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## Articles

## Victims and Vindication

by Catherine C. Kroeger (Brewster, Massachusetts)

Some months ago, I made a duty tour of a section of the Bible that I find incredibly boring. It was in fact the book of Job, composed of interminably long speeches from a crowd of unbelievably rigid and self-righteous snobs. As I started again to plow through their torrent of rhetoric, I suddenly realized that I was hearing the same sentiments that came to me from a far different contemporary source. The opinions of Job's friends are very much the same as those voiced by faith communities when they address victims of domestic violence.

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They must have done something wrong to deserve this ill treatment. If they had behaved better, prayed harder, been more submissive, been a better wife they would not have been in such a predicament. Sad to say, some churches revictimize the victims, scolding, denying, reprimanding, shaming, and silencing. We as Christians are apt to spend a great deal of time trying to set the victim straight and very little on the offender. In point of fact, we frequently become a secondary set of abusers and offenders.

What then does the book of Job have to teach us? It is composed in a genre different from any of the other sixty-five tractates of the Bible. It is in fact a drama, with six main characters God, Job, his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and their younger side kick Elihu. The devil is given a minor speaking role. Some scholars suggest that the story is actually a parable while others view it as a description of an actual event. In any case, it is a protracted debate as to why bad things happen to good people and where is God when tragedy strikes?

The drama begins with a strong affirmation of Job’s righteousness. He is described as a sort of poster person for someone who lives blamelessly before the Lord. (That’s why some people think this is more a parable than a history of a real live person).

Throughout the entire saga, there is never any doubt about Job’s piety and integrity. That is a given, re-emphasized at several points along the way. There are some sinners in this story, but Job isn’t one of them. Almost immediately as the story begins, we discover that his integrity has made Job a target for one dire tragedy after another. Human predators and natural disasters sweep away his flocks and herds, his servants, his holdings, and his children. Nothing is left to him except an embittered wife who has no words of comfort to offer. Her only advice is “Curse God and die.”

Here, as in several other places, the voice of an editor comes to the fore: “In all this Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” (Job 1:22) “In all this Job did not sin in what he said.” (Job 2:10)

Finding no consolation at home and smitten with a painful affliction, Job goes in despair to sit upon an ash-heap and to scrape his boils with a broken potsherd. If ever the support of faithful prayer friends was needed it is now.

Having failed to break down Job with the loss of all that he owns, including his beloved children and the suffering of physical pain, Satan wheels up another piece of equipment, psychological warfare. Enter Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite - to do their religious duty. As we learn from the text, they are religious leaders in the community.

The most commendable thing they do is to sit in silence as his companions for seven days. “No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.” (Job 2:13)

In some ways, they represent the richest treasure that Job was to lose in this incredible succession of catastrophes. No matter what disaster might strike, he had supposed that he could be assured of the support and sympathy of his own faith community. No matter how dire the circumstances, they would be there for him. Job’s ultimate support is about to crumble; and of all his afflictions this is the most cruel.

He himself is the first to break the silence, to bewail his fate and to question WHY has this happened to him. Why ever was he born in the first place? Eliphaz is prompt with an answer. Because Job has sinned and has failed to get straightened out with God. One friend follows the other in condemning Job, in insisting that all his trials have come about because of his own misdeeds.

Suddenly Job finds himself deprived of his dearest earthly support. They lash out at him because he has burst their tight theological framework. Bad things happen to bad people and good things to good people. Their whole understanding of the universe rests upon this principle.

“The truth remains that if you do not prosper, it is because you are wicked?” (Job 18:3)

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**“Can you recall a guiltless man that perished, or have you ever seen good men brought to nothing? Will God pervert the right? Will the Almighty pervert justice? If you are blameless and upright, He will protect you,” (Job 4:7)**

**The supposed friends understand the ways of God far too well to believe Job’s protestations of innocence. Again and again, he insists that his life has been one of integrity, of compassion for those who are, were in need. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar simply refuse to believe what he says. How often victims just aren’t believed!**

**Job cries out, “what wonderful helpers you all are! And how you have encouraged me in my great need! How you have enlightened my stupidity! What wise things you have said! How did you ever think of all these brilliant comments”? (Job 26:2-4)**

**“Will you never stop tormenting me, and shattering me with speeches? Ten times, no less, you have insulted me, ill-treating me without a trace of shame.” (Job 19:2-3)**

**“O please be quiet. That would be your highest wisdom . . . Must you go on? Speaking for God? When he never once has said the things that you are putting in his mouth? Does God want your help if you are going to twist the truth for him? Be careful that he doesn’t find out what you are doing! Or do you think you can fool God as well as men? No, you will be in serious trouble with him if you use lies to try to help him out.” (13:3-10)**

