Hebrews - Commentaries by Clarence E. Lunden

Creation, Death, Destiny, Creation: Hebrews 11:1-3 (11:1-3)

In seeking to discover the first truth as to God revealed in the Scriptures, we should notice the first chapter of John, verse 1. It takes us back before any beginning in creation—no sky, land, nor creatures. What august dignity and majesty attach to this description! Perhaps this is all we are told of the Creator before the creation except what is found in Prov. 8, "My delights were with the sons of men." The first advent of Christ has prepared the way to fulfill His desire; the second will complete it all in glory (Heb. 9:28).

Christ is the Creator, Savior, and Son of God. In Him was life; all things were made by Him, and He is the Author of life. We have Adam life in virtue of creation. When we speak of eternal life for those who are saved, we know that we have this only through Christ's death. This is new creation. "I am the resurrection and the life" were His words to Martha. One can only wonder and adore at such language as this from the Creator Himself. Why was this to include me? If in this world there are such joys in anticipation, what will we experience when all of our hopes are realized (1 Cor. 2:9)?

Every upright person will have to admit that naturally he is estranged from God (Isa. 59:2). Sin separates from God. Not only this, but a person's life here has taken him so far from God that it seems there is no way back. Often he feels, "Only to be a child again to drink deeply into the simplicity of faith."

"Backward, turn backward, Oh time in your flight, Make me a child again Just for tonight."

But alas, the mind turns from this simplicity, being spoiled through the deceitfulness of sin. That is why the Bible says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Luke 18:17.

What a time of joy it must have been when the foundations of the earth were laid! Is it necessary to know how they were laid? Are there any spiritual benefits involved in acquaintance with the mechanics of the process? If so, would not God have given an account of these things? Where He is silent does it not behoove us to be silent, too? Creation cannot be the textbook for life in the Spirit. God spake! It was done! How simple for faith. Would you expect anything else of God? This is all that faith needs, because the new man has a nature which delights in God and is satisfied with whatever He is pleased to reveal (Psa. 119:57,93).

It would seem that "sons of God" is a title given to angels in the Old Testament (Job 1:6; Gen. 6:4). Since angels participated in the joys of the creation of the earth, they themselves must have been created before that momentous event (Job 38:7).

In the beginning—God. The next part of verse 1 Says, "created the heaven and the earth." We know a living God. He can choose to do the thing that He pleases at any time. The time shall come when there shall be only one will in the entire creation. All others shall be subject. This will be voluntary on earth and in heaven (2 Peter 3:13).

Through faith we understand; there is no other way. Faith understands, because the believer simply rests upon what God has said. This is understanding. Reason is lost in the infinite. If a natural man cannot understand the visible creation, consisting of a possible three million creatures of various species, how can he understand One who fills all things as Man, Christ, or One who is "all in all"—God?

The Bible is truth, fact to be believed, not to reason. Reason may be used by man to carry out his existence here as to natural things, a material creation. The spirit of man is contact with God, and this relationship can be entered into or carried on only by faith. Reason must not ever enter here. Dependence and obedience, the character of man's moral being, were lost in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6-11). They must be recovered or all for man is lost forever. One who now believes God's Word has eternal life, brought back into His favor again, through faith in the work of God's Son on the cross. If man would like to reason with God, he should first read what God said to Job in chapter 40, verses 1 to 14. It is in the flesh that man reasons (Rom. 15:13).

We can only view with extreme sadness the reasoning world around us vainly trying to find God, while we rejoice already in the full revelation of Himself to us as Father, through His Son Jesus Christ.

Instead of questioning God's ways in creation, the Psalmist sings praises and bows in reverence at the revelation God has given of it (Psa. 36:5-10). Faith has learned that God's ways are just and without partiality. Oh that we might seek the Lord and feel after Him! What an eternal loss which can never be measured—to lose the companionship forever, of such a wise, benevolent, loving God. Faith is found simply by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17).

The second verse of the Bible tells a very sad story. God has not been pleased to reveal details to us of what happened to bring the creation into this terrible state—"waste, empty." We know that everything God allows in His creation, being foreknown, is for eventual good. It follows then, that after the first verse of Genesis there is room for all the preparing of that which may be seen in the unearthing of fossils in the rocks as well as the great stores of energy in various forms such as gas, coal, oil, uranium, and the like. Such explorations, however, if for the purpose of questioning the Bible's veracity, betray infidel minds and hearts and stand as omens of a terrible judgment from the very God of creation. We do not refer to necessary research for the use and application of resources which God has provided (Job 28:1-9. J.N.D. Tran.). On the contrary, this is the use intended (Deut. 8:9),

and man's mind was fitted for this. Only moral issues are meant here. Faith comes by hearing—not by seeing—God's Word. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." 2 Cor. 4:18.

No doubt, during those ages so spoken of, God was forming the earth for man to be its head (Gen. 1:26-28). Man had no precedent; all of the fruitless exhuming has brought no light as to the origin of species. The book of Genesis remains as the only light upon the dark history of man and his beginning. Atheistic claims as to the unearthing of evidences of prehistoric man stand only in speculation, plaster of paris, and wire. God did not merely make fossils, surely, to lie in the rocks; but although ferns, fish, and other animals, as well as evidences of other creations, may be shown with reasonable accuracy, nothing that resembles intelligent man, as God made him approximately six thousand years ago, has been produced. This, of course, cannot be, because God's Word is forever settled in heaven. "Thy Word is truth." To seek evidences of man's ancestry other than what is given in the divine record is gross infidelity for anyone who has the Word of God in his possession.

The beneficent Creator intended man to have sky, land, and sea with broad plains, mountains, valleys, and rivers (Job 28:9,10). He prepared fiery flashing gems -sapphires, diamonds, rubies, and gold and silver. His omniscience prepared for man copper, iron, tin, nickel, as well as a variety of metals, not to speak of a medley of abrasive stones hidden away in the lower parts of the earth, many now exposed by watercourses.

How all of this should draw forth praise and devotion as we see the purpose before Him whose delights were with the sons of men. One who is not thankful for these blessings betrays the distance his heart is from God through the fall of Adam and the fact that he has never been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, who is the Creator as well as the Savior. It will be the Rock of Ages who will be found to be the stable resting-place of security when the Lord arises to shake terribly the earth. The age of rocks will not matter then. At that time He will shake heaven as well. A "place" will offer no security then, but a "Man" shall be a hiding place from the storm (Isa. 32:2).

The time will come when all in heaven and earth shall praise the Lord. During the millennial reign of Christ the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. His people, Israel, shall be near unto Him. Of the three kingdoms, only the heavenly and earthly shall be reconciled. The infernal shall be subjected to judgment forever (Phil. 2:10; Col. 1:20).

