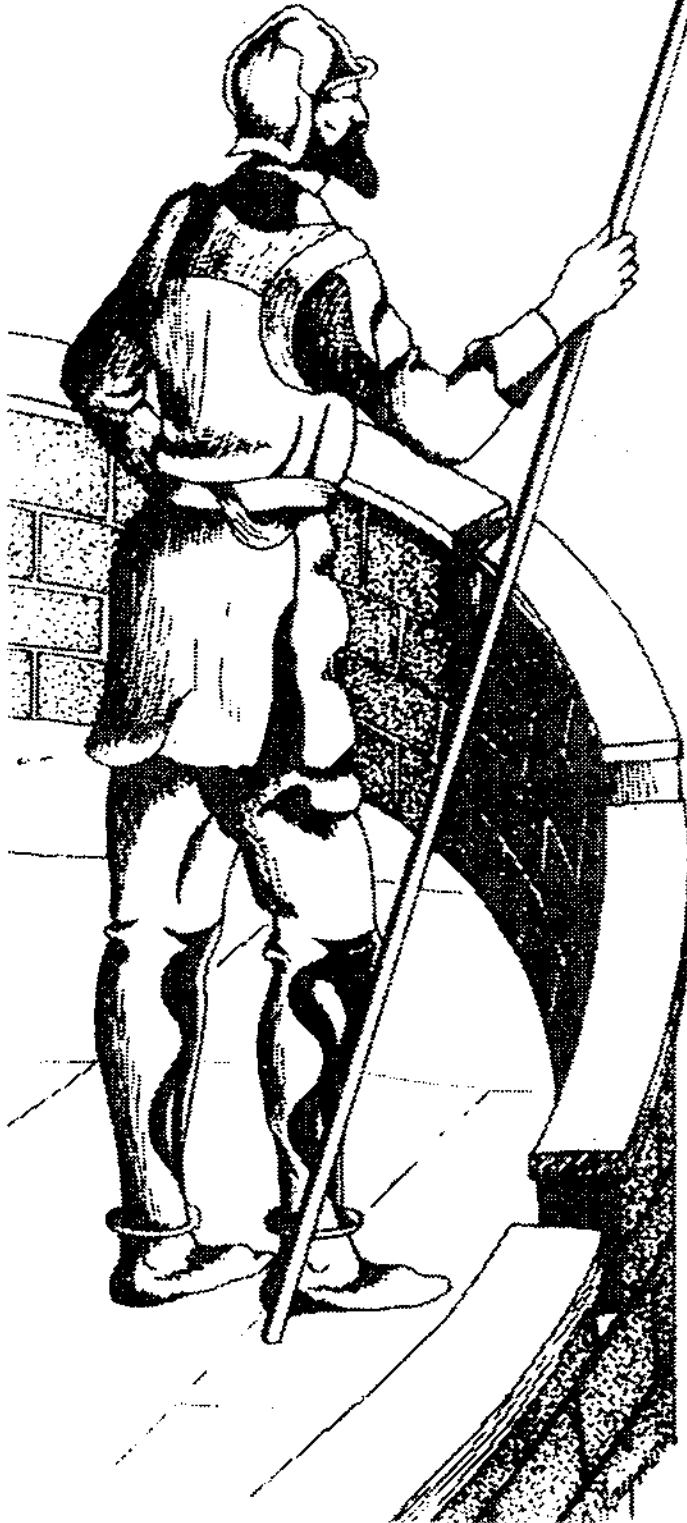


# "Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,  
the hour and the end!"

Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



"TAKE HEED THAT  
YE BE NOT DECEIVED"

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## Editor's Preface

This year, the same as last year, we did not have the regular Annual Fellowship; however, due to the persistent requests of several, we did conduct, in August, what we called a "Mini" Fellowship. No announcements were made in W&N, although invitations were sent to those whose persistence was rewarded as well as to some others whom we believed might be interested. There were no recordings of any of the studies presented. It had been suggested that we make the First Epistle of John the basis for the Seminar sessions. Limited as the time was, it was possible to cover only briefly the major polemical topics in the Epistle.

