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"... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3)

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S Desk: The Day of the Lord

As we Christians try to understand the things that are happening in the world today, we must not only look through the lens of scripture to see God's perspective, but also must point out that which is evil. When it comes to the world, Machiavelli once said even evil acts may be put to good use if they are handled properly. Many of our leaders have interpreted that to say never let a crises go to waste. Of course believers in the one true God know that **all** things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). All things means both good and bad. **We** know that but my guess is that the bad guys don't. And so they continue on with their devious plans, playing right into the hand of God.

I certainly can't predict to you what any of that means as it pertains to the immediate future of America, but I can tell you that the day of reckoning is coming. The day of judgment when all the nations of earth will stand before the Almighty and receive their just due. The Bible refers to it as the Day of the Lord. The prophet Amos said "the day of the Lord is darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18). Joel 1:15 says "that as a destruction from the Almighty it shall come." And in Zechariah 14:2-3 the prophet tells us "that in that day the Lord will gather **all** nations against Jerusalem and the Lord shall go forth against them." Any question how that battle will end?

I don't see America specifically mentioned or pictured anywhere in Scripture, but that hasn't stopped some ambitious Christians, as well as some misguided zealots, from formulating all kinds of scenarios, based not so much on scripture as on their own ideologies. Everything from Replacement Theology to offshoots of Armstrongism. Some think that America has inherited God's promises for Israel while others believe that America is one of the so-called lost tribes of Israel, vanquished and deported by the Assyrians. As in the case with most heresies, people get in their mind what **they** want to happen and then twist the scriptures every way but loose to meet their objective.

One thing we do know for certain is if America is around for the Tribulation it will be numbered among the nations of the last days that the Bible addresses in prophecy. **If** we're still around. We are not a nation that is in a covenant relationship with God. That distinction belongs to Israel alone. But He has blessed America. So is there any significance to that? I believe there is if we orient our answer to the prophetic timeline of the Jewish people. Remember, in God's plan everything revolves around the nation of Israel. Therefore I believe that everything that made America great was done so that we could be in the position to come alongside the apple of God's eye.

But that may all be changing. We have become a secular nation, as well as handing over the keys in some of our cities to mayors who are Muslim-friendly, which automatically puts them at odds with the Jewish people. At some point in time America will be deposed. God's Word says it will happen to **all** nations. Before that happens, be sure you understand and claim another one of His promises, which He made to Abraham in Genesis 12, concerning Israel. "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who don't."

Rev. David Lewis

Prophecy: Our Pearl of Great Price
Part 1—Starting at Square One (Matt. 13:46)

Compiled by Robert Luthardt, Sr.

Found in a second-hand bookstore was a veritable treasure of truth, a book published in 1940 by Dr. Harry A. Ironside. Dr. Ironside was a biblical scholar, an expert in scriptural prophecy and advocate for the rebirth of Israel. Dr. Ironside was born in 1876 and lived to see Israel reborn on May 14, 1948. Dr. Ironside died on January 15, 1951. Since his book, "The Lamp of Prophecy" was his work in the early 20th Century (before Israel's founding), it was written in that vein.

Square one for biblical prophecy is the same for all else in God's Word. ALL are called to read it and study it (2 Tim. 2:15). Many cults and false teachings came from wresting scriptural meanings and contextual errors out of biblical settings. All should heed God's warnings. "Every Word of God is PURE … Add NOT unto His words" (Proverbs 30:5; see also Deut. 4:2, 12:32; 2 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 22:19).

No mortal knows the "day or the hour" of the homegoing of "THE CHURCH" (the body of Christ: Col. 1:24; Ep. 1:22-23, 4:12) but the Father alone. Still, pride-filled men set dates anyway. Even though we know NOT the date, we are told how, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel … the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST, then we which are alive … shall be CAUGHT UP … IN THE CLOUDS to meet the Lord IN *THE* AIR: and … ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

Dr. Ironside alluded to a strong "three-fold cord" (Eccel. 4:12) we do well to know: one is the visible church wallowing in apostasy, second is the regathering of Israel, and third the subverting of gentile nations into the "New World Order." This LATTER DAYS" political order is slated for destruction (Dan. 2:45; Rev. 19:11-16).

Ezekiel prophesied the return of Israel to their land and this was fulfilled thousands of years later. One day they will yet receive God's perpetual protection under "DAVID THEIR KING" and by His "EVERLASTING COVENANT" (Ez. 36 and 37). Ezekiel also predicted a war by "FAR NORTH INVADERS" (Ez. 38) in the "LATTER DAYS" and their utter destruction by God who then received worldwide glory (Ez. 39). Israel will live in wars until Christ returns (Matt. 24:6).