**Many survivors tell us that it was the rejection from their faith community that inflicted the cruelest wounds. Many believers feel closer to their family of faith than they do to their own kin, and many find no solace when they disclose the terrible truth of their abuse.**

**Hagar’s Sisters have encountered the following responses when their plight was revealed.**

- **“It takes two to fight, what was your role?”**
- **“Go back and be more submissive.”**
- **“You have not been long suffering.”**
- **“After DSS declared the father unfit for visits with their children, the wife sent an email to her pastor letting him know of the issues. The pastor responded by saying, “I hope for the sake of the children that you will go back to your husband”.**
- **“After revealing the abusive situation to her church and her decision to pursue divorce, the wife was asked to step down from the church choir, then when she applied for church membership she was asked, to not pursue church membership at this time.”**

**Like Job’s friends, those in direst need are betrayed the worst. The church just is not there for them. Let’s face it: we, the body of believers have ignored when we should**

- **have affirmed, condemned when we should**
- **have consoled, victimized when we should**
- **have vindicated, silenced when we should**
- **have supported.**

**How often believers refuse to lend a listening ear! Repeatedly Job asks his friends just to listen to him, and this is a basic need of every victim, that a support group of believers will just listen.**

**A woman called from another state to tell of her friend, a faithful and sincere Christian, a member of a world-famous fundamental church. Her exemplary life threw the church into dire consternation when she revealed the truth of her domestic scene. Such things just did not happen in good Christian marriages. Even if what she said was true, her disclosure was simply gossiping. An official announcement was made in a large adult Sunday School class, she was not to be believed or supported. Although the church sent enormous amounts of aid to many places around the world, there was not to be even a food basket for this desperate mother trying to feed her children.**

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Here is our predicament. We believe that marriage is a divine institution, ordained by God. We maintain that marriage is a picture of Christ’s love for the church. In point of reality, the Bible holds up Christ’s love for the church as a model for Christian marriage. We have idolized and idealized marriage in ways that do not have scriptural support, and domestic abuse threatens our whole theological framework. We cannot accept the ugly reality unless we take a wider look at God’s purposes and designs.

Strange to say, this is precisely one of the messages of Job. God is far wiser and more profound than the little black and white theology espoused by the religious leaders of Job’s community. Terrible things do happen, and often very unexpectedly in a way that lies far beyond human understanding. But the message for us today is that well-meaning folk can totally mistake the mind of God. Job’s friends thunder on and on interminably, inflicting ever deeper and more accusatory blows. Now in view of the total scenario, this is most interesting.

The Hebrew name Satan literally means Accuser, and in Revelation we read “The Accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down from heaven onto earth, he accused them day and night before our God. They defeated him by the blood of the lamb and by their testimony.” (Rev. 12:10-11)

This is precisely the role of the friends who have become the devil’s tools. The ultimate affliction that Job suffers is not his material losses or the loss of his children, but rather the accusations of those whom he thought that he could trust most deeply.

Again and again, he pleads with them just to listen to him, but they are far too fond of their own rhetoric and their own self-righteousness for that. When they are exhausted, a younger friend continues the assault until Job is left with no shred of comfort. Elihu is exasperated that his elders have done so badly, and he intends to clinch the argument. In point of fact, he does no better than the others and even confesses himself to be a windbag.

“I am pent up and full of words, and the spirit within me urges me on. I am like a wine cask without a vent. My words are ready to burst out. I must speak to find relief, so let me give my answers.” (Job 32:18-19)

Job longs to be allowed to face God directly, to question WHY his whole world has collapsed. Like the Psalmists, he asks difficult and searching questions, he is devastatingly honest about the storm in his own soul, about the incomprehensibility of the divine Being to whom he still clings.

“I vow by the living God, who has taken away my rights, even the Almighty God who has embittered my soul, that as long as I live, while I have breath from God, my lips shall speak no evil, my tongue shall speak no lies. I will never, never agree that you are right; until I die, I will vow my innocence. I am NOT a sinner; I repeat it again and again. My conscience is clear for as long as I live. Those who declare otherwise, are my wicked enemies. They are evil people.” (Job 27:1-7)

And suddenly, out of a whirlwind, God speaks. “Who is this who darkens knowledge?”

After the dreadful tedium the words of God burst forth in brilliant poetic utterance. Who can fathom the wondrous designs of God in all that has been made? Who can understand the majesty of the horse or the power of the crocodile or the speed of the ostrich? Who are mere mortals? God said to Eliphaz, “I burn with anger against you and your two friends, for not speaking truthfully about me as my servant Job has done. So now find seven bullocks and seven rams and take them back with you to my servant Job and offer a holocaust for yourselves, while Job my servant offers prayer for you. I will listen to him with favor and excuse your folly in not speaking of me properly as my servant Job has done.”