This issue gives, in summary, some of the subjects presented, other than from I John, as well as two of the main doctrinal issues raised by John - the Eternal Deityship of Jesus Christ, and His coming "in the flesh." We need to confront in our own Christian walk the full significance of the fact that to "abide in the doctrine of Christ" is to have "both the Father and the Son" which means eternal life. The converse is then true, that not to have "the doctrine of Christ" is to walk in darkness and "do not the truth."

The imperative warning by Jesus, "Take heed that ye be not deceived," is so apropos at this present time when every wind of doctrine is blowing not only in the religious world in general, but is also echoing in the corridors of Adventism by "many voices" each proclaiming themselves to be speaking the truth as it is in Jesus. How can one keep from being deceived?

A second part to this primary injunction by Jesus is also the question which He asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" With the "numbers" game emphasized at every turn, and the success of every endeavor judged by the numbers generated, we do well to consider the success of Noah judged by this criterion. Jesus said, as it was in Noah's day, so also will be the last days. Then we should remind ourselves of what Jesus said on the Mount relative to the gate that leads to life - "few there be that find it."

## “Take Heed that Ye Be Not Deceived”

While Jesus' eschatological message is reported with variations in the three synoptic gospels, all, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, begin our Lord's prophetic utterances with the same solemn injunction. In response to the question, "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?," Jesus warned:

Take heed that no man deceive you - Matt. 24:4

Take heed lest any man deceive you - Mark 13:5

Take heed that ye be not deceived. - Luke 21:8

Deception is paramount in the formation of "the image to the beast." Masquerading as the fulfilment of the prophecy of the coming of the prophet Elijah, the "false prophet" *deceiveth* those "that dwell on the earth" to "make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live" (Rev. 13:14). The deception does not end there. He further *deceived* them to receive "the mark of the beast" and to worship the image he caused them to create (19:20).

Deception was the means by which sin was introduced to this earth. Paul, writing to Timothy, stated that "Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being *deceived* was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:13-14). [See also II Cor. 11:3] The text in Genesis merely states: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3:1). The word, "subtil," (Heb. *gahroom*), an adjective, has a dual meaning. In Genesis 3, it means crafty and cunning; but it also has a good meaning - prudent and wise. (See Prov. 14:8). This deceptive voice is rightly described as "subtil" for he was once "full of wisdom" (Eze. 28:12) but perverted that wisdom into cunning craftiness. His first question to Eve reveals the very core of deception - "Yea hath God said?" Over this one factor is the whole of the great controversy between Christ and Satan; our salvation or our eternal loss.

John in his first Epistle declares that "the victory that overcomes the world" is "our faith" (5:4) And that "faith" comes by "hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The preferred Greek text reads literally - "then faith out of hearing [comes], and the hearing

through (the) word of Christ." We seldom look at this verse in context, merely taking it as definitive. Observe the context:

They have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias (Isaiah) saith, Lord who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

One Greek word [ακουη] dominates these verses, used as a noun three times, and translated, twice as "hearing" (v. 17), and once as "report" (v. 16). The compound verb [ὕπακουω] is translated "obeyed" in verse 16, and means simply, "come under what you hear." In other words, bring your conduct and thinking into harmony with the word of God. While the Greek text of the KJV uses the word, Θεος (God), there is both Old and New Testament justification for the preferred, Χριστος (Christ). In the prophecy of the coming Prophet given to Moses, God declared that "whoso-ever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:19). This is serious language. On the mount of Transfiguration, the only words of recorded injunction from God are - "Hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5).

