

Faithbuilders Fellowship

Proclaiming Christ's Parousia
and the coming Millennial Kingdom
May, June 2007

"Limbo" in Limbo

Many of our readers probably heard the announcement that Pope Benedict XVI approved a report from the Vatican, released on Friday, April 20, which says there are "serious" grounds for hope that children who died without baptism may go to heaven. For centuries, the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church had been that such children went instead into some state of "Limbo" — a state of happiness with limited suffering — but that they were excluded from heaven.

Of course the entire issue is devoid of any scriptural foundation. The Bible does not speak of any such state as "Limbo," nor does it admit small children to a spiritual resurrection. That is reserved for the thoughtfully consecrated followers of Christ. Such children, along with the remainder of the human race, will have a blessed future. But it will be here, on earth, not in heaven. Presently they wait in the sleep of death until the resurrection. When that time comes, during the Millennium, they will be raised to life as human beings. They will grow and mature to adulthood, all the while learning the Truth about God, and godliness — just like others.

Then the hope for the world will be everlasting life on a paradise earth, such as Adam and Eve were offered at in the beginning. They lost that privilege through disobedience. God foresaw this, and allowed the experience in order to instruct the world about the consequences of sin. It also becomes a learning experience for the angels, by observation. As they watch the Wisdom, Love, Justice and Power of God operate through the ages for the blessing of the world, they learn to appreciate God's character, and grow in trust toward Him.

Heaven

Of course there is a Heaven — the abode of God, Jesus, and the holy angels. The unholy angels, who like Lucifer sinned against God, are also in the spiritual realm, though presumably not in fellowship with God. Both Jude and Peter, the apostles, tell us those fallen angels are restrained in some ways, limiting the exercise of their abilities (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6), until the judgment of the great day.

But heaven was never intended to be the destination for the world. Earth was created to be man's everlasting home. The Millennium, approaching within a generation, will be a time for instructing the world. Following that will come a "little season" of testing their hearts (Revelation 20:3). No doubt the vast majority will retain their love and appreciation for God, and soon thereafter enter upon the reward of everlasting, unending, life. It will be a glorious and wonderful world, populated by thankful, mature, developed, loving people everywhere, cooperating for the common welfare and enrichment of every member of the race.

But it will not be heaven. It will be "paradise" — but as in Eden, an earthly paradise. Heaven is for spirit beings, and the world is not called to become spirit beings, except for the followers of Christ during the present Gospel Age. For them it is indeed God's good pleasure to give them a higher life, a higher existence, not physical and fleshly, but spiritual and heavenly. They will be in fellowship with God, with our redeemer Christ, and with all the holy angels, for the eons of eternity.

God "will render to every man [and woman] according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life," in the spirit realm (Romans 2:6, 7).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).

When we recognize from texts such as these that Heaven is the exception — not for the world, but for the consecrated saints of God — it is apparent that it has nothing to do with unbaptized children who die before reaching the age of accountability.

Such children, along with the other billions of mankind, will have their place in the resurrection on earth.

The Problem

The problem which impels the Roman Catholic Church to discuss such imaginary conditions as “Limbo” is their misunderstanding of God’s “Plan of the Ages.” That Church teaches that *they* constitute God’s vehicle for saving the world. That *they* represent Christ as the necessary means of salvation to every human being — without which, humans can never attain “salvation.” They overlook the fact that God’s plan is to recover the world during the Millennium, at which time God will raise all the dead back to life for this purpose — Adam, Eve, and everyone else.

Supposing that the present is the only opportunity for the world, that God calls everyone to heaven, that *their Church* is the only vehicle for salvation, and that baptism is the means of inducting people into their Church, they concluded that unbaptized people cannot be admitted to divine fellowship in the courts of heaven.

So what other option is there for the unbaptized?

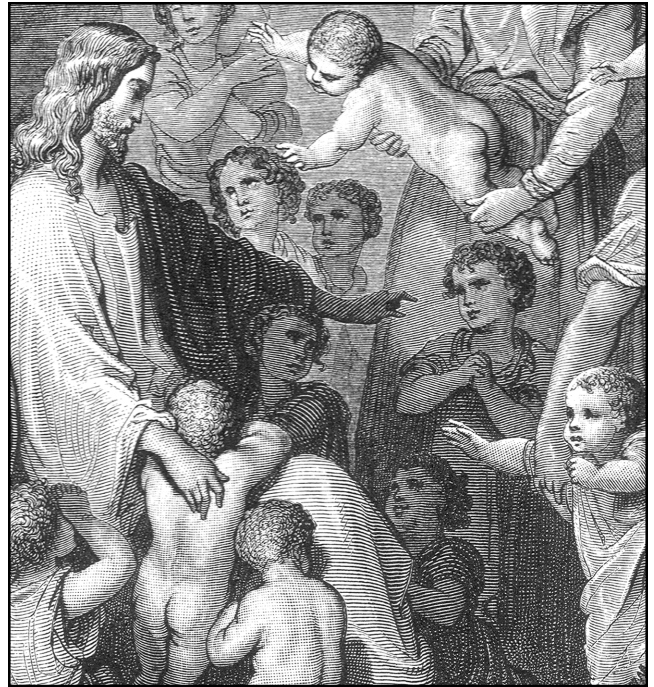
They suppose (incorrectly) that the other option for eternity is torture in hell. (Mercifully they invent a temporary place for expiation, namely purgatory, but this also is without foundation in scripture.) Because they are too kind-hearted to suppose young children go to torture, they invented “Limbo” — an intermediate state with only a little suffering. But the scriptures do not speak of it, and even the Catholic Church itself now questions it.

All the concerns are solved when one recognizes the two separate and distinct ages of redemption. The present Gospel Age is to call out an elect “little flock” to rule with Christ from heaven, and to bless the world during the Millennium, which is the second age of redemption. The present is a heavenly call — the second will be an earthly call.

The Resurrection

Of course all of this depends as well as the scriptural doctrine of the resurrection. Unlike the suppositions of the Roman Catholic Church — and of so many of her daughter systems — when a person dies, they really do die. They stop thinking, suffering, knowing, doing, experiencing — they are simply dead. In the resurrection, God will raise the person back to life. Only then will he or she live again. In the meantime there is no “place” into which they go. They simply enter the “condition” of death — described by the Old Testament word *sheol* and the New Testament word *hades*.

