godly way. The Holy Spirit is eternal God Himself, and we are to pray in accordance with the will of God. We do not make demands upon God. We do not insist on our way.

We have conversation with God, but always in the setting that we want God’s perfect will to be done. That is praying in the Spirit.

Caller: Some people say that God already knows what we need before we pray, and others say we have to keep praying, and wait upon the Lord. Could you explain a little about how and what and why we are to pray?

Mr. C.: Prayer is a great blessing that God has given to us. We can call upon God and tell Him all about our cares and concerns. We can pray prayers of thanksgiving. God wants us to pray.

We must remember as we pray that God knows more about us and our needs than we will ever know. God is God; He knows everything perfectly.

God commands us to pray with thanksgiving. We all have many things for which we can thank our God. The very fact that we can address God in prayer should fill our heart with thanksgiving.

We are to pray always with the attitude, “O, Lord, may your perfect will be done.” We might think that the best thing that could happen is that our mom becomes a child of God. From our vantage point and from what we read in the Bible, we think that would be the most wonderful thing that could happen. But we do not know God’s plan for our mother. So, we pray, “O, Lord, may your perfect will be done.” We have the privilege of crying to God for her salvation.

We do not have to pray to God with great eloquence. When we pray, we might stumble and stutter, and have a hard time praying, but so be it. God is not interested in our command of the language. God is not interested in fancy phrases. God is interested in our heart. There may come a time when we are so overwhelmed with thanksgiving that all we can say is, “Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.” There might come a time when we have a need, and we just want to cry out and tell God all about it, and all we can say is, “O, Lord, help me. Help me.” God can take our inarticulate prayers and bring them perfectly to the throne of grace.

We are never to pray for the praise and adulation of others. Most of our prayers, and in many cases, all of our praying, is to be done in a closet, that is, it is done in our mind; it is very personal; it is between me and the Lord. No one else needs to hear me when I pray.

There are times for public prayer, for instance, when beginning a Bible study, when a family sits down to eat a meal, but most of the time our prayers should be in our hearts.

Caller: I am confused about prayer. Will you explain John 9:31?

Mr. C.: We read in John 9:31:

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Confusion arises over the question: “If I am not saved, I am a sinner and under the wrath of God, how do I know that He will hear me when I plead for His mercy?” When we truly plead with God for mercy, He can be drawing us. We read in John 6:44:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

If God is drawing us, He will regard our prayers. That is a different matter from those people who are in a desperate situation, for instance,

if their boat sank, and they are on a life raft in the middle of the ocean. They are afraid that they are going to die, and they desperately cry, “O, God, save us. Bring us to safety.” They have no assurance that God will hear them. They are not praying for salvation, they are praying for physical deliverance, physical protection, or some physical need that they have.

All kinds of people pray. It is amazing how, when things get tough, people will begin to pray to God, but unless they are praying for salvation, they have no assurance that God will hear their prayers.

If they are praying for salvation and mercy, and God hears them, that means they are praying to God in their spiritual brokenness and in recognition of the fact that they are in deep trouble with God. God tells us to come boldly to the throne of grace with that kind of need. We read in Hebrews 4:16:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

THE RESURRECTION

Caller: When will we be resurrected?

Mr. C.: The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus will return on the last day of this earth’s existence. At that time, He will rapture all the believers, that is, the believers will be caught up in the air to be with Christ (I Thessalonians 4:11).

On the last day, all of the unsaved people, all those who have lived during the 13,000 years of the history of the earth, will be resurrected to stand for judgment (II Peter 2:9, II Peter 3:7). Of course, anyone who stands for judgment will be found guilty, and God has already prescribed their sentence; it is eternal damnation.

It is very important that while we are still living, and while it is still the day of salvation, we make sure that we are ready to meet God. If we are not sure that we are saved, we can cry to God for mercy. We can pray, “O, Lord, have mercy on me.”

Caller: Will you comment on John 11:21-27?

