

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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At the Last Trumpet

What will it be like for us when the last trumpet sounds and the Feast of Trumpets becomes a reality?

By Gregory Dullum

The Feast of Trumpets, the fourth of God's annual Feast days, will be Oct. 3. It is "a memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Lev. 23:24).

One of the events this day pictures is the return of Jesus Christ to this earth at the blowing of the seventh, or last trumpet (Rev. 11:15).

What will it be like FOR US when that day is fulfilled?

Changed Into Spirit

For those of us who *are baptized*, an AMAZING change will take place. It won't matter if we are dead or alive when Christ returns. This amazing change will *happen to all of us*.

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [died], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:13-17).

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1



Photo by NAPS and Greg Dullum

As we rise to meet Christ in the air, we'll look down and notice we're no longer on the ground! Everything will drop beneath our feet, getting smaller and smaller.

Cor. 15:50-54).

What Will It Be Like?

What will it be like to be changed into spirit beings at the return of Christ?

The very first thing we will feel is *energy*! We will feel POWER rushing through us—an amazing, *overwhelming* sense of POWER! We will no longer be LIMITED by our flesh. We will be GLORIFIED *spirit beings* (Rom. 8:17)!

The second thing we'll notice is that all aches, pains, illnesses and physical weaknesses will be GONE! Our back won't hurt! Our feet won't ache! Our joints won't hurt! If we are blind, we will see! We won't need glasses. Our vision will be perfectly clear. If we are lame, we'll walk! If we are deaf, we'll hear! Our ears will hear *every* sound. We will feel tremendously *youthful* and ALIVE, able to tackle anything that comes our way!

The next thing that will happen is we will *wonder where we are* and what is happening to us. If we were DEAD, this

will be *especially true*. Our last memory before we died is all we will remember and then suddenly we'll be alive again and we won't know where we are or how we got there. We may not be aware that we had died and we won't know how long we were dead.

Rising into the Air

If we are ALIVE at the time, it also will be disconcerting. After we feel this *tremendous change* in our BODIES, we'll look down and notice we are *no longer standing on the ground*! We will be rising like rocket ships or hot air balloons off the ground! Everything will drop away beneath our feet, getting smaller and smaller.

We won't be afraid of the height. There will be absolutely no sense that we'll fall. We'll be rising with a *sense of purpose* and direction, with *no chance of falling*.

Some of us have flown in airplanes, helicopters, hot air balloons or hang gliders, but none of us has ever flown *without* one! It will be a NEW EXPERIENCE for us! How will we guide ourselves properly, so we don't crash into each other or start heading back to earth? How will we know where to go once we reach the clouds?

Jesus gives us the answer: "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mat. 24:31). *Angels will gather us together* as we rise. They can guide us if we need a reassuring hand on our elbow or arm. Perhaps we will see our guardian angels face-to-face for the first time!

Our eyes will turn skyward to see where we're going. The sky above us

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will be as if it's ripped open and the clouds rolled back like a scroll (Rev. 6:14). A very bright light will seem to be slicing open the sky. Upon closer examination we will see it is a rider upon a white horse, shining like the sun (Mat. 24:30)! Behind that rider will be a host of angels (Rev. 19:14). We will rise to meet them in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:17).

Looking Around...

After looking down to notice our rising and looking up to see where we are going, we may look to our sides to see what's happening around us. There will be others like us, rising with us! It may appear something like thousands of giant Roman candles shooting balls of fire into the sky, but each ball of fire is a glorified saint, rising to meet Christ in the air.

The apostle Paul described what our new bodies will be like: "But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

"All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dis-



Photo by NAPS and Gregory Dullum

As we rise to meet Christ in the clouds, we may look around to see others rising with us. Angels may guide us so we don't crash into each other or head back to the ground. They may help organize us into our families or church congregations as we reach the clouds.

honor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power" (1 Cor. 15:35-43).

Looking at our own glorified bodies, we will see ourselves shining with power and glory. Yes, we, too, look like those shining stars around us. THEY are shining and WE are shining!

Circling the Earth

As Christ passes over a portion of the planet, those saints *from that area* will rise. How long will it take?