The resurrection of the saints will be in the spirit realm, in heaven. There will be two classes of these. The first is the “bride class” who are faithful to God and Christ, and receive all the rewards promised, such as Revelation 3:21, 22 for example. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear.”



Jesus loved the little children. But heaven will not be populated with babies. Heaven is the reward for those who consecrate their lives to God during the present Gospel Age, which draws to a close within a generation.

The second spiritual class is the “great company” or “great multitude” described in Revelation 7:9. They also receive life as spirit beings, but fail to become part of the bride class. Paul describes this class in 1 Corinthians 3:14, 15. They are devoted, and they build upon the foundation Christ laid. But their zeal is lacking. They build their characters poorly, and suffer loss of the position they are called to. Nevertheless, they will be resurrected into heaven. There they will serve God in a lesser, but still very honorable, capacity. (Compare Revelation 7:15, Ezekiel 44:10, 11.)

The resurrection of the world will be altogether different than either of these. It will not be spiritual, nor heavenly, but earthly. They also will have a wonderful future. They also will have everlasting life. But it will be here on earth, in a perfected society, rather than in heaven. This supposes, of course, that they will repent during the Millennium, become obedient to God, and develop godly character. Surely the vast majority will choose this course, when they recognize the opportunity.

Then all the millions, or billions, of babies who died in past ages will be raised to life, grow up, and have a blessed opportunity, along with everyone else. They will not be in Limbo. They will not be in Heaven. But they will be in Paradise. That Paradise will be here, on earth, with the remainder of the human race.

All who then become obedient children of God, from the heart, will enjoy everlasting life as perfect human beings on a perfect world. In the age to come, the world will awaken to some remarkable blessings.

The Herald Website

We are planning an expanded website for Faithbuilders Fellowship. However, there already is an exceptional site for Bible Student material — the website of the Pastoral Bible Institute, which publishes the 32 page magazine, “The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom,” six times a year. The site is located at ... www.HeraldMag.org

Among the contents of this site are ...

- The Current Issue of the Herald Magazine.
- All back issues from its inception in 1918.
- Several editions of Polish and German versions.
- The special and very popular “History Edition.”
- A new biography of Pastor Russell.
- 37 Booklets available for download or order.
- A collection of hymns sung by John T. Read.
- The “Divine Plan of the Ages” in 31 languages.
- Bible Students Library Three.
- Three-CD set of that Library for order.
- “Studies in the Scriptures,” complete text.
- All “Watchtowers” edited by Bro. Russell.

The current issue of the Herald Magazine treats the prophet Elisha, including a complete explanation of 14 episodes in the life of that prophet, which represent the progress of Christ’s Kingdom during the Millennium. We heartily recommend a visit to this website.

Godliness with Contentment

“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all [sorts of] evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

So the aged Apostle wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith. He summed up with this exhortation — “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Timothy 6:6-11).

The principles which operated then operates still today. If one learns contentment with the necessary provisions for life, he or she is freed from much mental anxiety. Reasonable industry may be expended in the support of our families and ourselves, and our interest in the

comforts of our dependents will be appreciated by them. But let our eyes of desire be fixed upon the prodigious heavenly gifts we have in abundance.

Our Heavenly Father’s care is assured in every experience. Reflecting on the mercy and grace extended to us in Christ should mellow our heart. Remember some instance when a kindness toward us filled our mind and heart to overflowing with thankfulness. Did it not fully displace any foul emotions or bitterness, from any cause?

Then, as remedy to the concerns, pressures, and stresses of life — we all have these — focus our minds on the “exceeding, great and precious promises” which are ours from God (2 Peter 1:4).

Are They Ours?

The whole world has certain promises from God. He has promised to bless “all the families of the earth.” The time for that will be the Millennium, only a scarce 36 years distant, as we best judge from the holy Scriptures.

Meanwhile, the gathering of his jewels continues. Who are his jewels? All those who have given their hearts to God. Have we done this? Have we thoughtfully presented ourselves to God, and committed ourselves to Him? Have we decided to follow our Master, Jesus, as a personal and binding commitment?

If we have, then the “exceeding great and precious promises” are ours! (2 Peter 1:4). Then, while exercising reasonable diligence and responsibility in our duties, we have the quiet assurance that God takes responsibility for our life, to direct our experiences in good ways. “He is faithful, that promised” (Hebrews 10:23).

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FAITHBUILDERS FELLOWSHIP is a publication of Millennial Morning, a recognized religious, non-profit organization for the dissemination of Christian teaching. Address all communications to — 8060 Wing Span Drive, San Diego, CA 92119, USA. Contact us by email at — FFellowship@aol.com. Subscriptions are free to all requestors. Visit our website at members.aol.com/FFellowship • Part of the Worldwide “Bible Student Movement.”

Understanding the Vision

“When I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man ... Gabriel” (Daniel 8:15, 16).

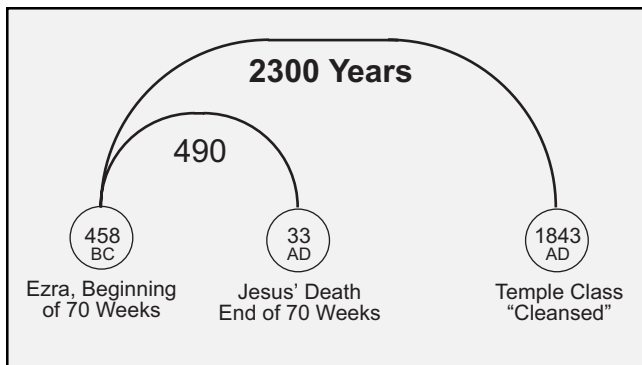
This article continues our series on the Book of Daniel. It is the third article treating Daniel chapter eight, and will conclude our comments on that chapter. In two previous issues we discussed the essence of this prophecy, but here comment on some points from verses 15 through the end of the chapter, verse 27.

