

*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM!
Come out to meet Him."

(Matt. 25:6 RSV)



NOW YOU CAN HEAR THE THUNDER

When dark and turbulent clouds gather on the horizon, you know that a storm is approaching. You can see the lightning flashes, but you do not hear the sound of thunder. The storm is too far away. However, as the storm nears, each flash of lightning is followed by the sound of thunder. If you time the lapse between when you see the lightning and hear the thunder, you can approximate how far the storm is away, and by several checks how rapidly it is approaching.

We have been warned that "a storm is coming, relentless in its fury." (8T:315) Already the ominous clouds are on the horizon. We have seen the lightning flashes. The storm has come closer. Now we can hear the thunder!

In the February 20, 1987, issue of Christianity Today, the lead article featured the agenda of the Christian Reconstructionists. The multi-colored cover on the issue illustrated their objectives and in so doing drew from prophetic symbolism. (See page 2)

The article itself was captioned - "Democracy as Heresy" with a subheading - "Reconstructionists anticipate a day when Christians will govern using the Old Testament as the Law book." On the symbolic cover was superimposed the message - "God's Law for a New Order." It should be understood that Christianity Today (CT) is not endorsing the Agenda of the Christian Reconstructionists but merely reporting the results of research done by one of the associate editors. However, the status given to the report of that research - the lead article and the cover picture - does indicate the importance attached to the findings.

Back in the early 1960's, a group of American Christians began calling for a reconstruction more radical than was imposed on the South following the American Civil War. They with their patriarch, Rousas John Rushdoony of Armenian extraction, found few listeners then. But

today things have changed. Rushdoony and his cohorts "are regular guests on religious television shows, hobnob with a potential candidate for the presidency, testify in dozens of church-state education trials, and gain burgeoning number of adherents in the charismatic wing of evangelicalism. Newsweek has labeled Rushdoony's Chalcedon Foundation as the think tank of the Religious Right."

Besides Rushdoony, there are two other primary persons involved in this proposed program, Greg Bahnsen and Gary North. All three hold earned doctorates. North and Rushdoony are prolific authors writing on varied subjects, while Bahnsen is the most scholarly of the three. At one time all three were associated together at the Chalcedon Foundation. Today, they have all gone separate ways but still holding the original concepts. Rushdoony heads the 12 member staff of the Chalcedon Foundation at Vallecito, California, while North, his son-in-law, has launched the Institute for Christian Economics at Tyler, Texas. Bahnsen is currently a pastor of an Orthodox Presbyterian church in southern California.

What Is Their Program?

First, it is Biblically orientated. Rushdoony insists that "without the Bible every fact from atoms to man is unrelated to all others." And apart from the Bible, there is "no knowledge at all - only chance and universal death."

They believe that Christians should be theonomic, that is, live by God's law. The Reconstructionists interpret this to mean exactly and as strictly as the law was revealed to ancient Israel. Bahnsen states that "every single stroke of the law must be seen by the Christian as applicable to this very age between the advents of Christ." However, they do recognize that the coming of Christ abrogated the ceremonial law, and thus the requirements for animal sacrifices are ended. But they do not see Israel as a unique theocratic state, but rather as a blueprint of what all nations need to be.

In their perception of last day events, the Chalcedon Foundation believe that the church will triumph bringing all things under the dominion of Christ before His second coming. In contrast to D. L. Moody who believed the world was a sinking ship from which persons need to be rescued, "the Reconstructionists want to commandeer the ship, repair it, and



sail it toward their own destination."

[Interestingly, there are Adventists on the right, who while not postmillennialists, have the same idea of taking over the Adventist "ship", repair it, and sail it into port.]

In anticipation of this day, the Reconstructionists have designed their political, economic, and legal agendas relying solely on the Old Testament Law, with certain New Testament modifications.

The Political Agenda

Democracy is considered heresy. There would be no Federal government. The controls of government would be on the State and local level with the family as the center, ordered according to the patriarchal system of the Old Testament. They would countenance a republican form of government with the Bible as the charter and constitutional document.