God is there, vindicating Job who did not blaspheme God; but the three friends are in serious trouble. They are guilty of blasphemy, of maligning God, of putting God in their own small box; and now they must make atonement. Job is not the sinner, they are, and they must bring bulls and rams in expiation.

Please note that ordinary offerings consisted of doves and lambs. Rams and bulls were necessary when there had been blasphemy or some other heavy-duty evil. This was required of kings and entire communities who outraged God’s holiness and goodness.

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Eliphaz and his cronies were leaders in their religious communities, and they must atone for their serious misrepresentation of both Job and the God to whom he has clung. One of the lessons of Job is that revictimizing the victim is sin and that it often drives a needy soul far from God.

Job, for all his anguish, has spoken truthfully about God; and now he is given yet another task. He must intercede on behalf of his misguided, self-righteous friends. We are never told whether or not he found it easy to forgive these would-be comforters. Only that the Lord accepted Job's prayer on their behalf. Surely it was easier to pray for them once he understood that he had been vindicated. And then he was ready to move on with the rest of his life.

"Then, when Job prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his wealth and happiness" All his old friends come around to comfort him, where were they when he really needed them?

How often present day victims need this kind of vindication! How often they are made to feel that they too are the sinners when in point of fact, it is their accusers. Let us remind those who endure ill-advised reproaches, the heaping up of words, that God is still there even if they cannot see Him. In the end, the ultimate reality is that the Lord has been there all the time, weeping to behold the abuse, affirming and vindicating.

When people close in on you, shaming and reproaching you, remember not to believe the lies that they say about God; and don't believe the lies that they say about you.

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## **The Time is Very Very Short!**

**by Paul Janvier Mbock (Cameroon)**

**NB:** Please read this document with the Bible in your hands!

"The night is far spent, the Day is at hand" (**Rom 13:12**). This Civilization is drawing to a close. Babylon is falling (**Rev 14:8; 18:2**)!

The Bible announces the major events marking the fulfillment of God's Plan on earth, including the future of mankind, and how the Divine Government will replace our human-led society.

So here is the Biblical Timeline of events that have happened recently, are happening right now before our eyes, or are expected to happen soon!

**1) In 2015 - Fulfillment of Joel 2:31:** "The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the day of the Lord, from that day, great and terrible. "

The year 2015 was marked by several important astronomical events:

- a) - The Total Solar Eclipse of March 20, 2015,
- b) - Four (4) Lunar Eclipses took place, each separated by six (6) full moons: the 15/04/2014, the 08/10/2014, as well as the 04/04/2015 and the 28/09 / 2015 (see below). The sequence of 4 lunar eclipses is called Tetrad and has only occurred 3 times during the last 500 years (1493 -1949 - 1967).

Here is what NASA wrote in 2015 in social networks about these phenomena: "Some Christians fear that this 4th Tetrad marks the beginning of a disaster (the end of the world and the return of Christ). They are indeed based on the book of Joel, in the Old Testament ... Whenever a Tetrad took place, a major religious event took place, especially for the Jewish people ":

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-The 1493 Tetrad took place just after the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsion of the Jews,  
-The 1949 Tetrad arrived a year after the foundation of the modern state of Israel (Jews) in 1948,  
- At the Tetrad of 1967, the Jews took back Jerusalem from the Arabs, after the war of 6 days,  
- After that of 2015, Jerusalem was recognized as the capital of the State of Israel (Jews) by the Americans (Manasseh) in 2017, which no country had done since the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 AD JC and the dispersion of Jews in 135 AD JC, following the 2nd revolt against the Romans!

**c) - How did the Moon change to Blood?**

The moon whose orbit makes an ellipse around the earth was very close to us (363 104 km) and appeared bigger in the sky. On the other hand, alignment with the sun has given the moon a special copper red hue. She was nicknamed "MOON BLOOD". It is the conjunction of these two astronomical phenomena that made the event exceptional.

This type of eclipse is rare and the next should be in 2033. In total since 1900, only 6 eclipses of Super-Moon have been observed: in 1910, 1928, 1946, 1964, 1982, and 2015!

So **JOEL 2: 31** was fully accomplished in 2015, and **all the eclipses of this year fell during the Holy Days of God!**

**2) In 2018, the 70 Years Prophecy was fulfilled for the Jews (Judah) -Duality**

Indeed, the modern Jewish Nation, called ISRAEL since its Birth in One Day on May 14, 1948 (**Isa 66:8**) under the aegis of the UN (Babylon), celebrated with Brio its 70 years of existence on the 14 May 2018, day when the Americans (Manasseh) transferred their Embassy to Jerusalem!

