

Bible Student's Notebook

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 31 Issue 765

"The Day of the Cord"

by — Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)

Part 2 of 2

THE LORD'S DAY IN REVELATION 1:10

I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's Day ...

Joseph A. Seiss, in his monumental work, *The Apocalypse*, says,

He [John] says he "was in the Spirit in the Lord's Day," in which he beheld what he afterwards wrote. What is meant by this Lord's Day? Some answer, "Sunday - the first day of the week," but I am not satisfied with this explanation. Sunday belongs indeed to the Lord, but the Scriptures nowhere call it "the Lord's Day." None of the Christian writings, for 100 years after Christ, ever call it "the Lord's Day." But there is a "Day of the Lord" largely treated by prophets and apostles, the meaning of which is abundantly clear and settled. ... And in that Day I understand John to say, he in some sense was. In the mysteries of prophetic rapport, which the Scriptures describe as "in Spirit," and which Paul declared inexplicable, he was caught out of himself, and out of his proper place and time, and stationed amid the stupendous scenes of the great "Day of God," and made to see the actors in them and to look upon them transpiring before his eyes, that he might write what he saw.

A.E. Knoch, the translator of *The Concordant Version*, shows that he actually labored on this passage. In explanation of it he has said,

In spirit, John is transported into the future Day of Jehovah of which the prophets have often spo-

is changed to "the Lord's day" in order to shift the emphasis from the character of the day to the time which is the important point in this passage. This is done in three ways, by changing the grammatical form, the rank, and the order of the words. The direction of the thought is altered by putting "Lord" in the dative instead of the genitive case, so that it locates rather than describes the day. Its force is further weakened by making it an adjective rather than a noun, and by shifting it from its prominent place at the end of the sentence and giving that striking location to "day."

In his book *The Apocaplypse or The Day of the Lord*, Dr. E.W. Bullinger² says emphatically,

John was transported by spiritual instrumentality into the scenes which shall take place in the Day of the Lord, and records what he then saw in vision, namely: the things that shall take place literally and actually in that Day. How this may have been accomplished we may learn from Ezekiel 8:3.

And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the Earth and the Heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem.

^{1.} CV notes on Revelation 1:10.

[[]Editor:] See also E.W. Bullinger's book, The Day of the Lord (see order form).

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A most excellent witness to this truth is provided by one whose love for the truth forced him to speak contrary to almost all with whom he was in close fellowship. I speak of F.C. Jennings, associated with the *Plymouth Brethren*, whose *Studies in Revelation* was published by Arno C. Gabelien, Inc. (Our Hope Publication Office), in 1937. In this he says concerning Revelation 1:10.

So here the words "in the Lord's Day" are closely connected with "in Spirit." In the power of the Spirit of God his spirit is raptured outside the region of physical sight or sense. He sees with another eye now than that of the body; he is in quite another surrounding. Patmos, with its persecution, Man's Day, with its evil spirit in ascendancy, are gone; he is in the Lord's Day, where his Lord is all, where He is even now judging. ...

If the "Lord's Day" be the first day of the week, then of course it has little or no connection with the words "in the Spirit," for John must have been in the first day of the week, in any event, apart altogether from "the Spirit." ...

If these words mean our Sunday, then they would alter, and I may say alter in a way utterly out of harmony with their unquestioned bearing in chapter 4:2, the being "in the Spirit," which, in this case, would be little more than a spiritual state of mind, instead of a "transport," as is the literal force of the phrase. ...

Surely the words, "the Lord's Day," have, in themselves, and apart from the traditional meaning we have attached to them, greater affinity to "the Day of the Lord" than they have to "the first of the week."

A final witness comes from *This Prophecy*, by Charles H. Welch, whose illuminating words reveal that he gave careful consideration to the matter:

There is no mystery about the meaning of John when he tells us that he "came to be in the Day of the Lord in spirit." It cannot possibly mean that he felt in a special spiritual frame of mind on a Sunday – such a suggestion is too trivial to require refuting. We should moreover be thankful that the expression "I became" has been used in :9 in a sense that is literal. John "became" in Patmos liter-

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Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal ISSN: 1936-9360 Volume 31, No. 765 – April 8, 2019 Scripture education in a weekly format!