Verse 3 brings us to the first day of the present creation. Darkness upon the face of the deep is dispelled, as light comes into evidence in creation. It was the evening and the morning of the first day. Christ is the Light who dispels the moral darkness for everyone who believes on Him. Christ is the first thought that God would set before us as we read His Word. Every truth of Scripture centers upon the Person and work of Christ. Christ is the only Light that man will ever have. In the eternal state Christ will be the Light and Sun—no artificial nor created light—just Christ (Rev. 21:23). What could we do without light? The eye would be useless (Eph. 6:13). Life could not continue without it. For the same reason, what could you do in eternity without Christ? What kind of an existence will it be for you? Exist you shall, either in eternal bliss or in the blackness of darkness forever. Your choice has been made this very moment. All that you possess is the precious "Now" (2 Cor. 6:2). Whatever your choice is at present determines your destiny, should you slip away where decisions are no longer a matter of your choice.

The firmament alluded to in the sixth verse is the heaven where the birds fly -the atmosphere which encloses flesh and blood (Job 37:16). There will be no need of this in the eternal state because flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Rev. 21:1; 1 Cor. 15:50). Life shall then be in spirit for man, the beasts having perished (2 Peter 2:12;. Psa. 49:12). The present effort of man to leave his habitation is of Satan and shall bring judgment. Man without Christ will never be content. All of his present efforts are the result of lack of contentment.

On the third day the earth rose out of the water, and the coastline appeared. Majestic cliffs, sandy beaches, excellent harbors emerged. What a lesson for those of us who wend our way through a maze of unintelligible paths. God works all things together for good. Who but a wretched, materialistic-minded, soul-destroying agnostic could deny the majestic touch of the hand of the Divine Architect in this, the only light man has about creation. This revelation satisfies the new man.

As the tall and stately form of Mount Everest rose before the mind's eye, followed by other high peaks, thirty thousand feet of water assuaged, leaving the beginning of a veritable garden of Eden. Immediately the continents with the islands appeared, forming the earth in its present shape ready for the creation following. How glorious all of this as God unveiled for the first time the sculpture formed in His secret laboratory! Would this not show the Creator's detailed interest in His choice creature, man? At God's command the sea remains at its given boundary (Job 38:8-11; Psa. 33:6-9).

After bringing the earth, sky, air, rivers, mountains, valleys, into the present order, God covered the earth with a mantle of grass, herbs, vegetables, trees, with green as the color to be so prominently a picture of prosperity, mercy, and rest. No other color would do for the vegetation of the earth besides green.

Having provided these things for man's happiness, still the earth was quiet, no living thing on the face of it except vegetation.

There could have been breezes blowing which would cause the sea to lap against the shore, but no creature to enjoy the creation, no birds in the air nor cattle in the field, no creatures in the sea. If former creations included present species, they succumbed in the succeeding cataclysm (Gen. 1:2).

How infinitesimal we know ourselves to be as we consider the third day. What beautiful vistas in the midst of tranquility—verdant hills, fruitful trees of great variety, vegetables, nuts, plants of diversity and beauty, prepared by the One whose delights were with the sons of men. If we become bored, it surely is not because He made it uninteresting. If we eat the same food day after day it is not because of lack of diversity. Truly the curse has left its mark, but does not that apply to man's mind as well (Gen. 6:5)? How can man rightly enjoy anything while out of communion with his Creator? Just as the present creation began out of a chaotic earth, so the new creation takes man dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-10), and through the work of Christ on the cross, God makes a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). Faith is the touchstone. Surely Wisdom is at work in the creation before us, but how generous the results as we view the new creation by the same Author (1 Cor. 15:52,53).

What treasured resources lie untouched beneath those purple mountains! What supplies of dainties upon fruitful plains! "Yet I beheld and there was no man." The scheme in its entirety was yet to be completed ere God would place the special creature, man, in his position on the earth as head over it all (Gen. 1:26,28).

The sun, moon, and stars were yet to be set in their orbits for seasons, day and night, summer and winter, also leaving a symbolic meaning—sun, supreme authority; moon, subordinate; stars, individual lights or governments. With the sun, heat is present as well as light, drawing out the grass in luxuriant growth, while the sun warmed and brightened the entire earth in course of its circuit. The sun is so important for this life that man in forgetting God has singled out the sun to worship as if it had life in itself. This was simply pagan worship. Even Israel stooped to this in Manasseh's time (2 Kings 23:5,11). Satan will again be publicly worshipped, not only by Israel, but by Christendom as well (Rev. 13:4).

As the fifth day came into being the waters of the sea began to bring forth abundantly the moving creatures which had life. The air began to sound with the flapping of wings, as different varieties of fowl were created (Lev. 11:1-30). Great monsters, whales, sharks, otters, seals, walruses, and multitudes of ocean-borne creatures, and creatures of the air, were seen playing in an unspoiled creation.

What wondrous wisdom was here displayed as one after another of the marvels of creation unfolded; still no man—until all was ready for him.

Then on the sixth day animals came into being, everything on the earth that moved about. This would include insects, rodents, and such creatures not specifically mentioned. What a variety! What endless differences in the natures as each acts in its own sphere and way. Each was created for God's glory. Approximately three million kinds have been recorded, including the creatures of the sea.

The crane, turtle-dove, and swallow were used by the prophet for a reminder to Israel in days of declension that Israel could not judge their own state nor time (Jer. 8:7).

Israel was also reminded that safety could not be found in the horse, which is a symbol of superiority in nature (Psa. 33:16-18).

As Peter found himself denying his Lord, the cock reminded him of the Word of God (Luke 22:60,61).

In rejecting their Messiah, Israel was told by the Lord that His affection for them was like a mother hen guarding her brood (Matt. 23:37).

Israel had gotten so far away from God that the prophet Isaiah has to remind them that the dumb ox and ass have more intelligence than they (Isa. 1:3).

The serpent or dragon seems instinctively to remind us of Satan (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9). The curse will never be removed from the serpent (Gen. 3:14).

God uses beasts to set forth the character of various empires (Dan. 7:3).

In the judgment of the living, sheep and goats are used to distinguish between the saved and lost (Matt. 25:31-33).

A he-goat and a ram are used to typify a strong king (Dan. 8:4,5).

Four little things are used to show forth exceeding wisdom (Prov. 30:24-28).

The eagle speaks of omniscience or speed of judgment, as the text determines; the dove, peace (Rev. 4:7; Job 28:7; Isa. 46:11; John 1:32).

Many animals are used to distinguish the clean from the unclean (Lev. 11). The raven is outstanding as unclean, yet God used it to feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:4).

The Lord Jesus commanded the fish and took a coin from its mouth (Matt. 17:27).

A great fish was used to take Jonah where God wanted him (Jonah 2:10).

An ass was used to rebuke Balaam (Num. 22:28). The only thing it was ever said that the Lord Jesus had need of was a colt, the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:3). This pictures man in his unbroken state (Job 11:12).

Hornets were used to drive the Canaanites from the land (Ex. 23:28; Josh. 24:12).

The lion is a figure of Judah arising in a coming day in power, supreme (Gen. 49:9).

The greyhound is comely (Prov. 30:29-31).

These examples should suffice to show how all was created for Christ's glory, and He as the last Adam will soon take His place over the entire creation (Psa. 8). How we should thank and praise the Lord that His delights are with us.

