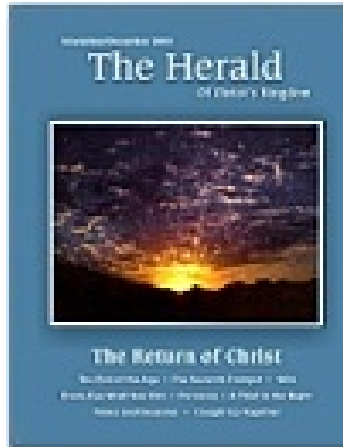


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In the Beginning The Return of Christ

The promise of Christ's return was a motivating inspiration to the early disciples. "If I go ... I will come again" (John 14:3). "This same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner" (Acts 1:11). "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37).

We are now living in the blessed day so long expected. Our Master has returned, and all the attendant evidences are about us. We feed upon a clear understanding of God's plan and our share in it. The mists of the dark ages have rolled away. The time of trouble such as never before has already brought two World Wars, with the Armageddon crescendo impending. Israel is being restored, and the saints of past ages have entered their reward.

The Return of Christ, and his *parousia* since 1874, are thoughtfully examined in this issue. We begin with an article on the harvest, "The End of the Age." We are also in the time of "The Seventh Trumpet," the subject of our second article. "Every Eye Shall See Him" explains that this will be through mental appreciation, our Lord Jesus himself being invisible to the human eye. This is followed by "1874," an examination of the date common among brethren worldwide as the date of the second advent.

The article "Times and Seasons" considers this expression used by Jesus before parting from his disciples, and how it relates to the hope of his return. The next article, "Parousia," examines the meaning of this Greek word used of our Lord's return, showing

it to mean “presence.” We close with “A Thief in the Night,” words from a text wherein Jesus warns that his return would be stealthy, requiring us to attend to the signs while living a devoted Christian life.

Our returned Lord, “having received the kingdom” (Luke 19:15), is now exercising regal authority. “This kingdom has already come into executive authority, although ... it has not yet come into full control of earthly dominion. Its establishment is in progress ... nothing could be more ... deeply interesting to those ... seeking to be engaged in cooperation with the Master, the Chief-Reaper and King, in the work now due and in progress.”—*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 3, p. 22.

May this issue further our interest and study of the sacred Scriptures which disclose the remarkable character of these “days of the Son of man” (Luke 17:26).

The Harvest

The End of the Age

The harvest is the end of the age.—Matthew 13:39, NKJV

Carl Hagensick

A harvest, both in literal and symbolic usage, applies to the activity of gathering in the fruitage of a period of growth. The word is used eight times in the New Testament, always in the metaphorical sense of a spiritual harvest. It occurs 41 times in the Old Testament, usually with the sense of a literal harvest, though some of the occasions appear to have a prophetic significance as well.

In Matthew 13:39 the word “end” is from the Greek *suntelia*, meaning not a point in time but a period of time. Professor W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, states, “The word does not denote a termination, but the heading up of events to the appointed climax.” Thus the implication is that the ingathering of the church of Christ, the “harvest” of this present Gospel or Christian age, is the work of a period of time as opposed to the instantaneous “rapture” anticipated by many Christians.

Two Aspects of the Second Coming

The concept of Christ returning a second time is mentioned frequently in two quite different contexts. Consider these texts:

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—John 14:3

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”—1 Thessalonians 4:16,17

Contrast these with:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”—Matthew 25:31

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.”—Jude 14

It is axiomatic that the Lord cannot come **for** his saints, as the first two texts demand, at the same time that he comes **with** them, as indicated in the second set of verses. It is also self-evident that the coming **for** the saints must precede the coming **with** them. It is the period of time between these two events that the New Testament styles the “harvest.”

The Word “End” in Matthew 24

The English word “end” appears five times in Matthew 24, representing three different Greek words. Verse 31 does not relate to our current topic; the word “end” there means “outermost part.”

The word used by Jesus in this Olivet sermon in verses 6, 13, and 14 is the Greek *telos*, meaning a full and complete end and referring to a point in time in contradistinction with *suntelia* in the disciples’ question of verse 3, referring to a closing climactic period of events.

From this observation, we suggest that the signs of Matthew 24 in answer to the question of Jesus’ followers do not refer to the final termination of events but to those events leading up to that final conclusion—to the “harvest” of the age. The catalog of occurrences in this chapter thus pertains to the specific query of how Jesus’ adherents would know that the time was ripe, not only for the return of their Lord, but for their ultimate deliverance which that return portended.

Harvest Events

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”—Revelation 14:14,15

From this Scripture it appears evident that this one, likened to the “Son of man,” is the one credited with doing the harvesting. In other words, the harvest must be at a time subsequent to the return of the Lord and not an event in preparation for his return. The “wheat” (children of the kingdom) and the “tares” (children of the wicked one) were not to be separated from each other before this time (Matthew 13:30,38).

Gathering the wheat (representing individuals) into the heavenly father’s “barn” and binding the tares into bundles (representing systems) for future burning (destruction) does not mean that individuals are destroyed forever. They are, of course, destroyed as individual tares in the same way that one can destroy an enemy by turning him into a friend.

In the context of Revelation 14, we observe a series of events listed in chronological order:

- ◆ Verses 1 through 5 give a vision of 144,000 saints gathered to their Lord on Mount Zion.
- ◆ Verses 6 and 7 portray an angel spreading the “everlasting gospel” throughout the earth.
- ◆ Verse 8 depicts the fall of a false religious system called Babylon.

- ◆ Verses 9 through 11 list the consequences to those who remain in this false system.
- ◆ Verse 12 praises the remnant for their patient endurance.
- ◆ Verse 13 promises those who die from this time forward a special “blessedness.”
- ◆ Verses 14 through 16 describe the harvest of these saints of the earth.
- ◆ Verses 17 through 20 narrate a second harvest, of the wicked remainder, the “tares” of Matthew 13.

The separation of the wheat from the tares, so prominent a part of the parable, is thus seen to be a direct result of the preaching of the “everlasting gospel”—the same gospel that was preached before to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). This message would have the two-fold effect of judging the false system of Babylon and attracting the true saints out of her (Revelation 18:4).

Following this separation the false system would receive its final judgment and destruction, figuratively portrayed as the burning of the tares in Matthew 13:40-42.

The Reapers

When Jesus explained the parable to his disciples, he identified the workers who cause the separation, saying, “the reapers are the angels” (Matthew 13:39). Who are these angels?

The Rotherham translation gives an alternative rendering of this phrase: “the reapers are messengers.” Strong’s Concordance defines the Greek word *angelos* (#32) used here as “a messenger, especially an ‘angel,’ by implication a pastor.” Thayers suggests “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God.” In the King James Version the word is translated angel 179 times and messenger 7 times.

On two occasions (Matthew 9:37 and Luke 10:2) Jesus talks about the greatness of the harvest and remarks “but the laborers are few.” He follows this statement with the request, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:38). In these texts it seems obvious that the laborers or reapers are human messengers, the evangelists or preachers of the gospel that are to accomplish this work.

Responsibility of the Reapers

The word “send” in Matthew 9:38 is from the Greek *exballo*, signifying not a mere delegation of authority but an authoritative command. The word suggests a sense of urgency to the need for reapers. As there was a great work to be done at the time Jesus spoke these words in the harvest, or end, of the Jewish age, so there is likewise a great work at the time of the harvest of the Christian or Gospel age at his return.

This work is the promulgation of a message that would separate the wheat, or true Christians, from the tares, their false counterparts. Although not directly the message of Revelation 18:4, “come out of her my people,” it has that effect. Rather than a direct message of separation, the division of the wheat from the tares is accomplished by the proclamation of the “everlasting gospel.” This gospel message is the plan of God for all mankind in the resuscitation from the dead and the subsequent restitution of man to full perfection and harmony with his Creator. Thus the words of truth act, not like a rod to drive out, but more like a magnet to attract and draw out the true Christians from the stupor of a nominal form of Christianity to a vital personal relationship with Jehovah. A message of love is always more permanently effective than one of fear.

However, there is another work assigned to the reapers. The two-fold nature of the work of the reapers is given in the parable of the wheat and the tares: “Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:30).

This secondary work of gathering the tares into bundles for the purpose of burning is here given as one to be accomplished prior to the gathering of the wheat into the barn. However in Jesus’ explanation of the parable, this order appears to be reversed. It is noteworthy in Matthew 13:40-42 that the burning of the tares is the last work of the harvest: “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The harmony between these two expressions is undoubtedly that the gathering of tares into bundles begins before the ingathering of the saints, but their destruction is postponed until the true Christians are gathered home. This is the very process used in the natural Middle Eastern harvests in biblical times. It was necessary to separate the two as the first step, but the tares disposal could await the far more important task of gathering the wheat into the barn.

It is the same message which accomplishes both works. To those who accept the message of the gospel it is a means for separation and ultimate deliverance; for those who do not it is a message of judgment and condemnation. The carrying out of the sentence does not involve the literal eternal perishing of the tare class, but their destruction as tares and the removal of the systems which have held them in bondage.

Old Testament Allusions

Several phrases of literal harvests in the Old Testament are suggestive of illustrations of the harvest of this present time. Space will not permit a thorough examination of these pictures, but we will draw a few short lessons from some of them.

♦ Joshua 3:15, “Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest.” This verse is in connection with Israel entering the promised land by crossing over the Jordan river dry shod. Jordan, in this picture, represents the death sentence upon the human race, and its overflowing might well show that the harvest portends the time when that sentence, being full, is about to be removed.

♦ 1 Samuel 6:13, “They of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.” This text narrates the return of the ark of the covenant, representing the presence of God, from Philistine captivity. It is a truth that the face of God is turned again toward earth’s affairs at the onset of the spiritual wheat harvest.

♦ Isaiah 18:4-6, “For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.” The heat of harvest time would be almost unbearable were it not accompanied by a cooling dew (see also Jeremiah 5:24). In the spiritual harvest, the troublous times that come with it are greatly alleviated by a gentle cooling dew of refreshing truth—the “everlasting gospel.” Although this harvest is of the grape rather than grain, it is also preceded by a separating work—removing unproductive branches before picking the vintage.

♦ Jeremiah 8:20, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved.” Here a group who have entered the “defenced cities” and were “silent there” find that they have missed the salvation for which they had so ardently hoped, an apt description of the great multitude of Revelation 7 who are not delivered until after the harvest, and then to a lesser reward than that for which they strove.

♦ Jeremiah 50:16, “Cut off the sower from Babylon and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword shall they turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.” Here we find the spewing out of the false religious system as the Lord’s mouthpiece (Revelation 3:16) and the true saints fleeing the oppressions of their former bondage.

♦ Jeremiah 51:33, “The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her; yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.” As in Revelation 14:17-20, the harvest here is not of the church, but the destructive harvest of Babylon. This is also referred to in Joel 3:13,

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; get you down for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.”

The activity of spreading the truth and the separation of many sincere Christians from sincerely held errors of the past and the organizations that promulgated them has been going on for over one hundred years. There is yet work to be done in this harvest. Let us therefore volunteer to be laborers in the field of our Lord.

Times and Seasons

The Seventh Trumpet

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.—Revelation 11:15

Michael Brann

As Christians, the days in which we are now living are the most exciting and anticipated times since the beginning of the Gospel age! For nearly 2,000 years the church has longed for the promise of our Lord's return and the establishment of his long-awaited kingdom.

In Acts we read of the expectations of the disciples and our Lord's response to their query: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:6,7). In verses 10 and 11 we are informed that "two men," undoubtedly heavenly messengers sent for this purpose, added "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Although the disciples were told the "times and seasons" were something they would not understand at that moment, we would not conclude that our Lord never intended them to investigate these matters further, nor never would there be a time when these "times and seasons" would be revealed.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."—1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

The apostle here used the same terminology as did our Lord regarding "times and seasons." They are two different Greek words: *chronos* (meaning a space of time) and *kairos* (meaning a fixed or marked time, or occasion). The word *chronos* indicates there would come a time when certain signs of world conditions would suggest to the watchers that something was about to happen. The word *kairos* indicates to those same watchers something more definite, fixed, or determined which would validate their reasoning upon the signs, such as time prophecy pointing to specific events.