The tolerance which marks our present pluralistic society would be a thing of the past. Rushdoony notes that "in the name of tolerance, the believer is asked to associate on a common level of total acceptance with the atheist, the pervert, the criminal, and the adherents of other religions."

The family would be given the responsibility

for the education of the youth. The Reconstructionists believe that government controlled education robs the family of the right to shape the education of their children in Biblical beliefs. In their judgment, the present system "emasculates" men, detracting from their leadership of the family and rendering "women either the fluffy luxuries for men or aggressive competitors to men."

The Economic Agenda

There would be a return to either the gold or silver standard. Citing Lev. 19:35-37, "hard money" is considered to be a means to restrict the government's ability to grow beyond Biblical boundaries. They perceive that money not based on a set standard is counterfeit and the resulting inflation due to currency manufacture is "theft."

The Reconstructionists have no sympathy for the Third World Nations. They believe that if a nation will not follow the Biblical blueprint, those nations deserve to suffer economically. Gary North has written - "The so-called underdeveloped societies are underdeveloped because they are socialist, demonist, and cursed... The Bible tells us that the citizens of the Third World ought to feel guilty, to fall on their knees and repent from their Godless, rebellious, socialistic ways. They should feel guilty because they are guilty, both individual and corporately." (Emphasis his)

A Biblical form of slavery would be reinstated to allow impoverished persons to pay off their debts, and criminals to make restitution for damages. One reconstructionist writer states the slave should be cared for, educated in civic responsibility, and if Christian freed after set periods of time. This concept of slavery is considered as among "the most beneficent" of Biblical laws.

The Legal Agenda

All law would be derived from the Old Testament Code. Bahnsen, writing in his Theonomy, states - "The follower of Christ should teach that the civil magistrate is yet under moral obligation to enforce the law of God in its social aspect," because it is "the transcript of God's eternal holiness and the permanent standard for human righteousness." Then Bahnsen lists 15 crimes that deserve capital punishment, among which are - murder, and rape, sodomy, Sabbath breaking, apostasy, witchcraft, and blasphemy. Following this list of

crimes punishable by death, this comment is made - "Christians do well at this point to adjust their attitudes so as to coincide with those of their Heavenly Father."

There are no plans for prisons in this new society. They are considered a defilement. Under a Biblically orientated society, the criminal would either be executed, or would be forced to make restitution possibly as a slave.

The Present Acceptance of These Ideas

Each section of the Reconstructionist's Agenda could be related to the end-time events as outlined in the book of Revelation. However, the question arises as to their present acceptance which would be a factor in the imposition of this way of life upon America and the world. While the present key figures in the movement think in terms of hundreds of years into the future for its implementation, others, such as Everett Sileven, the Reconstructionist pastor in Louisville, Nebraska, expects to see this program in his lifetime. Certain areas of present concern serve as catalysts to promote this agenda as an alternative to the decadent social order. The plan to impose the death penalty on practicing homosexuals gives impetus to the agenda. Then with the threat of AIDS as a plague that could decimate populations, this program's appeal is greatly augmented.

The growing disenchantment with the public school system is another factor giving a boost to this proposed reconstruction of society. Rushdoony is now frequently in court as an "expert" witness on behalf of church-affiliated schools. He with Gary North have appeared a number of times on Pat Robertson's "700 Club." These two have also been repeat guests on the Dr James Kennedy television program. This gives the agenda increasing public exposure. Further, it must be kept in mind that Dr. James Kennedy is a "bitter foe church-state separation." (Church and State, April, 1987, p. 10)

Another insight into the growing acceptance of the agenda of the Chalcedon Foundation is the use made of their ideas by various molders of thought and religion in their publications. The late Francis Schaeffer's, A Christian Manifesto, relied on Rushdoony's social analysis. Schaeffer's son listed the The Chalcedon Report as one of four periodicals all concerned Christians should read. Gary North gave his blessing to the controversial

charismatic campus ministry, Maranatha, as "forthrightly proclaiming the 'crown right of King Jesus.'" This means simply the setting up on earth the kingdom of God modeled after the Hebrew theocracy. Rushdoony gives praise to the ministry of author and evangelist Bob Mumford, a charismatic leader. The CBN University operated by Pat Robertson has key staff members who are more than merely sympathetic to the movement. A half dozen text books used in the University's School of Law and Public Policy are authored by either Rushdoony or North. One major Protestant church - the Presbyterian Church in America - issued a statement on the movement in 1978. While not endorsing it, the General Assembly decided it was not heretical.

