

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

VOLUME XXXVIII

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

JULY, AUGUST 2012

NUMBER 4

The Time of the End

Part XXX

Christ's Return

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

Christ is seen returning from heaven to earth at the end of the Tribulation, after Israel has been brought to the place of repentance *on earth* (17:1-19:6), and after the marriage festivities for Christ and His wife have occurred *in heaven* (19:7-9).

The actual marriage of Christ to His bride — a bride previously revealed at the judgment seat (Rev. 1:10-3:22) — is another matter though. The marriage itself, separate from the festivities, is

part and parcel with the judgments brought to pass through the breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll, introduced in Revelation chapter five — the redemption of the inheritance (Rev. 6:1ff). And these judgments will not be concluded *until after Christ returns, immediately following the marriage festivities (seen in Rev. 19:11ff).*

After Christ returns to the earth and deals with Israel and the nations, *corresponding marriage festivities* to those seen in heaven preceding Christ's return will occur on earth. And these festivities will have to do with *God and Israel.*

Because of *Israel's harlotry* during Old Testament days, God *divorced* Israel (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8; Hosea 2:2). And, because *a divorce* has occurred, *a remarriage* will have to occur. And, as occurred with Christ and His bride, festivities will accompany this marriage. This is the subject of the first sign in John's gospel.

This first sign in John's gospel is preceded by a sequence of events which carries the reader through six days, with the marriage festivities occurring on the seventh day. Through this means — a sign having to do with marriage festivities, occurring on the seventh day — God reveals *who* these festivities have to do with and *where* and *when* these festivities will occur (John 2:1-11; cf. John 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1; ref. the editor's book, *SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL*, Chapter VI).

These festivities have to do with *the Jewish people*, for the signs in John's gospel have to do with *Israel* (I Cor. 1:22), with each depicting some aspect of God's future dealings with His people; and the festivities depicted by

the first sign are *wedding festivities which will occur on earth at the beginning of the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, the Messianic Era.*

(The festivities attendant the marriage of God's Son to His bride precede the completion of all activities surrounding the marriage itself [the completion of all activities surrounding the redemption of the inheritance]. That though may or may not be the case with festivities attendant God's remarriage to Israel — a marriage which will occur at the same time and through the same means as the marriage of God's son to His bride.

At the time of Christ's return, Israel, as a repentant and converted nation, will be regathered from a worldwide dispersion. A new covenant will be made with the nation at this time, and the Jewish people will be restored to their land under this new covenant *before* Christ completes all of His work in connection with the redemption of the inheritance.

This work will be completed when the Gentile armies of the world, under the leadership of Antichrist, come together in the Middle East against a restored Jewish nation, with their King in their midst. And this work will be completed through the destruction of these Gentile armies, as seen in Rev. 19:17-21.

When this work has been completed, the remarriage of God to Israel will have occurred [along with the marriage of Christ to His bride]. And, as previously seen, *festivities* occur in connection with each marriage. For Christ and His bride, *these festivities will occur in heaven preceding the Son's return*; and for God and Israel, *these festivities will occur on earth following the Son's return*. The timing of the former in relation to the marriage is given [immediately before the marriage], but not so with the latter [either immediately before, or immediately following]. The subject can only be left open.)

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Heaven Opened

There are several references in the New Testament *to heaven (or, the heavens) being opened*.

The heavens were opened at the time of Jesus' baptism, with the Spirit descending upon Him and God announcing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16, 17; Luke 3:21, 22; cf. Matt. 17:5).

Then John 1:51, a Messianic passage, points to a future day when *the heavens will be opened* to provide angelic ministry in relation to Christ's rule over the earth (cf. Gen. 28:12-14), a rule alluded to by God's announcement concerning His Son at the time of His baptism ("Sonship" implies *rulership* [it is *Sons* who rule in God's kingdom], with Christ having been born "King of the Jews" [Matt. 2:2]).

The heavens are seen opened two times in the Book of Acts — at the time of Stephen's stoning (7:56), and again when a vessel was let down from heaven to teach Peter a lesson concerning God's message being carried to the Gentiles (10:11ff).

Then *the heavens are seen opened* two times in the Book of Revelation. The first time pictures *a door opened in heaven* (4:1), dealing with the removal of Christians preceding the Tribulation. And the second is in 19:11 where *the heavens are opened* to allow Christ, accompanied by angels, to return to the earth.

Two of the preceding references parallel one another in a respect, though separated in time by about 2,000 years — Acts 7:56 and Rev. 19:11.