A space capsule can circle the planet in 90 minutes. We may not circle the earth that fast, but I believe we will make the trip *within ONE DAY*—in 24 hours or less. When the Bible speaks of Christ's return, it often uses the term, "that day" (Mat. 24:36, 50, 1 Thes. 5:4, 2 Thes. 1:10, 2:3).

Jesus Christ said of his return: "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mat. 24:27).

Does actual *lighting* in a STORM travel from east to west? No, we see it travel from the clouds to the ground or as flashes of light among the clouds, but not as a rule *from east to west*. The Greek word *astrape* which is translated "lightning" can by analogy mean "bright shining." Someone once speculated that this "lightning" could be translated as "that which brightens the sky," or the SUN! As the sun travels from east to west and nothing is hidden from it (Ps. 19:5-6), so will the coming of the Son of Man be!

If this is true, we may travel as fast as

the sun does. Of course, the sun doesn't really move through the sky. It's stationary and the earth rotates. In similar fashion, Christ may remain stationary while the earth rotates under Him. The sun may be shining on one side of the earth while Christ is shining on the opposite side! Or, with the sun darkened at that time, Christ will most likely be the only bright light in the sky (Mat. 24:29)!

When We Reach the Clouds

What will happen when we meet in the

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The SABBATH SCOOP

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Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. Which two of the 12 spies gave Moses an honest report?
2. In what language was the New Testament written?
3. On what mountain did Noah's ark come to rest?
4. On what mountain did Moses receive the 10 commandments?
5. What did Judas get for betraying Jesus?

(Answers on page 5)

SHOULD CHRISTIANS VOTE?

Do Christians have an obligation to try to make this a better world when they have the opportunity to vote?

By Gregory Dullum

The U.S. presidential election next month is a very important one for the future of the country. We may think that as Christians, we have a duty to vote for the candidate we think will make this country better.

Is Voting a Sin?

The words “vote,” “voting,” and “politics” are not in the Bible. The Bible gives *no* DIRECT COMMANDS regarding voting. Voting is a *privilege of citizenship*—it is NOT a spiritual SIN.

A vote is simply “a formal expression of opinion or choice made by an individual or body of individuals,” according to *The Random House College Dictionary*. There is nothing inherently sinister or sinful about voting itself.

Prayerful voting was used to find a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:23-26). A type of voting was used to select the seven deacons in the early church, for many people were involved in the selection process (Acts 6:3-6).

What has the Church of God taught regarding voting in the past?

A personal correspondence letter from the Worldwide Church of God states, “The Scriptures lead us to believe that whether to vote or not to vote is a private decision that each person should make for herself or himself. Sin is not an issue in either case.”

A Q&A section from a Worldwide Church of God Pastor General’s report about voting states: “While the Church has never published that voting is a sin, we have usually discouraged participation in the political process.”

Why? It was not the act of VOTING itself that was a problem; it was that by voting in national elections, we *became participants in this world’s system of government*.

Coming Out of this World

Herbert W. Armstrong published an article in *The Plain Truth* in 1952 and 1956 titled “How Would Jesus Vote for President?” In a reprint of that article copyrighted 1960 and 1964 (these were all presidential election years), Mr. Armstrong argues that this is Satan’s world and its systems are based upon a “Babylonish system of government.”

In God’s government, leaders are given their positions to serve others. But not so in this world. Leaders in this world govern on the backs of their people, lording over them and oppressing them (Mat. 20:25-

27). This is true even in America. Once our national leaders get to Washington, D.C., they often concentrate on getting re-elected and accumulating more power.

Shortly after Noah’s flood, Nimrod established Babylon (Gen. 10:8-11). Babylon was a city-state with a pagan religion and a Satanic form of government that put a few leaders at the top who profited from the sweat and labor of others.

“This BABYLONISH principle of government, intertwined with economic manipulation, has ruled the world ever since. It has ruled under various forms—whether called oligarchy, monarchy, dictatorship, autocracy, democracy, communism or Naziism—but it’s the same old BABYLONISH PRINCIPLE under slightly different modes of administration” (Armstrong, p. 2).

Jesus wouldn’t vote for president, concluded Mr. Armstrong. Rather than participate in this world’s Babylonish system, He would be proclaiming the good news of his own coming world-ruling government.