This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
 the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the Body of
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the Body of Christ (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication, thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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For definitions of abbreviations/acronyms, see index after the order form.

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ally and really. ... The book of Revelation is taken up with something infinitely vaster than days of the week. To read that John "became³ in Spirit on the Lord's Day" (meaning Sunday) tells us practically nothing. To read in the solemn introduction that John became in spirit in the "Day of the Lord," that day of prophetic import, is to tell us practically everything. ... If in Revelation 1 John is taken, in spirit, to the future day of the Lord, to see the visions and to write them in a book, all the book that he writes, including chapters 1, 2 and 3, must be future in their interpretation. There is no part of the prophecy or vision that is not "in the Day of the Lord."

We can expect no fulfillment of any prophecy in the book of Revelation as long as we are in the dispensation of God's grace. Neither does any of it have to do with "the Day of Christ." There is much to take place before "the great and notable Day of the Lord" comes.

BEFORE "THE DAY OF THE LORD"

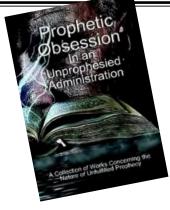
Those who follow the *Darby-Scofield* system of prophetic interpretation, also known as the dispensational-premillenial school, put great emphasis on the coming of the "*Day of the Lord*" in their written and spoken messages, especially so in the popular fast-selling books on prophecy which are so ubiquitous

today. They, as a rule, begin the "Day of the Lord" with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, although many start it seven years before with what they call "the rapture." They put great emphasis upon the terrors of this seven-year period, seldom failing to quote Isaiah 13:9-11.

Behold the Day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of the heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

This is a very popular passage with many self-styled "Evangelical" preachers today who believe it is their duty to scare people into making a decision for Christ. They find such passages to be very useful tools, especially when elaborated with accompanying dramatics, histrionics, and the dogmatic matching of biblical prophecies with current events. Part of the orchestration of evangelistic services is to time the invitation for people to "come to Christ" at the same moment they have been seized by a paroxysm of fear concerning the terrors of the "Day of the Lord." This opportunistic exploiting of people's anxieties merits the severest condemnation.

However, one thing that is apparent concerning these heralds of coming doom, these proclaimers of "Armageddon Now," is that they ignore altogether that the glorious "Day of Christ" (Philippians 1:6,



Prophetic Obsession in an Unprophesied Administration

(A Collection of Works Concerning the Nature of Unfulfilled Prophecy)

List of authors contained in this work are: Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918), Cecil J. Blay (1906-1976), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988), Andrew Miller (1810-1883), Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992) and C.R. Stam (1909-2003).

62 pp, PB See order form.

 [[]Editor:] γίνομαι (ginomai) – "a prolonged and middle form of a primary verb; to cause to be (generate), that is, (reflexively) to become (come into being)" – Strong's G1096. Thus it is translated:

[&]quot;I became in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Darby);

[&]quot;I became to be in the spirit in the Lord's Day" (Dabhar);

[&]quot;I came to be, in Spirit, in the Lord's Day" (Rotherham);

[&]quot;I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's Day" (Concordant);

[&]quot;I came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Green).

10; 2:16) precedes the "Day of the Lord," and none of them have anything to say about those marvelous divine activities which God's Word explicitly says will take place before "the great and notable Day of the Lord" comes. These are ignored, disdained and passed over as if they were unworthy of any consideration.

It is quite plain that this is done because the recognition of them would throw the proverbial monkey wrench into almost all of their prophetic schemes and timetables.

No certain event is revealed in Scripture that will mark the beginning of the "Day of the Lord." It comes "as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10). Its time period will be a reality the moment that God removes the last of the restraints that He placed on mankind during the time period of His [pre-Millennial] government. Once again all nations are permitted to walk after their own ways, and this will make possible the divine testing of all who have lived under and enjoyed the rich blessings of the Kingdom of God. In the "Day of the Lord" we find such events as:

- the emergence of the man of sin (II Thessalonians 2:3);
- the final week (7 years) of Israel's seventy weeks (490 years) as prophesied by Daniel (9:27);
- the desecration of the temple of God (Matthew 24:15);
- the great tribulation;
- the short time of God's vengeance;
- the Second Coming of Jesus Christ;
- His 1000 year parousia (personal presence);
- the binding of Satan for a thousand years;
- the "little season":

- the Great White Throne judgment; and
- the purging of the Earth by fire to make way for the "Day of God."