While the Reconstructionists do not advocate revolution or massive, rapid social change, they aim at a transformation, both moral and social, at the grass roots level. To them "this will require the salvation of souls and world mission, as well as legislative reform." (Emphasis mine) This was written by Joseph Kickasola in The Journal of Christian Reconstruction. Kickasola teaches in the CBN University's School of Public Policy. The dangerous part of this whole program is that the Reconstructionists in formulating their agenda take cues from certain strands of New England Puritanism. Any person knowledgeable in New England history can understand what this means. (See The Two Republics, pp. 601-655, by A. T. Jones)

Even well-known publishers, such as Thomas Nelson, have published four titles in the Biblical Blue Print Series, edited by Gary North. These have been endorsed by Jerry Falwell as "a tool Christians need" for the difficulties "that confront society."

The Overview

While nowhere in this special report on the agenda of the Reconstructionists as it appeared in Christianity Today was the prophecy of Isa. 2:1-3 mentioned as appearing in the writings of the Chalcedon Foundation. However, the editors of CT sensed the implication of where this agenda was leading so as to picture the prophecy symbolically on their front cover. (See again, p. 2)

This is exactly the direction Papal policy is tending. Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter closing the Jubilee Year of Redemption, described Jerusalem "as a symbol

To page 7, col. 1

CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lesson # 4

God Manifest In The Flesh

Question

Answer

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. What testimony is borne concerning Christ's life? | 1 Peter 2:22 |
| 2. What is true for all other members of the human family? | Romans 3:23 |
| 3. To what extent was Christ tempted? | Heb. 4:15 |
| 4. In His humanity, of what nature did Christ partake? | Heb. 2:14-16 |
| 5. How fully did Christ share our common humanity and why? | Heb. 2:17,18
(See note 1) |
| 6. How did John describe the incarnation? | John 1:1,14 |
| 7. Where did God, in Christ, condemn sin and why? | Romans 8:3,4
(See note 2) |
| 8. How else is this expressed by Paul? | 2 Cor. 5:21 |
| 9. How did Paul sum up the humiliation of Christ? | Phil. 2:5-8
(See note 3) |
| 10. By whose power did Christ live the perfect life? | John 5:19,30
John 14:10 |
| 11. Through whom may we gain victory? | (See note 4) |
| 12. What is our privilege? | Eph. 3:14-19 |

NOTES

1. "In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature. If not, then He was not 'made like unto His brethren,' was not 'in all points tempted like as we are,' did not overcome as we have to overcome, and is not, therefore, the complete and perfect Saviour men needs and must have to be saved. The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that in the same way every one who is 'born of the Spirit' may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh." Bible Readings For The Home Circle page 174, 1935 edition. (Emphasis theirs.)
2. Since, "Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it was sinful man that He came to redeem." Christ Our Righteousness pp. 27,28.
3. See text in the New International Version.
4. Please read: John 15:5; Phil. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:57.

THE JEWISH EQUATION

(Part Three)

Some Historical Background

Prior to the giving of the Message of Righteousness by Faith in 1888, Ellen G. White had indicated repeatedly the nearness of the end. Note the following references:

- 1) 1878 - "We are now upon the very borders of the eternal world." (4T:306)
- 2) 1881 - "The end of all things is at hand." (5T:16) "We are standing on the threshold of the eternal world." (5T:18)
- 3) 1885 - "We are standing, as it were, on the borders of the eternal world." (5T:382)
- 4) Circa 1886 - "We are standing on the very verge of the eternal world." (5T:460)

There can be no doubt as to the message these statements intended to convey. Further, at the same time, the church was warned that a "threefold religious union" - Spiritualism, Protestantism, and "the Roman power" - would be instrumental in influencing the establishment of "the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God." This would be a sign whereby God's people would "know that the time had come for the marvelous working of Satan, and that the end is near." (5T:451)

Again in emphasizing that "the curtain is about to be lifted" upon the final scenes, Ellen G. White wrote that "in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath" would be seen the sign "to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. (5T:464-465) This has become known as the sign of the National Sunday Law and is used prominently in last day projections at the present time among various dissident groups.