Our national elections are *part of this world’s* political system, and this is NOT God’s world! It is Satan’s (2 Cor. 4:4). We should come out of this world, not participate in it: “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’ ” (Rev. 18:4; see also 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

There are additional reasons for not voting in national elections.

Voting for the Wrong Candidate

In our effort to vote for the right candidate, we could vote for the WRONG one! We base our decisions upon what we hear, see, and read about candidates, but that information is NOT always correct. *We cannot know a candidate’s heart* (1 Sam. 16:17).

God chose David to be Israel’s second king (1 Sam. 13:14). David would NEVER have won an *election!* Even the *prophet Samuel* and David’s *own father* would have voted for *any of David’s older brothers* before voting for him (1 Sam. 16:1, 4-13).

It is difficult to know God’s will regarding political candidates. He “rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Dan. 4:17). Does God want the “lowest of men” to rule America *at this time* because our sins will lead us to national captivity and our nation *needs to be weakened*? If God wants the lowest candidate to win and we vote for a “higher-quality” candidate,

we could be *fighting against God!*

God Is in Charge

God is ultimately in charge (Dan. 4:17). He sees all and knows all (Ps. 33:13, 139:7-12). He is working out a purpose on this earth and things will work out according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28, 2 Pet. 3:9). He doesn’t NEED our help or our vote to accomplish his purpose.

Jesus tells us that our job is to pray that *God’s will* be done (Mat. 6:10). It is not to cast votes so that *our will* be done.

Our Citizenship Is in Heaven

The apostle Paul tells us, “For our citizenship is in heaven” (Philip. 3:20). He calls us ambassadors for Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). We live in this present evil world but we represent the kingdom of heaven. Ambassadors from other countries don’t participate in the politics of their host countries.

Voting for Local Issues

On the other hand, if there are local issues “near and dear” to our hearts on the ballot, we may want to show our support or disapproval of these issues.

Queen Esther, after much prayer and fasting, used her voice to rescue her people from an oppressive law (Esther 3:13-14, 4:13-16). This was one woman’s “vote” (by dictionary definition) to *change a bad law*. And it worked (Esther 8:3-12).

“Voting in local, issue-driven matters has been seen as an exception. Several kinds of situations might come up in this category—local school bond issues, PTA, water treatment, zoning changes, sewage disposal, trash hauling ... among other things that directly affect the residents of a township, city, or rural area. These cases of local issues are not viewed in the same manner as participation in the politics of the world” (“Voting and Involvement in Politics” *Study Paper*, The United Church of God, 2003, p. 20).

Voting itself is not a sin. It is a personal matter. However, if we choose to vote in a national election, we need to ask ourselves, are we trying to make SATAN’S WORLD *better*? We would be wise to focus our attention on making OURSELVES *better*—to overcome sin—so we can be part of God’s coming kingdom (Rev. 3:21). That will be the REAL SOLUTION to this world’s problems.

Who Are the German People?

Are the German people mentioned in Bible prophecy? Where did they originate and what is their future?

By Gregory Dullum

During the month of October, many communities celebrate an "Oktoberfest" in which they drink beer, dance polkas and honor those of German heritage.

The German people play hard, work hard and fight hard. Notice this description: "They were apparently of cheerful disposition, given to mirth and feasting, but of implacable cruelty. The pages of history are nowhere more bloody than in the records of their wars." Does this sound like the German people to you? It actually is a description of their ancestors, the Assyrians, taken from the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 1998, p. 118.

How can we know that Germans descended from Assyrians? We can trace their history.

Asshur Settled in Assyria

All people on earth today sprang from Noah and his family after the flood. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

From Shem came people known as Semites. These included the Israelites, who descended from Shem's third son, Arphaxad. (Arphaxad had a son named Eber from whom we get the word "Hebrew.") Shem's second son was named Asshur. He was the progenitor of the Assyrians, who later became the German people.

Ham's grandson, Nimrod, became a mighty man who started a great false religious system and planted the seeds of two empires. As a "mighty hunter," he protected the inhabitants of the land from wild beasts, becoming their *leader* and an *object of worship*. People looked to him instead of to God for protection. He ruled *in place of God*, or "before" God.