In our focus on the Seventh Trumpet, we find that both "times and seasons"—time periods and episodes—are revealed which confirm our reading of the signs regarding our

Lord's return and the establishment of his kingdom (*chronos*), and specific dated episodes verifying those signs, hopes, and expectations (*kairos*). (See Matthew 16:1-4 for a stinging rebuke to the religious rulers of his day regarding their inability to connect "times and seasons.")

Trumpets

Trumpets in the Bible are signaling instruments. They were used to assemble armies, signal an attack, sound an alarm, or herald an important occasion. Trumpets are loud and shrill sounding so they can be heard broadly and distinctly. Although the seven trumpets in Revelation are not literal soundings intended to be heard with a literal ear, those who have spiritual "ears to hear" have heard and heeded the soundings of the trumpets. This is especially so in our day with the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

Outside of Revelation there is only one place in the Bible where specific mention is made of seven trumpets, with special emphasis placed on the last or seventh of these. This is in Joshua 6, which describes the events of Joshua and his army encircling Jericho. Each day, for six days, they marched around the city with the trumpets; on the seventh day they marched seven times around the city, blew their seven trumpets, and shouted. The walls of Jericho collapsed and the city was taken. Correlations exist which are significant in understanding the symbolic trumpets of Revelation. This is a fruitful comparative study in itself, but for our purpose we merely observe that sounding of the seventh day's trumpets marked the end of their objective. There was no eighth, ninth, or tenth day of trumpets and warnings. The seventh was the last one.

So also in Revelation, the seventh trumpet is the last of a series of seven trumpets. Events associated with it mark the end of an objective. The seven trumpets are synchronous in time with the seven messages of the seven angels. They have occurred in an historical sequence beginning at the start of the Gospel age (shortly after our Lord's ascension into heaven); they will end at the close of the Gospel age (our day and the time immediately ahead of us).

Revelation 8:2, 6 Revelation 10:7 Revelation 11:15-19	Matthew 24:30-31	1 Corinthians 15:51-52	1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
Seventh Trumpet	Great Trumpet	Last Trump(et)	Trump(et) of God
Mystery finished	Mystery implied (v. 3)	Mystery Revealed	Mystery implied (v. 13)
Trumpet Sounded	Sounding implied	Shall Sound	Sound accompanying the Lord's return
Dead Judged	Elect Gathered	Dead in Christ raised	Dead in Christ rise
Voices	Voice of Trumpet		Voice of Archangel
Angry Nations and God's Wrath	Trouble (clouds)	Suppress enemies (v. 12)	Trouble (clouds)
Lord's Presence	Lord's Presence	Lord's Presence (v. 23)	Lord's Presence

This chart compares the events described under the message of the seventh trumpet of Revelation with the trumpets mentioned by our Lord and the apostle Paul. Note the harmony between these four New Testament passages.

The different names given these trumpets (i.e., The Seventh Trumpet, Great Trumpet, Last Trumpet, and Trumpet of God), all indicate the same trumpet. The events variously associated with each one are convincing beyond doubt.

The Mystery of God (Revelation 10:7)

Each of the trumpets, either clearly stated or implied in the context, includes something about a "mystery" being completed or revealed. The mystery of God's Divine Plan of the Ages is being revealed in great detail to those who have heard the message of the Seventh Trumpet, including the mystery of the church as the Body of Christ, their call and purpose, the mystery of why God permits evil, the mystery of why God has seemingly delayed his plans to bless all the families of the earth, etc. One day soon all mankind will be able to rejoice in this knowledge, but presently it is only understood by the elect.

The Sounding of the Trumpet

That the trumpet is sounding in each of these passages indicates these events are going into effect. Harvest truths are being heralded far and near and many are coming to know the true purposes and plans of God as never before because it is the due time.

The times and seasons are understood now also. Many in Christendom read the signs of our day such as Israel's regathering, worldwide stress and trouble, and say, "The Lord is

coming soon.” We, on the other hand, see these same signs, but see the “seasons” also, that is, specific chronological time measurements which indicate not that the Lord is coming, but that he has already returned, invisibly, to direct earth’s affairs, gather his elect to himself, and begin the times of restitution (Acts 3:19-21).

One time feature of special note relates to the days of Daniel, the 1,260, 1,290 and 1,335 days (Daniel 12:7-12). Each of these periods began in 539 A.D., with the 1,335 days concluding in the year 1874, specifically marking the “blessedness” of that time, the second presence of the Lord. (See also Matthew 24:37-46.)

The Dead Judged

The next feature listed is the judgment of the dead. This is not the general judgment of the dead of all mankind, but an advance judgment of those who have been associated with God through Jesus Christ during the Gospel age. These alone are being judged since the Lord’s return. Those deemed faithful to their covenant of sacrifice (Revelation 2:10) will be “raised in Christ” as two of the texts state, while Matthew 24 says the “elect” are “gathered.”

Revelation 11:18 adds some additional detail. Three groups are indicated: “thy servants the prophets,” the “saints,” and “them that fear thy name, small and great.” The first group may at first seem to indicate the prophets of old, but this cannot be according to Hebrews 11:39,40. These prophets must indicate the New Testament prophets (teachers) as referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 2:20, 3:5, etc. One of the first works our Lord would naturally perform at his return in “gathering his elect” would be to raise those “prophets” from the dead to be with him.

The “saints” (a common term associated with the faithful Christians of the Gospel age and used approximately 60 times in the New Testament), likewise are awarded their resurrection from the dead onto the spirit plane of existence during the sounding of this trumpet. We believe this occurred shortly after our Lord’s return. The saints who die in the Lord since that time no longer need to sleep in the dust, but pass immediately to their reward. (See 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.)

The last group to receive its reward consists of “those that fear thy name, both small and great.” This appears to refer to the entire world of mankind who will eventually, if compliant with the terms of life offered them in the kingdom, likewise obtain their reward—everlasting life on the earthly plane of existence. Revelation 20:11,12 styles this the “great white throne” judgment.

If this is correct, we have a clearer definition as to how long this Seventh Trumpet sounds (or is in effect). If it began in 1874 at our Lord’s return and includes the resurrection of all the dead of mankind, then we would understand it to last nearly the entire 1,000 years.

Voices

Next on our chart regarding events associated with the Seventh or Last Trumpet we have “voices.” Primarily it is the voice or message of the “Archangel,” our Lord at his return as indicated in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. His voice or message heralds a new order or dispensation beginning the times of restitution. As Revelation 11:15 states the matter, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” What remarkable news this brings to the Lord’s people who have long looked for and desired it (Acts 1:6; Revelation 6:10). All who hear this message join their voices together with him to proclaim these “glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10).

Anger, Wrath, Trouble

Another common theme embedded in each of these trumpets is trouble. Of course there has always been trouble in the world since sin was first introduced in Eden, but this seems to be a special kind or type of trouble. Revelation says “the nations were angry” and “thy wrath has come,” while the other three texts indicate this by the symbol of “clouds.” The term “clouds” is used in a variety of ways in the Scriptures. Sometimes they convey to the observer that God himself is involved, that it is heaven-born, something not man-made nor manufactured. (See Exodus 13:21 and Matthew 17:5.) At other times clouds convey the idea of something obscure or hidden from normal view, revealed only to the eye of faith (Acts 1:9; Revelation 1:7). Lastly, clouds represent trouble, especially in the form of heavenly judgment (Job 3:5; Isaiah 19:1; Ezekiel 38:9,16). This appears to be the case with this trumpet, as the context reveals.

Earth’s kings and rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, have held dominion for several millennia. These, along with “wicked spirits in high places,” are not eager to yield their power and position to earth’s New Ruler. As 1 Corinthians 15:25 states, “he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet.” The storm clouds are gathering for the final conflict. Psalm 2 portrays this conflict, as well as its glorious outcome.

The Lord’s Second Advent

Perhaps the most significant and thrilling theme common to each of these final trumpet texts is the one indicating our Lord’s return, or second advent. Revelation 11:15 contains the message of his reign begun. In Matthew 24, in answer to the disciples’ question “what shall be the sign of thy coming” (Greek *parousia*, meaning “presence,” not “coming” as the authorized version reads), Jesus gave several signs indicating his presence at the end of this age. The signs included the “tribulation of those days,” “the sound or voice of the trumpet,” the “gathering of his elect” and the regathering of Israel as indicated by the budding fig tree. It is highly unlikely that Jesus would give signs indicating his second presence if every literal eye would in fact see him.

In the 1 Corinthians 15:51,52 text, the apostle Paul clearly speaks of this trumpet in relation to the Lord's return as mentioned in verse 23. Again, the word rendered "coming" is *parousia* and should be rendered "presence."

In the 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 text, Paul states "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with (or accompanied by) a shout," again connecting the second advent of our Lord with the trumpet, in this case the "trump of God."

What a grand and rare honor it is to hear the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet! Those who hear its sounding and understand the times and seasons rejoice in hope and realize that shortly God's kingdom shall fill the earth completely, evil will be eliminated and peace and harmony between God and man shall be an eternal inheritance!

"All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Psalm 145:10-13).

Mental Sight

Every Eye Shall See Him

*He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him:
and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

—Revelation 1:7

Gilbert Rice

This promise of Revelation is both well known and authoritative. But Christian people hold divergent opinions about the manner of its intended fulfillment. Are we to understand from it that Jesus will be revealed to the literal sight of people in the earth, or that he will be “seen” in a figurative sense by mental perception?

Strong’s Definition

The Greek word represented by “see” in Revelation 1:7 is listed in Strong’s Concordance as 3700, *optomai* which (for its grammatical use in this passage) is spelled *opsetai*. Strong defines it as “to gaze (i.e., with wide open eyes, as at something remarkable),” and proceeds to distinguish its shade of meaning from other words listed as 991, 1492, 2300, 2334, and 4648. Since this definition does not explicitly include a figurative sense, one might suppose it requires Jesus would be seen with literal sight. However, that would be an incorrect conclusion for two reasons:

1. Before Strong’s definition, he says it is used as an “alternate of 3708,” *horaw* which he defines as “properly to *stare* at ... (by implication) to *discern* clearly (physically or **mentally**)” (bold emphasis supplied). This augments the definition of *optomai* to include a figurative sense.

2. For the five other words which Strong’s mentions, explaining their subtle contrast with *optomai*, he specifically includes a figurative sense in his definitions, yet he never stipulates this feature as a matter of contrast with *optomai*. Here is the remainder of Strong’s comments on *optomai*, followed by his definitions of the other five words:

“... thus differing from 991, which denotes simply *voluntary* observation; and from 1492, which expresses merely mechanical, passive or casual vision; while 2300, and still more emphatically its intensive 2334, signifies an earnest but more continued *inspection*; and 4648 a watching *from a distance*.”

991—*blepw*—“to look at (literally or figuratively)”

1492—*eidw*—“properly to see (literally or figuratively)”

2300—*theaomai*—“to look closely at ... to *perceive* (literally or figuratively) ...”

2334—*theorew*—“to be a *spectator* of, i.e., *discern* (literally or figuratively) ...”