Let us return to the Garden of Eden encounter. In his question, "Yea, hath God said?" the "serpent" singled out the one restriction placed by God on our first parents - "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." To Eve's reply noting the consequences of so doing - "Ye shall surely die" - the serpent negated it - "Ye shall not surely die" (3:4). The line was clearly drawn between truth and error; however, another factor was introduced in the controversy. The serpent suggested, that in eating, the eyes of Adam and Eve would be opened. In other words, they were in "blindness" to be in harmony with God's word. But on the side with that harmony is faith, "the evidence of things not seen." This is not all - they would be "as gods knowing good and evil" (v. 5). Here was an appeal which perverted their very "ego" but contained an element of truth. After the deception, the Lord God, declared, "Because the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (v. 22). They knew what was good; all they gained was a knowledge of evil. But the desire to become "gods" united them in Satan's rebellion and violated the very first commandment.

Here we have all the elements that produce deception: a denial of the word of God, a mingling of truth and error which perverts truth, and an introduction of an egotism which marks not only the deceiver, but deceives the ones hearing him. These elements of de-

ception first played out in Eden are intensified as we come to the final hour when with great wrath the devil reaches what he knows is his approaching last hour (Rev. 12:12).

The issue of the word of God involves truth for as Jesus prayed to God, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). This again places in direct conflict Christ, who is the Truth (14:6) and the enemy who "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (8:44). However, the devil does not hesitate to mingle truth with error but a mixture is still deception. It must be pure and unadulterated truth. This then requires a diligent and sensitive study of the Sacred Scriptures.

Paul counselled Timothy:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II, 2:15).

This fine line, Jesus Himself exhibited in His teaching from the Old Testament writings. Returning to Nazareth where He had been brought up, Jesus attended the Sabbath services in the synagogue as was His custom. He was asked to read the Scripture lesson for the day and make comments. From the book of Isaiah He read what is now designated as Chapter 61:1-2. After reading these verses, He returned the scroll to the minister of the synagogue with the comment, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21). Turning to Isaiah 61, we can note that Jesus stopped in the middle of the second verse, not even finishing the sentence. The whole verse reads:

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

If He had read the whole sentence, He could not have made the comment that He did. His first Advent was not to be a day of vengeance; that would be at His second coming (II Thess. 1:8). He rightly divided "the word of truth."

Today, the enemy who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden is seeking to thwart the advancing light of truth through deception. He is causing men to reject the plain prophetic words of Jesus concerning last day events, not only asking, "Yea hath Jesus said?," but also darkening the mind so that the words of Jesus cannot be rightly associated together, in other words dividing when there is no division. This is deception

compounded and reversed.

With the initial warning of Jesus in our minds - "Take heed that ye be not deceived" (Luke 21:8) - let us carefully read a complete section of His prophecy concerning Jerusalem:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (21:20-24).

First, observe that this whole paragraph is about one city - Jerusalem, not Israel as a nation. Most of this paragraph concerns conditions as well as a warning about events which actually occurred in the history of Jerusalem during the years 66-70 AD. This was more than thirty years after 34 AD. Israel was no longer the people of God, nor was Jerusalem the "holy city." The designation of "Israel" as the people of God had passed to a new "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16); and the term "holy city" applied to another city (Rev. 21:2). Yet Jesus said, events in the history of Jerusalem would be signs to the people of God, the new Israel. God had said - "Hear ye Him." The early Christians in Judea and Jerusalem did, and not one of them was killed or led away captive in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Secondly, in the Greek text of verse 24, there is one word translated two different ways in the KJV. The word is ἐθνῶν, and translated "nations," or "Gentiles." The same word is also used in verse 25 and there is translated, "nations." The concept is Gentile nations as corporate entities, and not Gentiles as individuals.

The same city, which when surrounded by alien armies in 66 AD served as a "sign" to Christians, is the same city which by events in 1967 and 1980 told those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, that the probationary time of the nations of earth was fulfilled.