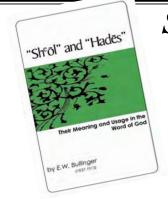
However, certain great events must precede all events that are related to the "Day of the Lord." The first of these is the appearance and the successful ministry of Elijah the Prophet. This is expressly declared in Malachi 4:5-6.

Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet **BE-FORE** the coming of the great and dreadful **Day of the Lord:** and He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

We are told that BEFORE "the great and dreadful Day of the Lord" comes, Elijah the prophet will be sent to the people of Israel, and he will do a work of vast importance and of such nature that it will remove any need for the Lord smiting the Earth with a curse.

Our Lord enlarged upon and further explained this great work when He said to His disciples,

Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come and restore all things (Matthew 17:11).⁴



Sheōl and Hadēs: Their Meaning and Usage in the Word of God

by — E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

This is a detailed study of two key words (one Hebrew, one Greek) that have a significant bearing on our understanding about death.

52 pp., PB

See order form.

www.EWBullinger.com

^{4.} [*Editor:*] While some literal translations, such as *Concordant*, do not have the word "first," others do:

[&]quot;Elijah doth indeed come first, and shall restore all things" (Young);

[&]quot;Elias truly comes first, and shall restore all things" (Diaglott);

[&]quot;Elijah indeed comes first and shall restore all things" (Green);

[&]quot;Elijah is indeed coming first, and he will restore all things" (Analytical-Literal);

[&]quot;Eli Yah indeed comes first and restores all" (Exegeses).

There is great consolation in the fact that, before the first vision in the book of Revelation is fulfilled, Elijah the prophet will have appeared, and he will restore man's lost understanding of the divine idioms, signs and figures used throughout this prophecy. The world will know what every word in Revelation means before any man is called upon to face the things revealed in it. We thank God for this.

If the man of faith will take God at His Word and think in harmony with the truth declared in Malachi 4:5-6 and Matthew 17:11, no belief will be possible than that there is to be a period of beneficent and benevolent divine activity **before** the "Day of the Lord," and this will be achieved by God working through Elijah the prophet. All of this will be in the "Day of Christ" and under the "Kingdom of God." This is enough in itself to demonstrate that there will be a period of Divine Government before the Second Coming and the personal presence of Jesus Christ.

THE MISSION OF ELIJAH

In Galatians 3:16 we are emphatically told that to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, and in Romans 9:4 that the promises belong to Israel.

The Old Testament closes with one of the greatest promises to Israel to be found in the Word of God. It is a promise that is yet to be kept by God (Malachi 4:5-6). These are the glorious words that close the Old Testament. We are told that "before ... the great and dreadful Day of the Lord" comes, Elijah the prophet will be sent to the people of Israel, and he will accomplish a far-reaching work of spiritual nature.

It is also declared that if it were not for this great work, it would be necessary for the Lord to smite the earth with a curse when He comes. However, we can rest assured that He will not need to do this, for *before* He comes He will send Elijah who will do a work that will make such far-reaching vengeance unnecessary. The phrase "turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the children to their fathers" indicates a work of great spiritual value and importance, first for Israel and then from them a blessing for "all families of the earth."

Furthermore, we know that in God's order the family is the one unit He has established, and that these

words indicate a full return to the family system when God governs the Earth.

In the family, the father is supposed to be the head and the teacher of the children. Today, the average father is incapable of being either head or teacher, and at the best the children regard the father as a well-intentioned nincompoop. The ministry of Elijah is going to make fathers be what they should be, and he will do the same for the children.

The words of the angel of the Lord to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, shed further light on the meaning of this phrase. Concerning John he said,

And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

The ministry of John the Baptist did not fail. It prepared many in the land of Israel for the First Advent of Christ. The work of Elijah in a coming Day will prepare all Israel for the Second Advent of Christ. When He comes again He will find a nation fully ready for Him. There should not be even as many as one who will need to be eliminated because he knows not God.

"For they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," saith the Lord: "for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

This is God's promise to them. The words of Christ emphasize still further the far-reaching spiritual nature of the work that Elijah is to do:

And His disciples asked Him saying, "Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?" And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things" (Matthew 17:10-11).

