



THE CHALLENGER

Our WEB site address: www.thehourofgraceandpower.org

Vol. 40 No. 7

PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

July-August

DON'T BE A CULTIST!

Dr. T. Michael Eccleston, Editor

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.” - Deuteronomy 18:22

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

“Take ye heed, watch, and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” - Mark 13:31-32

Recently a leader of a religious radio station in California predicted that the Lord would return on a certain date, May 21, 2011. *It obviously did not happen!* Every one of us who are saved can bear witness to that fact. That same man has now predicted that it was an oversight of mathematical proportions and then stated that there is a new date in the fall of 2011. Folks, if you have any knowledge of the Word of God then you realize the sheer folly of this kind of date setting and the great damage to the name and cause of Christ that this kind of sensationalism causes. Yet, many who do have degrees of knowledge of the Word of God fell into the trap set by the owner of that radio network. How could something like this happen?

Simple:

It is the strategy of the devil as he works through the devious operations we know as cults and false religions. He works beyond them as well, but for this message, we will dwell on the mind set of cults and start with this admonition:

Don't be a cultist!

This ministry, The Hour of Grace and Power, as started by Pastor Dwight Porter well over 45 years ago, has maintained a consistent Biblical position. Our literature request forms and our website pronounce, “no strange doctrine.” To this day we continue to be a fundamental Bible believing and teaching ministry, with a strong emphasis on things doctrinal and practical. We have long ago found that many people have a degree of knowledge of God's Word, but do not know how to use that knowledge in their circumstances of life. As Bible believing preachers and teachers – and students of the Word, we are not to, nor do we, point people to ourselves: we point them to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word; we do not solicit your money by any of thousands of schemes that are floating around and in use today; we do not want to control your mind: The Lord Jesus Christ does; we do not want to capture your souls: the Lord Jesus Christ does; and we do not want your allegiance over the local church: but the Lord Jesus Christ does want that allegiance within the framework of His local churches. We desire to point you to the Word above whatever theological system that you may subscribe to, because, before any of these systems surfaced, there was always first and foremost, the Word of God.

Cults are characterized by a number of things:

- 1.They have a human founder and/or a very forceful human element of control over their group.
- 2.They believe that only they are right: all others are wrong.
- 3.They are not bound by the Word of God alone: extra-biblical works and visions are deemed as authoritative as the Bible.
- 4.They enter into a position of ‘theological term-switching.’
- 5.They are deceptive and intellectually dishonest.

Their knowledge of Scripture is only in relation to the misrepresentation and misinterpretation of the cult that they belong to.

Am I insinuating that the man who predicted the Lord's return is part of a cult? Even after he made a similar prediction back in the '90's (which also was in two parts – and failed)? *In no way!* But what I am saying is that he was and is acting as a cultist would. In discussions after his failed prediction, he refused to apologize and acknowledge the damage he caused to so many that were deceived by this. Rather, he said that it actually did happen, just not physically, but spiritually instead. Think about the whole idea of what the Bible says about the Lord's coming for His own:

I Thessalonians 4:16-17, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with

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them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

I Corinthians 15:51-52, "Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

It is miraculous and it is physical - as we receive an incorruptible body. What use would that be if it were only spiritual? If what he said is true, exactly what part went to be with the Lord? Let's be perfectly clear: he was wrong in the 90's, and he is wrong now - just the same as the cults were in their similar predictions. But they never apologized and admitted that they were wrong either, did they?

The early church of the New Testament experienced persecution because of their stand on the gospel of Christ. During one of the earlier instances, Peter answered the detractors in Acts 4:29,

"... We ought to obey God rather than men."