On this same sixth day, although distinct from the animal creation, God created man in His image and likeness, a unique being who was to be head of the whole creation; that is, the creation spoken of in the six days of Gen. 1. The heavens or their inhabitants are not the question here (Psa. 115:16). He was given a spirit which the animals do not have, linking him with God in a special way. Man was made upright to look to his God in the heavens, not with his head down as the animals. God also made a helpmeet for him which He took out of Adam's side, a type of the Church taken from Christ's riven side (Eph. 5:22-33).

A distinct mark of superiority above the beasts, found in Adam at the moment he was created, was that one of his faculties was the power of speech. The ability to name the newly-created animals as well as to talk with God seems to be sufficient evidence of his headship

unquestioned. There are no indications of so-called evolution up to this point from the divine record, and one would look further in vain. Man's mind alone, estranged from God, could invent such debasing philosophy. "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. The crucible and microscope do not support the results of man's infidel reasoning. Reason cannot enter the sanctuary of God. Faith in God's Word alone gives peace to the troubled heart and a true answer to the mind. We find "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13).

Language was a necessary part of Adam's person as created. This is one of the ways that intelligent man might express himself; and intelligent he was from the day he was created, as we have seen. Adam gave his wife the name Eve (mother of all living). Through this act of faith God could give him a coat of skins after he had sinned. What a full vocabulary he must have had to name the smallest of creatures as well as the largest—names which still carry, though translated into various languages, since the Tower of Babel and its consequences because of man's pride and departure from God (Gen. 11:9). Even at the dispersion, different tribes of men suddenly found themselves with a new language which their fellow workmen could not understand. The reverse was true with Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11). These are events of great significance to faith. Truly the poet wrote, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." The very breath which we breathe is constant: without it for five minutes we would be left a corpse. Where, then, my friend, would you spend your eternity, a creature with a never-dying soul? The divine record is all man has of creation. By the same token, the divine record is the only one which can show you how to solve your destiny. Won't you be wise and set your feet on solid ground now?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24.

The seventh day brought rest. The Sabbath day is the very heart of the Jewish faith (Lev. 23). It speaks of one resting from all of his toil as God did from His upon completing creation. How rich and sweet the rest that remains for the people of God, as soon we shall cease our toils here to enter forever our home with the One we love.

"My longing heart, now pillowed On Jesu's breast of love, Hath oft to me foreshadowed, That blissful rest above; But, O my soul, remember, None shall be weary there; The ransomed without number God's blessed rest will share."

Have you ever thought what it would be like should we be shut out from all of the good that a new creation promises, having already been given by the Spirit special tokens of a bliss that Eden pictures only faintly?

How these meditations mellow the sub-j ect heart and cause it to spread its roots deeper into the only revelation that can satisfy the thirsty soul and speak peace to a troubled heart. At the same time it causes one to bow in humble gratitude to a Creator-God who spent all for our salvation in giving heaven's richest Object, who makes known to us a new creation that, worthy only of God, accepts us into the divine favor "in the Beloved."

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? "Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Rom. 11:33-36.

Creation, Death, Destiny, Death: Hebrews 11:4 (11:4)

EB 11:4{Fair as the first creation was, affording everything for man's need and happiness, there was the possibility of losing it all through disobedience. God allowed man to be tested. He lost his paradise, probably soon after he received it. The immediate cause of his fall was very much like that of his tempter's—"He abode not in the truth." Satan came in to ruin the creation which God had set up for man. All of the peace, joy, rest, tranquility, the capacity for enjoying good, was affected by sin. The power found in Satan's hand may well arouse us to a sense of our helplessness. He has the power of death and the grave. Since that day millions—yea, billions -lie in death, fallen under Satan's power. Besides that, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." Death threw its pall over the entire creation, leaving the curse upon the ground. Of man it was said, "He died.... he died.... he died." Today two persons pass into eternity every second. What an awful thought! What shall I do? How can I escape it?

There is a company who shall escape death, actual physical death—those who are Christ's at His coming. All those who die in Christ shall be raised to be caught up with the living of whom we have just spoken. As man begets children, he leaves a race in this world like its fallen head -lost. All are lost until they are saved. Lost! This is your case if outside of Christ. The only prospect that you have is death, and remember—"after death the judgment."

Not only did sin leave man subject to death physically, but also a moral derelict, his mind being at enmity with God—not one thought except evil: morally wrong. If there is to be blessing, there must be new birth; also every thought must be brought to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

The only deliverance from death, moral or physical, is through the substitutional death of another. This Jesus accomplished for those who trust Him. It is true that all who are trusting in Christ and living at the time of His coming will not pass through physical death. All those who are Christ's but in their graves shall be raised, and the living will join them. All will be changed and given a body like unto His body of glory. This will be complete final deliverance when we shall no longer be encumbered with these bodies of clay, nor the old nature, but we shall be dwelling in a building of God, eternal in the heavens and incorruptible.

Since sin came in, this world has gradually become a colossal graveyard. (No one but God knows how many now lie in death.) The time will come when death and the grave will be destroyed—gone forever; but those who are holden by it at that time will be cast into the lake of fire,

to physically and mentally undergo the judgment of eternal fire (Rev. 20:11-15). At least 1000 years before this, the last person having a part in the first resurrection will already have been raised and will be at home in heaven (Rev. 20:4). Those living on earth at the time death is destroyed will continue to live eternally upon the new earth, sharing common joys with those in heaven (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 21:1-8). Have these truths no voice for us? Are you saved? Is your destiny secure? Death will bring you no nearer the solution except to fix your destiny forever. There is no second chance. "If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. 11:3.

Forever! Oh, forever!

Consider it, my soul;

The fire still is burning

As endless ages roll.

Is rest secure and waiting,

Or conscience stained with blight?

Has each account been settled

Ere your spirit takes her flight?

Only by trusting in the finished work of Christ, His death for us on the cross, can you rest secure, as thoughts of eternal judgment roll over your soul.

The first thing to know is how to satisfy a holy God in order that one will not have to stand before the great white throne. Only those who have been morally, spiritually dead will be there. The rest will already be enjoying their eternal portion. The Passover is a fit picture of how God can be satisfied. Every household which had the blood of the slain lamb in a basin and had applied it with hyssop to the lintel and doorposts of the house was secure from judgment. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." When God saw Jesus die on the cross and the blood flow forth, He passed over all who believe His Word. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." This has been borne out in our subject of death—that a sacrifice must be made to God in our stead or we will remain under judgment. This sacrifice must be perfect, for God cannot accept anything but a perfect offering.

Though sheltered by the blood from the judgment of Egypt, still the power of sin was there—Pharaoh and all his hosts. The victory at the Red Sea sets before us the death of Christ. Here it was a question of the power of sin. When Christ died, not only did the blood satisfy the claims of a holy God, but His death once and for all met the combined power of Satan and death. This is deliverance through death—the death of Christ.

The Word of God tells us that Christ tasted death for everything (Heb. 2:9 J.N.D. Trans.). We have spoken of the individual man; also Christ bought the entire creation (Rom. 14:9). The heavens and earth shall be shaken and changed. He will reconcile heaven and earth to Himself so they can be inhabited forever in a state that cannot see corruption.