Nimrod planted the seeds of the Babylonian Empire on the lower Euphrates River and the Assyrian Empire on the upper Tigris River.

"Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh..." (Gen. 10:8-11).

The *King James Version* says Asshur built Assyria: "Out of that land went forth Asshur, and he builded Nineveh..." (Gen. 10:11). But the name "Asshur" is NOT in the original Hebrew. The *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* notes the error

in its article on "Asshur": "The second named of the sons of Shem (Gen. 10:22; 1 Chron. 1:17). His descendants peopled the land of Assyria. The name also appears in the KJV of Gen. 10:11, but the verse should be rendered, 'From that land he went forth into Assyria' (so NASB and NIV)" (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p. 116). The *New American Standard Bible*, *The New International Version*, *New King James* and other modern translations don't mention Asshur in this verse.

By the rules of grammar, the "he" in this verse must refer to the last man mentioned, who was Nimrod. It appears that Nimrod built Assyria but Asshur and his family occupied it. (As first occupants they may have helped build it.) As the first occupant of Assyria, Asshur may have been given credit for building it by the King James translators and other historians.

"According to Greek historians, the ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh was built by Ninus. ... Ninus is simply the Greek name for the Asshur of the Bible" ("The Remarkable Identity of the German People" by David Vejlil, p. 2).

Trier Founded by Assyrians

Some of Asshur's descendants migrated to the land that is now Germany soon after the flood, but the majority of the them stayed in Assyria until the Assyrian Empire fell in the seventh century B.C.

"The oldest city in Germany is Trier, a city founded around 2000 B.C. by the Assyrians, according to its inhabitants.

"Joseph K. L. Bihl writes in his German textbook *In Deutschen Landen*, 'Trier was founded by Trebeta, a son of the famous Assyrian King Ninus. In fact, one finds ... in Trier the inscription reading, 'Trier existed for 1,300 years before Rome was rebuilt.' ' To this day, the story is used to attract tourists to Trier' (Vejlil, p. 1).

Assyrian Empire Is Built

The vast majority of Asshur's descendants remained in Mesopotamia and built up the Assyrian Empire. "Asshur" is the term Hebrews used for Assyria: "The nation Assyria and its inhabitants are generally meant by the Hebrew term *Asshur*" ("Asshur," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, general editors, 2003, p. 133).

Assyria was an ancient empire "originating around Ashur on upper Tigris R., with cap[ital] later at Calah (also called Nimrud), where excavation has yielded rich collection of 7th century ivories. At first a small Semitic city-state; had brief fame in the 12th cent. B.C. under TIGLETH-PILESER I. Real importance began in 9th cent. with conquests of ASHURNASPIRAL II, who set up an imperial administration" ("Assyria," *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*, 1968, vol. 1, p. 64).

"Ashurnaspiral II (883-859 B.C.) moved Assyria toward the status of an empire. Ashurnaspiral II used a well-deserved reputation for cruelty to extort tribute and taxes from states within the reach of his army in predatory campaigns" ("Assyria," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 134).

Israel Sins Against God

As Assyria grew into an Empire, God's chosen people, Israel, split into two nations: Israel and Judah. Jeroboam became king of the 10 northern tribes (Israel) while Rehoboam ruled two tribes (Judah).

"The united kingdom of the twelve tribes suddenly divided in 931/930 B.C. The 10 tribes in the north would henceforth be known as Israel or Ephraim (its most influential tribe). The two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to the house of David and were known as Judah" ("Israel, Land of," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 846).

While Judah had many good kings who kept that nation closer to God, Israel's kings were wicked from the start. The people's sins multiplied over time. God sent prophets to warn the Israelites of national destruction unless they repented.

"The last century of the Northern Kingdom (eighth century B.C.) was marked by the ministry of four great prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, as well as Jonah. With perfect clarity they saw the demise of Israel and eventually Judah. Yet both nations believed themselves to be invincible because of their relationship with Yahweh [the LORD]. Most of the people ignored the prophets and clung to their delusions of grandeur and safety" (ibid., p. 850).

When God's patience ran out, what people did He use to punish Israel for their sins by taking them captive? The Assyrians! We'll see that in detail next month.

(To be continued!)