This chapter records the prophecy, given to Daniel, that 2300 years would pass before the cleansing of God’s spiritual Temple from many defiling errors. From the days of the Adventist Movement under Bro. William Miller, through the days of the Bible Student Movement under Bro. Charles Russell, it has been customary to commence those 2300 years at the same time as the 70 weeks of years given in the next chapter — chapter nine. As we will see when we treat the ninth chapter (following issues), those 490 years began in the year 458 BC and ended in 33 AD, the year our Lord died in the springtime, at passover season. By this sacrifice he brought in “everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24).

Thus the 2300 years, commencing also in 458 BC, would terminate in 1843 AD, which was the year of expectation of the Miller Movement. In that stirring of the Christian world, many of the old, defiling errors of Christendom were identified, and cleansed.

Is the Predicate Correct?

Note the proposition — that the 2300 years commenced at the same time as the 490 years. A later article in this issue, titled “2300 Year Parallels,” gives some remarkable evidence in favor of this approach. In this case, the 2300 years would apply as follows.



Certainly the date 1843 was a milestone in the history of the Church. It prepared the Christian world to anticipate the return of Christ, which we understand came to pass in the year 1874.

With that, came the harmony of the “Divine Plan of the Ages” which we appreciate still. The resurgence of Bible Study and understanding, which we are heir to, was timely at this period because the 1260 years of Papal persecution had ended 44 years earlier in 1799.

The Bible, the Old and New Testaments (represented by the two prophets of Revelation 11:6), would then have a renewed influence. Initially, after the close of the 1260 years, there was a brief setback (Revelation 11:8-10). But thereafter, the Scriptures are represented as ascending to heaven, symbolic of the great influence they would have in the centuries following (Revelation 11:11, 12).

This resurgence of Bible Study is referred to also in Revelation 10:8-11. There a “little book” appears (the scriptures), which John was told to eat. It was sweet as honey in his mouth. “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalms 119:103). We have all tasted the sweetness of the Lord’s word, in the understanding of God’s Plan, by which we anticipate the blessing of “all the families of the earth” in the approaching Millennium.

Thus the early half of the 1800s was an appropriate time for the “cleansing” work to be accomplished among the Lord’s people, by identifying the various errors which had crept into Christian doctrines — errors such as inherent immortality, hell-fire, and the trinity. About 30 years later the Truth would crystallize into the Plan of the Ages which we appreciate today.

Gabriel

These two time prophecies — the 1260 years of Papal dominion, and the 2300 years pointing to the cleansing of the temple class (the Church) — are connected. They both pertain to the afflictions of the saints by Papacy. Also, in each prophecy, the angel Gabriel is involved.

In Daniel 8:15, 16, Gabriel is the one who explained (in part) the vision to Daniel. “I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision” (verse 16).

A similar scene appears in Daniel chapter 12. There also a river appears, and there also a voice calls to Gabriel near the river, prompting him to speak. (Compare closely Daniel 12:6, 10:5, 11:1, 9:21, to see that this linen-clad angel was Gabriel.)

Thus Gabriel is involved in the vision of chapter eight (2300 years) and the vision of chapter twelve (1260 years), which relates those prophecies to each other. They are related also, in that they were the foundational time prophecies which spawned the Adventist Movement in the early 1800s, anticipating the second advent.

The Explanation by Gabriel

In Daniel 8:17, Gabriel explained to Daniel that the end of this vision was a long time distant. “For at the time of the end shall be the vision.”



The Angel Gabriel at the Annunciation to Mary.

In verse 18 Daniel “was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: and he [Gabriel] touched me, and set me upright.” Daniel represents the Lord’s people, and perhaps here, those who would come to understand this vision in the last days. In Matthew 25, in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, we are also told that Christ’s followers “all slumbered and slept,” waiting for their master (Matthew 25:5). Daniel’s “deep sleep” may be prophetic of that.

As noted above, the angel Gabriel is associated with both visions — 2300 years and 1260 years. These prophecies pertain to movements among the Lord’s people in preparation for the return of Christ. Similarly, the angel Gabriel was active in announcing the coming of Messiah when he visited Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, and later Mary, mother of Jesus.

Gabriel is thus associated with the work leading to the coming of Christ. By contrast, Michael is the angel associated with the actual coming of Christ. “At that time shall Michael stand up,” and assume royal authority (Daniel 12:1). Christ comes “with the voice of the archangel [Michael]” (2 Thessalonians 4:16).

Rome Described

Verses 20-22 explain the Ram and Goat — Medo-Persia and Greece with its four horns. Verse 23 then explains the other little horn which emerged later. In the later times of the Grecian Empire, “A king of fierce countenance” would arise. That seems to be the Roman Empire, “which waxed exceeding great” (verse 9).

Then verse 23 continues, “and understanding dark sentences.” This relates to the later development of the Roman Empire, which became transformed into Papacy.

Two Angels

The Angel Gabriel is associated with the work leading to the coming of Christ. Michael is associated with the actual coming of Christ.

This system was pictured in Daniel 7:8 as a stout horn having “eyes like the eyes of man,” suggesting wisdom and sagacity. In this case its shrewdness is devious, rather than enlightening, thus “dark sentences.”

Papacy relied mostly upon the kings it ruled to carry out its wishes. “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power” (verse 24). Papacy would severely persecute the Lord’s people. “He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people” (verse 24). This description is similar to that in Daniel 7:25, where Papacy “wears out the saints of the holy High,” and Revelation 13:7, “it was given unto him to make war with the saints.”

Verse 25 — Papacy’s crafty policies caused him to prosper, and be exalted in pride. “By peace [margin, prosperity, he] shall destroy many.” Perhaps this refers to the corrupting riches which that system gathered. “He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.” Even though he [falsely] claims to represent Christ, in fact this anti-christ system would oppose the true spirit and teachings of Christ. “But he shall be broken **without hand.**” So Papacy, and its political rule intermixed with the kings of the Europe in bygone days, would be broken by the spirit of God. This work began when Europe was shaken during the Napoleonic Wars. But the real smiting was during World War One, continued through World War Two. Daniel 2:34 is a parallel passage. There a rock is cut out “**without hands**” and breaks apart the “image” of Church-State ruled Europe.