In 1901, Ellen G. White negated the messages given between 1878 and 1886 as to the nearness of the end. She wrote to P. T. Magan in a letter dated, Dec. 7, 1901, - "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel" because of their insubordination at Kadesh-barnea. And we have!

Certain questions now follow: Has our own

insubordination altered the nature of the end-time signs and the events connected with them? In ancient Israel's experience, their insubordination at Kadesh-barnea caused them to enter Canaan by a different way, and under different leadership. God said they would know "the altering of [His] promise." (Num. 14:34 margin)

It is of the utmost importance that we recognize a parallel between our history and the experience of Israel at Kadesh-barnea. In the very year that Ellen G. White negated the messages of the impending end - 1901 - she wrote:

In the twenty-first chapter of Luke, Christ foretold what was to come upon Jerusalem, and with it He connected the scenes which are to take place just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Letter 20, 1901, Counsels to Writers and Editors, pp. 23-24)

In this letter, Ellen G. White specifically designates Luke 21, in contrast to Matthew 24, or Mark 13, which are parallel chapters. The only event concerning Jerusalem recorded in Luke 21, not recorded in either Matthew or Mark is that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles [nations] until the times of the Gentiles [nations] be fulfilled." (21:24) Here enters the Jewish [or Jerusalem] Equation which involves those "scenes which are to take place just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

In 1898, James Edson White published a book - The Coming King - in which he commented on Luke 21:24. He wrote:

We also read that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. Jerusalem has never again come into possession of the Jews, and will not until "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This will be when the work of the gospel is finished. (p. 98)

There is a clear association between the concept of "the times of the Gentiles fulfilled" and "the work of the gospel finished." The sign which would mark this point in time is to be an event in the history of the Jerusalem; namely, Jerusalem would no longer be trodden down of the Gentiles, but be restored to Jewish authority and control. This brings us to current history.

Events in Our Time

In 1948, Israel once again became a nation,

but without control of Jerusalem. The new capitol was at Tel Aviv. This historical fact of itself had no prophetic significance. Coming events were simply casting their shadows before. (See Desire of Ages, p. 636) But they do serve as a warning. In the light of what we had been told - events in the history of Jerusalem as foretold in Luke 21 would mark the scenes just prior to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven - the reestablishment of the State of Israel should have served as an alarm sounding a warning to every Seventh-day Adventist.

The ministry of the Church was put on notice concerning this event, and the significance to be attached to it. The late Arthur S. Maxwell in a presentation at the 1952 Bible Conference noted among "Areas of Unfulfilled Prophecy," developments taking place in Palestine. He said:

The recent dramatic restoration of the nation of Israel has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine. ...

There is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care. Said Jesus, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24.

For nineteen centuries Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles. It is still trodden down [1952] of the Gentiles. Despite the amazing prowess of the Israeli troops, the ancient city of Jerusalem is still in Arab hands. ... Victorious as were the forces of Israel in every other part of Palestine, they failed to take the most dazzling objective of all. **Mysteriously they were held back from achieving this most cherished goal, this culminating triumph, as by an unseen hand.**

What could be the reason? Only that the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled.

Centuries ago Israel was not permitted to enter Palestine for a certain time because "the iniquity of the Amorites" was "not yet full" (Gen. 15:16); that is, not until the probationary time allotted to the Amorites had run out.