If man should leave his present habitation and finally plant his feet upon another planet, he will verify, as he already suspects, that the reception will be most inhospitable. God never prepared the present heaven for man. The new heaven will not be for flesh and blood; life in the spirit will be the order there. Admission to those ethereal realms will require celestial preparation. For the believer the death of Christ severs all relation to Adam and earth. The resurrection brings the believer into new creation and thus prepared for the new heavens. There he shall enjoy forever without interruption a place where all things are new and of God, in a body incorruptible. Man's mind cannot follow here; only faith in God's Word will do until faith turns to sight.

In the meantime man with his schemes will knock in vain at the portals of heaven only to lose it all and in the end slip away into outer darkness forever with the devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. These are called the infernal regions—never to be reconciled. "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils."

The introduction of Christianity on the day of Pentecost not only provided man with a release from guilt but opened heaven to him as his destiny, providing he own himself a sinner and put his trust in the Lord Jesus as his Savior. This offer on the ground of simple faith in God's Word religious man scorns; but he is still attempting to take the heavens by force. This will lead into the final apostasy-religious, political, and social (Jude 6), as the beast and false prophet join forces with the ten kings to attack the Lamb as He comes forth from an opened heaven to establish His kingdom on the earth (Rev. 19:19).

What a specter—DEATH! Only those working with the sick and dying or dead, steeling their feelings and thoughts, escape in measure the reality of death. The world is trying vainly, by pleasure, sense-deadening drugs, and alcohol, to flee its awful reality. Why? Because that silent monitor, Conscience, which never leaves, night and day, causes the word to ring constantly in the ear, "After death the judgment." Will education relieve guilt? What about your sins? Your reason leaves you in atheism, agnosticism, or infidelity—temporary hiding-places. "God requires that which is past." As man plunges into adventure, research, and philanthropy, subconsciously it is only to drown the awful reality of death and its fruits. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." The ostrich may cover his head in the sand, but it will not hide him from his enemies. Neither will the denial of a fact change the consequence. Such thinking will only prove the words of Psa. 53 "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Since the way is strait, Scripture says, "Few there be that find it." How much more serious, then, for those who have approached it to turn again to their sins, leaving Christ.

It is a believer and a believer only who can sing as he passes into the unseen world. The dark traditions of man's religions give no certain hope, peace, or joy in the prospect of death. The word that fills the heart of the believer with peace is, "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Would you exchange the certainty of a living faith for the uncertainty of man's reasonings based upon nothing but a corrupted mind? You are at the crossroads between life and death. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Josh. 24:15.

I came to certain roads that cross,

My choice I now confess;

The one shall lead me into life,

The last—the second death.

If a believer should die, he is promised a resurrection unto life and incorruptibility of body. What can an unsaved man expect? A place where the "worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." He will be cast into the lake of fire—body, soul, and spirit. Such is death and its consequences!

God has made provision for man so that none need be lost. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." All are lost now except those who have identified themselves with Christ in His death (Rom. 10:9).

In Heb. 9:16, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." "Christ died for our sins." Our inheritance was secured by Christ's death.

Friend, what is your prospect? Is it death or life? Are you sure of your destiny, or are you on a vast uncharted sea with no certain port?

Take Christ today and secure your eternal DESTINY with Christ, in the Father's house, with an incorruptible body and a new life in a new place, where all things are of God and where He has reconciled us to Himself according to His own will, counsels, and purposes in Christ—in heaven.

Deliverance for Those Who Have Received Christ but Still Feel Bound to Keep the Law of Moses to Secure Eternal Life or As a Standard for the Christian Life, We Would Now Make a Few Remarks.

Scripture says, "In Adam all die." "The wages of sin is death." The death of Christ ends all guilt for the believer. Christ took our place in death and also resurrection; therefore, in believing in Him we have justification of life. Christ is the Head of a new race for us who believe. We are no longer in Adam, but we are now in Christ (Rom. 5:12-21). All that belonged to Adam in his fallen state belongs to his children. Thus the Spirit of God reasons in righteousness that what belongs to Christ, the Head of a new race, belongs to His children. Death has completely severed our connection with the race of Adam, and now we are joined to another. Here we see plainly that Christ replaces Adam.

The next aspect of deliverance is from the power of sin. This is not so much the subject of our position in Adam or Christ but the place sin has in authority over us (Rom. 6). Here the Spirit of God shows plainly that "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." It was the perfect, righteous, spiritual law that condemned us, but here we are told that belonging to Christ we are no longer under it. We are not under law, but grace. We are no longer debtors to sin. The death of Christ has made the change; death is the end of the old.

The next point to notice is what the law has to say to sin in the flesh. Am I to go about with the sense of condemnation because of this body of sin in which I am found? No! Death breaks the tie of marriage, and the law cannot say anything to a dead man (Rom. 7). Christ has raised the dead man through His death and resurrection; now there is a new principle of life that completely controls the man instead of the old principle of sin and death. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1-4.

Thus we are delivered through death -the death of Christ. The quickened soul who believes this can say, "I am saved," and because he now has the Spirit of God indwelling, he is sealed until the day of the redemption of the body (Eph. 1:13), and he can cry, "Abba Father," as well.

In peace may I resign my breath,

And Thy salvation see;

My sins deserved a second death,

But Jesus died for me.

Creation, Death, Destiny, Destiny - Heaven: Hebrews 11:5-7 (11:5-7)

EB 11:5-7{Wherever ruin comes into that which God has entrusted to man, God never restores things just as they were. The illustration used in Heb. 11:5 sets this forth. We, the Church, see now the mystery of godliness as described in 1 Tim. 3:16. The complete circuit taken by the Lord Jesus coming from heaven and returning into the heavens, a Man, is set forth at least in part by Enoch. Enoch typifies a heavenly Man on earth who pleased God. There was the Man Jesus who fully pleased God, who entered the Father's house in the uncreated heavens. He went there because the earth cast Him out, and also because He glorified God on the earth, the place of sin, laying the foundation whereby sin might be taken away forever from the eye of God.

The subject of the heavens opens to us something entirely new. What a vista is before us! Be sure of this, that heaven will be no repetition of Eden (Gen. 3:24). There will be no possibility that we lose heaven. The Head of the new creation is not subject to failure or death. He not only has been tested for us, but He has gone into death and come forth as the Victor (John 10:17,18). It is because He lives that we live. Then, again, the joys found in Eden were of a character that depended on the senses of a natural man. The heavenly joys are not even found in the natural senses, but only in the spirit (1 Cor. 2:9,10). The natural man in Adam could not long keep his eyes upon God because they naturally were drawn to visible things (Eccl. 3:11). It is only in spirit and in truth that we worship the Father (John 4:24).

This sphere, "the heavens," has aroused considerable research of late; and no wonder. Religious man knows that there are people who intend going there. The scoffer still is trying to do the same thing only in a different way. This will never be accomplished as hoped; and, although he has even set his foot on another planet, still that, or any other planet, has never been prepared for him, only the earth. To leave this earth with the intention of settling in the heavens is a blatant form of apostasy which will be judged. Christian, beware! It is sin (Psa. 115:16).