Verse 26 — “And the vision of the evening and the morning [2300 of each, constituting 2300 days, fulfilled as 2300 years] which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.” For most of the years of the Gospel Age, the Daniel class has waited for the time. Now it has come. The defiling errors have been identified. They have been cleansed from the sanctuary class, who now breathe the sweeter air of clear understanding of God’s Plan.

Verse 27 — “And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days.” So the Daniel class, the Lord’s people, have fainted and been stricken by the various distresses they endured when Papacy was dominant. “Afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business.” So God’s people rise after the long dark night, and proceed upon the King’s business, to proclaim the Truth. “And I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it” — until the due time, which has now come.

The Emergence of Rome

Reader Comments

In our previous issue (March, April 2007), in the article titled “2300 Years,” a question was considered about Daniel 8:9. The text says out of one of the four horns (of the Grecian Empire) came forth another little horn, which appears to represent the emergence of Rome, which thereafter grows into a world power. The question is, in what sense did Rome emerge from one of the fragments of the Grecian Empire? We suggested two possibilities and expressed a preference. Following is a third option, credibly proposed as a resolution, which our readers may find of interest.

“Dear Bro. — Just received FF 2007 March-April. Will suggest a rather simple solution how Rome came out of one of the Grecian horns. Thrace (the Tiras of Genesis 10, which became Lysimachus’ home base) founded Rome. They were symbolized by the wolf (cf. Romulus and Remus’ legend). The names Troas, Troy, Tyre are related. On the west of Italy it is still called the Tyrhennian Sea (waters of Tyre). The early inhabitants of the Italian peninsula were called the Etruscans (from which Tuscany still today), which likely derives from Iter-Tiras, the goings of Tiras. Also, it explains why the Ezekiel 28 prophecy is against the prince of Tyre, when it seems to be against Rome: ethnically, they are the same people. That is how Rome came out of the Tiras, or Thracian, horn.” Bro. Jim Parkinson

Salvation

Recent Correspondence of General Interest

The following recent correspondence may interest our readers. There are very many good Christian people laboring to promote Godliness and faith among others. This is a good work. But it is best to focus on the goal which God seeks for this age, namely the selection of a consecrated and devoted “Bride of Christ” to serve and lead the world during the Millennium. Understanding the purpose of the call of the Bride class also helps us understand the high standards which we are called to attain in our Christian life.

“Dear Brother in Christ, From last year I was so busy in the church working, organizing crusades and seminars. But our God is doing wonders ... people are being saved and having salvation. I am listening to hear from you at USA. Yours in Christ, Pastor R W, Kenya”

IN REPLY

“Dear Brother, Greetings in Christ. I am glad to know the work of encouraging faith in the people in your area is progressing well. As to salvation, recall that in the

Scriptures this is used in two senses — salvation presently through redemption, and salvation future through our resurrection from death into heavenly life.

“Your mention of people “having salvation” thus refers to the first of these. But of this, there is something more to say. Please notice Romans 6:13, and Romans 12:1, and Matthew 16:24, and Luke 14:27-33. Notice that these texts, which define what becoming a Christian is, call for a devoted commitment to Christ — a consecration. This means a willingness not merely to avoid sin, but to sacrifice, respecting the good things of earth which we might otherwise enjoy.

“Very often, people consider salvation little more than avoiding sin and attending meetings. That is certainly good. But it is short of the commitment of consecration. I hope that those you minister to are encouraged toward a full commitment, in accord with the texts above.

“One reason that becoming a Christian is not as well understood as it might be, is that people have the opinion that when a man dies, he either goes to heaven or hell. In that case, people reason, surely people who believe in Christ are on their way to heaven.

“But the truth is very different. Heaven is not the destination for mankind in general. It is only the destination for those who are consecrated to God, and manifest this by their development of Christian character, expressed by their conduct and service.

“Nor is hell a place of torment and everlasting punishment — there is no such place as that. Hell in the Bible refers to the state of the dead. When people die, they are just that — dead. They do not see, feel, think, or suffer. As animals die and are no more, so with people — except that people will be brought back to life (like Lazarus was), during the Millennium, in the resurrection.

“Then people will be raised to life as human beings again. During that time Satan will be bound, so the world can learn the Truth. The rulership of that world will be from heaven, by Christ and his elect. The representatives of that kingdom on earth will be the prophets of the Old Testament, raised as perfect human beings to lead the world. (We refer to them as “Ancient Worthies.”)

“When this is grasped by Christian people, then they can appreciate that the call to heaven is not a general call to the world, but a very special call for those willing to become disciples according to the requirements in the scriptures listed above.

“I hope that the dear ones you referred to as “saved” are sincerely committed, as the scriptures listed above describe. From experience, I suppose that the number of true disciples is the minority, rather than the majority, or those who step forward. But of course we hope for the very best in this respect.

“Godspeed in your work — but I hope you make these points clear to your listeners. Otherwise they may misunderstand what it means to be a Christian, and fail to mature. In our hope of the Kingdom.” — (signed)

Wary of Discontent

(Some counsel from the pen of Pastor Russell)

Discontent is the general malady of the world today. Selfishness is harassing the vitals of society, in its every class. The rich are generally grasping for more millions; the comfortably fixed are anxious to be wealthy; the poor and laborers are grasping for what is “right” and for “hours” and for “more pay.”

The only safe place for God’s children is as far as possible out of all the strife. Remember the statement of the Bible, “*Godliness with contentment is great gain,*” and lay in a large stock of both. These two qualities will serve to separate you and your aims from the worldly and their aims, ambitions and greed. Rather, be willing to earn a humbler living with godliness and contentment at gain of peace of heart, communion with the Lord and some more time to spend in his service, doing good unto all as you have the opportunity — especially to the household of faith.

Look at the list below and choose which you will have as your experience. You cannot mix them. An attempt to do so will only discomfort yourself and others. Choose the second list, and endeavor to shape your course accordingly.

Ambition for self	Ambition for God
Selfishness	Godliness
Discontent	Contentment
Impatience	Patience
Pride	Meekness
Rudeness	Gentleness
Anger	Self Control
Malice	Brotherly Kindness
Hatred, strife	Love, joy, peace
Bitterness of soul	Fellowship with God

The Lord says to all, even to those who are not saints: “Seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.” Leave, in general, most of your grievances and wrongs for the Lord to make right. Trust in the Lord and do good. Verily, you will be fed and generally blessed (Psalms 37:3).