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clouds? God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), so I believe *there will be organization* as we rise and follow Christ.

There will be A LOT of us saints to organize! “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14).

When we get to the clouds to meet Jesus, it seems logical that we will be organized by families and/or church congregations. We will probably look around and see others we know. We may get to stand near our parents or other family members who died in the faith. We won't look the same as we did when we were human, but I'm sure we'll be able to recognize resurrected family members and others we knew when we were human!

Our First Task: Return to Earth

Our first task will be to *follow Jesus back to earth*. Jude says our task will be “to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 15).

Christ said an *army of angels* will follow Him as He returns: “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him...” (Mat. 25:31). We won't be angels. Where will we fit in?

The return of Christ was seen by John in a vision: “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ... And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself shall rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on his robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. ...

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds

were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:11, 14-16, 19-21).

We'll probably form ranks *behind the angels*, but it doesn't sound like we will be doing much fighting. Most of us have no training in warfare. I can't image an angel handing me a sword and telling me, “Go kill those evil people on the earth.”

Perhaps some who had training in warfare (such as King David) may participate. However, Rev. 19:21 seems to indicate that Christ will do most, if not all of the slaying. The angelic army could take care of any others.

A Wedding Supper

Once the human armies are vanquished, there will be time to CELEBRATE.

The Bible describes a great wedding supper as Christ marries the church: “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” ’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’ ” (Rev. 19:6-9).

This is written in Revelation 19 *prior* to Christ's return. It *may be* out of chronological order, because if we rise to meet Christ *at the last trump*, and He returns to earth *at the last trump*, when is there time for a wedding supper? As the wedding supper begins, it is declared that “the Lord God Omnipotent REIGNS” but He doesn't reign on earth *until later*, AFTER He conquers the armies on earth.

On the other hand, SPIRIT BEINGS live *outside of time and space*, so there may be a way this wedding supper will happen *prior* to Christ's return. In my mind, there is some question as to the *exact timing* of this wedding supper. Nevertheless, I am sure *it will happen!* It is one of the “true sayings of God!” (v. 9).

I picture this wedding supper as a joyous time of family celebration, meeting up with friends and family who died in

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Know Your Bible Answers

1) Joshua and Caleb. 2) Greek. 3) Ararat. 4) Sinai or Horeb. 5) 30 pieces of silver.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

Raisins were once very expensive and were eaten only by the rich.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle, Farrar, Straus and Company, 1962, p. 87.

Hate, Fight Evil

“ ‘I hate it!’ Charles Wallace cried passionately. ‘I hate the Dark Thing!’

“Mrs. Whatsit nodded. ‘Yes, Charles, dear. We all do. ... ’

“ ‘But what is it?’ Calvin demanded. ‘We know it's evil but what is it?’

“ ‘Yyou hhave ssaidd itt!’ Mrs. Which's voice rang out. ‘Itt iss Eevill. Itt iss thee Ppowers of Ddarrkkness!’

“ ‘But what's going to happen?’ Meg's voice trembled. ‘Oh please, Mrs. Which, tell us what's going to happen!’

“ ‘Wee wwill cconnttinue tto fffightt!’ ”

Ps. 97:10, Prov. 8:13, Eph. 6:12

Quotable Quotes

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” — Dale Carnegie

Memory Scripture

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.” — Eph. 6:12

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the faith or who were *separated* by distance, but who successfully ran their races and are now REUNITED! It will be a time to *begin* meeting great men and women of faith mentioned in the Bible.

For Those Not Baptized...

Those who are *not yet baptized* will have a different experience when the last trumpet sounds.

If they are DEAD at that time, they will be unaware of any changes. The dead are unconscious and know nothing (Eccles. 9:5, 10). They WILL *live again*, but not until 1,000 years after Christ's return (Rev. 20:5).

If they are STILL ALIVE when Jesus comes back, they will probably NOT be in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, or any of the lands currently occupied by the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. These nations will cease to exist. The inhabitants of these countries will be prisoners and slaves in other countries, most notably in Europe and Egypt (Deut. 28:62-68).

While in captivity, they will look up to see Christ coming in the clouds. "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him" (Rev. 1:7). The Bible does NOT say only the eyes of spirit beings will see Him. EVERY eye will see Christ return.