4648—*skopew*—“to take *aim* at (spy), i.e., (fig.) *regard*”

Clearly Strong is correct in allowing a figurative sense to each of these, as shown by the following texts, which all require it:

991—Luke 8:10; Romans 7:23; 2 Corinthians 7:8; Hebrews 2:9; 10:25

1492—Acts 15:6; 28:26; 1 Corinthians 13:2

2300—John 4:35

2334—John 4:19; 12:19; Acts 17:22; 27:10; Hebrews 7:4

3708—Acts 8:23; James 2:24

4648—Luke 11:35; Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Galatians 6:1, Philippians 2:4, 3:17

The Figurative Use of “*Optomai*”

The figurative sense of *optomai* is explicitly affirmed in *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*. “*Optomai*, to see (from *ops*, the eye; compare English optical, etc.) ... (b) subjectively, with reference to an inward impression or a spiritual experience” (page 65, “appear,” item 6). This is particularly appropriate for *optomai* in Revelation 1:7. Its figurative sense is also used in the following texts¹:

- ♦ John 1:51—“Hereafter ye shall see (*opsesthe*) heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” Surely Jesus did not intend that Nathaniel would literally see actual angels moving up and down between heaven and earth.
- ♦ Mark 14:61, 62—“Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see (*opsesthe*) the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Jesus would not have meant that the hostile and unbelieving high priest to whom he spoke would literally see the glorified Jesus in heaven, exercising power and authority.
- ♦ Luke 3:6—“And all flesh shall see (*opsetai*) the salvation of God.” Salvation is something that is felt, experienced, and thus discerned mentally. Isaiah 40:3-5 is the source of this expression: “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see (*opsetai*) in the

Septuagint) it together ...” (The Hebrew word for “see” in Isaiah 40:5 is *ra'ah*, Strong’s 7200, “a primitive root, to see, literal or figurative, (in numerous applications).” Discern and perceive are two of many English words used to translate this Hebrew word.)

- ◆ John 3:36—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see (*opsetai*) life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” In the present time this life is discerned mentally, not visibly. It is the portion believers share now by faith, in contrast to the wrath of God which continues upon unbelievers.
- ◆ Acts 18:15—“But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look (*opsesthe*) ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.” Here it is used of a mental occupation, not of literal seeing.
- ◆ Matthew 27:4, 24—“What is that to us? See (*opse*) thou to that.” “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see (*opsesthe*) ye to it.” The word “see” (like look, above) throws responsibility on others. Literal seeing is not implied.

Naturally the view that supposes Revelation 1:7 refers to a visible descent of a fleshly figure in the sky is besieged with a variety of imponderables, not the least of which is the incongruity of billions of humans simultaneously observing a normal sized human figure on a cloudy day descending from a prominent height.

The Prophetic Date

1874

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.—Daniel 12:12

Merely mention the date 1874, and brethren worldwide know that one is speaking of the return of Christ. That date is computed from the prophecy of Daniel 12:12. This prophetic period of 1,335 days is fulfilled in 1,335 years, a day for a year, as is customary in time prophecy. This period is one of three which begin from the same point in time, 539 A.D. All three of these time periods—1,260, 1,290, and 1,335 years in duration—are mentioned in the 12th chapter of Daniel. We will explore each of these time prophecies which point in progressive steps to the introduction of the second presence, the *parousia* of Christ, in the year 1874.

1260

The first of the three prophetic periods appears in Daniel 12:7. It is a period of persecution of the saints by one Paul later termed “The Man of Sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)—Papacy, the Roman Catholic Church, the Antichrist system which even the early church knew would come (1 John 2:18).

When Paul discussed the Man of Sin, he drew from three parts of Daniel, chapters 11, 8, and 7.

1. The term “Man of Sin” is drawn from Daniel 11:36, which speaks of a rebellious, strong-willed “king” who “shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god.” Compare this description of Daniel to Paul’s in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, “Who ... exalteth himself above all that is called God.”
2. That this abomination takes place “in the temple of God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4) may be inferred from Daniel 8:11-13 where the sanctuary [temple] is polluted, dominated, and a host of worshipers oppressed. These defilements would linger until the conclusion of the 2,300 years in the 1840s. By then the reform movements of four centuries, culminating in the Miller Movement, had identified and publicized the major errors.
3. That this abomination would be “consume[d] and destroy[ed] ... unto the end” (Daniel 7:26) is referred to by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, “Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth [truth], and shall destroy with the brightness of his [*parousia*].”
“Time, Times, and a Half”

The period Papacy was permitted to rule the Christian world was 1,260 years. But this time span was expressed cryptically, to hide the matter from all but the Lord’s saints, and even from them until the due time, as the Lord’s wisdom saw best.

The prophet said this domination “shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7, ASV). The same period is mentioned in Daniel 7:25. “He

[Papacy, the horn which sprang from Rome] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

If one assumes “times” refers to two times (there is no reason for a greater number), then these texts describe three and one-half “times.” Revelation 13:5 refers to the same period as forty two months, and indeed in three and one-half “times” or “years” there would be forty two months—a congruence which affirms this long-revered approach. Revelation 11:2 describes the persecution of the “holy city” (the church) during the same forty two months.

If we use an even thirty days per month, forty two months is 1,260 days. This is the express duration for this period in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6. Revelation 12:14 completes the circle of reference by again describing the period as “time, and times, and half a time,” as in Daniel. The context of each passage shows all seven references are to the same period. The three separate descriptions of this period give a solid foundation for understanding them as 1,260 prophetic “days.”

Christians and Jews have long known from the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel chapter 9 that a day in prophetic time is fulfilled as a full natural year—consistent with the principle explicitly mentioned in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. This supports the well-founded and time-honored view that these texts point to 1,260 years of Papal domination.

The Beginning Point

If one examines the prophecy of Daniel 12 for a beginning date marker for this period, one must go back to chapter 11 (it is all one connected prophecy), back to the rise of Papacy in Daniel 11:31. “Arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.” Israel’s “daily sacrifice” was a burnt offering of a lamb every morning and every evening, which symbolized the coming of Christ, the “lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). In the spiritual temple of the Gospel age, this “daily sacrifice” refers to the ransom.

The papal doctrine of the mass effectively set aside the ever-efficacious ransom by requiring a fresh sacrifice of Christ on each occasion of sin. This doctrine was incorporated into the Catholic faith by the year 381. “Romanists claim that the Mass was instituted by Christ and the apostles; but the earliest mention of it we have been able to find was at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 3, p. 103).

But Daniel 11:31 speaks of the time when the force of arms would be used to establish in power the institution which sponsored this doctrine of “abomination.” The 1,260 years begin to count from this point. There Papacy received jurisdiction over political matters which allowed it, in course of time, to mightily oppress the Lord’s saints.

The date for this setting up, when “arms shall stand on his part,” is 539 A.D. (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 3, Study 3). In 533 A.D. the Emperor Justinian decreed the bishop of Rome (the Pope) to be the head of all Christian churches, but not until five years later in 538 was the Pope (Vigilius, 537-555) committed the jurisdiction of the city of Rome by Justinian’s general Belisarius, who through force of arms overcame the siege of Rome by the Goths (eastern Goths, thus “Ostrogoths”). In the following year, 539, the Gothic stronghold Ravenna was taken, their king Vitiges killed, and the threat to papal authority (at least temporarily) laid to rest. By 540 Belisarius returned victorious to a hero’s welcome in Constantinople.

1,260 years later, in the year 1799, Pope Pius VI died as a prisoner in France, having been taken prisoner at Rome by the French General Berthier the previous year. By the time the Pope died Napoleon had secured the rulership of France and refused to allow the election of a successor Pope. Papacy was broken. This marked the lowest ebb of papal fortunes in modern times. *A History of the Popes*, by Nicolas Cheetham, marks the year 1799 as one of its divides in chronicling the history of Papacy. A few months later a new Pope was elected, but never again did Papacy rule the powers of Europe. Her “time, times and a half” had expired.

1290

That Daniel 11:31 is the correct beginning point for the second time prophecy, the 1,290 days, is expressly affirmed in Daniel 12:11. “From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be 1,290 days.” 1,290 years from 539 A.D. take us to 1829. According to Daniel 12:9-11, the 1,290 days mark a point significant to the saints in understanding these very prophecies. “The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end ... none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”

About this time the Miller Movement in America, and others abroad, based upon the time prophecies of Daniel, began arousing the Christian world to the approaching advent of Christ. As early as 1818, Miller himself had privately concluded that Christ would return about the spring of 1843. “He hesitated to present his message to anyone as yet. After all, he could be in error. That thought ... drove him into another five years (1818-1823) of study as he sought to raise and answer every possible biblical objection to his theory” (*Millennial Fever*, George Knight, p. 42).

He then began speaking privately with some neighbors, and even some ministers, hoping that one of them might embrace the burden of awakening others. He had little success. He continued his Bible studies, but this only increased his anxiety. “When I was about my business,” he penned, “it was continually ringing in my ears, ‘Go and tell the world of their danger’ ... For another eight years (1823-1831) the reluctant prophet continued to resist what he believed to be the unction of the Holy Spirit, even though he claimed to have had a dream on November 4, 1826, in which God had indicated that he would bless him if he would be faithful in warning the world. On January 14, 1829, however, Miller gave some indication of his future direction ... though he was moving infinitesimally

slowly when one considers that he believed Christ would come in a mere fourteen years. On that January date, he made his first entry in a small book in which he noted important remarks on Sunday sermons. At times he provided lengthy outlines of those sermons. Whether he realized it or not, he had begun a practical course in sermon preparation” (*ibid.*, ppg. 42, 43).

In the meantime Miller continued seeking a preacher to take his burden. He penned “A Few Evidences of the Time of the 2nd Coming of Christ to Elder Andrus” on February 15, 1831, and held interviews with “Elder Truman Hendryx and other ministers” in the summer of 1831. He prepared a series of articles under the name “W.M.” which were accepted for publication in sixteen numbers of a Baptist paper “Vermont Telegraph,” beginning on May 15, 1832. To his chagrin, it became known that he was the author and he was “flooded with letters of inquiry respecting my views; and visitors flocked to converse with me on the subject” (*ibid.*, p. 44).

In the summer of 1831 before these articles were published, the pressure of his views urged him to “a solemn covenant with God, that if he would open the way, I would go and perform my duty to the world.” As he pondered in his mind how such an “opening” might appear, “Why, said I, if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I find in the Bible about the Lord’s coming.” Having never in his life received such an invitation, his mind was at peace, his burden eased. “In about a half-hour, he had his first-ever invitation to present his beliefs regarding the second coming ... ‘I was ... immediately angry with myself for having made the covenant ... I rebelled at once ... and determined not to go. I left the boy [who delivered the request] without giving him any answer, and retired in great distress to a grove near by. There I struggled with the Lord for about an hour, endeavoring to release myself from the covenant I had made with him; but I could get no relief. It was impressed upon my conscience, Will you make a covenant with God and break it so soon? and the exceeding sinfulness of thus doing overwhelmed me ... I would go, trusting ...’ The following day Miller preached his first sermon on the second advent at Dresden, sixteen miles from his home. ‘As soon as I commenced speaking, all my diffidence and embarrassment were gone, and I felt impressed only with the greatness of the subject, which by the providence of God, I was enabled to present’ ” (*ibid.*, ppg. 45, 46).

It was a resounding success. The Dresden congregation requested his lecture the following week, on returning home he had an invitation from the Poultney congregation for a similar series of lectures. “Those invitations were the beginning of an unbroken stream of requests that would continue for the rest of his active life” (*ibid.*, p. 45).

Meanwhile, in England

In these years England was alive with prophetic studies, which were highly productive in moving the “wise” to understand the prophecies of Daniel

Sir Henry Drummond, a banker and member of the House of Commons, assembled at Albury, a village ten hours distant from London, a group of men, well-known and

competent theologians, for the examination of prophecy. In the years of 1825 to 1829 each summer about fifty gentlemen gathered for a week of conference. The chairman was Hugh Mac Neill, a clergyman of Albury. They assembled each day three times, in the morning from 9 to 11, in the afternoon from 1 to 3, and in the evening from 7 to 11. In the morning sessions one of the participants, invited for the purpose, made a presentation. Until 3 or 4 in the afternoon there was exchange of opinion about the presentation, and in the evening the result was formed into some conclusions.