Love as a Stimulus

The world is motivated by ambition and selfishness to push the world along the highway of progress. But how few have pure, unadulterated love. This love is one of the

choicest fruits of the spirit of God. It is not, consequently, to be found growing wild in the worldly heart. It is found only very imperfectly developed in Christian people, absolutely perfect in none, and approximately perfect only in a very few — the saints.

Of these few we remember that the Lord declares there are not many rich or great or wise. This “little flock” is mainly composed of the poor of this world (both in mind and in purse), whose only riches are riches of faith. The world will not think of these, their words and examples, but will go on blindly, talking about love and practicing selfishness, hatred, malice and envy, and all the unlovely elements of the spirit which is the reverse of the spirit of love.

The world will soon enough find its release in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Then they will begin to bend their ears to the “still small voice” of godliness. Meanwhile, we have that privilege now.

“Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Spirit, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 1:20, 21).

— Adapted from Zion’s Watchtower (R1243)



“What shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.”
(Luke 3:14).

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”
(Philippians 4:11, 12)

“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”
(1 Timothy 6:6-8)

2300 Year Parallels

A strong prophetic confirmation of the chronology of the Old Testament.

This article is part of our series on Bible Chronology. But it also serves as a supplement to the recent articles on Daniel chapter eight. Some of our readers have the study titled “The Stream of Time,” which explains the chronology of the Old Testament and some of the interweaving testimonies for its accuracy. (A copy may be obtained by request, at no charge.) But some of the features presented here is not included in that study, as they came to light since that study was published.

Many dear friends are engaged with interest in the evidence we present that the Kingdom is approaching in about 36 years. But there are reservations — understandable enough in light of the subject, which has so long stirred the hopes of the saints.

For ourselves the evidence is entirely satisfactory. It is fixed firmly upon the testimony of Scripture. It builds upon the noblest labors of prophetic students of the past, in particular upon the studies of the adventist movement of the early 1800s, and the refinements advanced through the Bible Student Movement begun in the late 1800s. The former was led by Bro. William Miller, the latter by Bro. Charles Russell. We, as do many Bible Students, consider Bro. Miller a forerunner of the Harvest, and Bro. Russell as the messenger of the Harvest. It is therefore natural, reasonable, satisfying, that the conclusions we advance are merely refinements of the prophetic testimony which was advanced through their labors.

They, in turn, were building upon the devoted labors of prophetics students before them. Such is the method by which God has led the Church to the end of age, providing just the information necessary at just the times appropriate. “No prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

Open to Evidence

Any time one ponders a matter with interest and concern, but a degree of uncertainty, it is good to keep open to additional evidence which arises from time to time. That is the nature of what appears below. It is additional evidence which we did not appreciate until recently. For those who are mulling these issues in their mind, anxious to be apprised of whatever is available from the scriptures about the nearness of the Kingdom, it should be of considerable interest.

Gabriel

There is something unusual in Daniel 8:15, 16. For the first time in scripture, an angel is identified by name:

Gabriel. “And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.”

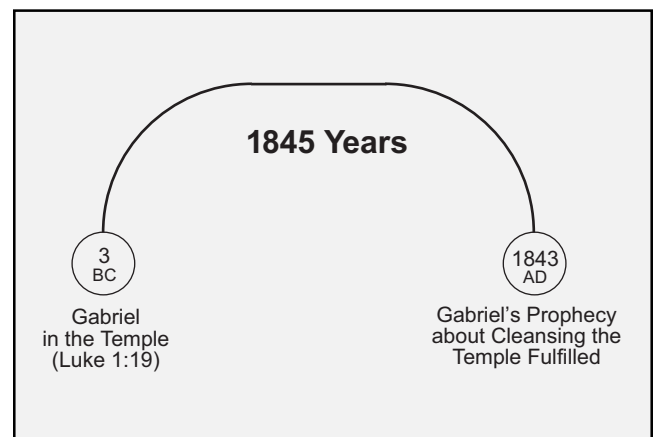
The same angel is named also in chapter nine of Daniel (9:21). Gabriel is also the giver of the vision in Daniel 10, 11, 12 (compare Daniel 9:1, 21, 11:1). So though the scriptures nowhere earlier mention an angel by name, here in three consecutive narratives, Gabriel is specified. Why is this?

Consider the content of these prophecies. Daniel chapter nine contains the seventy-week prophecy about the coming of Christ at his first advent. As most Bible Students hold, Jesus himself is Michael the archangel (mentioned in Daniel 10:21, 12:1, and thrice in the New Testament). So naturally a different angel, in this case Gabriel, was used to give the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26, 27). It is fitting, then, that Gabriel also deliver the prophecy predicting the coming of Jesus in Daniel chapter nine.

The time prophecies in Daniel chapter eight, and chapters 10-12 — namely, the 2300, 1260, 1290, 1335 years — all pertain to the second advent of Christ. And they all have parallels as well to the first advent of Christ. (See “The Stream of Time,” Section Eight, “Expanded Parallels.”) So it is appropriate that they also are associated with Gabriel. It is the parallel regarding the 2300 years that we focus on here.

Gabriel in the Temple

As explained in the articles on Daniel chapter eight, the 2300 years take us to the expectant hopes of the adventist movement in 1843 — just 31 years before the actual date for the return of Christ in 1874. The parallel date 1845 years earlier would be 3 BC — just 31 years before the appearance of Christ as Messiah when baptized in the Jordan River in 29 AD. (Remember, when crossing the BC/AD divide, adjust by one. Thus 3 BC + 29 AD = 32, adjust by one, yields 31 years.)



In exactly this year the same angel, Gabriel, made an appearance again, the first one recorded in scripture since the days of Daniel. He appeared to a priest named Zacharias, to announce that Zacharias would have a son who would prepare the way for Messiah. That son was John the Baptist, a forerunner of Christ, just as the Miller Movement was a forerunner of the Harvest Movement. (The Bible Student Movement was founded upon an appreciation of the Second Advent of Christ, which was anticipated by the earlier Miller Movement.)