Out of pure biblical duality with what had happened to the ancient nation of Judah in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the Bible announced that, as soon as the 70 years of existence of the modern Jewish nation in the world today would have been fulfilled, God will chastise Babylon (**Jer 25:12**), that is, The present World System (Babylon) would fall, collapse (**Rev 14:8; 18:2**)!

**3) In 2019, effectively a year or so, just after the 70 years of the end-time existence of Judah (Jews),** the fall of the current world system (Babylon) began with COVID19 which began to set the economies of nations on their knees!

**4) In 2021, The Fall of the United States of America (USA):** *'God is now acting towards America, laden with sins (especially homosexuality), in a way that few people understand, but which will soon be sufficiently clear to all'* (Plain Truth Nov / Dec 1983-Page 25 in French).

The month of August is loaded with memories for the USA, in a surprising divine cycle of 19 years!

- August 06, 1945: The 1st Atomic Bomb in the history of mankind is launched on Hiroshima (Japan), ending World War II. America briefly became the undisputed 1st world power!

- August 05, 1964: **19 years** after Hiroshima, almost to the day, the American Congress approves the resolution of the Gulf of Tonkin (Vietnam), authorizing President L.B. Johnson to repel any armed attack on the USA. The inappropriately waged war ended in disaster in 1973!

- Mid-August 1983: **19 years** after the Tonkin resolution, the American Forces arrive in Honduras to secure Central America against the expansionist tendencies of the former USSR and communist Cuba (cold war). The lull came in the 1990s with the dislocation and disappearance of the Soviet bloc!

- On October 11, 2002, **19 years** after Honduras, the US Congress authorizes the use of force against Iraq, one year after September 11, 2001, and one year after the intervention in Afghanistan from October 8, 2001!

- On August 31, 2021, **19 years** after the intervention in Iraq, the American forces and their Allies leave Afghanistan in total rout!

**NB:** The USA has gradually lost its leading place on the international stage, and the World Superpower is falling apart

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according to Prophecy, for God said about America today:

\* *"Woe to the sinful nation, to the people laden with iniquity, to the race of the wicked, to the corrupt children! They have forsaken the Lord; they have despised the Holy One of Israel. They have turned back "(Isa 1: 4),*

\* *"... If you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God ... The Lord will make you beaten by your enemies; you will come out against them by one way, and you will flee before them by seven ways. "(De 15:1,25), and " You will flee without being pursued. "(Lev 26:17),*

\* *"I (the Lord) will break the pride of your strength" (Lev 26:19)!*

America may still have tremendous strength, but it lacks the Will to harness that power, because God has broken its Pride to use it. This weakening of the USA, especially after the recent Kabul debacle, will give Europeans the Stimulant they lacked to achieve soon, the future United States of Europe, prophesied in the Bible, with their own nuclear defense capacity!

**5) In Progress, The 8th Resurrection (Head) of the Holy Roman Empire**

This is the **United States of Europe (USE)** which will be formed from 10 federated Nations, which will soon leave the current European Union (EU-7th Head-27 States), to become the **Beast (Dan 2:42-43; Rev 17:11-14).**

**6) The 8th Resurgence of the Church after the 7 Eras:** It is the **Vase** above the Candlestick of **Zechariah 4:2**, which is the **Physical Nation of God** who will be born in one day, **ZION (Isa 66:8 -Duality)**. This birth will take place through the Return to Physical Life of the 2nd son of man who is the **Elijah** who is to come. It is around him that the physical people of God will gather through the intervention of angels (**Luke 17:37**); and it is he who will announce the fall of Babylon which has begun (**Rev 18:2**) and will sound the Trumpet of the Coming of the Day of the Lord (**Isa 66:7-9; Zac 4:2-3; Joe 2:1,15; Mal 4:5-6; Matth 17:11; Mk 9:11-12; Act 3:19-21; Luke 17:30-37**).

**This Nation, Zion, to be born in a day (Isaiah 66:7-8)**, is **the Bowl** above **the Lampstand of Zechariah 4: 2-3**, and this lampstand is the story of the True Church of God from Abel the Just, to the two Witnesses:

- **The 2 Olive-trees:** are the 2 ambassadors of the Nation of God; they are the 2 witnesses of **Revelation 11** during the Great Tribulation!

- **The Bowl:** above the lampstand, is the Church of God rising from the Laodicean correction to become the Nation of God, to be born in a day as Zion (**Isaiah 66:7-11; Ps:87 ; Luke 17:34-37**) !

- **The 7 Lamps:** are the seven eras of the Church of God of the New Testament of **Revelation 2 and 3!**

- **The Rest of the Lampstand:** represents all the faithful servants of God of the Old Testament (**Hebrews 11**)!