Christ has entered the heavens as Man, going there to prepare that place for men. If the preparation for a natural man must be physical, the preparation for a spiritual man must be spiritual (Luke 24:39). As the heavenly One, such the heavenly ones. Friend! Do you qualify for this? If not, your portion shall be in the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Man will never dwell in the heavens except with Christ (John 14:3). We who are believers should carry the atmosphere of heaven with us continually, as the children of Israel wore a riband of blue on the border of their garment (Num. 15:38,39). Samson had a secret with God—his long hair. Keeping this secret gave him continual power in the midst of his enemies. In a careless moment he gave away his secret to the world and lost his power and sight (Judg. 16:17). "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Prov. 23:23.

Little does man realize that behind the scenes there is a mighty battle raging between good and evil. Ever since Adam in faith named his wife Eve (Gen. 3:20), there has been a conflict with the evil one. Although mostly hidden (Rev. 10:7), sometimes the conflict comes out into the open. God has told us of the conflicts of the past and also the way in which the enemy attacks. He has succeeded many times against God's people, but soon there shall be a series of major changes in which Satan shall be overthrown completely and cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10).

The first change that we as Christians are to expect is the rapture, which is a part of the first resurrection inasmuch as there will be a great many raised at that time (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Only believers will be raised out from among the dead. The rest of the dead will not be raised until the close of the millennium, and then to be sentenced to the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:5). Before the thousand-year reign of Christ, then, all believers who have died shall be raised out from among the dead and shall be changed in body like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be different families in heaven, such as the Old Testament saints, those as John the Baptist and the thief on the cross (who were here to see the Lord but who died before the day of Pentecost when believers were baptized into one body forming the Church), and the Church (Eph. 3:15; Heb. 12:22-24). All the living saints will join with those who have died in faith to be caught up together to I meet the Lord in the air. Later the martyrs who will be slain by Jezebel during the tribulation, will be raised to be in the company who come out of an opened heaven with the Lamb to execute judgment upon the earth (Rev. 14:13). All these shall reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:

Everything for us will be new in that heavenly creation.

Fresh as the morning's glistening dew,

The Lord of life makes all things new.

The heavens He'll change, the earth make right,

With everything pleasant for thought or sight.

The sun in the heaven? 'Twill not be so!

The Lamb is the Light wherever we go.

Who raises a new song of the Savior's worth?

Only the redeemed who come from earth.

My name here is worn and covered with shame;

He'll make it new with glory and fame.

He has given me here a new white stone;

I'll sit with Him there on a glorious new throne.

Do you think that this world with its gifts and renown Could compare for a moment with my wonderful crown?

Why tarry you longer? The night cometh fast.

Embrace now my Savior and reach home at last.

Wherever I look, I am sure it is true, All that I'll see will be better and new.

The turtle dove's mourning, the heart's longing cry Will soon have its answer when we meet in the sky.

We should try to become acquainted here with our future surroundings. By reading the gospels and epistles prayerfully we are brought into God's presence and acquire more of heavenly things. The more knowledge we acquire of material things, such as music, art, and industry, the more danger there is that we might be hindered from the things which make for the enjoyment of eternal life (1 Tim. 6:19). The pursuit of these things makes for leanness of soul; they contribute nothing to the new man (1 Tim. 6:6).

If we are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ, our Deliverer from the coming wrath, should we not now be enjoying His company? The Spirit, the other Comforter, is here for that very purpose and also to lead us into all the truth (John 16:13).

The coming of the Lord will be the fullness of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25).

Soon after the snatching away of the heavenly saints, Satan shall be cast out of heaven. This will precipitate the great tribulation for Israel (Rev. 12:9). At the same time there will be a time of trial for the western nations as well. This will be the time of the trumpets and vials.

The heavens are to be cleansed and changed before the earth will be changed in the restitution of all things (Luke 19:38).

Satan's being cast out of heaven will be the first step, or the cleansing of the heavens. Heaven will then rejoice; no longer will the accuser roar there (Rev. 12:9). Toward the close of the time of tribulation and trial for earth, the entire heavens or the universe of created things shall be changed as to administration, power being transferred from angels to men. It will then be said of the angels that they are "His angels" (2 Thess. 1:7), servants to the Son of man. The general assembly of angels, "myriads," will be called in to have the administration transferred to Christ and the Church enregistered in heaven (Heb. 12:22,23). This begins the DAY OF THE LORD. As He comes out of heaven, riding on "a white horse," He is accompanied by the Church (Rev. 19). The Old Testament saints and martyrs who have already been raised will reign with Him as well. All who die shall have a heavenly portion if they have their names written in the Lamb's book of life. With "peace in heaven," blessing follows for earth. From that moment on, through the millennial day, Christ as Man shall command the angels as servants, sending them to cleanse the earth of all things that offend and removing those that do iniquity (Matt. 13:41). The setting up of the earthly kingdom will follow immediately, as the Spirit is poured out on Judah (Joel 2:28).

The throne set in heaven has twenty-four elders, composed of the Church and Old Testament saints, immediately around it, the angels having taken a place in the outer circle (Rev. 5:11). Angels are seen as willing doorkeepers of the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12).

After the earth is cleansed by judgment, the saints will reign with Christ over it as He sets up the throne of His glory on the earth for government. The final sentence of the creatures, men, or angels will not be determined by men. Christ and He alone is the Judge (John 5:22,27). In maintaining righteousness and advancing blessing in the earth, the Church with the heavenly saints will surely have their part (1 Cor. 6:2,3), though generally unseen, working much as the angels at this present time. Israel, of course, will be the direct visible agents on earth (Mic. 5:7,8).

"The wife hath made herself ready" may include the preparation at the judgment seat of Christ, in which all of the principles of righteousness shall be brought to light (Rev. 19:7).

The Lord Jesus will be Melchisedec Priest and King in that day (Heb. 7:1-3).

The heavenly saints will have a very happy work to do then besides government. There will be souls who need to hear about the King in Zion. We know that during the one thousand years' reign of Christ the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This most pleasant task the saints will have when it will be said, "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3). The bride, the helpmeet, will simply continue the same joyous work which we have been privileged to carry on down here, only in a richer and fuller way (Matt. 25:21). Of course, Israel again will be the direct agents as they will be in government, the Church being hidden (Mic. 5:7). The varied colors in the stones of Rev. 21 suggest to us the way that the glory of Christ as King shall be spread.

Since Enoch was translated by faith, he must have known that he would be translated before it took place. This suggests to us what is clearly taught in the New Testament—that those who are the heavenly ones on earth have already the mind of heaven (Eph. 1:8,9). Enoch walked with God down here and was taken up to walk with God there. The heavenly man seeks to maintain a heavenly character down here because it is the permanent character up there. Intelligence in the mind of heaven gives us to know about coming events (John 15:15).