Even the place of Gabriel's appearance is notable. He appeared in the Temple, as Zacharias served his priestly duties (Luke 1:5-19). This is another connection with Daniel eight, where the subject of the vision brought by Gabriel was the Temple and its cleansing.

Thus the conclusion reached in previous articles — that the 2300 years culminate in 1843 — is engagingly supported by the parallel just 1845 years earlier. The 1845 year period, which is the length of time between the two advents of Christ, is used as a "marking stick" as it were, to connect each time prophecy of Daniel with a parallel mark 1845 years earlier.

Notice that if the end of the 2300 years were a few years earlier, or later, we would be devoid of any apparent supporting parallel. How does this happen, if not by design?

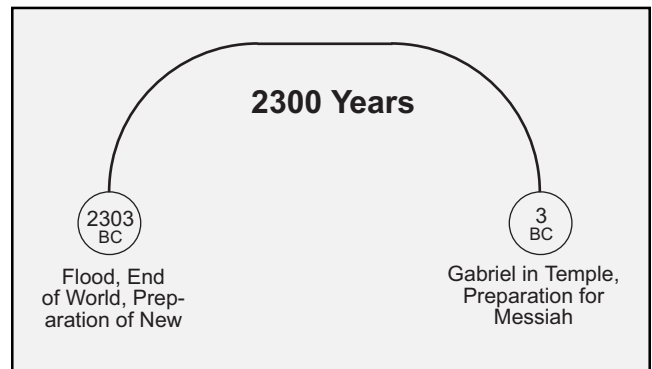
This is helpful support. It suggests that we are on the proper track in understanding the 2300 years of Daniel eight. It is evidence — not proof, but supporting evidence — that the adventist method of interpreting the 2300 years, namely to begin them at the same time as the 70 weeks of Daniel chapter nine, is correct. The same approach was followed by Bro. Russell in his treatment of the subject in *Thy Kingdom Come* (popularly known as Volume Three, part of the "Studies in the Scriptures" series).

This supportive parallel is relatively fresh information. However, this support is not entirely new. It is part

of the "Expanded Parallels" treated in "The Stream of Time." But there is more to this parallel, and it is newer part which we cite as evidence not published before.

Another Dimension

This further dimension to the subject comes in four pieces. (1) Remarkably, the date 3 BC when Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the Temple was also at the close of a notable 2300 year period — just as the date it supports by way of parallel, namely 1843 AD, was the close of a scripturally-marked period of 2300 years. 2300 years before 3 BC is the date 2303 BC. This is precisely the year in which the great flood of Noah's day commenced.

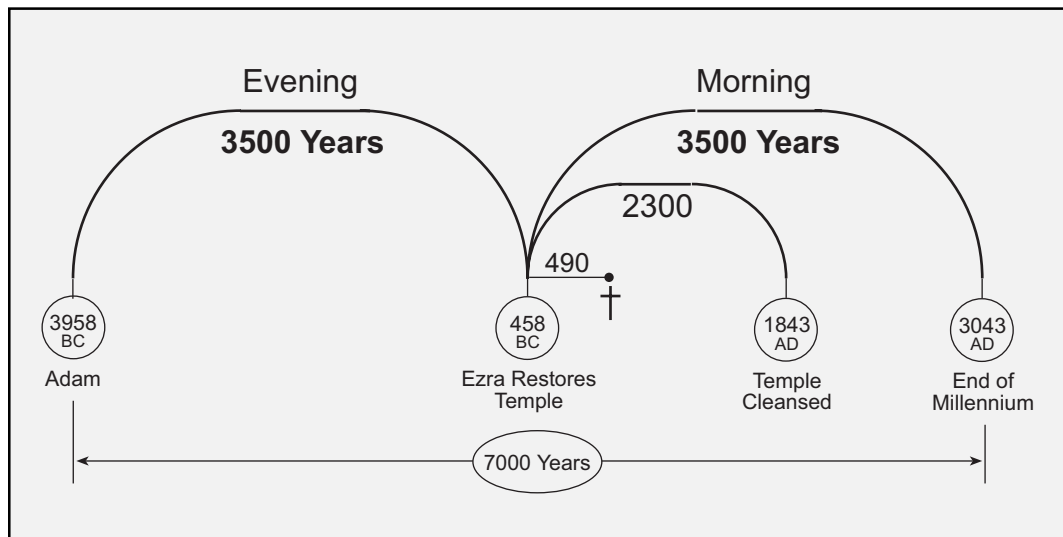


This connection is illustrated above. In the diagram previous to this, we saw that the two dates, 3 BC and 1843 AD, are in parallel with each other. This further observation, that these two parallel dates are each also at the close of a marked span of 2300 years, cannot but arrest the attention of those seeking to appreciate the design our Heavenly Father has intertwined with His prophetic word. This is evidence of design, which speaks of intention and purpose by God.

(2) But note further. There is a striking feature about the beginning point of the 2300 years of Daniel eight — namely, that the date starting these years, 458 BC,

is auspiciously at the very center of the 7000 years of God's Plan. The last "creative day," 7000 years in length, has two parts, like all the others — the "evening" followed by a "morning." The darker days of the Divine Plan, the first 3500 years, introduce the brighter "morning."

That morning, the second 3500 years, commences at the same point as the 490 years leading to the



Ransom yielded by Jesus at Calvary. In other words the 2300 years commence at a new beginning in God's Plan.

Is this also true of the earlier, parallel 2300 years? Does that also commence a new beginning in God's Plan? Remarkably, and clearly, yes. The flood dynamically closed the Old World and introduced a new world into which Noah and his family were delivered. Thus the parallel is not only of date, but of kind. Each 2300 year period begins an extraordinary new beginning.

(3) But there is still another connection between these two, parallel, 2300 year periods. Saint Peter shows that the ark, which delivered Noah and his family from the flood, represents redemption in Christ (1 Peter 3:20, 21). The seventy weeks commencing in 458 BC take us to that redemption in Christ. So even in this concept there is a connection.

A Step Further

(4) But even this is not the end of the matter. Starting the 2300 years in the year 458 BC is predicated on the opinion that they commence at the same point as the 70 weeks (490 years) of Daniel nine. Is this point supported in the parallel?