Those not baptized may see the saints rise to meet Christ in the clouds—if the risen saints are made visible to human eyes. And these captives will know that in very short order they will be freed from their bondage (Lev. 26:44-45, Isa. 11:11-12, 16). Once freed, they will be given an opportunity to renew the face of this earth as we move into the Millennium.

Their opportunity to become spirit beings will lay ahead of them as they learn to live God's way of life, living according to his commandments and laws.

The day Christ returns will be an AWE-SOME day that we will remember *forever*. And forever is a long, long time for spirit beings!

Our minds are limited and it's hard to grasp *everything* that will happen and *exactly how* it will happen. I have tried with my limited ability to make this day come alive. I hope I have made this day seem a little more real.

Someday it will be REAL! And when the last trumpet sounds, we may remember this article and think, *Wow! This is just like that article we read*. Or perhaps we'll think, *This is not at all like that article we read. It's so much BETTER!*



Pregnant Women Told to Avoid Zika Zone

"With the Zika virus spreading to Miami Beach, federal health officials on Friday [Aug. 19] advised pregnant women not to visit a 20-block stretch of the country's most alluring tourist destinations. They also told them to consider postponing travel anywhere in Miami-Dade County.

"The escalation of the Zika crisis here [Miami Beach] sent tremors through South Florida's vibrant tourist industry and stoked the fears of pregnant women, worried about the virus's ability to cause severe brain damage in newborn babies. ...

"Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the C.D.C. director, warned at a news briefing on Friday that more cases of local Zika transmission are likely to emerge in other parts of the country. The agency he leads said in a statement that because so many people infected with Zika have no symptoms, because the virus can incubate for two weeks and because diagnosis of cases can take several weeks, 'it is possible that other neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County have active Zika transmission that is not yet apparent' " ("Pregnant Women Advised to Avoid Travel to Active Zika Zone in Miami Beach" by Lizette Alvarez and Pam Belluck, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Aug. 19, 2016, pp. 1-2).

The spread of disease (pestilence) is a sign we are living in the end time (Mat. 24:3,7). It is also one of the punishments God foretold would come upon a rebellious Israel prior to national captivity (Deut. 28:15-16, 18, 21-22, 28, 58-65).

Deadly Quakes Shake Italy and Myanmar

"Rescue crews using bulldozers and their bare hands raced to dig out survivors from a strong earthquake that reduced three central Italian towns to rubble Wednesday [Aug. 24].

"The death toll stood at 159, but the number of dead and missing was uncertain because of the thousands of vaca-

tioners in the area for summer's final days. ...

"The magnitude-6.2 quake struck at 3:36 a.m. and was felt across a broad swath of central Italy, including Rome, where residents woke to a long swaying followed by aftershocks" ("Italy earthquake kills at least 159, reduces towns to rubble" by Paolo Santalucia, Frances D'Emilio and Nicole Winfield, Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, Aug. 25, 2016, p. 11A).

"A powerful earthquake Wednesday [Aug. 24] shook Myanmar, killing at least four people and damaging nearly 100 ancient Buddhist pagodas in the former capital of Bagan, a major tourist site, officials said.

"The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude-6.8 quake was centered about 15 miles west of Chauk, a town south of Bagan" ("Powerful quake shakes Myanmar, killing four," Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, Aug. 25, 2016, p. 11A).

One of the signs leading up to Christ's return is that of "earthquakes in various places" (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Japan Wants Increase in Military Spending

"The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is requesting another increase in spending on Japan's armed forces, with a plan to expand missile defenses that would test the nation's commitment to pacifism and escalate a regional arms race with China and North Korea. ...

"If approved, the budget proposal for 5.17 trillion yen, or \$50.2 billion, formally submitted on Wednesday [Aug. 31] would be the nation's fifth-straight annual increase in military spending. It is a 2.3 percent rise over last year" ("Japanese Government Urges Another Increase in Military Spending" by Motoko Rich, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Aug. 0, 2016, p. 1).

A rearmed Japan could be part of the prophesied "kings from the east" that will attack the king of the North (Europe) when it occupies the Holy Land at Christ's return (Dan. 11:40-44, Rev. 9:13-16, 16:12-16).