From this we know that the work of Elijah is not to be insignificant. He will "restore all things," and this will be done **before** the beginning of "the great and notable Day of the LORD."

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It must be noted here that Elijah does his great work in the time period and under the conditions brought about by the divine assumption of sovereignty which inaugurates the Government of God on the earth. He is the one who will indicate the exact boundaries of the land which God promised to Abraham, the boundaries of the land allotted to each Tribe, the division of Israel according to their Tribes, the identification of the Aaronic family, the three divisions of the Tribe of Levi, the restoration of the judges and counselors as promised in Isaiah 1:26, the identification of historical sites, the restoration and proper observance of the feasts. Today no one knows how Passover was observed in the time of Christ. All of this will be restored by Elijah when God governs the Earth.

The prophecies of Malachi and the words of the Lord Jesus concerning the coming and ministry of Elijah have proved embarrassing to many students of the prophecies of things to come. They do not know what to do about a coming of Elijah and his great work *before* the return of the Lord. They have no room for such a grand event within the limits of their tight systems of prophetic interpretations.

Some get around it by making Elijah to be one of the two witnesses described in Revelation 11:3-12, but this cannot be true, for Elijah does a great work of "turning." He turns the hearts of both fathers and children. The verb "turn" which appears twice in the Malachi prophecy is the Hebrew word shuv, and it denotes the kind of turning that signifies the conversion of the heart (See Psalm 51:13; 19:7; Isaiah 6:10 where this same word is translated "converted.")

Since the two witnesses in Revelation are smiting both the Earth and men upon it, we cannot say that they are doing a work of "converting" men so that the Lord will not need to smite the Earth with a curse when He comes.

Others get around the direct prophecy of Malachi by saying that it was fulfilled in John the Baptist. They feel they have solid ground for this position, and since this is the way they want it to be, they steadfastly refuse to consider any truth that would make their position impossible. Furthermore, they refuse to see that if proven true the idea would break the

Word of God.

In considering the teaching that John the Baptist and his ministry fulfilled the Malachi prophecy of the coming of Elijah, certain facts must be faced. When the priests and the Levites asked John if he were Elijah, his emphatic answer was, "I am not" (John 1:21). This should be enough to settle the question for all who permit the Word of God to speak in matters in dispute. John the Baptist certainly knew who he was and the nature of his mission, and he declared that he was not Elijah.

In the Malachi prophecy we have the direct statement of the LORD that He would send "Elijah the prophet." Since John declared that he was *not* Elijah, he could not have been the one whom God promised to send. Even though he came in "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), he did not fulfill the Malachi prophecy. God made a promise, and we have every right to believe that He will fulfill this promise. We do not need to settle for John the Baptist. To do so would break the Word of God. The language of Matthew 17:10-11 indicates that the scribes were justifying their "do-nothing" attitude toward the Lord Jesus by quoting the prophecy of Malachi. They insisted that He did not have Elijah as His forerunner. This led the disciples to ask: "Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come" (:10). Even though John the Baptist had come, had completed his ministry and had been beheaded, the Lord Jesus said in answer, "Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things" (:11). Thus our Lord made the coming of Elijah and the restoration of "all things" to be still future events, even after the death of John the Baptist. However, He added,

"But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist (:12-13).

This is the passage that many use to "prove" that John was Elijah. At first glance it would *seem* to teach this, but many of us have learned to take more than one glance at a Scripture passage. We know that John was "born of a woman." If John were Elijah, then we would have here a clear case of "reincarnation." Fur-

thermore, when Elijah "appeared" with Moses on the mount of transfiguration, it was Elijah and not John (Matthew 17:3).

What then did our Lord mean when He said, "Elijah is come already"? Since the scribes were using the fact that Elijah had not yet come as proof that Jesus was not the Messiah, it is evident that His words were directed against them. If they did not recognize John as one sent from God, they would not recognize Elijah if he were sent by God. If Elijah had come they would have treated him just as they treated John, since John came in "the spirit and power of Elijah."

The Lord here used a figure of speech that is familiar to all of us. We speak of the need for "a Lincoln" or "a Gladstone" or "a Solomon." Our Lord was telling the disciples that an Elijah had already come and the scribes had rejected him. Would it have been any different if the Elijah had come?