It is. Remarkably, the opening of the Flood, which begins the earlier 2300 year period, **also** begins a notable period of 490 years. From 2303 BC (when the Flood began), 490 years forward take us to 1813 BC. This was the date of the death of Sarah — the only woman in the Old Testament whose age at death is recorded.

How do we know Sarah died 490 years after the opening of the flood? According to the count of years from Genesis 11 and 12, from the end of the flood to the entrance of Abraham and Sarah into Canaan was 427 years. As the flood opened a year before the episode closed, this becomes 428 years from the start of the flood until entering Canaan.

Abraham at the time was 75 years old (Genesis 12: 4-6). Since Sarah was 10 years younger than Abraham, she would have been 65 years old at the time (Genesis 17:17). Sarah died at age 127 (Genesis 23:1), so she lived 62 years more after coming into Canaan. The sum of 428 (beginning of the Flood until Abraham and Sarah entered Canaan) and 62 (Canaan to Sarah's death) is 490 years.

(See the diagram at the top of page 11 for this feature, and a summary of them all.)

The Death of Sarah Meaningful

But is the death of Sarah meaningful? Yes, it is. We grasp this from Paul's comments about Sarah in Galatians chapter four. There Paul shows that Hagar was a type or picture of the Law, and Sarah was a type or picture of the Covenant God made with Abraham, that through him would come a promised seed of blessing (namely Christ). Sarah was barren for many years, picturing that this promise of God would appear barren of fulfillment for many years — until Christ came. When

Beginning Points

As the 1260, 1290, 1335 Years of Daniel 12 begin at one time (539 AD), so the 2300 and 490 Years of Daniel 8, 9, start at one time (458 BC).

Jesus died, and rose from the dead, the first "child" of that covenant was brought into glory.

Thus, the passing away of the type (Sarah), and the fulfillment of the promise she represented (when Jesus was raised to glory), are related in concept. They are parallel in time and parallel in concept.

The thoughtful observer must be impressed with the harmony and symmetry thus produced. We are tracing the thoughts of God, looking for evidence that the leadings of the Spirit of God through the prophetic students of the past has been in the right direction. And, as Albert Einstein once said of his studies, "we are thinking the thoughts of God after him."

Direct Testimony, Supplementary Evidence

This kind of evidence is very impressive to us. We are deeply encouraged. Not only does it support the customary approach of interpreting the 2300 year of Daniel, but at the same time it strongly suggests we have understood the count of years from the flood forward, properly. This, in turn, strongly confirms that the count of 6000 years from Adam, to the seventh millennium in 2043, is also correct.

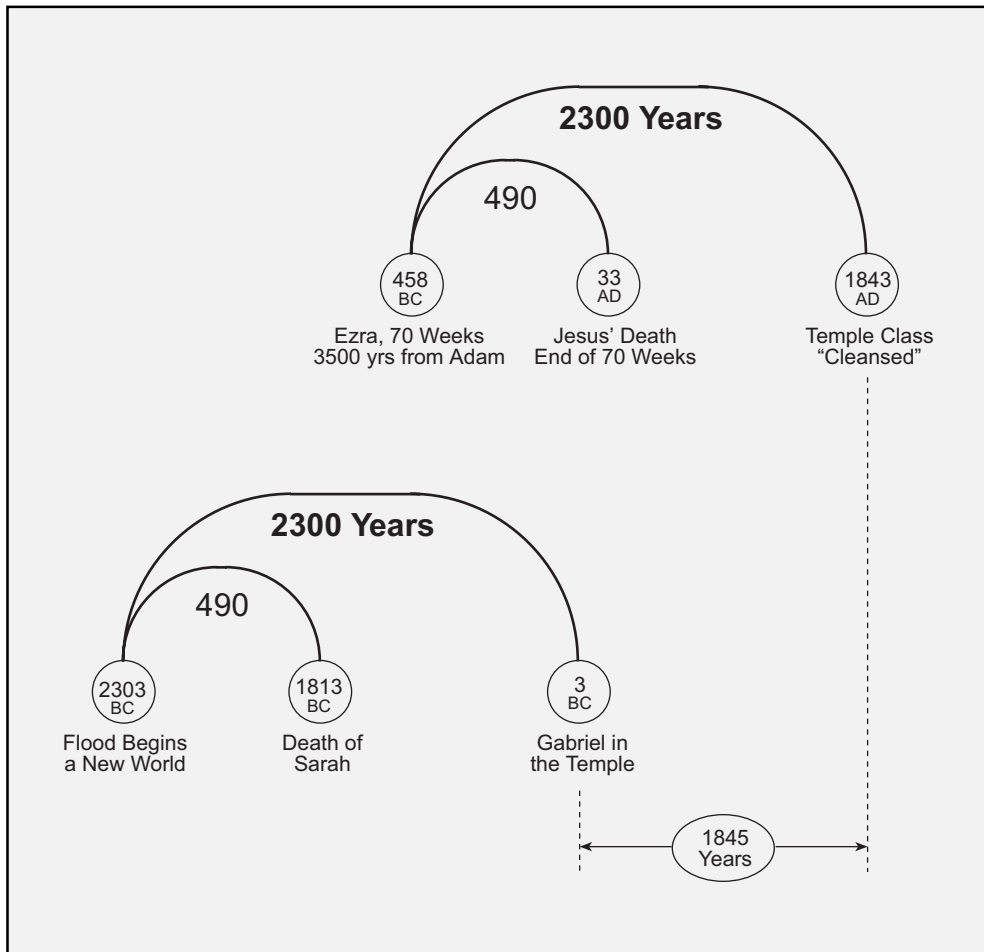
However, we recognize these parallels as supplementary evidence. Very strong, but nevertheless supplementary. It requires interpretation. But recall that the foundation for all these applications is the Direct Testimony of scripture about Bible Chronology — the actual count of years. We have seen this, step by step, in our series of articles on Bible Chronology.

The Genesis account gives 1656 years from Adam to the end of the Flood, 427 more to Abraham entering Canaan, Galatians 3:16 give 430 more to the Exodus, and 1 Kings 6:1 gives 479 more to the founding of Solomon's Temple. These are not guesses, nor interpretations, but founded, as we say, upon Direct Testimony.¹

It is never satisfactory to form opinion upon a foundation of symmetries, however appealing. But this is not the train of logic presented here. The foundation is the Direct Testimony. Only when this is embraced do these lovely parallels and symmetries emerge. These give evidence of thought, planning, design, as we would expect to find, if we apprehend the Divine Mind properly.