Mr. C.: In John 11, we read that Jesus stood outside of the tomb of His

dead friend, Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead for four days. Lazarus' sister, Martha, loved Jesus, and she said to him in verse 21:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Martha recognized the fact that Christ is God and that He could have healed her brother instantly. Jesus healed all kinds of people. He is God. Then Martha said to Him, and we read John 11:22-24:

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Martha and her brother Lazarus were believers. She believed what God teaches throughout His Word, that is, the bodies of those who have become saved will be resurrected on the last day, a glorified, spiritual body. Christ emphasizes another kind of resurrection in verse 25, where He says:

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

Jesus shifted the focus from physical resurrection to spiritual resurrection because He was going to use Lazarus' physical resurrection as a picture or portrait of spiritual resurrection, which is salvation. Jesus continues, and we read verses 26-27:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Christ came into the world to provide eternal life for those He came to save.

Jesus did all the work to raise Lazarus from physical death, and He does all the work to raise us from spiritual death to spiritual life, that is, from spiritual damnation to eternal life. He gives us a new resurrected soul at the moment we are saved, and He gives us a new resurrected body on the last day. Throughout eternity future, we will live as a complete resurrected being.

Our Glorified Spiritual Bodies

Caller: Will you comment on I Corinthians 15:40-44?

Mr. C.: I Corinthians 15 is a wonderful chapter that deals with the resurrection of the bodies of believers on the last day. We will be resurrected a glorified spiritual body. God declares in verses 40 to 44:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So [God is setting up the analogy, then He gets to the subject matter] also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

In other words, by talking about the glory of the sun, moon, celestial bodies, and terrestrial glory, God indicates that He is capable of creating various levels of glory. Now, our human body is a glorious creation (very complex, and the more scientists work with our bodies, the more complex the body appears to be), and yet it is nothing compared with the glory that will come to us when we are raised in our glorified spiritual body. It is an entirely different kind of glory.

Caller: In the transfiguration of Jesus, when He was with Moses and Elijah, were Moses and Elijah transformed?

Mr. C.: Unquestionably they would have been transformed because they came from heaven. They are in heaven in their glorified spiritual body. Their body would have been similar to Jesus' glorified body that was on the Mount of Transfiguration. The focal point is on Christ so God does not discuss how Moses and Elijah appeared.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Caller: Will you comment on the chain of events in the Book of Revelation? How will all that happen?

Mr. C.: Actually, we have an easier place to discover how that will happen. In Matthew 24, we read a clear statement about the end-time events. Matthew 24:21 says:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

That is the last event before the end of the world. Then God says in Matthew 24:29:

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.

In other words, the universe is beginning to collapse. It is the end of the world. Then we read in verse 30:

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.

All the peoples of the earth will weep and wail because the day of God's wrath has come, which we learn from Revelation 6. Then Matthew 24:31 tells us:

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

In other words, he will gather all the believers out of this earth and they will be with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many other passages teach the same thing, for example, John 6:39, 40, 44, and 54 teach that the believers will be resurrected the last day. The last day is the end of the world. John 12:48 says the unbelievers will be judged on the last day. John 12:48:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

We know that judgment is the end of the world, so the resurrection of believers is at the same moment as judgment of the unsaved. 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 [the believers]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [the unsaved].

In I Thessalonians 4, God indicates that a believer is not to sorrow as others who have no hope. We read in I Thessalonians 4:14-17:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus [those believers who have died have been living and reigning with Christ in their soul existence] 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 [those believers who are waiting and living here on earth right up till the time Christ returns] shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [the resurrection of the bodies of the believers who had died]: Then we which are alive and remain [those believers who have not died and are living when Christ returns] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Thus, it is very clear that believers will be here on earth until the last day. In fact, the character of the final tribulation period is that the church will be overrun with false gospels.

Caller: I would like for you to comment on Luke 17:28-32.

Mr. C.: We read in Luke 17:28-32:

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.

Here is the problem. This world becomes more and more attractive to us. There are nice things that we could buy, and things to enjoy, and things we want to do, until those things become our God.