**NB:** Even **Jehovah's Witnesses**, relying on **Isaiah 66:8**, recognize "*The sudden birth of a whole nation... in one day*", and they called it "*The greatest prophetic miracle of the... century!*" - **Watchtower 11/01/2010, Page 27!**

**7) Arrival on the World Stage of the Man of Sin** (Antichrist-Unholy-Prince of Tyr- False Prophet!

As soon as the Physical Nation of God is born with **Elijah** the Prophet who is the son of man (2nd), the False prophet will also suddenly appear, the man of sin who will be a Minister of the Church of God and not the Pope as we have often thought! (**Ez 28:1-10; 2 Thes 2:3-12; Rev 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 1 Jn 2:18-19**).

**8) Departure of the Physical Nation of God with Elijah for Galilee**, to Mount Hermon (Transfiguration), Place of Refuge, under the pressure of the Beast (USE) - (**Rev 12:13-16; Ez 34:13-15; Ex 15:15-17; Mic 7:15-17; Ez 36:8; Isa 4:5-6; 33:16; Isa 8:18**)!

**9) Beginning of the Great Tribulation or Time of Anguish for Jacob** (**Rev 12:17; MT 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Jer 30:7; Ps 83:4-9**)!

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**10) Work of the 2 Witnesses (Representatives of the Physical Nation of God)**: the work of the 2 witnesses will mainly concern the rest of the people of God who will not have wanted to follow Elijah to the Place of Refuge in Galilee, and who will be trapped by the Great Tribulation in Babylon (**Rev 11:3-12; 14:9-11; 18:4**). This remnant will have been seduced by the deceptions of the false prophet, prince of Tiro (Minister of COG), who will thwart the work of Elijah, the son of man, prophet of God (Minister of COG) (**Ez 28:1-10**)!

**11) 1st Resurrection-It is that of the Saints (Firstfruits-144,000)**, to the sound of the 7th Trumpet, and Meeting with Christ in the air (**1 Cor 15:51-53; 1 Thes 4:16-17; Rev 20:5-6**)!

**12) Arrival and brief Sojourn of Jesus and the First fruits (144,000) in Heaven** in front of the Sea of Glass, for the Ceremonies: of Coronation, of reward and of the Marriage of the Lamb with his Bride, presided over by the Father (**Rev 14:1-5; Eph 5:27; Rev 15:2 -4; Rev 11: 5-18; 19:7-9; 11:19**) – After that, the Father isolates himself in His Heavenly Temple and the Plagues of his Great Anger begins to be poured out on the earth by 7 angels (**Isa 63:4; Rev 11:19; 15:5-8; 16:1-17**) - After this lapse of time in Heaven,

**13) Glorious Return of Christ and his Bride (The Risen Saints) to Earth**, Victory over the armies gathered in Jerusalem (**Rev 19:11-21; Zac 14:2-4; Rev 17:14; 1 Thes 3:13 ; 2 Thes 1:10**) - Then Chaining of Satan (**Rev 20:1-3**) – Finally, Beginning of the Millennium (**Rev 20:4-5; Matth 19:28; Dan 7:22,27; Rev 5:9- 10; 1:6; Ex 19:6; Isa 25:6-8; 11: 6-10**)! After that,

**14) End of the Millennium- Last Rebellion instigated by released Satan** (**Rev 20:3,7-10; Jud 13; 2 Pe 2: 4**) - After that,

**15) 2nd Resurrection - Judgment of the Great White Throne** for all those who have died and who have never been called to salvation (**Jn 6:44; Rev 20:11-12; Ez 37:1-14; MT 11:20 -24; 12:41-42**)! After that,

**16) 3rd Resurrection - Second Death - Lake of Fire**, for all those who have been called, and who have voluntarily rebelled against God, after having received the knowledge of the Truth and the Holy Spirit - This fire will also cleanse the heavens and the earth of now- (**1 Pet 4:17-18; Rev 20:13-15; 2:11; Dan 12:2; Jn 5:29; Heb 10:26-27; Luke 3:9; Ps 21:9-10; Mal 4:1,3; 2 Pet 3:7,10-12**)! Next,

**17) A New Heaven and a New Earth** (**Rev 21:1; 2 Pet 3:13; Isa 65:17; 66:22; 51:16**)! At last,

**18) Heavenly Jerusalem will descend from Heaven (3rd)** (where it will always have been) and will be established forever on Earth (**Rev 21:2-5**). All those who will be there will have been transformed into spirits like God and Jesus (The Great Family of God - ELOHIM).

There will be no more men made of flesh and blood, all will be made immortal spirits, for death will be no more, and the sea will no longer be there to allow human life (**Jn 3:6; 1 Cor 15 :50-54; 1 Jn 3:2; Ex 33:20; Jn 1:12-13; Phil 3:21; Ps 42:3; Col 3:4; Rev 22:3-5**)!