What does this mean? Again we must rightly divide "the word of truth." The seven final plagues wherein

"the wrath of God is (poured) upon the earth" (Rev. 16:1) is but God's answer to what man has done in probationary time, with one exception, plague three. For example, Plague #1, which comes after the close of probation is on those who receive "the mark of the beast" prior to its close (16:2; cmp with 14:9-10). In this light consider the justification for the sixth plague:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ... And (they) gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (16:13-14, 16).

A correct understanding of what Jesus, that "Prophet" sent by God, said will help us to perceive the time when "the spirits of devils" were given control so as to begin gathering the nations to the final conflict in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. We have reached that day. "Take heed that ye be not deceived." "Hear ye Him"!

#### PART TWO:

### "In an Hour that Ye Think Not"

Not only did Jesus as the Prophet set forth events in the history of Jerusalem which were to be signs to God's people, but He also uttered warnings concerning His return which should give us deep concern. After citing what a "goodman" would do had he known that a thief was going to enter his house, Jesus said:

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matt. 24:44; Luke 12:40).

Mark, recording another illustration Jesus used to emphasize the need for watchfulness, notes that He warned, "Lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping" (Mark 13:36). Jesus is not talking about those who declare in their hearts, "My lord delayeth his coming," and thus are "unaware" of how near the end is. (Matt. 24:48-50) Jesus is speaking to those who believe in His second advent, and that events declare without question to the nearness of the end of all things human. Citing an illustration from nature, Jesus stated, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt #24:33).

A careful analysis of what Jesus said concerning the suddenness of His return, implies that He was conveying a warning about the close of all human probation as the distinctive "hour that ye think not." Comparing the days before His coming to the days before the Flood, Jesus declared:

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt. 24:38-39).

The description of life before Noah entered the ark is that of normal existence. Then came the day when Noah and his family entered the ark, and "the Lord shut him in" (Gen. 7:16). But the flood did not come that day! The rain began seven days later. (7:4). The inhabitants "knew not" - did not sense the reality - until the day the rain started. It was too late. "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Before Jesus comes as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" "in righteousness to judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11), His work as High Priest is concluded (15:5, 8). Probation has closed. In an hour that ye think not, Jesus' divine ministry changes.

There is also another aspect to the unexpected nature of the Second Advent. Jesus asked a question - "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). In this question is found an untranslatable Greek particle which suggests the expected answer. The word,  $\alpha\pi\alpha$ , can indicate "an inferential question to which a negative answer is expected." Thayer cites Luke 18:8 as the example of this use of the word (p. 71). Souter in his lexicon states the same for  $\alpha\pi\alpha$  (p. 36).

This factor should give us concern, concern not only for others, but also for our own souls. A careful appraisal of the Sermon on the Mount confirms this question of Jesus. He counselled:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because ---

That is the way they want to go? No!

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (7:13-14)

Jesus also spoke of the many who go into the broad way while thinking they are in the narrow way. He stated:

Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

His response is clear - "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you" (7:22-23). They were deceived - preachers, exorcists, and laymen whose lives were full of good works. There is but one criterion for entrance into "the kingdom of heaven" and that is, "he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (7:21). What is the will of the Father? Again, recall the Mount of Transfiguration. That Voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5).

Observe closely another scene from the gospel of Luke (14:25-27). "Great multitudes" were with Him. He turned, and said to those multitudes:

Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple (v. 27).

Where were the multitudes when Jesus was bearing His cross to Golgotha? What did they say when Pilate brought Jesus forth and said, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14). Dare we think that if we are permitted to sit with Him on His throne, we will escape the terror of loneliness that tortured His soul? To the "great multitudes" He said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). What is a disciple? Is it not one who walks with Him? If we are to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14:4), we will follow Him now in the "narrow way" He walked. Should we wonder why He said, "Few there be that find it"?