Jesus gave His disciples the sign of Noah's flood as a sign of His return (Matt. 24:36-39; Zech. 14:3-4, 9), "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the SON OF MAN be … before … they were eating and drinking, marrying … until the day Noah entered 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. 24:40-44).

In our day apostasy, corruption and violence have again filled the earth. If we are serious about bringing Christ's gospel to the lost, no time should be lost petitioning God's Throne.

Consider, once God shut Noah in the Ark, he had to leave all who were still outside (Gen. 7:16). The same hand that shut Noah in, shut out the entire antediluvian world; "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the LIVING GOD" (Heb. 10:28-31). Pray for all loved ones to flee to Christ while He (The Door—John 10:1-11) is still open (Matt. 25:10-13; 1 Pet. 4:7).

All believers are to, "walk, worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called … with long-suffering" and "put on the NEW MAN" (Ep. 4:1-2, 24). Every called follower of Christ has been supernaturally joined to God by the Holy Spirit into the "invisible church" (the body of Christ); "the wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but CANST NOT tell whence it cometh [wind itself is invisible] and whither it goeth: so is everyone born of the Spirit (John 3:8; 1 Cor. 2:9-16) and have grace to believe" (Acts 16:30-34).

Christ alone is our chief cornerstone, "according to … His own will" and sealed with the "Holy Spirit of Promise" (Ep. 1:11-13). Christ's victory over sin, the world, and the Devil, broke down the … partition separating believing Jews AND Gentiles making … "ONE NEW MAN." Christ being the building's "CHIEF CORNERSTONE" (Ep. 2:14-22) and we are each fashioned by the Holy Spirit into LIVING STONES in Christ's body (the church—1 Pet. 2:5-9), Christ's conquering army (Rom. 8:37).

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 8-12) Christ's comforter (Holy Spirit) inaugurated this "One New Man" (Ep. 2:15) by the miracle of untrained Galileans fluently speaking unknown foreign languages. Peter was led to preach adding 3,000 to Christ's Church (vs. 41). Soon after, Peter was again enlisted to bring Gentile believers to Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10 and 15), yet it was more Christ's enemy, Saul of Tarsus, who brought the Gospel to the Gentile nations after his conversion (Acts 9:1-6).

So, while Peter was used to convince some contentious Jewish believers, it was more Paul who God used to bring Christ's Gospel to Gentile Nations, unlocking the mystery hidden from the beginning (Ep. 3:1-9) and now as fulfilled prophesy (Gen. 17:1-4; Rom. 4:13-17).

New Gentile believers were no longer to be considered strangers outside God's covenantal blessings, having been made a part of that "one new man" (Ep. 2:6-22). All called of God meet at the Cross by the resurrection victory of Jesus Christ, trusting the only redeeming sacrifice for sins, the blood of God's only Begotten Son (John 3:14-17; Heb. 9:11-12, 10:19-20).

The world has now heard from Christ's "house-hold of God" (Ep. 2:19=believing Jews AND Gentiles for 2,000 years). A people whose divine head is Jesus Christ (Ep. 4:10-15). This same body of believers are those slated by God the Father to be "CAUGHT UP" (1 Thes. 4:13 -18) under an eternal insurance policy signed in the blood of the SON OF GOD. We are called "Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the … blood of Jesus Christ …", a clearer single verse description of God's Triune nature could hardly be found (1 Pet. 1:2=see also 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:16-17, et. al).

Adam said it first of his bride but Jesus more perfectly of His Bride … "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" … (Gen. 2:23; Ep. 5:30) "that in ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace … toward us through Jesus Christ …" (Ep. 2:7-10).

The first time we hear of Christ's Church (Matt. 16) came after Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" and Jesus answered, "… flesh and blood have NOT revealed it unto thee, but my Father …". Then Christ said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As long as Christ and His one new man remain (Jews and believing Gentiles) it will stand undefeated (Matt. 16:13-18).

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, presented Himself to Israel as their promised Messiah but was rejected by Israel's rulers which in turn brought Israel's dissolution for over 1,900 years (Matt. 23:37-39; Zech. 13:6-9. Israel, though God's chosen nation, lost their standing before God, and though they have begun a regathering into the Promised Land, it is yet still with a vail "upon their hearts" (2 Cor. 3:14-15; Rom. 11:8-10, 25-26).

So, the Apostle Paul revealed the special truth (Mystery = Ep. 3:1-10) of which God is still taking out and uniting believing Jews and Gentiles into one new body of His choosing (John 15:15). The Church's destiny has been revealed by Paul (Ep. 2:4-7; Ep. 5:25-27) wherein God changed the figure of the present "body of Christ" (the Church) into the beloved "Bride of Christ" … saved by the blood of the Lamb of God and delivered us into our eternal habitation (Rev. 19:7-9; 1 John 5:9, 13).