In the former reference, Stephen had just finished a lengthy message to the religious leaders in Israel — an address before the council, with Israel's high priest present (6:15; 7:1). Stephen had dealt with central parts of the history of Israel extending from Abraham to the present time, covering 2,000 years of history (7:2-50). He then called their attention to that which had occurred down through the years, climaxed by recent events (7:51, 52). The Jewish people over the years, covering centuries of time, had rejected, persecuted,

and slain the prophets which had been sent unto them. And now, in a climactic act, they had done the same thing to God's Son (cf. Matt. 21:33-39; 23:34-37; Acts 2:23, 36; 3:14, 15).

Stephen's message was proclaimed very early in the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel, and this message brought matters to a climactic point. Stephen's message, *which dealt solely with the recorded Word as it pertained to the living Word, was so powerful that, at the conclusion of this message, the heavens were opened*. And God's Son, referred to in the passage as "the Son of man" (a Messianic title [cf. Ps. 8:4-6; Dan. 7:13, 14; Acts 7:55, 56]), was seen *standing at God's right hand*.

In the light of related Scripture, the picture is self-explanatory. The religious leaders in Israel had been brought to a decisive place in the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel. They could only do *one* of two things. There was no alternate. They could either *receive the message* being proclaimed or they could *reject this message*.

Receiving the message would result in ultimate blessings for Israel and the nations; *rejecting the message* would result in exactly the opposite — ultimate dire consequences for Israel and the nations.

Receiving the message, the religious leaders would call for national repentance on Israel's part, the Son of man would return following Israel's repentance, and the kingdom would then be established. Note that similar messages had previously been delivered by Peter to individuals in Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:14-40) and later to Jews at and near the Temple following a miraculous sign (Acts 3:12-26; also see Acts 4:1-12; 5:12-33).

Rejecting the message, there would be no national repentance. The heavens would close, "the Son of man" would sit back down at His Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34, 35), the Jewish people would continue in their sins, and the dispensation which had begun on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two would be allowed to run its course.

These Jewish religious leaders chose the latter. *They rejected the message*; and, as the Jewish people had previously done with the Prophets, and last of all with their Messiah, *they slew the mes-*

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

Published bimonthly

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

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All unsigned articles are
written by the editor.

senger (vv. 57-60). Thus, these religious leaders (and, consequently, the nation at large) remained in *an unrepentant state, a state in which they would continue*. The heavens could then only close and remain closed until Israel did repent, with resulting dire consequences for Israel and the nations during the interim.

(Because of Israel's position as God's firstborn son — possessing the rights of primogeniture among the nations of the earth — that which occurred, particularly during the first seven chapters of Acts, had far-reaching ramifications. Events in Acts chapter seven form a major turning point in the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel, as events in Matthew chapter twelve had formed a major turning point in the original offer of the kingdom to Israel.

In the original offer of the kingdom, Israel's rejection of the message and the Messenger was brought to a climactic point through events in Matthew chapter twelve. Beyond this time in Matthew, though the offer of the kingdom remained open, matters were markedly different. And this difference began with Christ, *the same day*, going "out of the house [a reference to *the house of Israel*]" and down "by the seaside [a reference to *the Gentiles*]" in Matt. 13:1.

In the reoffer of the kingdom, exactly the same thing is seen through events in Acts chapter seven. Beyond this time in Acts, though the reoffer of the kingdom continued, matters were markedly different. And this difference began with the introduction of *Paul* [referred to by his Hebrew name, "Saul"] immediately before Stephen was stoned [vv. 57-60]. Paul, following his conversion, became *the apostle to the Gentiles* [Acts 9:15, 16; 26:16-18; Gal. 2:7]. Thus, through concluding events in Acts chapter seven, exactly as previously seen immediately following

events in Matthew chapter twelve, *the Gentiles* are brought into full view.

In both the offer and the reoffer of the kingdom, the direction which Israel would take [rejection] was, for all practical purposes, set at these two times [events in Matthew chapter twelve and Acts chapter seven]. Thus, exactly as the events of Matthew chapter twelve established a base for the course which Middle East history and the history of the world at large would take [the removal of the Kingdom from Israel, the Cross, and the bringing into existence of the Church to be the recipient of that taken from Israel (Matt. 16:18, 21; 21:43)], so it is with events in Acts chapter seven. Events in this chapter establish a base for the course which Middle East history and the history of the world at large would take for the next 2,000 years. Blessings for Israel and the Gentile nations would be withheld, the nations would continue holding the sceptre, and conditions among Israel and the nations in the Middle East would only deteriorate.