And Eternity will continue (**Isa 9:6**), because there will be no more night, therefore Time (**Rev 22:5**)!

**In the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ!**

**No One Knows The Day**  
**Dwight Fleming (Orville, California)**

Jesus Christ warned His followers to be watching for the signs of His return lest they be caught unprepared and miss out on the Resurrection. Concerning the time of His return, notice:

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ... Therefore keep **watch**, because you **do not know the day** on which your Lord will come. But understand this: If the homeowner

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had known in which hour the thief was coming, he would have kept **watch** and would not have let his house be broken into. For this reason, you must also **be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour **YOU DO NOT EXPECT**” (Matthew 24:36, 42-44).

To drive this point home even further, Jesus went on to give the parable of the Ten Virgins. As you know, five were foolish and five were wise. The main point of the parable is to show that the wise virgins were the ones who were prepared and ready for the arrival of the bridegroom. The ones who were ready obtained entrance into the bridal chamber while the others were shut out. The parable ends with this warning: “Therefore **keep watch**, because **YOU DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR**” (Matthew 25:13).

Do you think that Jesus was serious about His warning to be ready? Is it possible that some Christians won't be ready at the time of Christ's return and will then miss out on the First Resurrection? Do you believe that you are ready? This is a vital topic that every Christian needs to understand. We all want to be **fully prepared** for Christ's return so that we don't miss out on important opportunities of service that God wants us to fulfill in His kingdom.

Let's look at some examples in history where God's people missed out on the promises and opportunities that God had offered to them. As you know, God promised to Abraham and his progeny the land in which he traveled in as a stranger. This became known as the Promised Land which would be possessed by Abraham's heirs through Isaac and Jacob who would become a great nation (See Acts 7:5 and Genesis 17:8). In time, Jacob and his 12 sons moved to Egypt and became a great multitude. The Egyptians feared their loyalty if war should break out and made them slaves of the Pharaoh.

We all know the miracles that God worked to free them and bring them out of Egypt. After entering into a holy covenant with the God of the universe, they traveled north and prepared to enter the Promised Land. Before they launched their “invasion,” they sent out 12 spies to spy out the land to see what challenges they would encounter. They all had seen the mighty miracles that God had performed on their behalf to rescue them from the hand of Pharaoh and his army. Their confidence in the power of God should have been extremely high.

After 40 days, the 12 spies returned with a mixed report. This was their golden chance to take possession of their inheritance. Instead, they became defeated before they even tried. How so? Because of their **unbelief**. Hebrews 3:16-19 reads: “For who were the ones who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was God angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would never enter His rest? Was it not to those who disobeyed?”

So, we see that it was because of their **UNBELIEF** that they were unable to enter.”

What happened? Why did the Israelites disobey and refuse to follow God's commands to take possession of their inheritance? As you know, the mixed report of the 12 spies contained good and bad news. Two of the spies, Joshua, and Caleb, said it was a rich land flowing with “milk and honey” and urged their fellow compatriots to immediately launch the “invasion” since God would bless their bravery and efforts.

But then the report of the other ten took the wind out of their sails. “There are giants in the land, and we are nothing but grasshoppers in their sight.” Ten against two. History records that the Israelites put more weight on the negative news given by the majority. They listened to the wrong advice and paid dearly for it. There is an end-time prophetic type with these spies. The two who expressed trust in God are a kind of Two Witnesses. The ten, who lacked faith and gave a negative and discouraging report, are like the Ten Toes or Ten Horns which are Ten Kings that will fight against Christ at His return (See Revelation 17:12-14).

Moving on to the time of Christ, we see that Jesus' own people largely rejected Him. Why? They knew the scriptures concerning a promised Messiah. Yet when the reality came, they were unable to realize who Jesus was. John records this confusion in chapter 7, notice:

“On hearing these words [spoken by Jesus], some of the people said, ‘This is truly the Prophet.’ [the prophet foretold by Moses] Others declared, ‘This is the Christ.’ But still others asked, ‘How can the Christ come from Galilee? Doesn't the Scripture say that the Christ will come from the line of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?’ So

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there was division in the crowd because of Jesus. ... ‘Aren’t you also from Galilee?’ they replied. ‘Look it up, and you will see that no prophet comes out of Galilee’” (John 7:40-43, 52).

These people knew their “Bible.” No way was anyone going to convince them that anything good would come out of Galilee let alone their promised Messiah. Yet, as we all know, they turned out to be wrong, big time! God allowed this to happen. Why? “... ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For the hearts of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed” (Matthew 13:14-15).