A comparison of the "books" of Heaven may help us to understand the ratio between the saved and the unsaved. Consider Revelation 20:8 - the number gathered for the battle against "the beloved city" is "as the sand of the sea." These will be judged from the same books which Daniel beheld opened in his vision of the judgment (7:10; Rev. 20:12). How many volumes must there be? Or is the record all on computer discs? There is, however, another book, just one volume - "the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 20:12, 13:8; Dan. 12:1). In it are only names, no resumes, and no recorded eulogies. These have but one song to sing. They join the angelic host in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power,...

and glory" (Rev. 11-12), for they had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14). Those whose number is as the sand of the sea had echoed in their lives the multitude who responded to Pilate, "Crucify Him" for sin is the will to kill God.

Keep in mind that a part of that number, who are as the sands on the sea shore, are those who prophesied in Christ's name and did many wonderful works for which at death they had been eulogized. Why had they failed to find the narrow gate, and why could they now join in the attack on "the beloved city"? One word: "deceived" (Rev. 20:8, 10).

Note carefully Jesus' words of the deception in earth's final hour:

There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matt. 24:24)

Observe closely His next words - "Behold I have told you before" (ver. 25). We are left without excuse.

#

## John's First Epistle

"This letter is plainly polemical. Dangerous heresy called it forth. In this letter the writer emphasizes the deity of Christ and pronounces a severe verdict on those who deny the deity" (R.C.H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 11, p. 364). The word "deity" means simply, "the state of being a god." Paul had written to the Church at Colosse that in Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9). The Greek word translated, "Godhead" (θεοτης) can also be translated, "deity." The Apostle John late in the first century faced this heresy in Ephesus, the Church to which this Epistle is addressed. We face the same heresy today in the community of Adventism in a revived form.

This Epistle has no introduction as the Epistles of Paul and Peter. There is no preface or preamble, but a basic statement about Jesus Christ upon which the whole letter rests. It begins - "That which was from the beginning" The words - *απ' αρχης* - need no article. "This is the same 'beginning' as that mentioned in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. In Genesis 1:1 'in beginning' marks the moment when time began for the acts of creation that followed; in John 1:1 'in the beginning' marks the same moment but in order to tell us

that already at that time the Logos was. 'From the beginning' looks forward from that moment to all time that follows; but the verb ην (it is not 'became' εγενετο, and not 'has been') leaves all eternity open to 'that which' already then 'was.'" (Lenski, *op.cit.*, p. 371)

There are five neuter clauses in this basic statement: 1) "That which was; 2) That which we have heard; 3) That which we have seen; 4) That we have looked upon; and 5) In the third verse, seen and heard are restated. All of this is "concerning the Word of life." Why the five neuters, when the Word (Λογος) is used referring to the Person, Jesus Christ? Lenski explains:

Jesus Christ cannot be separated from what he was and is for us. Both belong together like the sun and its glorious light. The same theme of this letter is the same as that of the Gospel: the eternal Son incarnate for our life and salvation to the confounding of all antichrists. (p. 370-371).

The parenthetical second verse needs to be carefully considered. It reads:

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

Observe carefully. In verse one, John specifies that the One of Whom he is speaking, which he had seen, heard, and handled is the Logos - the Word of life. This life - "that eternal life" - was not derived from the Father but was "with the Father" from all eternity. The same preposition, προς, "with" is used here as is used in John 1:1 - "the Word was with God." This is a clear declaration of the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is these pronouncements concerning the Deity of our Saviour Jesus Christ that need to be made basic in any formulation of the doctrine of God, instead of ignoring them, and eisegetically interpreting other Scriptures in the light of our human experience. In other words, the relegating of Jesus Christ to the status of a lesser Being is one of the deceptions of these last days, and many "are going in thereat." The matter of "position" is one thing, the matter of "Being" is another.

Another heresy on which John makes pronouncement is whether Christ came in the flesh. He specifically warns:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets

have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: for this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (I John 4:1-3)

Of so great importance was this doctrine that John returns to it in his second Epistle, writing:

Many deceivers are entered in the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist (ver. 7)

Then John adds a basic concept which is too often overlooked:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (ver. 9).