We live for the things of this world. But suddenly, the end of the world will come. We have not thought that our life is more than just our time on this earth. We were created to exist forever. What we do as we live out our life on this earth is really how we are preparing ourselves for eternity. On the other side of judgment day, where will we live? If we have become a child of God, then we are ready to meet God, and we have eternal life.

When Christ comes, we will be with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth. However, if we have not become a child of God, we will not be ready to meet God, and we will stand at the judgment throne where we will have to answer for every sin we have ever committed; we will be found guilty and plunged into hell. It is a terrible punishment because sin is so terrible. That is why we have Family Radio; we want to get the Gospel out to the world so that people will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire is that many might be saved.

Caller: A Jehovah's Witness told me that this earth will last forever. I do not believe that is Biblical, but could you comment on it?

Mr. C.: Some people pick and choose certain verses to try to prove whatever they want to prove, for instance, that this present earth will continue forever. The Biblical rule is that before we can establish a conclusion, we test our conclusion against the whole Bible to make sure we correctly understand the verses. We read in II Peter Chapter 3, verse 10:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the

earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

This is very plain language. God is talking about the end of the world. He does not say that this present earth will last forever. God says in verse 13:

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

When we tie all the Scriptures together, we learn that this earth began as a perfect earth, but God put this earth under a curse because mankind, who rules over this earth, came under the curse of God.

There will come a time when God will remove that curse from this earth, and He will do so by destroying the present earth with fire, and He will create a new universe, new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells. So, in that sense the earth continues for evermore, but it will not continue in its present form. God will create a renewed earth after this old earth has been destroyed by fire.

This is parallel to the body of a believer. Our present body is still under the curse of sin, which is why we die physically. When a believer dies, his body is put in a grave and it returns to the dust, exactly like the body of an unbeliever.

On the last day, the body of the believer will be resurrected as a glorified, spiritual body. It is still his body, but it is infinitely more beautiful and wonderful. The believer's resurrected body is eternal. So it is with the earth. It is the same earth, but it is a resurrected earth, it is an earth that has been recreated as perfect and everlasting.

The Final Tribulation

Caller: During the final tribulation, do you think that in addition to the spiritual troubles there will be physical troubles, like nuclear war?

Mr. C.: The final tribulation has nothing to do with anything physical of that nature. All the emphasis is spiritual. For example, Revelation 13, the whole chapter deals with the final tribulation, and it has to do with the activity of Satan as he brings signs and wonders and builds false churches. Matthew 24 and Mark 13 deal with the final tribulation, and it is totally spiritual.

The likelihood is that the world will look more and more wonderful as it goes along. Revelation 17 and Revelation 18 talk about God's final judgment coming on the world, and speaks of the merchants and ships' captains weeping and wailing because suddenly all of their ability to make money has come to an end. These chapters give the impression that everything has going along better and better in the world. We read in Matthew 24:37-39:

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

While God uses very lurid and dramatic pictures of physical trauma, as in Revelation 9 and Revelation 10, they illustrate spiritual trauma. I do not believe that we are to understand them literally in any sense.

Caller: Will judgment day come during or after the final tribulation period?

Mr. C.: The Bible clearly teaches in Matthew 24:21:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Then we read in Matthew 24:29-31:

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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

In other words, judgment day, which is anticipated in Revelation by the fall of Babylon, will come right at the end of the final tribulation period. The final tribulation will not be physical tribulation or physical bloodletting; the final tribulation will be spiritual tribulation as God allows the church to be overthrown by Satan.

In churches where people think they are serving Christ, they will in actuality be serving Satan. In our day, we see this all over the world, which indicates we are in the final tribulation right now.

The Gospel will be preached right up until the end of the world. As long as mankind exists on this earth, the Gospel will be proclaimed. Jesus says in Matthew 10:27:

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

We are to give the Gospel the widest exposure possible. In Matthew 24, Jesus is talking about the end of the world. We read in Matthew 24:17:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house.