As a result, 2,000 years later, Israel finds herself at the center of a turmoil among the nations, centered in the Middle East but worldwide in scope—a turmoil which will ultimately tumble completely out of control. According to Scripture, this situation will one day become so dire that Divine intervention will be the only thing that will save both Israel and the nations:

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:22).

A situation of this nature is what Scripture reveals that it will take to bring Israel to the place of repentance—the repentance called for in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts. And God, yet future, will bring Israel and the nations through that which lies just ahead [the Great Tribulation] *for this very purpose—to bring about Israel’s repentance* [ref. Part XXVII in this series, “God’s First-born Son,” and the editor’s article, “The Intractable Middle East Problem”].

The time when *the heavens will open once again in relation to that seen by the opened heavens in Acts 7:56* is not seen again in Scripture until Rev. 19:11ff—after Israel has been brought to the place of repentance (Lev. 26:40-42; II Chron. 7:14), after Israel has been cleansed of her harlotry (Rev. 17:1-18:24), after the

rejoicing in heaven because of Israel’s changed condition (Rev. 19:1-6), and after the marriage festivities in heaven (Rev. 19:7-9).

Israel will have been brought to the place of repentance through the judgments of the Tribulation, the kingdom will have been delivered to the Son by the Father (Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15ff), and Christ will then return through *an opened heaven* as “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” to complete His dealings with Israel and the nations prior to His reign.

“Israel” is *the key*. And more particularly, in relation to the subject at hand, *the one act by Israel* which will turn the lock and open the door is *the nation’s repentance*.

Until Israel repents, the nation will be left without a Deliverer; but when Israel does repent, God, remaining true to His Word, will then send the Deliverer.

God will send the One of whom Moses was only a type, the One greater than Moses. And as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt (“Egypt” is always a type of *the world* in Scripture) with a view to their realizing an inheritance in another land (the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), the One greater than Moses will lead the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion, with a view to their realizing an inheritance in the same land (*cf.* Ex. 3:1-9; Lev. 26:40-42; II Chron. 7:12-14; Matt. 24:30, 31). And as the former resulted in a theocracy in the land, so will the latter, with the latter theocracy being millennial in its scope of fulfillment.

Christ Comes Forth

One day the heavens will open again, and Christ will come forth as “King of kings, and Lord of lords” to deal with Israel and the nations immediately preceding the establishment of His kingdom. The matter is dealt with numerous places throughout the Old Testament and is dealt with in a somewhat capsulated, succinct manner in the latter part of Revelation chapter nineteen. The matter need only be dealt with in this concise manner as Scripture is brought to a close, for all the different facets of the matter have been covered in great detail in previous Scripture.

1) A Crowned Rider on a White Horse

In the Book of Revelation, at the beginning of the Tribulation, a crowned individual is seen riding forth on a white horse, going forth “conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2). Then, at the end of the Tribulation, another crowned individual is seen riding forth on a white horse, with the same goal in view (Rev. 19:11, 12).

The first rider is *from below* and rides forth from a part of the earth, with the conquest of the earth in view. He rides forth preceding the redemption of the inheritance, at a time when the inheritance is still under Satan’s dominion and control, still belonging to him.

This rider comes forth wearing a type crown referred to in the Greek text by the word *stephanos*, indicating that he has yet to achieve the position which he aspires—worldwide dominion. But by the middle of the Tribulation he will not only have achieved this position but he will be seated on Satan’s throne, wearing a crown referred to in the Greek text by the word *diadema* (Rev. 12:3; 13:2).

The second rider is *from above* and rides forth through an opened heaven to the earth, with a view to taking possession of an inheritance which is about to be redeemed, an inheritance still under Satan’s rule and dominion, but no longer belonging to him. And it is about to be taken from him.

This rider comes forth wearing “many crowns,” the type crowns referred to in the Greek text by the word *diadema*. This type crown, as distinguished from the type crown referred to by the word *stephanos*, indicates that *Christ is now in possession of the kingdom, previously given unto Him by His Father* (Dan. 7:13, 14; *cf.* Rev. 11:15). And, in keeping with that *now in His possession*, Christ is seen coming forth as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

(For differences in crowns referred to through the use of *stephanos* and *diadema*, see Parts XIX, XXVII of this series.)

However, the crowns seen on Christ’s head at this time are not crowns which He will wear during His reign. Christ will wear the crown which Satan, the present world ruler, wears; and Satan

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will still be wearing his crown at the time Christ returns, though the kingdom will now belong to the One returning through the opened heavens. And Christ, the One Whom God will have previously given the kingdom, will, following conquest, wear the crown depicting this royalty — a crown presently worn by Satan, the one whom God had given the kingdom in time past (Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 4:17, 25; 7:13, 14).