We have spoken of outward things. What about the private life of the heavenly man when he finally reaches his home? As Christ has gone to the Father, so we also will go to the Father (John 14:2,3). There are many abodes. In Luke 11 The Lord Jesus invites us to Him as a Friend, suggesting personal communion. Worship will be the part of those whom Jesus has befriended. In the Father's house there will be servants to wait upon the children (Luke 15:22). Jesus Himself has promised to wait upon His own as He always has loved to do (Luke 12:37). We shall be clothed, to leave not the slightest room for embarrassment on our part, even to the eye of God Himself. We shall be thoroughly clean, refreshed, comfortable, and deeply happy. We shall feed daily with the Father on the fatted calf, (no joy like this). We shall drink abundantly as well. Joy and gladness will be our part then, the "harp" tuned forever.

"To set before the Father's ears No other name but Thine."

heart as He and we are satisfied forever in His love (Eph. 1:4-6).

Being aware that all things are ours, we shall look down upon the inheritance and look up to behold the glory of God. We shall see Christ face to face (Rev. 22:4). He will remain a Man with His bride forever, as God is All in All (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The changed incorruptible bodies will be "as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 15:38). What glad surprises as the old order passes away to be replaced with all things new. What eternal weights of glory to replace the present sufferings which are only for a moment (2 Cor. 4:17).

Paul heard words impossible for man to utter, as he was carried into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:4). In the new heavens where dwelleth righteousness we shall share that long eternal day with the Lord Jesus our Savior, as members of His body, His flesh, His bones (Eph. 5:30).

We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is. As we eat of the tree of life, sitting with Him on His throne, He as the Bridegroom will have written upon us His new name (Rev. 22:4).

What will it be to eat of the tree of life? The first man was driven out of the paradise on earth so that he could not eat of the tree of life and live forever (Gen. 3:24). In Christ, the last Adam, we "shall eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). If the new Jerusalem sets forth the eternal dwelling place of heavenly saints in general, the Father's house is the special home of the Church. We shall live in heaven always; we, as Christ, are heavenly ones.

From heaven the Church will have contact with the new earth to share mutual joys. What a vast change from a world of sin! As the new heaven and earth merge into eternal blessedness, the tabernacle of God will be with men on earth, all pain and sorrow gone forever (Rev. 21:1-8).

Friend! Do you have a new nature and life which delights in this prospect? Perhaps you wish it were so, but you know it is not true. There is time now to drink of the water of life (Rev. 22:17). Receive Christ as Savior now. Put your whole trust in His precious blood and you shall be saved.

"These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life." 1 John 5:13.

Creation, Death, Destiny, Destiny - Earth: Hebrews 11:7 (11:7)

EB 11:7 {The hope of the Church is the Lord's coming. As believers, we do not look for prophetic events to take place while we are here on earth. Our home is in heaven, and we look for the Savior for our bodily deliverance out of this present evil world that is plunging into perdition. This hope will be realized when we hear the shout of victory and we are caught away to meet our Lord in the air, forever to be with Him in the Father's house. Following the rapture of the Church with the Old Testament saints, when all in Christ at that time will be raised and changed to be in heaven forever, earth will begin to undergo changes (Rev. 6).

For two thousand years the fulfillment of prophecy has been held in abeyance because of the "mystery," until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in (Rom. 11:25). The Apostle Paul was the first and only one to be given a revelation of the "mystery." The whole church period, including the judgment of the false professing body, is a mystery known even now only to the true believer who has the anointing of the Spirit. Paul was given, by revelation, the truth of the Church, as to its character, the administration in testimony during its stay in the world, and order and behavior in the gathering together of the assembly for doctrine, breaking of bread, fellowship, and prayers, also its rapture and association with the One who as Man will be Head over all created things (Rom. 16:25, Eph. 3:8,9).

John was given, by revelation, the future setting up of government and blessing in the earth through the Church. It will be associated with Christ in administrative glory on the throne as those who dwell in the heavens. John also shows us the development and climax of the awful apostasy and violence that close the history of the disbelieving, disobedient, professing church left here to undergo God's wrath, while the true assembly dwells in glory in the heavens, beyond the din of the rumblings of judgment.

Conditions at the time when the true Church has gone will probably not show any immediate change, religious organizations continuing much as before. There will likely be a stir as the company of believers disappears. A search no doubt will be made, to the chagrin of the searchers. The fact that no bodies will be found and everything left just as it would be, were the believers present, will be an enigma indeed to the earth dwellers. The outward observance of traditions will increase in order to ease the conscience, and idolatry will give outward satisfaction to the restless, estranged heart (Rev. 9:20).

There seem to be two spheres upon which the prophetic spotlight focuses—Roman (western) (Rev. 8:7), and the Holy Land (eastern) (Rev. 9:1-4). The term earth will include both the western and eastern parts. It is a moral expression to set forth the part of the world that in known relationship to God, at least by profession. There will be a gospel preached on earth after the rapture of the Church. It will tell of the coming King, Israel's Messiah, long promised, who shall reign in righteousness on the throne of His father David.

After the gospel of the kingdom has been preached (Matt. 24:14), the nations found within the boundaries of the four monarchies, described by Daniel in the second chapter of his prophecy, will also be included along with Israel in the prophetic earth. It will be the prophetic earth, not the whole geographic world, that will be judged then (Isa. 26:9).

Of the four monarchies (or beasts) mentioned, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman, the last shall be revived in the end days, when iniquity and sin are to be filled up, to head up an earth avowedly opposed to God and His Christ. Before the millennial day can be fully ushered in, what remains of these proud instruments of God's government and wrath shall fall, as a part of the great image spoken of in Dan. 2. The image shall be completely crushed by the Son of man as He comes to take His kingdom in righteousness.

The Apostle Paul writes how "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." The first change for earth on God's part will be the removing of that blindness (Rom. 11:25). Some of the Jews, spoken of as "wise" or intelligent ones, from the two tribes just then returning to Palestine, will teach the awakened remnant (Dan. 12:3). The result will be a testimony in Jerusalem. It will be at this point, or just before, some great maritime power, probably from Europe, will take up the cause of the Jews, not only to bring them back to their land in great numbers (Isa. 18), but also it may be the same power who will make a protective covenant with them for seven years (Dan. 9:27). The close of the first three and one half years of this covenant will see the covenant broken, bringing in the great tribulation upon the two tribes who have returned. The first three and one half years are sometimes spoken of as "the beginning of sorrows."

There will probably be prosperity at first as the wealthy Jews return to their land with treasure gathered during the Christian era (Isa. 2:7), and civilization will flourish in Jerusalem and its environs (Isa. 17:9-11). A popular leader with a religious background will arise to guide the

people. Shortly after, he becomes their king (Dan. 11:36).

From the start, there will be a godly remnant distinguished from the mass of the people. This remnant will not partake of the covenant, the worship, nor the sacrifices, their sacrifice being a broken spirit, which the Lord will not despise (Psa. 51:17). At and around Jerusalem false teachers will arise (Matt. 24:24).