They had their preconceived concepts of the Messiah based upon their faulty understanding of scripture. Their hearts and minds had become hardened. This means that no one was going to convince them of anything different than what they already believed. This is a major problem of our human nature that we all have to wrestle with. Once we think that we have the “truth,” we may fall into the trap of wanting to take life easy by thinking that we can just coast into God’s kingdom. However, this is not a good means of bringing about spiritual growth in Christ. These highly devout seekers of Christ’s day failed to realize an important aspect of God’s plan which would have provided them treasure in heaven.

Reviewing these historical examples, we may think that we would have never made those same mistakes. When Christ comes a second time, we won’t have any doubts and will be ready to be partakers of the divine glory. May that be true! Let’s explore an area of concern that may cause some if not many to miss out on the First Resurrection.

For those who understand the significance of the “Feasts of the Lord” listed in Leviticus 23, we see God’s plan of salvation “in bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:9-12). More and more ministers of various churches and denominations are realizing the prophetic nature of God’s Sabbaths and Holy Days. For the most part, what each Holy Day pictures in God’s Plan is fairly well explained in near agreement among most of those advocating their prophetic significance. We need to focus primarily in this article with that which portrays Christ’s return. As the apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 15:17, “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.” And in verse 32, “... If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’”

The apostle Paul went on to show in chapter 15 that we will be changed from flesh to spirit and the dead would be raised incorruptible (verses 50-56). This is describing the First Resurrection. And when will this happen? At the last trump! (Verse 52). This is an important clue. In the Book of Revelation, we find seven Trumpets. When the seventh trumpet is sounded in Revelation 11:15 to 18, the dead are judged, and the servants of God are rewarded. Thus, this seventh trumpet mentioned in Revelation eleven is the “last trump” mentioned by Paul.

One of the Holy Days mentioned in Leviticus 23 is the one called the “Feast of Trumpets” and also known as “Rosh Hashanah.” Because the Resurrection will occur at the “last trump,” it has been commonly assumed by many that this “last trump” will sound on a future Feast of Trumpets. This is a logical conclusion. Many anticipate that Christ will return on a future Feast of Trumpets. But could this expectation turn out to be a misunderstanding that may become a “snare” which causes some believers to “miss the boat,” so to speak. How so?

Just as we saw in Christ’s day, people had their preconceived concepts about the Messiah. Could we be making the same mistake with our understanding of certain Holy Days? If you firmly believe that Christ will return on a future Feast of Trumpets, what might happen if Christ returned at a different time than you are expecting?

Here is the possible problem: You see a bright light in the sky that appears to be an angel. You are alarmed by this supernatural sight not knowing what to think since it is not happening on the Feast of Trumpets. Since this angelic object in the sky is not on a white horse as depicted in Revelation 19, you are confused and wondering if this could be a Satanic deception. The Bible does say that Satan is able to appear as “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Because you had previously believed that Christ would return on the Feast of Trumpets, you are now infected with doubt and **UNBELIEF**. NEVER FORGET THIS: If you are in **unbelief** at Christ’s return, then you **WON’T BE READY!** If you can’t clearly recognize the reality of what is happening before your eyes, there is a good chance that you won’t be in the First Resurrection. This is why Jesus gave urgent **WARNING to WATCH and BE READY**. Many are prepared and ready for Christ to return on a future Feast of Trumpets. But if it doesn’t happen that way, what then?

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If this supposition disturbs or confuses you, then let's carefully examine the scriptures that explain and depict Christ's return. In Revelation 19:11-16, we see Jesus described as a conquering king on a white horse preparing to do battle with the rebellious nations on the earth. It has been explained by many that this occurs on a future Feast of Trumpets. This event also ties in with Zechariah 14 where we see the Lord going forth to do battle against the nations. His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in that day and all the saints or holy ones will be with Him. These saints are also mentioned in Revelation 19 as they celebrate in heaven. These are, obviously, the resurrected saints pictured in heaven **before** Christ comes to the earth on a white horse (Revelation 19:1-9).

How can this be? The Resurrection is supposed to happen at Christ's coming. Revelation 19 shows that the Resurrection has occurred **BEFORE** Christ comes to the earth on a white horse. Is this even more confusing or has an important detail been overlooked by most Bible scholars?

Here is another account by the apostle Paul regarding Christ's return: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep [dead]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a **SHOUT**, with the **voice** of an **ARCHANGEL**, and the **TRUMPET** of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

The apostle Paul shows that Christ will come as an ARCHANGEL from heaven to RESURRECT and gather together the saints both living and dead. Revelation 19 is depicting something different. The saints are there in heaven for the marriage supper. Afterwards, they follow Jesus on white horses to do battle with the rebellious nations on the earth. If the resurrection occurs before the events of Revelation 19, then where is it described in the Book of Revelation?