The host, Sir Drummond, reproduced the entire talks again in minutes, which grew to weighty tomes published in three volumes in the years 1827 to 1829, titled *Dialogues on Prophecy*. This was followed by a quarterly publication, *The Morning Watch*, in 1829. The conclusions of these Albury conferences include the following points:

1. Christianity will not gradually fade by a universal preaching of the gospel into the Thousand Year Kingdom, but will find her end by verdicts ... that the visible church and state are destroyed, as once the Jewish state has been destroyed.
2. At the time when these verdicts will come over Christianity the Jews will be restored in their country.
3. These verdicts will probably ... come ... most heavily over that part of the church of God that has been blessed mostly, and therefore bears the greatest responsibility.
4. After these verdicts the Thousand Year Kingdom commences for the entire human race, even for the unwitting creation.
5. The Return of the Messiah takes place before the beginning of this Thousand Year Kingdom.
6. Our blessed Lord will return soon.

Clearly the Spirit of the Lord was working upon the “wise,” who were coming to know some of the deep things of God.

1335

But when, exactly, would the blessed Return of Christ occur? Daniel 12:12 concludes with a final time prophecy to point to the crescendo: “**Blessed** is he that **waiteth** and cometh to the 1,335 days.” Going forward 1,335 years from 539 takes us to 1874. The mention of the waiting reminds us of our Lord’s words: “Ye yourselves [be] like unto men that **wait** for their Lord” (Luke 12:36). The resulting blessedness of those who wait is the same result promised by Jesus: “**Blessed** are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them” (Luke 12:37).

That feast of truth has been clearly evident to all who have refreshed themselves on it. The “Divine Plan of the Ages” has been provided through a devoted servant raised to assemble and distribute it (Revelation 3:14). The ministry of Pastor Russell is thus

properly renowned and esteemed by all who through it have been introduced to the blessed harmony of the truth.

Daniel 12:12 is but a brief phrase, by which it has pleased God to give us the foundation date for the second advent of Christ. But in the message to the church of Laodicea, Christ reiterates the lesson of this prophecy and its connection to the second advent through the Luke texts mentioned above. Revelation 3:20 says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and **knock.**” Luke 12:36 mentions the same knock: “Wait ... that, when he cometh, and **knocketh**, [you] may open unto him immediately.” The church of Laodicea, the seventh stage of the church, is the church of the *parousia* of Christ. Do we hear the knock of prophecy? Have we opened the door of our hearts and minds to receive the welcome returnee? Have we feasted upon the truths now richly provided? “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20)—exactly what was promised of the return of Christ in Luke 12:37.

To church four Jesus said, “Hold fast till I come.” To church five, “I will come ... as a thief.” To church six, “Behold, I come quickly!” But to us now, during the harvest, he is no longer “coming.” He is present and knocking. It is our blessed privilege to be lifted up as it were into the Chariot of our Lord (2 Kings 10:15), be in mental accord with his righteous program, separated from the hosts of Christendom now feeling the judgments of God (Revelation 3:16; 14:7), and to feast upon the bounties of God’s plan such as the saints have never before seen in its rich fullness.

Chronologically, we have been in the blessed time of the Lord’s *parousia* since 1874.

Michael Stands Up

Daniel 12:1 opens with the prediction, “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

The term “stand up” in this prophecy means to take power as a regent—so it is used in Daniel 11:2,3,4,7,20,21. In Daniel 12:1 it points to the time of Christ’s assumption of regal authority in establishing his kingdom. This is one evidence that “Michael” does refer to Christ, for the right to rule the kingdom is vested in Christ, not to a lower subordinate.

What follows this exercise of power is a time of trouble, and a deliverance of the Lord’s people. Verse 2 describes the resurrection of the dead, and verse 3 the blessed influence of the righteous during the kingdom. “This kingdom has already come into executive authority, although ... it has not yet come into full control of earthly dominion” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 3, p. 22). One by one, as the Lord’s saints are called home, they augment the reigning ones beyond the veil, preparatory to their priestly work of a thousand years still impending (Revelation 20:6).

Daniel 12:1 is an Old Testament parallel to what John later describes in the sounding of the Seventh Trump: “The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom [singular, *Diaglott*] of this world has become [*Diaglott*] the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ [Jesus]; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). What follows in Revelation is a time of trouble unlike any preceding, and the raising of the Lord’s saints (holy ones) and Gospel age prophets (spokesmen).

These items are all included in the prophecy of Daniel 12. This seventh trumpet period is evidently synchronous with the seventh church period, and began in 1874. It introduces the harvest, and its work closes with the end of the harvest. The predicted “time of trouble,” we hold, began in 1914 with World War I, continued through World War II, and will not abate until Armageddon and the residue of the seventh plague has run its course. Not until then will Christ command “peace, be still,” and the raging tempests yield to the peaceable instruction of the kingdom (Mark 4:39; 1 Kings 19:12).

A Common Starting Point

The 1,260, 1,290, and 1,335 years all began at 539 A.D., when Papacy was set up in political authority and the Ostrogothic Kingdom which had ruled Italy was subdued. These Goths were (nominally) Christian, but were Arian in persuasion, as were the Lombards originally, who impinged upon Papacy in subsequent years.

This view, that the three prophecies share a common starting point, is essentially universal among the Bible Student movement today—and well that it is. The 1,290 and 1,335 days clearly begin with Daniel 11:31 (see Daniel 12:11). The same text describes the setting up of Papacy by force of arms which began its 1,260 years of domination.

But it was not so during the Miller Movement. Bro. Miller supposed that the 1,260 days began in 538 A.D., but began the 1,290 and 1,335 days 30 years earlier, in 508 A.D., so that the 1,260 and 1,290 would terminate at the same point. This may seem odd to brethren today, but of course he had a sensible reason for his belief.

Bro. Miller observed that the 2,300 years of Daniel 8 began with the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. The latter he ended in 33 A.D., which means the full 2,300 would expire in the year 1843. Supposing the cleansing of the sanctuary thus marked in 1843 would mean the return of Christ, he had little option but to terminate the 1,335 years at the same point, and thus begin them and the 1,290 years in 508 A.D. Bro. Miller concluded that 2,520 years of Gentile Times, the Jubilee Cycles, and 6,000 years from Adam co-terminated in the year 1843 also.

Yet Papacy’s power of 1,260 years did not end until the Pope’s arrest in 1798, which means the 1,260 years could not have begun in 508. For this Bro. Miller used the date 538, when the Pope was granted authority in Rome by General Belisarius, as he left the city to chase the Goths and eventually defeat them at Ravenna. By this means the 1,260

and 1,290 years ended together, which seemed feasible to Bro. Miller (and thousands of others).

The package seemed very tight, with mutually correlating and intertwining prophecies. At the core of it, two prophecies were essentially correct—the 2,300 days, and the 1,260 days—and thus his expectations did have a proper foundation. But expecting the prophecies to climax at one momentous occasion, he was induced to focus most of the prophetic testimony on a single date, 1843.

In the disappointment following 1843, cause was found by some of his associates to reset the date a year and a half later, to the autumn of 1844 (specifically, October 21, 1844). The further disappointment was intense. As one might suppose, many abandoned the prophecies. But many others properly persisted in their study to locate the imprecision. Bro. Nelson Barbour was among these. A few years later, during a review of the prophecies on a sea voyage from Australia to England, he perceived the flaw, moved up the 1,290 and 1,335 years to begin coincident with the 1,260, and this brought the end of the 1,335 years to 1873—a date which is mentioned from time to time in the early Watchtowers. Bro. Barbour readjusted the various strands of prophecy to the new conclusion, adjusted the date to 1874, allowed for a period of *parousia* rather than a moment, added a fresh thought on parallel dispensations, and this constituted the prophetic package he shared with Bro. Russell in the summer of 1876.

Which Year?

Note that the original dates for the 1,260-year span were actually from 538 to 1798. These are still the dates used by the Seventh Day Adventists, and are also found in *The Three Worlds*, written by Bro. Barbour, published jointly with Bro. Russell. (See chapter 16 of that work, “The Resurrection.”) This differs by one from the dates common among the brethren, 539 to 1799. It may seem a small matter, but is it possible to clarify precisely between these two options?

In *Studies in the Scriptures*, Bro. Russell identifies Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt as a defining key to the proper date. However, this campaign lapped over from 1798 to 1799, which augments the ambiguity. “This event is shown to be Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt, which covered a period of a year and nearly five months. He sailed May 1798 and, returning, landed in France October 9, 1799” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 3, p. 44).

Verse 41 (of Daniel 11) may be helpful. “He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many [“countries” should not be supplied here] shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.” The “glorious land” is certainly the land of Israel which Napoleon passed through after his conquest of Egypt, traveling northward, contemplating a confrontation with the Ottoman Turks. Napoleon did not venture much eastward on this journey, thus the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon did not fall to him—as they had once fallen to the Ottomans, and would later to the British.

This expedition through the land of Israel is highlighted in the prophecy, as it appears also in verse 45: “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas [Mediterranean and Dead Sea] in the glorious holy mountain [Jerusalem, *cf.* Isaiah 27:13; Zechariah 8:3; 1 Maccabees 11:37].” This trek through Palestine was in the year 1799, whereas the conquest of Egypt (verses 42,43) occurred in the year 1798.

Time Parallels

If these three prophecies do terminate in 1799, 1829, and 1874 respectively, there are meaningful prophetic markers to each of these prophecies 1845 years earlier. The parallel dates, in the second column below, would be:

1799	47 B.C.
1829	17 B.C.
1874	29 A.D.

The last of these is familiar to the brethren. 29 A.D. was the date of Jesus’ baptism marking the beginning of his career as Messiah, which means “anointed.” He was anointed with the holy spirit at Jordan, represented by the dove which John the Baptist saw lighting upon Jesus as he rose from the water. But what happened in 47 B.C.? or 17 B.C.?

These are less familiar, but evidently very meaningful. The prophecy in Daniel 11:41-45 which describes Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt and journey northward through the land of Israel leads naturally to the next prophetic guidepost of Daniel 12:1, the second advent of Christ. However, the same prophecy was fulfilled by Julius Caesar as many years before the first advent of Christ as Napoleon’s journey through Israel was before the second advent of Christ.

As Napoleon came to Egypt in 1798, Julius Caesar came to Egypt 1845 years earlier in 48 B.C., pursuing Pompey. Caesar narrowly subdued a rebellion against him in Egypt, then in 47 B.C. departed northward through the land of Israel, passing “between the seas” and by the “glorious mountain,” but evidently did not venture eastward to the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon—just like Napoleon 1845 years later in 1799. As Napoleon in 1799 then returned to France and assumed power, Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. returned to Rome and assumed power.

What of 17 B.C.? This date is from a reference in John 2:20. The occasion was the first passover of Jesus’ ministry (John 2:13). When Jesus was asked a sign of his authority, he said “destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”—speaking of his resurrection. The Jews of course did not understand, and remarked “forty and six years was this temple in building” (John 2:20). Counting back 46 years from the spring of 30 A.D. leads to 17 B.C.—the year Herod began the reconstruction of the temple.

The temple represents the church (1 Corinthians 3:16). The remodeling and expansion of the temple marked in John 2:20 is a fitting parallel to the redevelopment of the spiritual

temple in 1829, when the wise according to the spirit began to see the treasures of prophecy more clearly.

Noting that the terminus of each prophecy—1,260, 1,290, 1,335 years—has a parallel 1,845 years earlier, gives added strength to the conclusion that the dates 1799, 1829, and 1874 are indeed the intended fulfillments of these prophecies, for only this set of dates produces a legitimate set of parallel dates.

The Broad Sweep

Daniel 12, which culminates in the time prophecy pointing to our Lord's return in 1874, is part of a three-chapter narrative beginning in chapter 10. Chapter 11 begins a broad sweep of history from Daniel's day forward, through Persia to Greece, through the Egyptian and Syrian branches of the Greek Empire as it affected Israel, to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem by the Roman armies. This last desecration forms in itself a picture of the Papal Roman power which sullied, dominated, and persecuted the spiritual temple during a period of 1,260 years.