It may well be that the same principle applies today, on a wider scale. If so, then Jerusalem is to remain trodden down by Gentiles till the probationary time of all Gentiles has run out. If this be correct, how much hinges upon the fate of this ancient city and the power that occupies it! Our Firm Foundation, Vol. 2, pp. 230-231)

One doesn't have to be a genius to understand that the Jews who for 19 centuries ended their Passover and Yom Kippur services with the incantation in Hebrew - "Next year in Jerusalem" - would rest satisfied with the city under

Arab control. In 1948, there was given to the world, and to Adventists in particular, a solemn warning that the end of all things was at hand.

Not only were we warned by an event in history, but at the 1952 Bible Conference, the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was alerted to what had taken place, and put on notice concerning the significance of this prophecy Jesus had given.

The tragic events in the Church's history which followed the 1952 Bible Conference did not alter the impending fulfillment of Luke 21:24. In 1967, the Jews in a "lightning victory" took possession of the Old City, the subject of Jesus' prophecy. In 1980, the Jewish Knesset proclaimed "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel." The city became the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court.

Since 1980, we have been living on borrowed time. We are living between the fulfillment of Luke 21:24, and Daniel 11:45, to be followed by Daniel 12:1 - "And at that time shall Michael stand up."

To Be Continued

What Is Wrong with "ALONE"?

The telephone rang. The voice on the other end, after identifying himself, asked if he might receive the Thought Paper. A brief conversation followed, in the course of which I read to him the following quotes from S. N. Haskell:

The true Jew is an heir by faith of the inheritance promised to Abraham, but many pride themselves on the inheritance of the flesh. Such belong to the synagogue of Satan; for righteousness by works is the devil's counterfeit of the Lord's plan of salvation by faith alone in the merits of the Son of God. (Story of the Seer of Patmos, p. 49)

The immediate response was that Haskell was teaching heresy. I asked the calling party what was heretical about this statement made by Haskell. He replied, the word, "alone." As the days have passed, I have asked myself the question - "What is wrong with the word, "ALONE", when applied to the work of Christ

To p.7, Col. 1

of coming together, or union, and of universal peace for the human family." He stated he longed for the day when "we shall all be 'taught by God' that we shall listen to [Christ's] message of peace and reconciliation." Then the Pope closed his message with these significant words:

This peace proclaimed by Jesus Christ in the name of the Father who is in heaven thus makes Jerusalem the living sign of the great ideal of unity, of brotherhood and of agreement among peoples according to the illuminating words of the Book of Isaiah: "Many peoples shall come and say: 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'" (Isa. 2:3)

With the attention focused on Jerusalem, and with the detailed agenda of what it will mean "when out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3), the solution of the Jewish Equation is an absolute must for us as we now begin to hear the thunder of the storm as it draws increasingly nearer.

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All direct quotes in the above article unless otherwise noted are from Christianity Today, Feb. 20, 1987, pp. 17-23. Some of these quotes were from publications of leading Reconstructionists.

For review of Papal Policy toward Jerusalem see U.N. Security Council Document S/14032 (WVN, XVII-2)

ALONE

in behalf of man, and man's response to that work?

The prophet Isaiah speaking of the deliverance from Edom wrought by God in behalf of His people wrote:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me... And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm wrought salvation unto me. (Isa. 63:1-3a,5)

Further, the Lord declares by Isaiah -

There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. (Isa. 45:21b-22)

Instead of accepting the means provided by God through Jesus Christ for our redemption, we want to contribute to our salvation as if what God has provided is imperfect. How brazen and defiant can we become in supposing we can enhance by our works the merit to be found in Jesus Christ our Lord!

Paul sensed the inability of man to contribute to the merits of Jesus Christ stating -

For my grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

Here was a man of God, who experienced the grace of God freely bestowed, knowing that he could contribute nothing to "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24); yet who did "works" far beyond what those who today are afraid of "alone" have ever done. Those whom Haskell describe as belonging to the "synagogue of Satan" should take their Bibles and read carefully Paul's response to those who claim to be "ministers of Christ." He said:

I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. (See II Cor. 11:23-28)

This same apostle could write - "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. 6:14) Alone the Saviour agonized in Gethsemane; alone He died on Calvary. Truly - "Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work." (TM, p. 508)

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