From the West, during the same period, some great leader will come forth in bloodless brilliant conquest (Rev. 6:2), subduing the western nations, at least for a short time. Unrest from despotism will produce a form of civil war (Rev. 6:4), perhaps different from former ones in that it will be more chaotic and widespread—they shall "kill one another." This may result from differences in local issues such as labor against capital, race disputes, and, as conditions become more trying, through the relaxing of morals, pleasure and gain, these being the objects of fallen man. The day of pleasure and gain is already upon us. How soon the Lord's coming must be!

As a result of a period of prolonged civil strife and spending of energies on desolating wars, agriculture will suffer. The increase in population, which has already become a problem, will add to widespread famine (Rev. 6:5,6), especially among the laboring classes. Fearful sights accompanied by signs from heaven shall strike terror, as pestilence and death sweep over a part of the prophetic earth (Rev. 6:8).

There never was a day when Satan did not attack God's people, and the time here spoken of will be no exception. Martyrs are heard crying from under the altar for vengeance upon the dwellers upon the earth (Rev. 6:9,10), who are the religious Roman people who have refused heaven, choosing a popular Christ instead of taking the path of rejection with an ascended 'glorified Christ whom the world has cast out. Those who were once privileged people, having turned away from the truth, shall fall away to Satan's delusion and become the instruments in his hand to persecute and slay the witnessing remnant of the Jews, all they can find. The martyrs are told to rest until their "brethren" and "fellow servants" should be killed as they (Rev. 6:11).

At this point in the prophetic unfolding, Satan shall be cast out of heaven onto, the earth, causing a tremendous convulsion, especially in the West (Rev. 12:7-9). Having no more opportunity to work from heaven, his energies will from then on be directed from earth. Though personally present to direct things, being a fallen angel he will not be seen. He will enter into the political arena, bringing together the Roman Empire but in a new and different form not known before, with ten horns and seven heads, the heads crowned (Rev. 12:3). The tail of the dragon (Satan) will draw the third part of the stars of heaven as he falls to the earth (Rev. 12:4). The "third part" designates the Roman Empire, the newly formed coalition of ten nations, but not each having a king as later at the end. The drawing with the tail suggests that they will be under a strange religious control, but dictated to by Satan—not heaven (Isa. 9:15). The earthquake spoken of is this unprecedented change of power, now completely politically in the hands of Satan (Rev. 6:12-14). The end Satan has in view, which will follow, is to be worshiped in the earth. Without ecclesiastical organization Satan would not have suitable tools with which to work (Rev. 17:7).

The church of Rome (called the "woman" in its governing form, Rev. 17:18, the "harlot" in its corrupting religious form in which it falls and is destroyed (Rev. 17:1-5), will be the instrument ripe and ready to be used by Satan in forming the new order upon the earth soon after he falls from heaven (Rev. 17). The church of Rome has always sought to influence government, and it is just such an organization that can be used to bow the whole mass of Christendom in idolatry and the worship of Satan (Rev. 18:2). Of course the "harlot" will have "children," the Protestant denominations that embrace Romish principles (Rev. 2:23). The ecumenical movement could be a preview of this. Thus the political Roman world shall be controlled by a religious government during a part of the last three and one half years of the seven years of prophecy yet to be unfolded.

Government being subverted, men will have no protection. The fear of what is corning on the earth will so overwhelm men that they will be driven to despair, calling for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16). Terror will grip the western earth that was once in possession of the most precious truths which, if believed in the heart, would not only hide the soul from the wrath of God but bring the vilest sinner into His eternal favor through faith, giving peace even now in a troubled world (Acts 10:36). But at the time spoken of here, all opportunity for mercy to these will be over. Remorse and terror shall strive for mastery in the human breast.

But the wrath of the Lamb has not come. These are the rumblings of judgment so terrible that were it not that the days will be shortened, no flesh would. be saved (Matt. 24:22). Some flesh will be saved; and in the interval, before the announcement of sorer calamities, we are invited to see what God is doing to magnify His great name (Rev. 7). One hundred and forty-four thousand of the children of Israel (a symbolic number), as well as a great company of Gentiles that no man could number, out of all nations, are presented as God's trophies of grace to be spared out of great tribulation to have a special place in the kingdom. These Gentiles are the same as the sheep of Matt. 25, who have believed the Jewish preachers who will go out to all the Gentiles of the prophetic earth before the "end" comes (Matt. 24:14). The prayers of the martyrs, formerly spoken of, will then be carried into heaven, precipitating the following staggering judgments (Rev. 8:3-5).

The eight souls of Noah's day prefigure these who not only will be saved to form the new millennial earth but picture also the ones to populate the earth during the eternal state (1 Peter 3:20).

If in the third seal the laboring class felt famine, here the great men of the earth, capital, the upper classes, come under judgment, their property falling with them. I suppose being deprived of all outward support they are made to feel how small man really is when God removes His daily blessings for which he is so unthankful. All pride shall be abased. Man's day will run out as the day of the Lord is soon to be ushered in (Rev. 8:7).

The next judgment within the Roman earth has to do with a great power (mountain) cast into the masses of the people, turning it into apostasy (Rev. 8:8,9). (Apostasy is the giving up of a known or professed position.) Commerce then comes to an end. What frightening conditions will engulf the earth. The "star" seen to fall could be the giving up of all connection with God, even outwardly, on the part of the leader of the religious western world (Rev. 8:10,11). This apostate power takes control, affecting the very sources and fixed channels of life and well-being within the empire. Through popular influence, apostasy will become a part of governmental administration, finally affecting buying and selling (Rev. 8:12).

The judgment reaching the rulers, spreading out to the least powers, instilling apostasy as the truth, and the worship of Satan as though he were God, show the great delusion taking effect. Man will be left without proper leadership, and there will be no inspiration or direction in his private life. The nations who form a part of the Roman earth, with their leaders, will have turned away from God to Satan, and the mass of the people follow in their stride. What emotional superstition will finally clutch the so-called Christian world!

In the East a religious leader later referred to as the antichrist will take control of the apostate people of Judah and Benjamin who have returned to the land (Rev. 9:1-11). The first woe pictures the subjection of this leader to the darkening influences of the abode of Satan, enclosing as in a religious net the mass of apostate, unsealed Jews. The light of heaven will be gone—what darkness! "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Matt. 6:23.

The instruments used in judgment on the so-called western Christian nations will be none other than the forces of atheism, then seen crossing the Euphrates to attack the Roman Empire from the east (Rev. 9:12-21). Both the sword and the venom of the serpent shall be felt by the West, reaching into the empire. This will cement the Jewish and the western confederacy together as one front against the eastern enemy. How far-reaching the results of this attack will be we do not know but enough to close the gap between the Roman Empire and the people in the area of Palestine. God shall bring the nations against the professing Jewish people. The Assyrian shall begin his activities which will finally bring him into judgment as well. This overwhelming power from the north and east will not turn the Roman subjects from their idolatry.

A beast is seen rising out of the sea and pursuing its course for forty-two months. Thus the stage shall be set for what follows, the rising of the two beasts in their final acts of blasphemy. The first beast is seen ascending out of the bottomless pit, his power now directly from Satan (Rev. 11:7). He is in his last form an emperor with ten crowned subordinate kings. In this form the beast comes forth to take complete control of the earth and to be worshiped, finally as supreme over all (Rev. 13:4). He usurps the right of God and His Christ.