Those years closed by 1799. Within another thirty years, by 1829, the prophecies of Daniel had opened remarkably and the spiritually wise came to anticipate the near approach of Christ's return. Another forty-five years brought us to the close of the third prophetic span in 1874, marking the return of Christ, the opening of the harvest, and the blessed bounty of truth which has been our privilege and heritage.

Chronos and Kairos

Times and Seasons

Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?—Acts 1:6

The last question the disciples asked Jesus before his departure was, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Our Lord replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). Shortly thereafter, “while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (verses 9-11).

Jesus had parted from them on previous occasions in strange ways, for example in the upper room he simply vanished without a trace, without leaving through a door. These were clear manifestations to the disciples that the Lord Jesus they had known in the flesh was no longer a fleshly being, but a mighty spirit being who could materialize and dematerialize at will. “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Corinthians 5:16). Christ was “put to death indeed in flesh ... made alive in spirit” (1 Peter 3:18, Wilson *Diaglott* interlinear).

But this departure was different. His ascent upwards was a clear visual demonstration to the disciples that he was going away, not simply parting from the company for a few hours or days, but he was leaving them. Jesus could have simply said, “I am going away now” and vanished, but it would not have had the impact and made them understand so clearly as his being taken “up,” received into the clouds, a clear indication of his “ascent” to the Father which he had predicted to Mary in the Garden, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17).

Literally, his ascent “up” had no physical meaning to returning to his Father. In the long ages of remote antiquity God had created the universe, employing the services of his “only begotten son” Jesus, the *Logos*. God did not inhabit the universe, nor does he, for he is on a spiritual plane far above the mundane, physical creation we see all about us. The awesome grandeur and magnitude displayed in our universe is only a small reflection of the glories of the spirit realm, “heaven,” which is the place of God. Jesus’ rising upward was not the first part of a lengthy journey through space, but merely a means of identifying the concept of his departure to his disciples.

In this respect it was like the resurrection of our Lord from death to life. The stone at the tomb was rolled away, not to permit Jesus’ exit from the tomb, for the stone could not restrain him any more than a locked door. The stone was removed to permit others to observe that he was gone. But even his missing body was merely a means to suggest to his disciples the reality of his resurrection. Christ was not raised with his old flesh, which “cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). Even in the earthly

resurrection, mankind will not be raised by reassembling old body parts around freshly exhumed skeletons.

Restoration of Israel

The answer of our Lord to the disciples' question—when Israel would have its kingdom restored—might be summed up as “not yet, but at an undisclosed time in the future.” Jesus did not correct their general impression that Israel would be restored, and blessings flow out from them in a renewed kingdom, but merely indicated that the time for this was not then at hand. When he was taken up into the clouds and the angels standing by affirmed that he would return—in harmony with Jesus' declaration “If I go ... I will come again (John 14:3)—no doubt the disciples began to realize that the fulfillment of their longing would be later, at the return of Christ.

This appears to be the connection Peter made, reflected in his assurance to the crowds only a few days later, “heaven must receive [him] until the period of restoration” (Acts 3:21, NASB). That the process of restoring Israel has now begun, and has been proceeding for more than a century, implies the Lord has returned, unknown to the world, and is supervising the affairs of the Israelites again. They do not yet collectively recognize that Jesus is responsible for this regathering. As Joseph assisted his brothers, mixed with chastening, but was unknown to them until disclosed to them amid much weeping, so Jesus is now assisting Israel, mixed with chastening, and will be disclosed when he pours out “the spirit of grace and of supplication ... and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zechariah 12:10).

Times and Seasons

Jesus' reply to the disciples' question used the phrase “times or seasons.” The Greek for this expression is *chronos ee kairos*. *Vine's Expository Dictionary* says *chronos* is “a space of time ... it sometimes refers to the date of an occurrence,” and *kairos*, “a fixed or definite period, a season,” with emphasis on the characteristics of the period. For example, summer and winter are seasons of the year with specific characteristics. We might clumsily paraphrase: “it is not for you to know the periods or dates intervening, nor the various seasons of activity, which the father intends and has under his own control.”

Now, of course, looking back over the age in light of fulfilled prophecy, we can see both the periods and dates, and various stages of the Gospel age, each with its work and result, as for example in the seven periods of the church outlined in Revelation. But to those expectant disciples, this information was closed. They simply grasped that “times and seasons” would pass before the return of Christ and the fulfillment of their hopes.

When Paul spoke of the return of Christ to the brethren at Thessalonica, he used the same expression as in Acts 1:7. “Of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:1,2).

When Peter delivered his sermon on repentance in Acts 3, he used the same words, though not joined in a single convenient expression. One of the words is obscured in the King James version. Verse 19 refers to “times of refreshing,” but the word “times” is the Greek *kairos*, seasons. During these seasons the repentant ones will be refreshed, forgiven, and blessed. Verse 21 refers to the “times of restitution” (restoration). This word “times” is the Greek *chronos*. In this case it refers to the period introduced by the return of Christ rather than the periods leading to it.

Seven Parables of the Kingdom

Though the particulars were not understood by the disciples at the time, Jesus had actually given them some details about the Gospel age in his parables. Matthew 13 records seven parables each containing good individual lessons beneficial to the household of faith. Put together they form a pattern which also relates to the progress of affairs from the first advent until the introduction of the kingdom.

Those seven parables are of the Sower, Tares, Tree with Fowls, Leaven, Treasure in a Field, Pearl of Great Price, and Dragnet. This sequence parallels the sequence of seven stages of the Gospel age in Revelation: (1) First is the sowing of the good seed of the gospel. (2) Then, “while men slept”—representing the passing of the apostles, or a spirit of carelessness—tares came into the wheat field. In the message to Smyrna they are “them which say they are Jews [spiritual Israelites], and are not,” Revelation 2:9. (3) The tree represents Christendom which grew into a kingdom during the age, in which many foul spirits lodged. (4) Jezebel leavened the whole thoroughly during the dark ages; compare Revelation 2:20. (5) In the reformation the church was a treasure almost obscured in the field of tares, but sought out and claimed. (6) The truths of Scripture were restudied and surfaced afresh during the Protestant expansion. (7) The dragnet was pulled ashore and the work of distinguishing good and bad proceeds during the harvest.

When Jesus completed these parables he asked the disciples if they understood them. They said yes, but our Lord knew their understanding could only have been in part. He knew that fathoming the depths of lessons such as these would be the privilege of the saints all through the age, as one after another of the times and seasons passed, and more details concerning the progress of the age became apparent. “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matthew 13:52).

This continues to be a blessed opportunity today. When we delve into the “deep things of God,” the treasures of wisdom, truth, and beauty contained in the holy Scriptures, and see facets of light sparkling as from cut gems, it cannot do otherwise than increase our joys of faith. The humblest of the Lord’s people, in the most depressed and poverty-stricken conditions, can rejoice with the most prosperous of the Lord’s saints in these riches—if, as Jacob rather than Esau, they value the things of the spirit above all else. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2). When such gems of truth come to light, even opposition only makes them more precious. This is part of the seal of the spirit which is open to every child of God.

Drawing the Net Ashore

The last of these seven parables, the parable of the Dragnet, reminds us of the last of seven miracles recorded in the gospel of John chapter 21. The disciples had been laboring all night on the sea of Galilee but had caught nothing. In the morning—picturing the morning of the seventh period of the church—a stranger appeared on the shore and urged them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. In all practical ways this appeared pointless, for if there were fish on one side there would be fish on the other only a few feet away. But there was little to lose for the effort and they followed the stranger's advice.

To their amazement, the draught of fishes was enormous, by count 153 “great fishes” (verse 11), but remarkably the net did not break—unlike an earlier episode when the net burst (Luke 5:5,6). The apostle John instantly grasped the situation: “It is the Lord!” he exclaimed to Peter, who true to character threw himself into the water and swam ashore (John 21:7). John was the perceptive one, Peter the impetuous one, and these qualities which endeared them to their Lord were manifest on this occasion also.

This seventh miracle, like the seventh parable, represents the harvest during the presence of our Lord Jesus. On the shore he had prepared a fish on the fire, representing the feast of truth served during the harvest (Luke 12:37). The net, which did not break, represents the gospel call, which produces more during the harvest of the age than one might suppose, observing the bleakness of some of the earlier periods. The previous episode (Luke 5:5,6) represented the call during the Jewish harvest. That net, representing the older doctrines of the Law, did burst under the pressure, just as the old wineskins and old garment could not contain the stresses of the new doctrine of the gospel (Matthew 9:16,17).

On this occasion seven of the disciples were present: Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and “two other of his disciples” (John 21:2). Perhaps in this number seven we have an indication that the participants represent the saints during the seventh stage of the church.

The count of the fish is given as 153, and this is so odd a number, but recorded so precisely, many have long looked with interest for some meaning in this number. It is in fact the sum of all whole numbers from 1 through 17, and as such is merely another way of symbolically representing the number 17, the combination of 10 (earthly) with 7 (perfect). It was the age of Joseph when he was sold (Genesis 37:2). Joseph represented our Lord Jesus, the perfect one (7) who came to earth to redeem mankind (10). The number of fishes in the net relate to this number to show that they are the redeemed of the Gospel age.

Once again, the lesson shows us the work of harvest to be done following the return of Christ after the centuries of the Gospel age. That work has been proceeding since 1874. We have some years yet remaining in this work. Let us be about the task, and thus receive the approbation of our Master. We have already reached the “time” of the harvest,

and but one “season,” the seventh stage of the church, remains to conclude before our collective journey is over.

An Important Greek Word

Parousia

What shall be the sign of thy parousia and of the end of the age?
—Matthew 24:3, composite

David Rice

The Greek word *parousia* has attracted much attention, because of its relationship to the return of Christ. Many translations render the word “coming” when it refers to our Lord’s return, but many of our readers have long learned that the word actually means “presence.”

Joseph Rotherham consistently renders the word “presence,” and to this agrees the definition in *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. “Parousia, literally, a presence, *para*, with, and *ousia*, being ... in a papyrus letter a lady speaks of the necessity of her *parousia* in a place in order to attend to matters relating to her property there. Paul speaks of his *parousia* in Philippi, Philippians 2:12 (in contrast to his *apousia*, absence). Other words denote the arrival. *Parousia* is used to describe the presence of Christ with his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, 2 Peter 1:16.”

The testimony of Philippians 2:12 is so emphatic that *parousia* means “presence” in contrast with *apousia*, “absence,” that the meaning of the word in this text is undisputed. However, its meaning in Scriptures is sometimes questioned. We understand the word invariably means “presence,” and this view is explored here.

All Instances

The word *parousia* appears 24 times in the Greek text of the New Testament. All 24 instances are shown here:

Matthew 24:3	sign of thy coming	parousia	N-GSF
Matthew 24:27	coming of the Son	parousia	N-NSF
Matthew 24:37	coming of the Son	parousia	N-NSF
Matthew 24:39	coming of the Son	parousia	N-NSF
1 Corinthians 15:23	Christ’s at his coming	parousia	N-DSF
1 Corinthians 16:17	glad of the coming of Stephanas	parousia	N-DSF
2 Corinthians 7:6	by the coming of Titus	parousia	N-DSF
2 Corinthians 7:7	not by his coming only	parousia	N-DSF
2 Corinthians 10:10	his bodily presence	parousia	N-NSF
Philippians 1:26	my coming to you again	parousias	N-GSF
Philippians 2:12	in my presence	parousia	N-DSF
1 Thessalonians 2:19	Christ at his coming	parousia	N-DSF
1 Thessalonians 3:13	at the coming of our Lord Jesus	parousia	N-DSF
1 Thessalonians 4:15	remain unto the coming of the Lord	parousian	N-ASF

1 Thessalonians 5:23	unto the coming of our Lord	parousia	N-DSF
2 Thessalonians 2:1	the coming of our Lord	parousias	N-GSF
2 Thessalonians 2:8	brightness of his coming	parousias	N-GSF
2 Thessalonians 2:9	whose coming is after ...	parousia	N-NSF
James 5:7	unto the coming of the Lord	parousias	N-GSF
James 5:8	the coming of the Lord draweth nigh	parousia	N-NSF
2 Peter 1:16	the power and coming of our Lord	parousian	N-ASF
2 Peter 3:4	the promise of his coming	parousias	N-GSF
2 Peter 3:12	hasting unto the coming of the day	parousian	N-ASF
1 John 2:28	before him at his coming	parousia	N-DSF

The first two columns are obvious. The third column gives the transliterated spelling of the word *parousia* in each usage. The fourth column needs some explanation. This information comes from a web site using the United Bible Society Greek New Testament. In coded form this gives the form of speech the word represents in each instance. The first “N” means noun, “S” means the noun is singular, and “F” that this word is a feminine noun in Greek (irrespective of whether the subject is male or female).