(The whole of the preceding, as it pertains to Satan and Christ, was foreshadowed typically by the account of Saul and David in the Books of I, II Samuel.

Saul was anointed king over Israel; but Saul disqualified himself by refusing, as God had commanded, to destroy the Amalekites and all of their possessions [I Sam. 15:1ff], though Saul continued to reign. And Saul would continue to reign until the one whom God had chosen to replace him was not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

Satan was anointed king over the earth; but Satan disqualified himself through seeking to extend his rule beyond his God-appointed position [Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:14], though Satan continued to reign. And Satan would continue to reign until the One Whom God had chosen to replace him was not only on the scene but ready to ascend the throne.

In the type, shortly after God rejected Saul as Israel's ruler, God had Samuel anoint David *king over Israel* [I Sam. 16:10-13]. There were then *two anointed kings in Israel*. But David didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, he eventually found himself in a place out in the hills, separated from Saul and his kingdom. And, during this time, certain faithful men joined themselves to David and remained out in the hills with him.

The day came when David was ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful men ready to rule with him. Then, Saul was put down, his crown

was taken and given to David, and David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government.

In the antitype, after God had rejected Satan as the earth's ruler, God anointed His Son *King over the earth* [Ps. 45:6, 7, 16; Heb. 1:8, 9]. There were then, and there are today, *two anointed Kings over the earth*. But God's Son, as David in the type, didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, as David, Christ finds Himself in a place of exile, separated from the kingdom. And, as in David's case, certain faithful individuals join themselves to Christ during this time, remaining in the place of exile with Him.

But the day is near at hand when *matters will continue exactly as seen in the type*. Christ, in that day, will be ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful followers to rule with Him. Then, Satan will be put down, his crown will be taken and given to Christ, and Christ and His faithful followers will move in and take over the government.)

The many crowns (*diadems*) which Christ will have on His head at this time would almost certainly be the crowns cast before God's throne by the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:9-11 (a representative group). These would be crowns worn by those angels ruling with Satan in the beginning who had refused to follow him in his attempt to exalt his throne — an attempt to extend his rule beyond the earth, apart from Divine appointment. And since man is to rule the earth during the coming age in the stead of angels, the twenty-four elders are seen relinquishing their crowns to God, for *God alone is the One Who places and removes rulers* (Dan. 4:17, 25; Matt. 20:23; *ref. Part VII of this series, "Crowns Cast Before God's Throne"*).

Following events at the Judgment seat (Rev. 1-3) and the relinquishment of crowns immediately afterwards (Rev. 4) — immediately following the time certain individuals have been found worthy to occupy regal positions with Christ, but preceding Christ's return — God will have appointed numerous Christians to positions in the kingdom. Then — in the

light of Rev. 19:12 — their crowns will evidently be given to the Son, He will return with these crowns, overthrow Satan, take His crown, and then give the other crowns in His possession to those whom His Father had designated should wear them (along with crowns worn by angels presently ruling with Satan, following the overthrow of Satan and his angels).

Then, Christ and His faithful co-heirs will move in, take over the government, and rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels.

2) Others Accompanying Christ

"The armies which were in heaven" are seen following Christ at the time He returns through an opened heaven (Rev. 19:14). Those comprising these armies could only be identified as *angels*, not Christians, as often taught (Matt. 24:29-31; II Thess. 1:7). "Armies" in heaven are comprised of *angels*, not men, particularly not Christ's bride (*cf. II Kings 6:15-17; Joel 2:11; Matt. 26:53; Rev. 12:7ff*).

Christ's bride, about to become His wife, will not return back to the earth with the One to Whom she is betrothed at this time but will be *as Asenath*, residing in another part of the palace when Joseph dealt with his brethren (Gen. 45:1ff), and / or *as Zipporah*, only going part way with Moses when he returned to deal with his brethren (Ex. 4:20, 29; 18:2, 3).

Christ's bride will probably go part way, *as Zipporah*, remaining in the New Jerusalem above the earth (which would leave her in another part of the palace, *as Asenath*) while Christ returns to the earth with His angels to deal with Israel and the nations.

Then, as Moses was reunited with his wife following His dealings with Israel and the destruction of the power of Egypt (Ex. 18:1-5), so will Christ be reunited with the one who will then be His wife following His dealings with Israel and the destruction of Gentile world power.

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