In other words, we ought to be presenting the Gospel and witnessing the Gospel to the world right up to the end of the world. This theme is picked up in Revelation 14, where we read that an angel is flying in the midst of heaven, and verses 6-7 tells us:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The Gospel includes the warning that judgment is coming. This is the message of the Gospel. When someone dies unsaved, the next thing he will know is that he will be standing at the judgment throne of God. The Gospel message is to constantly proclaim that judgment is coming, but today is still the day of salvation. Then we read in Revelation 14, verse 8:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

This is talking about judgment day; it is the end of the world. Of course, believers at that moment will be raptured to be with Christ. The unbelievers will be resurrected to stand for judgment; they will be judged, removed from this earth, and sent to hell where they will be eternally damned. Then God will destroy this universe and create a new universe, new heavens and a new earth, where Christ will dwell with us for evermore.

Caller: Will believers be on earth during the final tribulation?

Mr. C.: There is no question at all about the fact that believers will be on earth during the final tribulation. In John 6, Jesus says four times that the believers will be resurrected on the last day. He says this in verses 39, 40, 44, and 54.

When is the last day? The last day is the end of the world. We read in John 6:44, for instance:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

That matches what we read in John 5:28-29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour [the hour: one time] 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].

The resurrection of the unsaved is simultaneous with the resurrection of the believers. We read this also in John 12:48:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

The last day, the same day, is the end of the world. We believers are to continue to proclaim the Gospel right up to the last day, and

unbelievers will continue to live their sinful way, and then the last day will come, and it will all end.

Caller: Can you explain the Battle of Armageddon that is talked about in Revelations 16?

Mr. C: Well, you see, there's a great many Bible teachers who teach that Armageddon has to do with a final war between Israel, and perhaps, Russia. That has been commonly taught during the last 50 or so years. They say that there will be war between Israel and Russia, and Israel would finally defeat Russia, and at that point, Christ would come and reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years.

Now, that idea is based on an improper reading and improper conclusions from certain language that we find in the Bible, particularly, in the New Testament in the Book of Revelations.

In Revelation 16, God talks about His coming again, and He says in verses 15 and 16:

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Now, Armageddon really means the mountains of Megiddo. And then it goes on to talk about how Babylon is finally destroyed. The nations of the world are destroyed. Now in actuality, this is a figure taken from the Book of Judges where we read that there was a time when Israel was at war with the Philistines. And they had a captain over them, a man by the name of Sisera, who was a very mighty man. And he was ruling over Israel. And because Israel had done evil in the sight of the Lord, we read in Judges Chapter 4, verses 1 and 2:

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan [of the Canaanites], that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

Now, Sisera had 900 chariots of iron, and that would be like 900

bombers or 900 nuclear weapons or 900 whatever the modern most potent weapon of our day is, and he had an enormous army. And he was up on the mount of Tabor, which was right near the valley of Megiddo. And he came down that mountain to come against the Israelites, and the Lord defeated Sisera, and his army was completely destroyed. And finally, Sisera himself was killed. And God speaks about this using the word “Megiddo” in the next chapter.

There is a song of praise that Deborah, the prophetess, who was the judge at that time in Israel, and God wrote this through her, verse 19 of Judges 5:

The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.

In other words, God is using that enormous defeat of Sisera with his 900 chariots of iron as a picture of what happens at the end of the world, at the day of judgment, when Christ comes to bring the unsaved into judgment.

As a matter of fact, that judgment has already begun. Christ has already come, in principle. The day of judgment is already here. Judgment begins with the house of God and then it transitions, finally, to the whole world and the formal trial when each unsaved individual will stand for trial at the time that Christ literally puts in His presence. Already that judging process is in motion as God is preparing the peoples of the churches, the local congregations, for judgment. And for those who insist on remaining there, the Bible tells us they are being bound and prepared for the fire.

And that is what the battle of Armageddon is. It is the final encounter between the forces of evil and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Judge. It will not be any kind of a physical or literal battle. It will be a spiritual battle in that finally Satan and all of his hosts, that is, all the unsaved of the world, will be vanquished and end up in the lake of fire or in hell.