Those three letters are consistent in every usage of the word. However, the second letter varies between G, N, D, and A. This refers to the case of the word in each usage. (In Greek, as in Latin and other languages, the spelling of a noun can vary to indicate its grammatical role. In English the same task is accomplished with word order.) The list includes four different cases of the word *parousia*, namely Genitive, Nominative, Dative, and Accusative. These designations may seem obscure, but it is helpful in researching word meanings to become familiar with them.

1. Nominative—marks the subject of the sentence.
2. Accusative—marks the direct object of a verb.
3. Dative—marks the indirect object of a verb.
4. Genitive—describes, owns, or possesses some other object.

Here are some examples: (1) Nominative—in Matthew 24:27, “so shall ... the *parousia* of the Son of man be,” the noun *parousia* is the subject of the sentence. (2) Accusative—in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, some “remain unto [who or what?] the *parousia*.” The noun *parousia* is the direct object of the verb “remain.” (4) Genitive—in Matthew 24:3, “the sign of thy *parousia*,” the noun *parousia* describes “sign.”

Number (3), the Dative case, needs more explanation. In the list of 24 instances of the word *parousia*, nine involve the Dative case. They are shown here:

1 Corinthians 16:17	glad of the coming of Stephanas	parousia	N-DSF
2 Corinthians 7:6	by the coming of Titus	parousia	N-DSF
2 Corinthians 7:7	not by his coming only	parousia	N-DSF
1 Corinthians 15:23	Christ’s at his coming	parousia	N-DSF
Philippians 2:12	in my presence	parousia	N-DSF

1 Thessalonians 2:19	Christ at his coming	parousia	N-DSF
1 Thessalonians 3:13	at the coming of our Lord Jesus	parousia	N-DSF
1 Thessalonians 5:23	unto the coming of our Lord	parousia	N-DSF
1 John 2:28	before him at his coming	parousia	N-DSF

According to the simple rule, in each of the nine instances where the noun *parousia* is in the Dative case, it should be an “indirect object” in the phrase. An indirect object is a secondary object of a phrase or sentence. For example, in “John put the ball on the table,” John is the subject, put is the verb, ball is the direct object (the thing the verb acts upon), and table is the indirect object—the thing to which the direct object relates. But as we examine this list, seeing how the noun *parousia* is an “indirect object” is not apparent.

The Dative case in Greek is expanded to include two other usages, appropriately named “locative” (because this noun helps “locate” the subject) and “instrumental” (because this noun is “instrumental” in effecting the action).

“The form that we call the Dative case expresses the meanings of the Locative and Instrumental cases as well as its own” (*A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek*, H. P. V. Nunn, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 28). It should be apparent when reviewing these nine instances that the Instrumental case applies to the first three and the Locative case applies to the last six.

Presence in Every Instance

Let us return to the list of twenty four instances of *parousia* in the New Testament. If the word invariably means presence, this meaning should apply in each of the twenty four instances. Here is the list again, using the word presence in each case:

Matthew 24:3	What shall be the sign of thy presence?
Matthew 24:27	so shall also the presence of the Son of man be
Matthew 24:37	so shall also the presence of the Son of man be
Matthew 24:39	so shall also the presence of the Son of man be
1 Corinthians 15:23	afterward they that are Christ’s at his presence
1 Corinthians 16:17	glad of the presence of Stephanas
2 Corinthians 7:6	by the presence of Titus
2 Corinthians 7:7	not by his presence only
2 Corinthians 10:10	his bodily presence
Philippians 1:26	my presence to you again
Philippians 2:12	in my presence
1 Thessalonians 2:19	Christ at his presence
1 Thessalonians 3:13	at the presence of our Lord Jesus
1 Thessalonians 4:15	remain unto the presence of the Lord
1 Thessalonians 5:23	unto the presence of our Lord
2 Thessalonians 2:1	the presence of our Lord
2 Thessalonians 2:8	brightness of his presence
2 Thessalonians 2:9	whose presence is after ...
James 5:7	unto the presence of the Lord

James 5:8	the presence of the Lord draweth nigh
2 Peter 1:16	the power and presence of our Lord
2 Peter 3:4	the promise of his presence
2 Peter 3:12	hasting unto the presence of the day
1 John 2:28	before him at his presence

Four of these texts contain the phrase “at his *parousia*” or “at the *parousia* of our Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 1 John 2:28). This is an awkward way of referring to a presence, but would be natural if referring to an arrival. However, in each of these cases the word “at” represents the Greek word *en* which is better rendered “in.” Here are the same texts from the Marshall’s *Diaglott*:

1 Corinthians 15:23 in the presence of him
 1 Thessalonians 2:19 in the presence of him
 1 Thessalonians 3:13 in the presence of the Lord
 1 John 2:28 in the presence of him

The same preposition appears in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “unto [*en*, in] the presence of our Lord.” In 1 Thessalonians 4:15, “remain unto the presence of the Lord,” the word “unto” is the Greek *eis*, which properly means “into.” Thus in all six texts, these two and the four listed above, the *parousia* is something which can be entered in or into. This is consistent with the meaning “presence,” but not with “arrival” or “coming.” (In 2 Peter 3:12 “unto” is not represented in the Greek. In James 5:7 it is suitably translated from the Greek *eos*.)

One Remaining Concern

Philippians 1:26 may suggest a different view than “presence.” It reads: “That your rejoicing may be more abundant ... by my coming to you again.” To simply substitute the word “presence” would not fit in this English translation, for a “presence” is not “to” someone but “with” someone. Have we then a firm example where “presence” is inadequate to express the thought?

The sense of this text suggests otherwise. It was not the approach (coming) of Paul that would rejoice these friends, but his presence among them again. But how shall we deal with the grammar? The word at issue is “to,” the Greek *pros*. This preposition is here in the Accusative case. Moulton’s *Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 edition*, says of this Accusative case, if “used of the place to which anything tends [as for example with a word meaning to go, travel or approach, it is to be rendered], to, unto, towards.” However, “of place where [it is to be rendered], with, in, among, by, at.” This is its usage in Philippians 1:26. The Marshall’s *Diaglott* says “through my presence again with [*pros*] you.”

As the Lightning

Another telling use of this word is in Matthew 24:27, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the *parousia* of the Son of man be.” The comparison Jesus intends by the lightning is not the suddenness of its flash—as though Jesus would suddenly appear at his arrival—but the influence exerted as an evidence of his *parousia*, namely general enlightenment, just as lightning shines across the whole heaven.

In context Jesus was warning his disciples against any claim of a private, local, confined presence. “If they shall say ... he is in the desert [or] ... in the secret chambers, believe it not.” For his presence would be manifest by a broad, expansive influence of enlightenment. The point Jesus makes fits a period of presence.

Why the Imprecision?

Why, then, is the word so frequently translated “coming”? Of the twenty four instances of *parousia*, the King James version renders it “presence” only twice, 2 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:12, where the context forces the rendering. But why “coming” elsewhere?

The translation “coming” is not as egregious as it might first appear because the word “coming” when used as a noun can mean “presence.” If one says “at my coming we will renew our friendship,” the friendly exchange does not take place in transit, but after one’s arrival, during his presence. *Parousia* is in every case a noun, unlike a verb such as “I am coming” where the act of transit is the point. *Parousia*, a noun, “being alongside,” never refers to a transit. Though not egregious, the translation “coming” should be avoided because it is imprecise and misleading.

Arrival?

But what of the term “arrival”? Would this be a feasible rendering of *parousia*? Surprisingly, the King James version of the English Bible never uses the word “arrival,” in either the Old or New Testament. It is a noun, and it would emphasize that *parousia* does not mean transit. But it would imply the word has particular focus on the conclusion of a transit (which it does not), and fails to express the thought of a continuing presence. This would not fit well the texts that refer to events “in” or “into” the *parousia* of Christ. Better to render the word consistently “presence.”

The “Sign” of his Parousia

Matthew 24:3 marks the first use of the word *parousia*. “What shall be the sign of thy *parousia*, and of the end of the age?” Most agree that at this time the disciples did not understand that Jesus would die and return to his heavenly Father for many centuries before coming again to establish his kingdom. What, then, was the basis of their question about his *parousia*? Probably it was the closing warning of Jesus to the apostate leaders

of Jerusalem before he exited the temple that last day of his public ministry. “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39).

This must have seemed odd as they deliberated on these words. Jesus had walked among the Pharisees for three and a half years, shown many evidences of supernatural power, wisdom, and spoke as “never man spake” (John 7:46). What wonderful evidences of his claim to be sent of God. But if these had not convinced the Pharisees, what would? How would they come to say “blessed is he [Jesus] that cometh in the name of the Lord?” What sign [*seemeion*, evidence, proof] would Jesus give in order to induce this recognition? “What shall be the sign of your presence?”

They were not asking, as so many Christians assume, for signs of his approach to alert them to a sudden appearance. They were asking what sign would accomplish what the Lord predicted—to make him known as the one coming in the name of the Lord.

Jesus responded at length to their inquiry. His words were framed to fit the end of the Jewish age, which was the immediate concern of the disciples. We know, however, from the later application of his answers by Paul, Peter, and John, that the answer applies to the close of the Gospel age as well. But for now, let us consider the words as they applied long ago.

In verses 4-13 he warned them against premature expectations, showing that many years would intervene before the end would come and the sign of his authority be recognized. In verse 14 he shows that the gospel would be preached far and wide as a witness, and “then shall the end come”—the closing experiences, when the Roman armies would intrude upon the holy land and great perplexity and distress result.

This period and its adversities are described in verses 15-28. During this ending period the desolating armies of Rome would come into the sacred precincts (verse 15), those of faith would flee to the mountains (verse 16), and they were advised to be earnest and rapid in their flight (verses 17-19). If their flight was in the winter, or on the sabbath, or they had small children to care for, their difficulties would be compounded (verses 20 and 21). If there was no intervention, the disaster would come upon believer and unbeliever alike, sparing none, but by God’s providence there would be some interventions. Twice the threat was “shortened” —literally “cut off,” ended—before it resumed a third time after the elect had fled (verse 22). In those days false deliverers would falsely predict a good result, and the deceptions would be strong, but against them all Jesus forewarned the elect (verses 23-27). Amid the distresses, however, he would safely gather his saints (verse 28). During this time the authority and presence of the master would be recognized by his elect, though unperceived by others (verses 27 and 28).

Then the climax would come. Immediately after the tribulation of the days of siege and flight, the next wave of attack would devastate Jerusalem and the polity of Israel would collapse (verse 29). Then would they see the evidence—the sign—of Christ’s authority

and majesty in the coming of the dire judgments Christ had predicted. “Then shall appear the sign [*seemeion*] of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (verse 30).