Recall the details given by the apostle Paul. Now read Revelation 7:1-4. Here we find an Angel who comes from the **East** (Matthew 24:27) and cries with a loud voice (**SHOUTS**) to the four angels giving them a command (making him an **ARCHANGEL**). These four angels are holding the **four winds** of the earth (Matthew 24:31). Why? Because the resurrection is taking place as depicted by the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads. This "sealing" is accomplished by their being changed from flesh to spirit at the resurrection. See Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30.

Read all of chapter seven. Where do those sealed, the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude, end up? They end up at God's throne in heaven. Read it for yourself. This explains how the saints mentioned in Revelation 19 get there. In summary, we need to realize that the Book of Revelation depicts two major objectives. The first one is the coming of Christ as an Archangel to resurrect and gather together His Elect. This will occur at the last or seventh trumpet. But won't the seventh trumpet sound on the Feast of Trumpets as many have assumed?

Okay, if that is assumed, then when will the other six trumpets sound? Will all seven trumpets sound on a future Feast of Trumpets? All on the same day? Not likely. Here is a clue: The seven trumpets are described in a **four-three** pattern. The first four are depicted in chapter 8. After they sound, the last three are described as "Woes." This breaks them into a **four-three** pattern which is very significant. Why?

It so happens that there are SEVEN ANNUAL SABBATHS among God's Holy Days. Four are in the autumn and three in the spring. They also create a **four-three** pattern according to the secular or regnal calendar of the Jews. This is not just a coincidence but the design of God. The day that marks the beginning of the secular or regnal year is the Feast of Trumpets. If it marks the **BEGINNING** of the sounding of the seven trumpets rather than the ending, this means that the first trumpet of Revelation will sound on a future Feast of Trumpets; the second on Atonement; the third on first of Tabernacles; the fourth on the Last Great Day; the fifth on the first of unleavened bread; the sixth on the last of unleavened bread. The seventh and last trump would then sound on a future Pentecost. Sound crazy?

Remember that Christ warned that no one would know the day or the hour of His return when His saints are resurrected and gathered together for the marriage supper. What day does Pentecost fall on? Yes, on a Sunday. But which date? Strange thing about Pentecost. There is no set date for it. It must be calculated every year from the day that the barley harvest is started with the offering of the wave-sheaf offering on the first day after a weekly Sabbath.

At this time, there is some controversy as to when the wave-sheaf offering should take place in some years causing some groups to observe Pentecost on a different day than others. Furthermore, it is dependent on the condition of a yearly

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crop. You can't start the count until the barley is ready to harvest. So, conditions affecting the harvest could vary from year to year. You have to constantly check the barley to see when it is ready to harvest. In other words, you have to pay attention or WATCH! So, Pentecost rather than the Feast of Trumpets better pictures the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the resurrection.

The second objective depicted by the Book of Revelation is Christ coming with His saints to make war against the nations and to establish His kingdom upon the earth. This is when Jesus will come on a white horse as a conquering king. This will be preceded by the outpouring of the seven last plagues of God's wrath as described in chapters 15 and 16. These seven last plagues will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth between Resurrection Pentecost and the following Feast of Trumpets when Christ comes on a white horse.

If you are able to recognize and understand these two major objectives of Christ's return, then it may greatly help you to know what things to be watching for so that you may be READY. A full discussion and explanation of the Book of Revelation is not possible with this article. It mostly is geared to make you THINK and be open to other prophetic possibilities that will motivate you to be diligent in your own Bible study.

Lastly, if one should miss out on the First Resurrection because he or she was not ready as Christ has warned, this may not mean that one has no hope of salvation. He or she may be able to live on as a physical being into the Millennium until such time that Christ grants their spiritual birth or change. However, such individuals won't be among the FIRSTBORN. As you know, the Firstborn receives the greater reward and blessing. We have been called to be of the Church of the FIRSTBORN (See Hebrews 12:14-25). Let us strive as Jacob did to receive the blessing of the firstborn!

**Mexico Reaches Natural Gas Agreement  
with Russia and China**  
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Mexico has reached an agreement with two Russian and two Chinese companies after months of negotiations involving natural gas-pipeline contracts, according to negotiators directly involved with the talks.

Under the terms agreed upon, Mexico will allow Russian and Chinese troops to stay in the country in order to protect America's neighbor from "U. S. Aggression." In return Russia and China will have access to all natural gas supplies "with assurances that all citizens of Mexico will be provided adequate supplies for all their needs," according to negotiators.

"This is a solution to a very tense and uncertain situation," said Emmanuel Gonzalez, an energy industry analyst. "Mexico will be well protected from any aggression by the U. S. if its natural gas production is disrupted."

**Holy Days 2022**

**Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)**

**Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022**

**Pentecost – June 5, 2022**

**Trumpets - September 26, 2022**

**Atonement – October 5, 2022**

**Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022**

**Last Great Day – October 17, 2022**