In Ephesus at the time John was writing was one by the name of Cerinthus. He taught that Jesus was the physical son of Joseph; that the "eon Christ" was united with Jesus at his baptism but left Jesus before His passion and His death. He was a former Jew from Egypt and combined Jewish ideas with what can be called the beginnings of Christian Gnosticism. He sought to produce a spiritualized Mosaism, which was to be a universal religion. In his variant from truth, Cerinthus retained circumcision and the keeping of the Sabbath.

The issue today in regard to the Incarnation is not that Christ came in the flesh but what "flesh" did He assume in becoming human. There is no denial that the Word was manifest in the flesh *per se*, but was there a divine intervention so as to control the nature of the flesh that the Word took upon Himself? While we cannot define certain aspects of the mystery of godliness - the manifestation of God in the flesh, - the Scripture clearly states that the nature Christ took was the fallen nature of Adam. He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). He was "made... to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21). He was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3). "He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). Emptying Himself, He "took upon Him the form of a slave" (Phil. 2:7, Gr.). This then is "the doctrine of Christ" and to have this doctrine is to have both the Father and Son. This is life eternal (John 17:3) . #

## *Let's Talk It Over*

Have you ever, in your contemplation of the revelation of prophecy, placed yourself in the picture given? Consider for a few moments the picture in Revelation 20. The "camp of the saints" has come down to earth. The description of this city is given in the final chapters of Revelation. It has crystal clear walls as well as many other features of dazzling brilliance.

There is a great resurrection. The population of earth becomes in number "as the sand of the sea." Dare you place yourself, in contemplation, in that resurrection. You are outside of the city. You know what awaits you. You make a pilgrimage to see the city at closer range. You will have time as great preparations will be made to take the city. You know who the commander-in-chief really is. When you arrive at the city walls, you recognize certain ones inside. How will you react to them? The same as when on earth prior to the millennium? Will you bring yourself to join in the final attempted assault on the city?

The answer to these questions is that you will. Satan will deceive you. In the contemplation, you reject the idea with abhorrence. The fact remains, that with all the warning not to be deceived in the earthly spiritual conflict, you were, or you would not be where you will find yourself.

In your return trip to the small plot on earth which is yours, you meet others whom you know - some are the very ones used by Satan which caused you to be where you now find yourself. How will you address them? What will you attempt to do to them?

When you arrive back to your small plot of earth, you decide, you will not join the forces that Satan is preparing to take the city. But you will! The prophecy indicates that all went up and compassed the city. Why will you do this? You will again be deceived.

We have on record the greatest deception of all time which led Israel to reject the Messiah. How could a person reject One who had resurrected a man who had been dead four days? Yet it was done, and some of the very ones who had witnessed the event would later join the religious leaders in shouting, "Crucify Him!" In John 7 we find a record of the reaction of the populace to the evidence of truth. Conversing among themselves, the throng who had gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of tabernacles con-

cluded that when the Messiah came, no man would know from where he had come (ver. 27). They said that they knew from where Jesus had come. It is evident that some of the people perceived of Him as coming from Galilee. They asked the question, "Shall the Messiah come out of Galilee?" These knew the Scriptures for they cited Micah 5:2 as evidence to where the Messiah was to be born (vs 41-42).

What was the source of this misconception concerning Jesus? A dispute in the Sanhedrin in which Nicodemus was involved, the Pharisees threw at him this same distortion of fact as to the origin of Jesus (v. 52). The fact of his birth, and place of birth was a matter of record right there in the temple (Luke 2:21-24). With the record available, the Pharisees had ignored the place of His birth in Bethlehem; and circulated instead the idea that Jesus was a Galilean. This was either done in ignorance, or with purposeful intent. The same holds true today. The voices seeking to guide the "historic" dissidents are either ignorant - and many of them are - or they are purposefully covering truth so as to escape its implications. The price to be paid for such deception is too high. Think again, what it will be like to be outside, "the camp of the saints"!

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"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight - the greatest battle that was ever fought by man - is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love."

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