All of this has its parallel in the more complete fulfillment of our day. We have been in the end of the age for many years (verses 15-28), while the Lord’s saints have been fleeing to the mountains (representing our Lord and his care, Psalm 125:2), and he has gathered them around the carcass of “meat in due season,” freshly provided for their nourishment (compare Job 39:27-30). But the final judgment still awaits. When the seventh plague of Revelation is poured, its force will sweep away the present institutions which intrude upon our Lord’s program for God’s kingdom to be established in the earth.

“Then [in the climax incident to the seventh plague] shall appear the sign [*seemeion*] of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,” perceiving the authority and majesty of earth’s new king in the collapse of present governments (compare Revelation 1:7). It is this sign, the fall of present institutions, which will alert the world to the change in circumstances, and the presence of a mightier power taking hold of earth’s affairs. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

“The Parousia of Christ will not be known to the tribes, or families, of the earth in general, but will be known only to the most saintly ones of the church of Christ. Consequently, the sign of the Son of Man must in some sense stand related to his Epiphania, or shining forth in the ‘flaming fire’ of judgment, which the whole world of mankind will recognize—2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.”—*Pastor Russell’s Sermons*, p. 420, “The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven.”

Final Comment

If the word *parousia* could ever mean something other than presence, presumably some examples of its use exclusive of “presence” could be found. For example, “His arrival will be at noon” or “my coming will be by ship.” No such instances can be found, nor does the intrinsic meaning of the word—being alongside—have any reference to transit, movement, approach, or even arrival. On the other hand, every one of the twenty four instances of this word in Scripture is consistent with the word “presence.”

A Secret Coming

A Thief in the Night

*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch
the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered
his house to be broken up.—Matthew 24:42,43*

In this text Jesus forewarned his disciples to be watchful through the age, and the advice applies to all of his followers who anticipate Christ's second advent. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37). We are now in the days of the Son of man, and the watching ones, waiting for his return, have received the blessing promised, the banquet of truth, the "faith once delivered unto the saints," restored and augmented with prophetic testimonies. Never have the Lord's people had so much spiritual bounty available to them as now. How appropriate for the Lord to advise the Laodicean church to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve" to see the beauties of the truth clearly.

Matthew 24:42,43 was evidently the source for statements by the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter likening Christ's return to a stealthy, thieflike return. Paul wrote to the brethren at Thessalonica, "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Peter wrote, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief ... in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

Both texts emphasize that the Lord's people were to watch by attending to their Christian faith and duties as devoted stewards, keeping their eyes on the prophecies and circumstances portending the end of the age. Contrariwise, "If ... thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief" (Revelation 3:3), unexpectedly, and they will be unprepared.

In the Night

A thief generally comes at night. Jesus incorporates this feature into his warning by intimating his appearance would be during a "watch" in the night. Peter does not mention the night ("in the night" is spurious in 2 Peter 3:10), but Paul does in his epistle to the Thessalonians cited above. At night people would generally be sleeping, and Christ warns, "Watch ... lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:35,36).

In Mark 13:35 he also specifically mentions four parts of the night, "at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning"—four designations which touch some point of each of the four night watches. In Luke, however, he narrows the field to two watches in particular: "And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:38).

Interestingly, in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, all these aspects come together. The cry "behold the bridegroom" went out "at midnight" (Matthew 25:6)—

exactly the junction of watch two and watch three—and this call roused the virgins who had “all slumbered and slept” as our Lord warned.

These connections are augmented further in Psalm 119:62, “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.” A few verses later in the same psalm the lamps so necessary for the virgins of the parable are interpreted as the word of God: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (verse 105).

In another passage, the faithful bride of Song of Solomon 3:1-3 is so earnest in her longings for the Lord “by night upon my bed” that she rises while it is still dark to search the ways for any news of her beloved, even passing by the “watchmen that go about the city” during the night. Afterward, “it was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth” (verse 4).

Specific Application

All these texts are consistent about our Lord’s return during a night period: in particular “midnight” is specified in two of them. The Jewish day, like the night, was divided into four periods—the morning (prenoon) and evening (afternoon), each subdivided into lesser and greater portions. Thus the lesser morning, greater morning, lesser evening, and greater evening—four parts (see *Reprints*, p. 2953, and the diagram below).



Therefore, beginning at daybreak, to reach midnight one passes through four parts of the day and two parts of the night—six periods total. There one enters a seventh period. The Scriptures often speak of the Gospel age journey of the church as in seven divisions—the seven stages of the church (Revelation 2,3), the seven days’ consecration of the priesthood (Leviticus 8:33,35), the seven circuits of Jericho (Joshua 6:3,4), the seven days consecrating the altar for the world (Ezekiel 43:25-27).

This may show that the return of Christ comes after six periods of the church, at the opening of the seventh period. Indeed, Luke 12:36,37 says at the return of Christ the saints would hear a knock, and if responsive, would be fed a rich repast of truth—precisely the promise to church seven, Laodicea: “I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

The prophetic marker of “midnight,” therefore, points to the return of Christ at the opening of the Laodicean phase of the church. This is the time when the nominal systems are spewed forth (Revelation 3:16) and the saints called to come out from them (Revelation 18:4). It is the time of harvest when the wheat is separated from the tares, supervised by Christ at his return with a sickle in his hand (Revelation 14:14).

Gideon

Gideon’s band of three hundred attacked the Midianites “in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands” (Judges 7:19). Gideon represents our Lord, the three hundred the redeemed saints, the trumpets represent the announcement of the truth, and the earthen vessels broken to let their lights shine represent the humanity of the saints, broken in their service. All of this speaks of the harvest message going out through the brethren, the first front in the onslaught against Christendom, the fray later joined by others. The conflict begins within the middle watch, shortly after it began. Presumably the middle watch is the watch which began in the middle of the night. It is midnight, at the opening of the seventh church, the Harvest Church.

One Watch Later

Consistent with this is another reference in the gospels to the end of the third watch (period seven from daybreak), and the approach of the next, which would bring us into the kingdom. The episode is Jesus’ walking across the stormy sea of Galilee to join his disciples, rescuing them from the peril and bringing about a great calm. The incident is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and John.

Mark 6:48 says it was “about the fourth watch of the night,” but Matthew 14:25 is more definitive. The King James version says “in the fourth watch,” but the word “in” is not in the Greek text. The words “in the fourth” come from the single Greek word *tetartee*, which is rendered by both the Concordant Interlinear and New World Interlinear as literally “to fourth.” Moulton’s Analytical Greek Concordance says this is the Dative, singular, feminine case of *tetartos*. Dative case, in grammar, denotes “in many languages approach toward something” (*Webster’s Unabridged*, 1973).

The episode represents Christ rescuing his saints at the close of the time of trouble, after which there is a great calm as the kingdom rule stills the waves of trouble which bring us into the kingdom. This occurs at the close of the seventh phase of the church. It is here represented by the close of the seventh period of the day, the third watch of the night.

He Has Come

Jesus has now come, and is present with regal authority during the last phase of the church, Laodicea. But his return was stealthy, unobserved by the world, known only to those who have been awake to the prophecies and alert to the change of dispensation at hand. During this period the saints are separated from Christendom and nourished with

the Divine Plan. They constitute a voice to represent the Lord's program to all who have an ear to hear.

Poems and Short Features

Word Pictures

Jesus said, “Behold, I come as a thief” (Revelation 16:15). The apostle Paul informs us that Jesus was to come as “a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2). He also explained that the Master would come with a “shout,” also with the “voice of the archangel,” and with the “trump a God” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Certainly thieves do not blow trumpets and shout, nor did Jesus blow a trumpet when he left the disciples. But these are not contradictions. They are word pictures to help our finite minds comprehend more clearly some of the great factors involved in the second coming of Christ and what that event will mean to all mankind.

We know something about the manner of a thief’s coming. We know a little concerning the purpose of blowing trumpets. We are familiar with shouts of command. We know something of the characteristics of clouds, and what they signify. When we put all these together and add to them the many other illustrations of the Bible pertaining to Christ’s second coming, we begin to understand that what we are to look for is not a human being coming down through the literal clouds, setting fire to the earth and toppling over the mountains, but an upheaval of human society, leading to a conversion of mankind from selfishness and hate to love and sympathy; from war and destruction to peace and reconstruction; from sickness and death to health and life; from funeral processions to a great homecoming of the dead.

—*Behold Your King*

The Year of Jubilee

Blow ye the trumpet, blow
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound:
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners
home.

Jesus, our great High Priest,
Hath full atonement made;
Ye weary spirits rest:
Ye mournful souls be glad;
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners
home.

Extol the Lamb of God,
The all-atoning Lamb;
Redemption through His
blood,
To all the world proclaim:
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners
home.

Ye, who were sold for
nought,
Whose heritage was lost,
May have it back unbought,
A gift at Jesus' cost:
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners
home.

The seventh trumpet hear,
The news of heavenly grace;
Salvation now is near;
Seek ye the Savior's face:
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners
home.

Pastoral Bible Institute News

World News

Religious

Two car bombs rocked India's commercial capital of Bombay during lunchtime [yesterday], turning the area around a jewelry market and a historical landmark into a war zone. At least 45 people were killed and more than 150 were wounded in the successive blasts. Authorities blamed Muslim groups including the Lashkar-e Taiba and the Student Islamic Movement of India. Both organizations, which have been banned in mostly Hindu India for past terrorist attacks, seek independence for the Indian-held part of Kashmir, a mostly Muslim region. Violence between Hindus and Muslims has plagued the sub-continent since India and Pakistan were carved out of the remnants of the British empire in 1947.

—Los Angeles Times, 8/26/2003

On July 1, half a million people poured onto the streets of Hong Kong in angry but peaceful demonstrations, subversion and sedition. The imposition of harsh anti-subversion laws has serious implications for Hong Kong's large Christian community. Many foreign mission organizations still operate freely in Hong Kong, while churches in the autonomous region continue their quiet support of Chinese believers on the mainland. All this could change if the new laws are strictly enforced. Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Zen has taken the lead in Christian circles against the new legislation. Born in Shanghai, Zen taught at a Catholic seminary on the mainland for seven years before battles with the authorities over religious freedom led to his eviction.

—Religion Today, 7/11/2003

There are approximately 70 sextillion—that's 7 followed by 22 zeros—stars in the known universe, a team led by Australian astronomer Simon Driver announced this week at the 25th General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union in Sydney. That means there are more stars in the sky than there are grains of sand in every beach and desert on Earth. The astronomers made the calculation ... as part of a project known as the Two-Degree Field Galaxy Redshift Survey.

—Los Angeles Times, 7/26/2003



Social

Famine is again stalking Ethiopia. While a million people died in the famine of 1984 and 1985, today more than 12 million are at risk, half of those children under 15. Perhaps the most chilling aspect of today's crisis is that the famine persists despite generous outside

food aid. Drought is the primary reason, but it intertwines with other factors that keep Ethiopians too poor and too sick to recover from drought years. The impact of drought in Ethiopia is magnified by the country's deforestation and the depletion of soil by farmers who cannot afford to let land lie fallow. Ethiopia now has more than two million people with the AIDS virus, and the infection is exploding. Other countries in southern Africa are also beginning to suffer from hunger that does not go away, and their tribulations may turn into persistent famine as droughts intensify and AIDS incapacitates more and more workers.

—New York Times, 7/28/2003

Malaysia is allowing local Muslim men to get divorced by sending a text message on their mobile phones. An ancient practice under Islamic Sharia law permits men to end a marriage by repeating the simple phrase *talaq* (I divorce thee) three times. An Islamic law court in Malaysia has recognized the divorce of Shamsudin Latif after he sent such a text message to his wife. The ruling was endorsed by Abdul Hamid Othman, the government's religious adviser, who said that if the message was clear and unambiguous, it was valid under Sharia law.