In an earlier reference to John and Elijah our Lord had said.

And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come (11:14).

The truth here is expressed in the same manner as we find in 26:26 where the Lord said, "This is My body" meaning "this represents My body." Thus, in 11:14 our Lord declared to all who received him, John represented Elijah, and he would do for them individually what Elijah will do for Israel nationally.

So, by the words "Elijah, who is about to come," our Lord confirmed the fact that Elijah's coming was a future event even though John was then upon the Earth.

Another positive statement of things that must take place before "the great and notable Day of the Lord" comes is so immense and magnificent that it serves well as a challenge to all who do take God at His Word and think accordingly. It is a real test of submission and faith.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days," saith God, "I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men [presbuteros – elders] shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the Earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:17-20).

In this passage we find two definite time elements that enclose the promises made in it.

It shall come to pass in the last days ... before the great and notable day of the Lord come.

To find out what "the last days" are, we will need to read Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-8. In these passages we will find that the conditions described are those that will characterize the Earth when God governs.

The Acts passage is quoted from Joel and is Hebrew in character, which explains why "last" here means "resultant," or as *The Cambridge Bible* declares its literal meaning to be "in the sequel of the days."5

There are at least ten specific prophecies, each one a promise of good, listed in Acts 2:17-20, all of which will be fulfilled to the letter in the "resultant days" and before "the great and notable [epiphane, manifest] Day of the Lord" comes. No more positive words could be used to describe a time of divine activity before the fulfillment of the prophecies in Revelation begin.

One can only be amused at the vain struggles of those who try to stultify this passage, to make it say less than what it does, or to make it mean something different from what the Spirit has said.

Since these words were spoken to "Ye men of Judea," we are told that this limits "all flesh" to Israel. Then we are told that :19-20 describe the "great tribulation." If this is so, then the great tribulation is something that comes before the scenes of Revelation, and this would create two "great tribulations": one before the "Day of the Lord," and one in the "Day of the Lord."

5. [Editor:] I.e., "And it comes in the days hereafter" (Concordant).

They link these two verses with Revelation 6:12, never stopping to think that one of these events *precedes* the "*Day of the Lord*," and the other happens *in it*. Thus, they cannot be the same event.

Such struggles against God's Truth reveal a lack of submission to His Word. May we meet the test of believing what God has said here and recognize in this passage a description of divine activity, benevolent and beneficent in its character that comes *before* the "Day of the Lord" and precedes all events described in Revelation.

This will call for a new concept of the last book of the Bible, and could make obsolete every commentary on this oracle of God. May we be equal to this!

God's future program for Israel and for the nations is first blessing followed by testing. The first great testing will come only after God has governed long. When God sees fit to remove all restraints and permits men again to walk after their own way, the true righteousness of the majority will be demonstrated and the hypocrisy of a minority will be revealed. This will result in an uprising against God on the part of some, and this is the revolt that must come *before* the "*Day of the Lord*" (not the "*Day of Christ*" as in the *KJV*). We read of this rebellion in II Thessalonians 2:1-3, which I will literally translate as follows:

Now we request you, brethren, in view of the personal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that you be not quickly shaken from your mind nor be alarmed, either by spirit, or by word, or by a letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the Day of the Lord is present. Let no one deceive you by any means: for **that Day will not come until** the rebellion occurs, and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction.

The word translated "falling away" (KJV) here, and which I have translated "rebellion" is apostasia, which Septuagint usage demonstrates means a "revolt." A record of this revolt is found in Psalms 2 and 83, and is spoken of as the rebellion in this passage.

Thus, the Word of God sets forth positive facts that indicate a period of divine activity that is no part of God's present Administration of Grace but must *precede* the "*Day of the Lord.*" All prophetic systems leave no time for this. The question we now face is whether we will preserve our traditions or come to grips with the Word of God.

— Seed & Bread, Issues 54, 91, 110-111, 252

(edited & abridged)

TOPICS:

Major: Elijah; Great Tribulation; Kingdom of God; Pre-Millennial Kingdom; Right Division

Minor: Day of God; Day of Christ; Day of the Lord; Malachi; Man's Day; Prophecy



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