The prophetical "Pearl of Great Price" sparkles greatest when illuminated by the light of the signs of Christ's return for His Bride. Through Dr. Ironsides "Lamp of Prophecy" we hope to illuminate as many signs as the Lord is pleased to show us. Keep looking up (Luke 21:28).

Chief Source:	The Lamp of Prophecy (2nd Edition)
Author:	H. A. Ironside, Litt. D.
Publisher:	Zondervan Publishing House Grand Rapids, Michigan (1940)

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15b KJV

Repentance is Necessary as Evidence of Salvation

Joseph Burghauser

Repentance is proclaimed as necessary unto eternal life; it was included in the message of our Lord, John the Baptist, and the apostles. It was also taught in the Old Testament, as it uses the verbs meaning "turn," "return," and "repent" (Isaiah 55:7; Joel 2:12-13; Ezekiel 33:11; Jeremiah 8:6). The Bible sometimes refers to repentance which is temporary or only for this present age, such as with Nineveh in Jonah 3, and Ahab in 1 Kings 21:27-29. 2 Corinthians 7:10 tells of "the sorrow of the world", such as had by Judas (Matthew 27:1-10) and Simon (Acts 8:9-24), which does not lead to true repentance. In the New Testament, repentance is expressed by two Greek words. One means "to change one's mind." The other means "to turn about." Repentance is often viewed as a prerequisite to faith, as it is usually listed first when the two are mentioned together, as in Mark 1:15. Both faith and repentance are gifts from God to His chosen people. Faith is the means of our justification and repentance must result.

Repentance includes a change of mind about the Holiness of God, our sin, and our purpose after they had "forsaken their sin" (for example, see The Marrow Controversy on the Monergism and Heidelblog websites). This view is opposed by both the Scriptures and our Westminster Standards. A problem with holding that repentance precedes faith is that it makes repentance part of the means of justification, rather than faith alone as the means by which sinners are declared righteous.

These verses in Acts teach of faith alone, with no mention of repentance, for eternal life: Acts 8:12, 10:43, 13:39, and 16:31. The chapters of Romans 3-8, Ephesians 1-2, and Galatians 2-5, in which we read in depth of justification, do not add repentance as a means of justification. Our repentance does not justify us; God justifies His people by His grace alone, because of what Christ has done alone, through His gift of faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Our Westminster Larger Catechism has a helpful definition of true repentance:
WLC Question 76: What is repentance unto life?

Answer: Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such that are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with Him in all the ways of new obedience.

WLC Question 73 stresses that faith alone is the instrument of justification:
How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

Answer: Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which always accompany it, nor because of the good works

that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act flowing from it, were imputed to him for his justification, but only because it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and His righteousness.

And our Westminster Confession of Faith says of repentance in WCF Chapter 15 point 3:

Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners that none may expect pardon without it. (Ezek. 16:61-63; 36:31-32; Hosea 14:2,4; Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30-31).

Repentance is a gift from God and it follows His regeneration of His elect. It is also the responsibility of the believer. If God has chosen us, we will repent, and we are told to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). Repentance is a change of mind and a turning from sin which results from a life transformed by God (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is best understood as a fruit of faith and not a prerequisite to it. Repentance is never said to be the means or instrument of justification; we are justified by faith alone. It is not possible to have true faith without true repentance, but repentance is not a part of faith.

Both repentance and faith are to be held to and proclaimed, or the errors of legalism (that our works contribute to our salvation), or 'easy- believism' (that sanctification does not necessarily result from regeneration) may result. God justifies us so He can sanctify us. Ephesians 2:10 tells the elect that they were "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" He grants repentance to sanctify His people for His glory. God uses the command to "repent" as a means to accomplish His purpose to sanctify His people. All are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30), yet only His elect (believers) will repent. The Scriptures clearly teach that those without repentance cannot inherit eternal life (Luke 13:3-5). Our repentance is ongoing and will not be perfected until God glorifies us. So, repentance is necessary unto eternal life as evidence of having been chosen by God for salvation.

Luke 24:46-47: "And He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Acts 11:18b: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

God's Church

By Linda Tyson

With thankful hearts God's church will sing
The praises of our Lord and King.
His church began many years ago
And praise the Lord, He blessed us so!

He gave His word for us to teach
And many lost souls for us to reach.
In times of trials and many cares,
Our precious God has answered prayers.

He gave us grace to live each day
And showed His love in many ways.
His faithfulness forever flows,
Many mercies to us He shows.

We praise the God of heaven above,
Who showed to us His infinite love.
May the Lord keep us within His hand,
And may the church of God forever stand!

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

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WRITE TO US!

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Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 am
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 am
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	12:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 pm