Later, in the book of Galatians, the apostle Paul ripped into the believers of the church in Galatia, because of false brethren that had come after Paul left Galatia, saying that Paul was right - as far as he went - but if you really want to be saved, you have to add works to grace. Listen to his rebuke in Galatians 3:1-3:

"O Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

We are to be people of the Word of God, not people who follow men. Whenever there is a conflict between what men may say versus what God's Word says, we are to believe and obey God rather than men: even if it costs us dearly. The end times are filled with deception, readying the people for the time of trouble in the world never before experienced, so that they might believe the lie. Don't be cultic in your mind and set yourself up as an authority greater than the Word of God. It is presumptuous to God and misleads gullible people to believe error and therefore, not fully depend on the authority of the Word of God,

The Lord is coming back!

And soon.

Are you ready to meet Him?

FOR YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH

Here are four positive aspects of personal separation as found in the Bible. Many times, we advocate only the negative aspect of separation. But both sides are necessary for us to be a separated people. Look these up and study them, mediate upon them, and then apply them to your circumstances of life.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Separated unto the Scriptures | Psalm 1:1 |
| 2. Separated unto the Saviour | I Thessalonians 1:9-10 |
| 3. Separated unto Serving | Colossians 3:23-24 |
| 4. Separated unto Saintliness | Romans 8:29 |

(The Rapture Part 2, Continued from page 4)

come before Him. **For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Romans 14:11** Will you meet Him condemned and for judgment at the Great White Throne? Or, will you meet Him in the air, living with Him forever in Heaven? The decision is yours. **John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

We who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior (trusting in His atoning work on the cross alone for our salvation) look forward to the Rapture. But many scoff at this event, citing the absurdity of planes, buses, cars ships, etc. all crashing because their Christian pilots and drivers have been caught up to Heaven. But two facts of Scripture address these objections. **Matthew 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.** First, the number of true Christians is far fewer than the world believes there are. Second, the world will believe a deliberately false explanation of the event. **2 Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:** Are you looking forward to the Lord's return? Trust Him today and say with hope in your heart.... **Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Revelation 22:20**

Personal Word from the Editor



While I was working as the manager of a popular food chain, I hired two cashiers to handle our large lunch crowd. Only one of them worked at any given time, but they continuously filled in for each other. They both attended a local Bible College. They were accurate, efficient, polite, considerate, and, oh yes, militant for what they believed about the Bible and salvation by grace through faith only in the Lord Jesus Christ. Being a saved man, but extremely new in the faith, we butted heads more than once about a variety of issues – most of them related to store policies. One peculiar thing that they did was to give me or place by me that which I was sure to see - a 3x5 card each day they

were there with a scripture verse on it. On each of those verses they would place my name above or next to personal pronouns mentioned in the verses. These passages had to do with who I was in Christ, with how the Lord would provide for me, how He wanted to use me for Himself and for others, and a myriad of subjects too long to list. I read them at the beginning as a novel thing to do: place my name in the verse, but I wasn't too interested in the verses themselves. I was readying myself to open the restaurant for the public. I started getting a collection of verses and even began discarding most of them. It wasn't until years later that I thought to reflect on those times and those two faithful servants and the profound impact that they, through God's Word, had on my life. Day after day, week after week, month after month, the verses came. The Holy Spirit was at work in my life in the same way, using the Word to stir my heart toward God. I couldn't tell you today what those verses were exactly, just that God used every one of them in my life. One of the reasons I moved in the spiritual direction that I did was due to those two faithful witnesses. Had they been interested only in their personal livelihood, I seriously doubt that I would have ever thought of, or gone into the ministry. Their example has served me well throughout these years of living for the Lord and serving Him. Here is but one example of how this works:

“Call unto me, and I will answer [your name], and shew [your name] great and mighty things, which [your name] knowest not.”

- Jeremiah 33:3

The Word of God is 100% accurate and reliable – and authoritative. It speaks extensively to doctrine and to application. We can learn doctrine only, or we can not only learn doctrine but also how it is to be used in our lives and in the lives of others. And to do that, the Word has to be personal to us: God seems to be writing the things that are in His Word as though we are the only ones He is writing to and about. It is much easier and convenient to look at the Bible as speaking to others, but then, we will never examine ourselves in relation to the Word. But, examine ourselves, we must do, and do it daily. As you study today or have devotions in God's Word, use this method, and perhaps one day you too will have the great and precious privilege to look back on how these verses of scripture have molded your life.