All through the time of the world there have been skirmishes, there have been battles of one kind or another as Satan has fought against Christ as best he could. But there is that final battle that will end the warfare when Satan is totally vanquished, and that is typified as the battle of Armageddon. So, it does not involve Russia. Russia is not

found anywhere in connection with this in the Bible. It does not involve Iraq. It does not involve national Israel. It involves Christ and all the nations of the world who are in opposition to Him.

The Rapture and the End of the World

Caller: Will the believers be raptured before the period of the final tribulation? Many people seem to teach that they will.

Mr. C.: That is a very practical question that faces a great many people today. The Bible is very clear that believers will be on this earth right up to the very end of time. We read in II Thessalonians 2:1:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.

When Christ comes, there will be believers who will be gathered unto Him. That is one statement. Probably the clearest statement of how these things will happen is found in Matthew 24:21, where God says:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

This is what we call “the final tribulation,” which is spiritual tribulation. We read in Matthew 24:24:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Then we read in Matthew 24:29-31:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days [the final tribulation] 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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [all the believers] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

In other words, the believers will be raptured at the end. Then we read in I Thessalonians 4 about the believers who are living when Christ returns, and God says in verses 16-17:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This makes it clear that believers will be living, and they will be changed instantly into their glorified spiritual bodies, when Christ returns with the sound of the trumpet. This is also what we read in Matthew 24:31.

In John 6, we read about the timing of the resurrection of the believers, which is talked about in I Thessalonians 4 when it speaks of the sound of the trumpet. John 6:39-40 tells us:

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The resurrection of the dead is the last day. Remember that we read in I Thessalonians 4 that the believers who are still living on earth will be changed into their glorified body and caught up to be with Christ in the air. This will all happen on the last day. We read in John 6:44:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

God insists that the resurrection of the believers will be the last day. John 6:54 says:

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

There is no question at all about the fact that the resurrection of the bodies of the believers will be the last day. I Thessalonians 4 clearly teaches that when the dead in Christ are resurrected, then those of us who are still living will be caught up with them to be with Christ in the air. In I Corinthians 15, God explains when we will receive our new resurrected body. We read in I Corinthians 15:51-52:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

There is complete harmony in the Bible about the fact that the world will go on until the last day. Right before the end there will be the period we call the great tribulation, such as this world has never known. Immediately at the end of the great and final tribulation, Christ will come, the dead in Christ will be resurrected, and the believers who are still living on earth will be caught up with them to be with Christ in the air. At the same time, the unsaved who have died will be resurrected to stand for judgment along with all the unsaved who are still living on earth. In John 5:28-29, God tells us:

Marvel not at this: for the hour [one time] 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 saved]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [the unsaved].

Again, we have complete harmony; all these verses agree with each other.

The idea that a rapture will occur before the final tribulation, and the idea that there will be a literal thousand year reign of Christ on this sin-cursed earth after the tribulation or after the rapture, comes from Bible students who have not read the Bible carefully. They have not done their homework of comparing Scripture with Scripture. They take a few verses and build a position on those few verses. Their conclusion is not harmonized with the rest of the Bible, and so their conclusion is altogether incorrect.

Caller: What is the meaning of I Thessalonians 4:13-17?

Mr. C.: I Thessalonians 4:13-17:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [that is, those who have died], 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. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

How can He bring believers who have died with Him? When they died, they left their bodies and in their soul existence they went to live and reign with Christ in heaven. 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.

Their body is in the tomb but in their soul existence they are with Christ. When Christ comes on the last day, He will bring with Him all these people who in their soul existence are living with Him in heaven. "Prevent" is an Old English word that means "precede." The bodies of those who were with Christ will be resurrected; they are the dead in Christ. Their soul will not need to be resurrected because in their soul they are with Christ. In Revelation 20:4, we read,

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.

We know from I Corinthians 15:52,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: