

When the Kingdom of God Comes— What Becomes of the Children?

Jesus Christ preached the Gospel about the soon-coming *Kingdom of God*. He is to *rule* in that Kingdom for one thousand years before a "new heavens and new earth." But what will that Kingdom be like? Will *humans* live in it? Can children grow up and marry and have families? Will there be any cities? What about those who are too young to be converted, baptized members of the church? Will *they* be allowed to live in the Kingdom? Believe it or not, the Bible says a great deal about children in the Kingdom of God.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

"Will we ever be able to marry, and have children?"

This was the plaintive question asked many years ago by college co-eds who had heard many sermons about the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, and the coming Kingdom of God.

Having heard so much of "wars and rumors of wars"; of droughts, famines and diseases; of massive loss of life; of plagues, and the waters turned to blood, they were worried.

Would they survive, if they were not yet baptized, and in the church? What if they did marry, have children—what if those children were but three, or five? What would happen to their children if they were instantly changed into spirit beings, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:50-52?

What About the Children?

During the war in the Gulf, millions of children were worried, unknowing, wondering, apprehensive about the war. When a news commentator asked a group of elementary school children, "Could Saddam Hussein bomb the United States?" many said yes.

These children had no concept of the size of the world; the location of Iraq. Many adults, disturbed by the grisly news of the war, recalled their fears as children during Korea, or Vietnam.

Some 70 percent of Americans couldn't find Saudi Arabia, much less the Persian Gulf or Iraq on a map. Most of those geographical and geopolitical illiterates have children.

In New Orleans, Army-Navy stores were doing a brisk *business—selling gas masks!* What effect did this have on their children? As shocking as it seems, many must have heard about a "war in the Gulf," and thought it was out there in the *Gulf of Mexico*, somewhere!

The reason most children are disturbed about war; about Bible prophecies concerning the Tribulation and Day of the Lord, is ignorance. Not willful ignorance, but lack of education. When parents do not understand and act apprehensively, they unintentionally communicate fear and emotional difficulty to their children.

God's church must fulfill its commission of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness and a warning; of proclaiming the prophecies of Christ about the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, and Armageddon. Yet, we must also realize the *effect* sermons and articles about *war* and the coming of great *trouble* for our peoples will have on children who are not properly informed. Parents must recognize their own responsibility to properly interpret, explain, and place in perspective what comes from the pulpit so children understand.

Thankfully, some in the news media recognized their responsibility to properly inform children; to help them cope with news of war. In simple descriptions, including geographical references, they played to the children in their audiences, trying to put the war, so far away from America's shores, into proper perspective. With this article, it is hoped many of you will be able to help your children or grandchildren cope, not only with the aftermath of war in the Gulf, but with *prophecy*, and the great events which are to shake this world.

Sometimes, Sermons Scare Children

Is the Kingdom of God "for adults only"? How well I remember my boyhood, sitting in the hard wooden pews (benches, actually) in a little clapboard church outside the city limits of Eugene, Oregon. Most of what my father preached seemed to "go in one ear, and out the other."

I paid little attention, or so I thought, even though I was surprised how much had "stuck" in my subconscious when, after about 23 years of age, I began to really seriously study the Bible myself. As a boy, I was quite frightened about my father's sermons concerning the Tribulation and Day of the Lord, events which he then thought were almost upon us.

My mother reminded me of the time when I was about age five, and we were waiting at a bus stop in downtown Eugene. She said I snuggled up to her side, placing her overcoat partially around me, looked up and said, "Mom, I sure hope I get to go with you when you go to the place of safety." I have only the vaguest recollection of the incident, which my mother told me about many times. She was very pleased at my question hugged me close, and told me "Of course you can." I am sure she was unaware of the deeper fears behind my desire for reassurance.

Another memory is vivid. We were very poor, and I had to wear my brother's hand-me-down shoes. When they wore out, since we had no money to buy new ones, or even to have them repaired, I would cut out cardboard inserts, stick a couple of extra sets in my pockets, and go off to school, a one mile walk, with cardboard inside my shoes.

How well I remember one particularly rainy day. My father had been shouting over and over again about the terrible tribulation coming upon us—really bearing down about the *DROUTH*, as he pronounced it. My childish mind saw vividly the pictures of the dust bowl of the '30s; the deserted farms, window deep in drifted sand and dust; the blazing sun, withered crops, starving cattle and people.

On my way to school that day, I devised a little prayer-like chant. "Drink up the rain, grass!" I cried. "Drink up all the rain you can, because this might be your last chance!"

In very recent years, I have related this experience to my wife, especially during heavy rain! Such experiences, and questions from youths about the Kingdom, are the motivation for this article.

My childish exclamation to my mother was not seen by her as anything other than a very positive thing. She did not for a moment realize the fear or loneliness of which it was born. For it seemed to me, as a little boy, that salvation *was for adults only!* My plaintive request to go along when they fled was because my childish mind conjured up horrifying pictures of *being left behind!*

I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when the radio news told us the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. I was helping my mother wring out the washing. She washed in an old washing machine on our tiny back porch. She rinsed the clothes in a deep, lead sink in a mixture of water and "bluing." My task was to help crank the rubber wringer affixed atop the machine, and then help hang out the wash.

When the radio announcer interrupted regular programming, I was very excited. I had not the faintest idea where "Pearl Harbor" was. Was it just offshore Oregon? Was it in Portland, or Seattle? Was it in California? As

a sixth-grader, I didn't know. I begged permission to run to a neighbor's house, where a playmate's grandfather would tell me all about it.

He confidently told me we would "whip those Japs in six weeks." I still didn't know where Pearl Harbor was. I doubt, upon reflection, that he knew, either.

As the day progressed, I went out along the highways for two or three miles, collecting discarded bottles. I could get a penny for small coke bottles, and two cents for the quart-sized soft drink bottles. When my burlap sack was almost full, I went to "Frankie's Tavern" near my house, collected my money, enough for an 11-cent movie and a candy bar, and walked the mile downtown to see a movie. It was "Penrod" something or other—about a boy who accidentally cast off the ballast in a hot air balloon, and was borne aloft. As if that wasn't frightening enough, they interrupted the movie with crude, typewritten slides across the screen, telling us of ships sunk or damaged, civilians and military killed.

It was dark when I got out of the movie. On my way home I can still vividly remember thinking there were "Japs" hiding behind the dark shrubbery of every house. My scalp prickled; I had goose bumps—and I ran, or walked very fast, most of the way home!

Do you remember similar experiences?

Believe it or not, church can be a *frightening experience* to children. The not knowing; the apprehensions, vague fears, can create many harmful attitudes, not the least of which is a desire to simply blot out what is being said from the pulpit, and sit next to other youths, communicating with them, joking, drawing, making faces—anything to avoid being drawn in to things being said out of the pulpit which seem either threatening, or "for adults only."

Does God Care About Children?

On more than one occasion, Christ showed His love and care for children. Mark wrote, "And they [the parents] brought young children to Him, that He should touch them" (Mark 10:13). These parents either wanted their children healed, or they wanted Christ's *blessing*; His touch, assuring them of protection for the child—making them hopeful for the child's health, success, and long life.

"...and his disciples rebuked those that brought them." To the disciples, this band of would-be revolutionaries were a no-nonsense group of *adults*, going about the serious business of seeing to it Christ was established on the throne that was rightfully His. What they were doing was not child's play—it *was important*. Besides, they lived in a society that strongly stressed the patriarchal role of the male, that believed "children should be seen, and not heard," and thus thought it an effrontery that parents should ask Christ to deign to take Ms valuable time to have children presented to Him.

But notice what Christ did: "But when Jesus saw it, *He was much displeased*, and said unto them, 'Suffer [permit, allow] the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: *for of such is the Kingdom of God.*' " (verses 13,14).

Since He was *much* displeased with His disciples, He must have put some fervor in His voice. He then seized on the opportunity to *teach* them something they had obviously missed.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God *as a little child* [in childlike innocence—in wide-eyed wonder, and gleeful acceptance], he shall not enter therein.

"And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10: 14,15).

Christ loved little children. Their innocence must have moved Him to do what He did. As our High Priest, and soon-coming King, Christ *remembers* His own childhood; remembers the events of which we have just read. Surely, as we shall see, He tenderly cares for children.

This touching example has given rise to a church tradition. At the Feast of Tabernacles each year, the church conducts a ceremony we call "Blessing of the Children," so that parents can bring their newborn infants to a designated place, and God's ministers can briefly take them up into their arms, following Christ's example, and pray over them, asking God's protection; His blessing upon them. When feast sites grow too large so that such a ceremony becomes unwieldy, then other arrangements can be made, such as a specially-scheduled time, rather than as a part of worship services, or even on the weekly Sabbath following the feast for those who regularly attend a local church, allowing only those who cannot to present their children at the feast.

It is a good custom—one we believe our Savior smiles upon, for we are only trying to follow His wonderful example.

Christ, Too, Was a Child

Professing Christianity continually speaks of "the Christ Child." True, Christ was a child, once. I have written in brief about what may be gleaned from the Scriptures about His boyhood; about the kind of a child He must have been.

Yet, we are not to worship Him *as* a child; merely to be appreciative of the fact that He *was* a child; that He experienced the temptations of childhood, and overcame them all.

Notice how God uses the *family* relationship throughout Scripture to show us the plan of salvation. God is the *Father*, and Christ is the *Son* of God. Within the church, we are "brothers and sisters in Christ," and the church represents the *children* of God.

A newly-baptized Christian is called "a babe in Christ" In some of the richest language of the Bible concerning Christ's calling, His sacrifice for us, that family relationship, and God's concern for *children* shines through.

"...we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

"For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many *sons* into glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

"For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are *all one*: for this cause He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*.

"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church [assembly] will I sing praise unto thee.

"And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold, I and the *children* which God hath given me.

"Forasmuch then as the *children* are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might annul [thwart, counterwork, render null and ineffective; not destroy—margin] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:9-14).

Notice all the analogies.

Christ calls all of His people "brethren." Those who will be inducted into God's family at the resurrection are the "children" which God has given to Christ. These *children* of God, though physical adults, experience fleshly weakness and temptations, exactly as did Christ.

Christ used warm, tender expressions when referring to His beloved disciples. Following His resurrection, when He appeared to them as they were fishing near the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He called out, "Children, have ye any meat?" This was said to *adults*, as a term of affection.

God makes it clear He cares for children—that we *are*, by analogy, His *children*.

We are told little of Christ's childhood. Yet, we are astounded when we see Him, at the tender age of 12, sitting in the temple, confounding the learned doctors of talmudic tradition with His questions and answers.

"Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the *child* Jesus [notice He was still called a *child* at age 12, though the term could be "youngster" or "young lad."] tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it.

"But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

"And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

"And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers" (Luke 2:41-47).

We are told a great deal about Christ as a boy in this passage. First, He was obedient and dependable, or His parents would not have gone an arduous day's journey without searching for Him.

Most mothers would become frantic in about two hours if they could not find their sons as they left a big city for a 90 or 100-mile trek on donkeys and camels. That they "supposed Him to have been in the company" shows they knew Him to be self-reliant, sober, trustworthy. He wasn't the kind of boy to wander off mindlessly and become lost. He was purposeful, thoughtful, deliberate in what He did.

Any parent searching for a twelve-year-old for the better part of *four days* would certainly *become* distraught. It is in this context we understand Mary's exclamation, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee *sorrowing* [a modern mother would say, "frantically"].

"And He said unto them, How is it that ye have sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?"

The remaining verses show His parents did not understand the real meaning of what He said. Yet, we are told, "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, *and was subject* unto them..." (Luke 2:50, 51).

Does the Bible Promise Protection for Us and Our Children?

Over the years, I have delivered various sermons about conditions on earth during Christ's millennial reign to demonstrate that the coming of the Kingdom of God is *not the end of the world*.

Instead, it is the *beginning* of a whole new age—a new world order of *peace* at last; of an absence of poverty, sickness and disease, squalor, crime, drugs, divorce, abortion, violence, and war!

The first few decades will be a time of massive *rebuilding*; of cleaning up the environment, building gleaming new cities, transforming the wasted, polluted surface of this earth into a wonderland of green, verdant fields, running rivers and streams, growing forests, huge, healthy crops—literal *utopia*!

It is always darkest before the dawn. So it is in world conditions just prior to Christ's return. The Great Tribulation will cost millions of lives. The Day of the Lord will cost many, many millions more.

Yet, God will *spare His people* who seek His protection!

Christ told His disciples, "Watch ye therefore, and *pray always*, that ye may be accounted worthy to *escape* these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Escape what things?

He had just completed the famous "Olivet Prophecy," in which He spoke of the *Tribulation* and the Day of the Lord; of His Second Coming. He spoke of drought, famine, earthquakes, and horrifying wars. Then, He promised those who *are watching* and who are staying close to God in prayer *will be protected*!

Obviously, God has chosen, or will yet choose, certain individuals to be witnesses for Him, men who will be *martyred* for their faith. The famous "two witnesses" of Revelation II are but one example. Christ was the greatest of all martyrs. Many of the apostles were killed, as were countless thousands over the centuries.

As I have pointed out time and time again, martyrdom is *NOT PROOF OF SPIRITUAL INFERIORITY*; it is exactly the *OPPOSITE*! God chose only the *strongest*, spiritually, to endure such terrible suffering and death. A completely *false* teaching was that those who were supposedly "lukewarm" in God's church would be *tortured*, to make them *spiritually strong*! Nonsense! When a *weak* person is subjected to such terrible treatment, they quickly *give up* their faith, and accept whatever they are told. It is only the spiritually *strong* who are able to endure.

God makes a difference for those who are *not called* to be His witnesses in some dramatic fashion, as were many of the apostles—as will be the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7,8).

Notice, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted *above that ye are able*; but will with the temptation also make a way to *escape*, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

Each individual is different. God recognizes this, and so each individual is allowed to be tried and tested only to the degree of his or her faith, and closeness to God. God has *not* called us to make it so difficult for us we cannot enter into His Kingdom. Paul said he was confident "...of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Christ says HE prays for us. "I pray for *them* [His disciples]: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.

"And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are ... neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee..." (John 17:9-21).

Those who believe in Christ "through their word," the words and writings of the apostles, includes you and me! Christ thanked His Father He had *kept* safe those whom God had given Him: "While I was with them in the world, I *kept* them in Thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and *none of them is lost*..." (John 17:12).

Is God able to protect?

God Protects a Godly Family

When God brought our forebears out of Egypt, He brought out hundreds of thousands of *families*. "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb *according to your families* [depending on the size of the family; how many people were to partake of the roast lamb], and kill the Passover" (Exodus 12: 21).

Notice, "And it shall come to pass, when ye be come into the land which the Eternal will give you, according as He hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Eternal's Passover, who passed over the houses [escape! rescue! They were the exception!] of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses" (Exodus 12:25-27). Notice they were *at home*, not thousands of miles away, hiding like refugees in caves!

Now, notice what Paul wrote about the family unit: "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

"For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority [margin] on her head *because of the angels*" (1 Corinthians 11:9,10). Here, as Paul attacked the terrible practice of pagan women of shaving their heads, of the bald temple prostitutes, he explained that a woman's tresses were a God-given sign of her femininity; of her role as an help-mate to her husband, manager of her home, and mother of her children.

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11: 15).

The commentaries wax eloquent about how angels cover their faces in the presence of God; how a woman should pray, not shaven or shorn, or bald, but "covered" by her long hair, which is analogous to a "veil" given by nature. Perhaps there is more implied here than simple humility in the presence of God. Perhaps God is also implying that a woman who is not in Godly subjection and loving cooperation with her husband is depriving herself, and therefore her children, of God's angelic protection.

Read the 127th Psalm. Here, God says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Eternal: and the fruit of the womb is *His reward*. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

Here, a man who is blessed with a fruitful, faithful wife and companion; a man who is blessed with a large family—a man who is the head of his home; provider, protector, example, leader, is a man who *also leads in the*

community. He speaks "with the enemies in the gate," meaning he takes a leading role in the affairs and defense of the community.

Why? Because he is obeying God's laws regarding marriage, the family, and child-rearing! Because, as a wise and loving manager of a large family *unit*, he is qualified to govern in much greater matters.

Notice the very next Psalm: "Blessed is every one that feareth the Eternal; that walketh in His ways.

"For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

"Behold, that thus shalt the man be blessed that feareth the Eternal ... Yea, *thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace* upon Israel" (Psalm 128).

What wonderful promises!

First, God promises longevity of life, patriarchal status. The man who fears God and observes His commandments will become a father and a grandfather. Not only does God promise him a long and happy life, but also promises the survival and good health of his sons and daughters; their happy marriages, and that they will have healthy sons and daughters. *Peace* is promised.

This is not indication of an "adults only" kingdom, of God cutting short all human life at the Tribulation, but of *longevity, of continuance*.

Time is Opening Up Before Us

Christ's disciples asked, "Tell us, when shall these things be? [the destruction of Jerusalem and the tribulation] and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). But the word Matthew used in the Greek was *aion*, which meant "age."

The verse should read "...end of the age." Christ then described the terrible conditions just before His coming. But He also describes *protection and survival*. Notice, "And except those days should be shortened, there should *no flesh be saved [alive]*: but for the *elect's* sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

God will *cut short* the terrible wars of the Tribulation for the *sake of His elect*. Who are these? Are they exclusively the converted and baptized *adults* in His church?

Notice, "Thus saith the Eternal, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servant's sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and *mine elect* shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there" (Isaiah 65:8,9).

Continually, God calls *the House of Israel* "mine elect." Notice verse 22: "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and *mine elect* shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:22).

In each of these scriptures, we are dealing with the millennial setting of the Kingdom of God on earth; in one case, a time *after* the Millennium, during a 100-year period following the great, general resurrection. In each

case, we see physical human beings, families of the House of Israel and all nations, living in a utopian time of *world peace*.

Read the beautiful 49th chapter of Isaiah slowly and carefully. God pictures the restoration of Israel, the regathering of various gentile nations to their former borders, and the *restoration* of families, tribes and nations during the Kingdom of God. As a picture of that time of restoration, God shows a virtual "*population explosion*," among those who return to rebuild the wasted lands.

Notice, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, *yet will I not forget thee*."

"Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; [God showing that He would no more forget His people, and *their children*, than He could forget something engraved upon the palms of His own hands]; thy walls are continually before me.

"Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.

"Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: All these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Eternal, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

"For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be *too narrow* [not enough room for their growing, expanding families] by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

"The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too straight for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

"Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?

"Thus saith the Lord Eternal, behold, I will lift up mine hand to the gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and *they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders*.

"And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Eternal: for they shall not be ashamed that wait on me" (Isaiah 49:14-23).

Here is a fabulously beautiful picture of the restoration of Israel to its ancient inheritances, to the return of captive children, borne upon the shoulders and in the arms of their former captors to their joyous parents; a promise of God that even the *nobility* of gentile nations will become like *servants* unto Israel in the Millennium!

Many chapters of the Bible deal with the beautiful picture of the Millennium as a time of the rebuilding of old waste places (Ezekiel 36), the *healing* of the polluted and bespoiled wasteland of "earth" following the tribulation and the day of the Lord (Ezekiel 47), the peaceful, prosperous, happy state of *families* dwelling on their own land, with their own orchards and fertile soil to produce bounteous food for their consumption (Isaiah 65), and imagination-defying scenes of literal *utopia* with families *restored*, living in God's Kingdom, under the government of Jesus Christ and the members of the family of God.

For those young people who are not converted, baptized member's of God's church, there is a *fabulous future* ahead! Now, let's see what would happen in a typical family: Suppose a young couple had several young children, all under the age of understanding. Yet, the parents are baptized members of the church. God shows the parents will be *instantaneously changed* at the Second Coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:50-52). What happens to their children?

Becoming a Member of God's Family

At the present time, we cannot *see* our Heavenly Father. John wrote, however, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be *like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Job wrote, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19: 25-27).

When Christ returns to this earth, it will be a *visible* occurrence. He will *manifest* Himself to all nations (Revelation 1:7). Those who are caught up with Him in the clouds (Ephesians 4:17) to descend with Him to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4), will be *visible* to the startled humans on earth.

The moment of the resurrection is the same moment that living members of Christ's body are "caught up together with Him in the clouds," *instantaneously changed* from flesh to spirit!

But this does not mean they disappear. It does not mean that little children suddenly find their parents gone, without any means to find them. The coming of Christ is not a time of stress and trouble for God's people, but the time of *spiritual rebirth*; the time of a *new beginning*; the time of the commencement of *eternal, powerful, never-ending LIFE!*

Christ will set up His headquarters in Jerusalem. "But it shall come to pass, that the mountain [government] of the House of the Eternal shall be established in the top of the mountains, [governments of man] and it shall be exalted above the hills [smaller nations]; and *people* [human beings from all nations, Jew and Gentile alike] shall flow unto it.

"And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem.

"And He shall judge among many people [physical human beings, representing the nations of this earth, now under God's wonderful, forgiving, kind, merciful, yet *law and order* rule!], and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords [tanks, aircraft, ships, etc.; the weapons of war] into plowshares [gardening and farming implements] and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:1-3).

Now, the Divine Family, who are Co-Heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17), will begin to set up the entire infrastructure of rehabilitation; of rebuilding, restoration, and healing of people, as well as the environment.

And what of their children?

Some assume their children will be *left behind*; that the adults will be whisked away, somewhere, leaving children to fend for themselves. Nonsense! When we are *born of God*, born into His very family, then what shall we BE?

God's power is *limitless*. His eyes behold all the earth. He can read our thoughts; knows the number of hairs on our heads. Those who are suddenly transformed into God's Family will be *infinitely* more CAPABLE of caring for, protecting, feeding, clothing, loving their children than *ever before!*

God's coming Kingdom is a time of *restitution* (Acts 3: 19-21); of the restoring of families, resettling of families, tribes and nations according to their inheritance. It is not a chaotic time of refugees, lost children, unhappiness and distress, but a time of *order*, of loving *rebuilding* of a new, wondrous, utopian society.

Can *God* care for our children and grandchildren? Can WE, if we are then *members of the very God Family*?

What Kind of Society?

Are there any comparisons to modern society we may use to understand conditions in the Kingdom of God?

Surprisingly, there are many.

God, not man, is the Author of *cities*. There is nothing inherently evil in a city; nothing which suggests human beings should never live in large concentrations.

Revelation 21 and 22 describe the "Holy City," God's dwelling place, descending out of heaven to become the "New Jerusalem."

Only when carnal human nature, with its inbuilt vanity, jealousy, lust and greed—subject to the sway of Satan—determines what cities are like is there a problem.

Today's cities are virtually uninhabitable. Huge urban sprawls of concrete, asphalt, buildings, billboards, electrical power poles, ugly slums, outdated, tumbledown architecture, covered with the soot and pollution of centuries in some cases; today's cities have become festering carbuncles of pornography, divorce, kidnapping, drugs, alcoholism, rape and murder.

Most city dwellers' ears are attuned to the constant wail of police and ambulance sirens. Most live in homes and apartments equipped with peepholes, electronic burglar alarms, double locks and dead bolts, with guns in the dresser drawer, or a can of mace near the front door.

Cities are often suffering from miles of decaying water systems, inadequate sewage treatment plants, inefficient or corrupt police forces, inadequate medical facilities, and are subject to air, water and solid pollution.

Each day, in a city the size of Los Angeles, for example, it requires literally *hundreds* of trucks, slowly winding their way up the "grapevine" between the San Joaquin Valley and the city, or from the Imperial Valley, to deliver thousands of tons of vegetables, canned goods, milk, and hundreds of varieties of food, or the people in the city cannot find the shelves of their supermarkets bulging with food and drink. Cities represent tens of thousands of miles of wires, cables, pipes, roadways, sewer lines, drainage ditches; the electrical energy slaves serving each house, office or apartment are expected to work.

Each family expects to push a button, flip a switch, or turn a handle, and have something happen. Millions expect to come home in the evening to find their stocks of food in their freezers and refrigerators intact—their gas and electric appliances ready for instant obedience to their touch.

When tragedy strikes, like earthquake, fire or flood, cities quickly prove their vulnerability to such natural calamities—the infrastructure breaks down, and people die.

God did not intend for people to live like ants in an ant farm—for children to grow up with deserted lots strewn with abandoned needles, cast-off beer cans and whisky bottles, broken glass and rotting garbage as their playgrounds.

God did not intend a family to live in airless tenement buildings, sagging on their foundations, with inadequate plumbing and electricity; chipped and peeling paint, filthy hallways smelling of urine and garbage, bespoiled with graffiti—buildings abandoned by absentee landlords who live in Palm Beach while thousands of their tenants complain, to no avail, of their terrible housing, and high rents.

God's cities are described in the Bible as more a collection of many villages in a large area; each family possessing at least an acre or so; each family with a garden, fruit trees, cattle—living close to the land. This is not to say there will be no such thing as large buildings in the Kingdom. The Temple of God will be, perhaps, the largest and most impressive building in the whole world at that time.

Because all of the world's economy will be utterly *different* then; not based on speculation on stock markets; bonds, money markets, (the "money changers" line of work), on oil, or "futures" speculation about massive markets for cattle and wheat, but will be an *agrarian* society with an *honest* economic system, it is unlikely there will be any huge "skyscrapers" in which people labor for hours before computers, carried up and down in tiny metal boxes suspended from greasy cables in black, lightless shafts, to debauch onto streets filled with swarms of jaded, unhealthy, unhappy people shouldering through each other to fight for taxis when it rains during rush hour.

Let's see a few samples of what God reveals about His society during the Millennium: "Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hill shall melt [metaphor for produce foods like fruits and vegetables abundantly].

"And I will bring again [bring back from] the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall *build the waste cities...*" (Amos 9:13,14).

Modern Germany is a gleaming, prosperous-looking land of striking new architecture, highrise buildings, apartments, homes. A visitor to Dusseldorf, Cologne, or Bonn is struck with the affluence, the progressiveness, the modernity.

Yet, those same cities were hideously ugly piles of blasted brick and stone in 1945. But the Germans industriously rebuilt. They did not attempt to build the same old buildings as they were before. Instead, they built entirely new, modern buildings.

For whom will these cities be rebuilt? Not for God, nor for newly-born members of His Divine Family. God does not require a "house" in which to live. He says, "Thus saith the Eternal, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Eternal: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor [spiritually humble, not necessarily physically poverty-stricken] and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:1,2).

God does not require fruits and vegetables, wine, or grains. God does not require buildings and houses. Nor will those co-heirs with Christ who are *born* of God by the resurrection, or by instantaneous change (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

So *who*, then, is involved in all this rebuilding; in reaping the *physical* rewards of the beginning of the Millennium?

Why, physical, human beings, of course. That includes the *children of those mature adults who are changed from flesh to spirit!*

God says "...and they shall build the waste cities, and *inhabit* them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine [Hebrew: *yayin*, meaning fermented wine] thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled out of their land which I have given them, saith the Eternal thy God" (Amos 9:11-15).

One of the most beautiful passages of Scripture about conditions on earth during the Millennium is found in Isaiah 11: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp [a poisonous snake, which will no longer be harmful], and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder's] den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy [neither snakes, lions, nor any other carnivore, nor poisonous insect or animal—*nor man*] in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Eternal, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Today, if a child were to put its hand on an adder's den, he would probably be bitten, and die a horrible death. The parents would be devastated, heartbroken.

But human, fleshly, *children* will live under God's government during the Millennium—live in *complete protection*; free from malnutrition, disease, accident, injury or death; free from the threat of kidnappers, or Satanists, or perverts!

Notice, "Thus saith the Eternal; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the Mountain of the House of the Eternal of Hosts the Holy Mountain.

"Thus saith the Eternal of hosts; there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zechariah 8:3-6).

This suggest *safe* streets; wide and spacious, with planting, grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. It does not depict racing, honking, careening, dangerous traffic jams, or hit and run drivers, or screaming sirens of police cars and ambulances—but, serenity, quiet, *peace*.

Most importantly, it shows that those young people who are not old enough to be *born of God* at the time of the Second Coming of Christ, and all of physical Israel and the gentile nations who survive the Tribulation and Day of the Lord, will live on into a *new world order*, the GOVERNMENT OF GOD on this earth, a time of PEACE at last!

Never a Better Time to be Alive

God says, "*Blessed and holy* is he that hath part in *the first resurrection*: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

God reveals there is a *special blessing* upon those who have been called in this age—those who will be *physically alive* at the time of the return of Christ. For one thing, they will never have to taste death—but will be changed *instantly*, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

But of great importance, they will be able to *see their children*, and their *grandchildren*, and their great, great, great grandchildren growing up! They will live and reign with Christ for one thousand years! A thousand years means up to *forty generations* of their *own families* will be growing up in God's Kingdom!

All of us who are grandparents know what a JOY, what a BLESSING, are our sweet, precious grandchildren! We love our own children, of course. But, somehow, when we were in our 20s and 30s, God had not yet allowed us to mature and "mellow" into middle and later ages yet, so perhaps the *depth of appreciation* and enjoyment was not so poignant.

But what if you could remain alive, on the scene, able to teach, guide, instruct, impart rich memories and wisdom; and to *interfere to prevent accidents*, to protect, your great, great, great, great, great grandchildren?

I have three sons; two of them are deaf. Our son Mark underwent a painful, heartbreaking divorce. Yet, he has a beautiful, precious son, our grandson Michael Armstrong. Hopefully, he will grow to middle age in the time of God's government on earth, and live to see his own son's sons. Both of our other sons are married. Some day, God willing, they will have sons. My wife and I eagerly look forward to the time when they will HEAR the voices of their wives, of their father and mother, of their fathers and mothers-in-law; *and of their own children*. We look forward to seeing *hundreds*, and eventually *thousands* of human beings who could never have been unless we had something to do with it—the "tribe of Mark," and the "tribe of David," and the "tribe of Matthew."

Time closing in? NONSENSE!

This is the GREATEST TIME TO BE ALIVE IN ALL HISTORY—the time just before the dawn of God's wondrous KINGDOM!

We should actively instill in our little children the beautiful picture of the FUTURE, not the future of this world, but the future of God's soon-coming Kingdom! Children in the Kingdom? Of *course!* *Hopefully, thousands* of them may be YOURS!

-End-

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