Going Forward

We have examined the Direct Testimony in details from Adam to Solomon. We have paused along the way to



The top part of this diagram shows the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. The first part of this is the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24, which "make an end of sins ... reconciliation for iniquity ... bring in everlasting righteousness" — by Jesus' death, 33 AD.

This begins with the Decree of Ezra in 458 BC, and coincides with the mid-point of 7000 years, from Adam to the close of the Millennium — the "Morning" of the last Creative Day.

The second part shows a parallel 2300 years, also opening a "new world," at the Flood. These 2300 years close in 3 BC, when Gabriel appeared in the Temple — the same angel who appeared in Daniel 8, about the Cleansing of the Temple.

This period also begins with 490 years, to the death of Sarah. She represented the spiritual part of the Abrahamic Covenant, which bears the "Seed of Promise." The first part of that Seed, Jesus, was "born" on the spirit plane in 33 AD.

These parallel 2300 years are staggered by 1845 years, the "measuring stick" used so often in time prophecy. It is the span of time between the two advents of Christ (29 AD and 1874 AD).

catch a glimpse of the kind of harmony thus produced. Meanwhile we have mentioned the date 966 BC as the date for the spring of Solomon's Fourth Year — the year in which he founded the Temple which stood until the days of Zedekiah. This date is not at all unique to us — it is broadly held, upon firm evidence.

However, the next step in our series on Bible Chronology is to examine this date. We will begin this by looking at the period of the Divided Monarchy of the Israel-

ites, which followed the passing of King Solomon. Upon this matter the date 966 BC rests — that is, counting back through the history of Israel's Kingdom, to the time of Solomon. We have held this in abeyance for some time. But it is a rich field of study. When we continue this series, we will examine it directly.

(1) Even Direct Testimony must be reasoned upon and applied properly, of course. We do not mean to overlook this.



Sarah

"And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me ... for I have born [Abraham] a son in his old age" (Genesis 21:6,7).

When the Apostle Peter counseled sisters in the Church respecting Godly conduct, he remembered Sarah as a prime example. She, like Abraham, was first of all a person of faith. In the text which heads this article, her laugh at her triumph in childbirth was a laugh of joy she wished all to appreciate with her. Her son's name commemorates this, for the name Isaac means laughter.

Here are Peter's words (1 Peter 3:1-6). "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may ... be won ... while they behold your chaste conduct coupled with reverence.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair ... wearing of gold ... apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

"After this manner ... the holy women who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well."



Abraham, Sarah, and three angels with good news.

Sarah's faith was richly rewarded when she bore Isaac. She had come through many barren years, and many opportunities for expressing faith, and patience, and the "meek and quiet spirit" Peter speaks of.

With her husband Abraham, she left her native home in Ur of the Chaldees for journeys westward at the beckoning of God. She stayed with Abraham in Haran until the passing of her father-in-law Terah, then escorted Abraham southward into a foreign land — but a land of promise. How many opportunities she had either to supplement his faith, or to plague her husband with complaints for an unsettled life and a nomadic lifestyle.

When Abraham met three strangers approaching his dwelling in the noon day sun, and tendered them hospitality, he asked Sarah, "Make ready **quickly** three measures of fine meal and make cakes upon the hearth" (Genesis 18:6). Did Sarah repine, or cooperate?

When Abraham dutifully followed the Lord's command, "walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it," did his devoted wife complain or cheerfully appreciate the blessing God intended by it? (Genesis 13:17).

When Abraham was given the rite of circumcision for himself and his family, was Sarah supportive? (Genesis 17:10).

When Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice by God's command, perhaps in discretion Abraham did not share with his wife Sarah this exceptional burden. But did she later commend his remarkable obedience, or chide him?

When Eliezer sought a bride for Isaac, was Sarah agreeable, or restive?

These were all occasions, and no doubt countless others not recorded, which gave opportunity for Sarah's character to rise to the occasion, or otherwise.

So Christian wives today have opportunity after opportunity to express the godly virtues St. Peter exhorts. What may seem the mundane affairs of life, punctuated with episodes of apparent magnitude in the ebb and flow of life, are actually so many opportunities, great or small, for wives to exercise faith, patience, trust, respect, and encourage their husbands to the same. The power of influence by a wife and mother is very great. It may well turn many an occasion for either good, or otherwise.

Presumably all sisters in the Church would like their influence used consistently for the good, whether in the ecclesia or in the home. In this case, Peter gives us the way this can be done. It is by attending to the God-given feminine graces, and exhibiting them regularly — especially under provocation.

"The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit ... is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4). It is also greatly valued by those who behold when this grace is graciously exhibited. It can melt a hard heart. It can give pause to the aggressive. Whenever we observe such humble, kindly conduct, it ennobles even the observer.

Sarah Also a Type

Sarah is remembered not only for her respectful demeanor, but it pleased God to make of this faithful woman, and devoted mother, a picture which applies to all of God's saints.

Sarah represents the promise of God given to Abraham, that he and Sarah would have a promised seed to bless "all the families of the earth" (Genesis 22:18). Hagar, the bondmaid who first provided a son for Abraham on Sarah's behalf, represented the covenant of bondage — the Law Covenant from Mount Sinai. But Sarah, a free woman, represents God's Covenant of Grace. The first "child" of that covenant was our Lord Jesus, the "seed of Abraham" (Galatians 3:16).

But together with Christ will be all those who consecrate their lives to God, and prove faithful to that agreement through a Godly and giving life. If we have consecrated our lives to God, then we, together with Christ, are counted as part of that "seed of blessing." "If ye be Christ's, then are **ye** [also] Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

These pictures of Hagar and Sarah, as the Law Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant, are mentioned by St. Paul in Galatians 4:22-31. In verse 28 he affirms to us, "Now ye, brethren, like Isaac was, are children of the promise."

Thus not only do we inherit, with Christ Jesus, the chief favors of God, but as well, we will join Christ during the Millennium in blessing "all the families of the earth." (Romans 8:17, Revelation 3:21).