—Financial Times, 7/28/2003

A Nigerian oil pipeline punctured by thieves exploded, killing more than 100 villagers scavenging for fuel, witnesses said Saturday. Nigeria, the world's eighth biggest exporter of crude oil, is Africa's biggest oil producer, but it suffers chronic fuel shortages because of technical problems with its four domestic refineries. Witnesses said villagers using buckets and jerrycans had been scooping kerosene from the pipeline since it was deliberately punctured about two months before the accident. A thriving black market is a major incentive to thieves tapping into the more than 3,000 miles of pipelines transporting refined products across the country.

—Los Angeles Times, 6/22/2003

Most of the earth's surface is covered by oceans, and their vastness and biological bounty were long thought to be immune to human influence. But no more. Scientists and marine experts say decades of industrial-scale assaults are taking a heavy toll. More than 70 percent of commercial fish stocks are now considered fully exploited, overfished or collapsed. Sea birds and mammals are endangered. And a growing number of marine species are reaching the precariously low levels where extinction is considered a real possibility. Despite closures of fishing grounds, they may never come back, biologists say, because overfishing has so profoundly changed the ecosystem. In 2000, the American Fisheries Society, representing fishery scientists and managers, reported that populations of 22 species had almost vanished. Recent studies estimate that stocks of many fishes are now a tenth of what they were 50 years ago.

—New York Times, 7/30/2003

The staggering number of deaths in France due to the heat wave is finally drawing the nation's attention to who died and how. The government estimates that the heat killed perhaps 5,000 people. The largest undertaker, General Funeral Services, said Wednesday that the number could be more than twice that. The victims were generally found inside apartments or houses or hotels. In virtually every case, there was no air conditioner.

—International Herald Tribune, 8/21/2003

More than 300 million people worldwide are at risk of developing diabetes and the disease's economic impact in some hard-hit countries could be higher than that of the AIDS pandemic, diabetes experts warned. In a report released at the International Diabetes Federation conference in Paris, experts estimate the annual healthcare costs of diabetes worldwide for people aged 20 to 79 are at least \$153 billion. "In some countries with a higher incidence, diabetes has a higher economic impact than AIDS," Williams Rhys, professor of clinical epidemiology at the University of Wales, told a news conference. "What AIDS was in the last 20 years of the 20th century, diabetes is going to be in the first 20 years of this century," said Paul Zimmet, foundation director of the International Diabetes Institute. [Experts] warn that type II diabetes was increasing in children and adolescents in many countries and is linked to rising obesity.

—Reuters, 8/26/2003

Civil

North Korean officials said that they had finished producing enough plutonium to make a half-dozen nuclear bombs, and that they intended to move ahead quickly to turn the material into weapons, senior American officials said today. "It's the mirror image of the Iraq problem," one official said. "We spent years looking for evidence Iraq was lying when it said it didn't have a nuclear program. Now North Korea says it's about to go nuclear, and everyone is trying to figure out whether they've finally done it, or if it's the big lie." North Korea boasted in April that it was working to convert its 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods into weapons-grade plutonium.

—New York Times, 7/15/2003

Idi Amin, who died in Saudi Arabia, got away with thousands of murders. His murderous reign in Uganda (began with) a beating here, an expulsion there, a brutal whipping here, a murder here, a mini-massacre there and then a full-scale purge to round it off. Amin is accused of killing hundreds of thousands of his own people. Those who try to rationalize his bloodlust present the reason that he was frightened of his rivals and struck at them first before they could strike at him. Africa is in (a) dank hole of poverty because of people like Amin, because people have been so frightened of their brutality they have not dared to challenge them. Now, the poverty is almost universal.

—The Daily News (Zimbabwe), 8/21/2003

Starting next year, Chinese citizens will face something new and breathtaking in scale: an electronic card that will store that vital information for all 960 million eligible citizens on chips that the authorities anywhere can access. The vagueness and vastness of the undertaking has prompted some criticism that the data collection could be used to quash dissent and to infringe on privacy. The project comes at a time when China is doggedly remaking itself into a leaner economic machine in line with the standards of the World Trade Organization. There has been little public discussion or news about the new cards. Brief but rapturous accounts in the official press say the cards will “protect citizens.” Yet many of China’s toughest critics, at home and abroad, are skeptical, objecting to the concentration of so much information at the government’s fingertips.

—New York Times, 8/19/2003



The electrical blackout in the United States in August has revived the debate over energy generation. Generating electricity is a simple technology, more than a century old. The technology becomes a little more complex when you have to choose the optimal way of generating it. Hydro is great but requires big investments in dams. To make steam, you have a choice of coal, nuclear, natural gas, manufactured gas or oil. There are a few other complexities, but on the whole, any Third World Country can do it. The complicated part is the politics. Millions of conservatives are trying to peddle windmill farms amidst debate about destroying the scenic beauty of places like California and the Dutch coast. Nuclear power, a clean, safe and cost-effective way of making steam, has been stalled by the protestors in the U.S. The lack of incentives for utilities to invest in the infrastructure of transmission has limited the ability to deliver demand for increased electricity in growing population areas. Welcome to the bizarre world of energy politics.

—Wall Street Journal (Opinion), 8/19/2003

In a chilling final report, Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said Thursday that 69,000 people may have died in [the last two decades of the 20th century] of rebel and state-sponsored violence. Peru was racked by parallel wars waged by Shining Path and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement guerrillas seeking to impose communist rule. In response, the military and police committed widespread human rights abuses. Three-quarters of the victims were native speakers of the Quechua language and most died in the region of Ayacucho, which translated as "corner of death."

—Los Angeles Times, 8/29/2003

\$ Financial

Bulgaria holds almost \$2 billion of debt owed to it by Iraq since the 1970s and 1980s. The amount owed Bulgaria is a fraction of that due Russia, France and other Paris club members. But, according to finance minister Milen Veltchev, Bulgaria is at the top of the pain index when creditors are ranked according to the proportion of Iraqi debt represented in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Bulgaria's Iraqi debt is 12.5% of its GDP. Iraq's total debt represents 300% of its annual GDP. Bulgaria is still paying off the debts left from its former communist rulers.

—Global Finance, July/August 2003.

Inside North Korea, it goes by the Orwellian name of Division 39. It is a largely unpublicized trading network and slush fund. The money it generates is the lifeblood of Kim Jong II's dictatorship. According to interviews with defectors, Division 39 has generated a cash hoard as large as \$5 billion that is salted away in places as disparate as Macau, Switzerland and Pyongyang. It produces a steady flow of money that Mr. Kim uses to buy political support and loyalty. Intelligence officials have also tied it to Pyongyang's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction. Division 39 was set up during the mid-1970s. Citizens are required to make annual donations to Division 39 on important holidays honoring the so-called Dear Leader and his father.

—Wall Street Journal, 7/14/2003

An onslaught of rogue computer programs disrupted important commercial infrastructure [in August]. In one of the most serious incidents, CSX Corp., the third largest railroad company in North America, said it temporarily stopped service after one of the viruses struck. The day before, some passengers of Air Canada encountered delays because a "worm" program affected the airline's reservation system. The incidents highlight the (U.S.) economy's dependence on personal computers and the Internet, making it easier than ever for malicious computer code to spread rapidly.

—Wall Street Journal, 8/21/2003

Turkey's government will need to find \$8 billion to protect Istanbul from the effects of a possible earthquake. Istanbul's municipal government will have to reinforce or demolish about 75 percent of the city's 1 million buildings. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city with a population of about 10 million, stands near a fault line that has caused several quakes in recent years. An earthquake in Izmit, about 100 kilometers from Istanbul, killed 17,000 people in 1999. Death tolls are higher than they should be because of low standards of construction which result from failure to enforce building rules.

—Hurriyet (Istanbul), 8/19/2003

South Africa will suffer “a complete economic collapse” within four generations if it does nothing to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, according to new research from the World Bank. The authors of the World Bank report claim the AIDS epidemic could have such a devastating impact on the economy that family incomes could fall by more than a half and middle-income South Africa could become more like a poor African nation. They argue that the real economic threat from AIDS is its potential to kill young adults, which can destroy a country's ability to create human capital. ... Around 15 per cent of [South African] adults are HIV-positive.

—Financial Times, 7/14/2003

European farmers are preparing for their worst crisis in decades as record heat parches crops, threatening to cause billions of euros in damages to products from Tuscan olives to French wheat and German rye. In France, 54 of 58 regions have asked for agricultural disaster funds. Italy has declared a state of emergency for four regions because of the longest heat wave in two centuries. Germany's agricultural association expects almost a fifth of farmers in the worst-affected areas will lose their jobs. Europe's 288 billion-euro farming industry, which accounts for 4.2 percent of the region's workforce, and 1.7 percent of gross domestic product, has faced flooding, droughts and record high and low temperatures in the past three years. In France, Europe's biggest agricultural producer, drought is gripping three-quarters of the country.

—Bloomberg News, 8/7/2003

★ Israel

In perhaps the most delicate of ironies, Germany last year passed Israel as the leading destination for Jewish emigrants from the former Soviet Union: 19,262 admissions, compared with 18,878 for Israel. Germany is attractive, in part, because it grants all Jews from the former Soviet Union citizenship and automatic government benefits. Germany's pre-war Jewish community of 500,000 was just 15,000 after the war. Now it's back up to 200,000.

—Newsweek, 7/14/2003

Ever since its discovery nearly three years ago, the Gaza Marine natural-gas field off the Gaza Strip has been hostage to the seismic volatility of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But recently, peace hopes inspired by the U.S.-backed “road map” have breathed new life into the project. Its champions say it would lead the way in repairing economic ties severed by 34 months of bloodshed. But for others, distrust now runs so deep that any collaboration of this kind is a pipe dream. The 1.6 trillion cubic feet of gas off Gaza could earn \$50 million to \$100 million a year for the Palestinian Authority, a lot for a government whose monthly revenues at the end of last year were just \$18 million.

—Wall Street Journal, 7/14/2003

Israel is ready for a terrorist attack on the scale of the September 11 attacks in the US, a senior official in the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office told Ariel Sharon’s security cabinet members on August 6. Danny Arditi, who heads the task force on fighting terror, presented several possible terrorist attacks that could take place and explained how the country would react. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the possibility of such attacks requires a major investment in order to be fully prepared. He said the budget should reflect the need to make such preparations a national priority.

—Jerusalem Post, 8/7/2003

Book Review

***Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*, Barry and Judith Rubin.
Oxford Press, 2003. 354 pages.**

For more than four decades, since he founded Fatah in 1959 and then the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1964, Yasir Arafat has enjoyed the flattering glare of the international spotlight. Mr. Arafat is one of the inventors of modern terrorism and continues to instigate it to this day. Despite this, a multitude of admirers and apologists in the West have been taken in by his pose of moderation, at least until recently. As a result, he has visited nearly every royal palace and presidential residence in Europe and was a guest of honor at the White House several times. He has even won the Nobel Peace Prize.

How did this happen? As [the Rubins] show in their admirable, impressively documented book, he is one of the great con men of modern politics. Even those who know what a slippery character Mr. Arafat is may be surprised to learn from the Rubin's account just how deceitful he can be.

He claims to have been born in Jerusalem, for instance, but was in fact born in Cairo. He has told of single-handedly stopping an Israeli tank column in the 1948 war, though the evidence places him in Egypt at the time. Some of his falsehoods have been utterly fantastic such as that there was never a Jewish temple in Jerusalem. As for political tactics, the Rubins remind us that Mr. Arafat is often astute, positioning himself between competing Islamic, Marxist, and nationalist Palestinian groupings. Even today, though the Western media talks of a “new Palestinian prime minister,” Chairman Arafat retains control of almost all the key elements of power in Palestinian politics.

The Rubins, along with documenting his corruption and misrule, make clear how much Palestinians and Israelis alike have suffered from his refusal to entertain a two-state solution.

—Tom Gross, Wall Street Journal, 8/21/2003

(Gross is a former Jerusalem correspondent for the London Sunday Telegraph
and New York Daily News)