FROM THE NOT TOO DISTANT PAST

We featured the article concerning a man who predicted the world would end on May 21, 2011 – which it didn't. In this additional piece you will find another group of people who “named the name of Christ” and did similarly. The information stems from a publication dated November, 1985.

“A couple from Lowry, Minnesota, sued the Worldwide Church of God (i.e. Herbert W. Armstrong/Armstrongism) for five million dollars, alleging that church officials told them the world was going to end and defrauded them of 160 acres of land. “Gilman K. Anderson and his wife Gladys, said that they gave away much of their farm in 1969 when representatives of the California church told them the world was coming to an end. The Andersons said they were told in 1969 that they would have to move to Petra, Jordan, for safety when the call from the church came.

“In 1971, they were told that there would be a famine so severe that people would eat their own children to survive. They also said that they were told that Germany was going to attack and destroy the U.S. in 1975.

“Attorney's for the church argued that the court has no business determining the truthfulness of religious beliefs...”

We don't have to take people to the world's courts to determine the truthfulness of a church or of a 'ministry' – we merely go the authority of such matters – the Word of God!

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” - Isaiah 8:20

[NOTE: it is not written, because there is some light in them: there is none]

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.” - Deuteronomy 18:22

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” - 1John 4:1

The Rapture - Part 2

by R. J. Williams

Last month we began our investigation into the future event described in Scripture and called for convenience "The Rapture." We saw that it is tightly coupled to the resurrection and that it was an event, not a process. It would happen in the "twinkling of an eye." We saw that it involved new bodies for those who had trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. The believers (saints) at Thessalonica believed the Lord would return before any believers died, and when they did, they had questions.

Paul addresses this issue in the following verses. *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (died), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before, precede) them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* It is the event that occurs in these verses of Scripture that we call the "Rapture." Let's look at the event in detail:

vs13 - it is an event that removes the sorrow of death for the believer and believing loved ones (that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope).

vs14 - the Lord Jesus Christ will resurrect believers to accompany Him when He returns to earth (so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him).

vs15 - believers that are still alive when the Lord returns will not be resurrected before the believers that have died (we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep (died)).

vs16 - the coming of the Lord is preceded by the voice of the archangel (*probably Michael-see Jude 1:9*) and the trump of God. These two events having occurred we now see that the dead in Christ will be resurrected first.

vs17 - After the dead in Christ have risen, then those of us who are still alive on Earth and have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, will rise (be "caught up" and changed).

But where will all of this be happening? Will we meet the Lord in a city or on a mountain? The answer may surprise you, but you will surely want to be there. As the apostles watched the Lord rise into heaven 40 days after His crucifixion, the angels told them: *Acts 1:11 ... Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* He went up into the clouds to Heaven and He is returning for His saints in the same manner. Born again believers are going to meet the Lord in the air (we... shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

There is coming a day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to take the just, both alive and dead, from this earth to be with Him. It is a resurrection of believers only. It will happen in the twinkling of the eye. It is called the Rapture. Will you be part of it? Or will you be part of that group that is *not found written in the book of life ...cast into the lake of fire*. The Lord may return at any time. Everyone (no exceptions) will

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THE CHALLENGER

Published monthly by
**The Hour of Grace and
Power, Inc.**

Editorial & General offices located at: 3055 Satterfield Road
Titusville, FL 32780

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:
THE CHALLENGER
PO Box 5900
Titusville, FL 32783-5900

Without cost or obligation, this publication will be sent to you monthly. Extra copies are available.

Address The Challenger mail to:
PO Box 5900
Titusville, FL 32783-5900

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"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58

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