Of the four monarchies, the first with the head of gold was the most glorious, earth-wise (Dan. 2:37-39). The last, however, the Roman, shall wield the greatest, cruelest power, but only for a short time (Dan. 7:19- 21). Yet he will include all of the cruelty that the other monarchies symbolize.

The second beast of Rev. 13 rises out of the earth (Rev. 13:11), his character as having two horns like a lamb, imitating Christ as prophet and king. He is called "king" by Daniel the prophet (Dan. 11:36), and he assumes the place of Messiah and deceives the entire earth.

The two wicked instruments of Satan, the two beasts, will be raised up in their last blasphemous form during the tribulation judgments to counter the coming in of the kingdom of the Son of man. As the prophet sees the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the "one hundred and forty-four thousand" (Rev. 14:1), the angel with the everlasting gospel calls for all to give glory to God, for the "hour" of His judgment is come. It will be these two wicked instruments who shall bring the great apostasy of the Jew and the false church to the climax. There shall then be open worship of the beast through the great delusion set forth by the false prophet, bringing down the judgment from the temple of God (Rev. 16).

The public testimony at Jerusalem shall cease where the antichrist holds his sway, for the two witnesses are slain by the first beast.

Now, for "one hour" (Rev. 17:12), all will be in the hands of the Roman beast, with the ten kings, and the Jewish antichrist. The ten horns will come forward crowned and with the beast shall overthrow the "woman," taking away her political power, leaving her only as a "harlot" to become the habitation of demons. Soon after, she shall be destroyed completely by the ten horns and the beast.

This governmental power under the church of Rome being taken away from her is referred to in Scripture as "Babylon is fallen." Then she becomes the habitation of demons. This shall be the state of the professing church just before her final destruction. The ten horns have been a part of the Roman Empire, but they shall be crowned and active in throwing off Popish governmental power and in giving their power to the beast, when he takes the character of ascending out of the bottomless pit. In giving their power to the beast they can together attack the Lamb when He comes out of heaven to set up His kingdom.

Satan's power will be manifested first in corruption under the false apostate church and then in the violence under the beast risen out of the bottomless pit. The other beast that rises out of the earth will follow the first, as previously indicated (Rev. 13:11). When the first goes down to Palestine, the second assumes the character of "false prophet" (Rev. 16:13).

It is not surprising that John wonders as he sees the awful end of that which was once the depositary of the highest truth God ever gave to man -to which John was an apostle (Rev. 17).

After the first group of Jewish martyrs (Rev. 6:9) are slain, there will be Gentile martyrs who will not receive the mark of the beast nor worship him (Rev. 15:2). These two groups, along with the two witnesses who were slain; shall be raised and be brought into their rest and reward (Rev. 14:13).

After the unmerciful tyranny of the last head of the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 16:8), the kingdom of the beast shall begin to crumble, purposes be frustrated, and territory lost to the hordes coming in from the north (Rev. 16:10). In desperation he shall concentrate his army and navy near Jerusalem for the showdown with the nations from the east and north who have been gathered to Armageddon for the final conflict (Rev. 16:12,16). He shall afflict Asshur and Eber from his ships (Num. 24:24).

Heaven will then open and the Son of man as the Lamb shall come forth with a cortege, all riding upon white horses, pure and bright (Rev. 19:11-15). But He shall be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, His eyes as a flame of fire, and on His head many diadems. It is the Lamb, and He alone, who executes judgment upon His enemies -those who trampled His blood under foot and those who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. The beast and false prophet shall be taken without trial and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). In this graphic description in Rev. 19:18, "all men, both free and bond, both small and great," are mentioned as those slain with the sword of His mouth.

At the same time that He comes "as a thief" (Rev. 16:15), He is "terrible to the kings of the earth" (Psa. 76:12). All who come together to battle to Armageddon and oppose the Lamb as He comes out of heaven will be crushed in fiery vengeance when He whets His glittering sword. The rebels who join the beast and false prophet will be slain in the sudden coming of the Lamb out of heaven. The day of the Lord will have now commenced. Kings seem to disappear from the scene and are not spoken of from now on (Psa. 83).

The coming of the Lamb out of heaven will be a mysterious thing—as a thief in the night. It is the singular vengeance upon those who had openly challenged His heavenly rights over all. The man of sin will sit in the temple of God to show himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:3,4). This will be openly challenging God. The Lamb meets this challenge like a flash of lightning. He comes as a thief in the night. Without warning, except His Word given previously, He suddenly slays with the sword of His mouth the followers of the beast and the false prophet.

The Lord will use angels to cleanse out of the kingdom all that offends. This cleansing will begin at Jerusalem because Jerusalem had the most light. Each nation of the prophetic earth will feel the burning breath of the Lamb's wrath—also those from the outside who meddle with His people, now the objects of mercy. Before He can show mercy, however, He must chasten His people. His rod for chastening in ancient times was the Assyrian, and the Assyrian will again be employed, together with the other nations of Psa. 83, to bring His people to their knees. Egypt will try to intercept the first attack of the Assyrian but be driven back and captured (Isa. 20). When Jerusalem is completely humbled and the priests and elders weep between the porch and the altar crying for mercy, then God will remove the Assyrian or northern army (Joel 2:17-20) and will bring in blessing, pouring out His Spirit in their midst.

Thereupon, the land will be quickly cleared. "A short work will the Lord make upon the earth." (Rom. 9:28). The enemies within will be driven from the land, as Judah returns first to enjoy the blessing of the Lord that makes rich and adds no sorrow. Thus the present age will be closed in judgment (Jer. 25:30-33).

The Lord's feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4). This will not be as He was seen coming out of heaven to crush His enemies. No! This will be the beginning of the new age. This coming will be ushered in by the quiet manifesting of Himself—"this same Jesus" of Acts 1. It is not necessarily the showing of His hands and feet as later, but a quiet drawing aside of the veil, similar to the first time that Joseph made himself known to his brethren (Gen. 45). All others were commanded to leave. This making himself known troubled them. Later when their father was dead and they were dwelling in Goshen, and having gone through deep exercise concerning their conduct toward Joseph, they were completely restored (Gen. 50:15-21). They owned the one who went down into death for them, that he might go ahead to preserve life.

The 1290 days spoken of in Dan. 12:11, an additional 30 days over the 1260 days in connection with the great tribulation, begins the new age. There will be still another short period of 45 days before the indignation will be removed from the entire nation which is in the meantime coming back into the land by faith. The great Assyrian, spoken of as Gog in Ezek. 38:17,18, has yet to return to Jerusalem to be destroyed before Zion can be founded. All twelve tribes will return before the Assyrian makes the second attack on Jerusalem (Isa. 10:24-34).

God will gather all nations of the prophetic earth to Jerusalem to battle so He can pour out upon them His indignation (Zeph. 3:8). This time the rod goes beyond what God has ordered and will seek to take possession of the beloved land (Hab. 1). As the enemy, Gog, comes up as a cloud, the Lord encamps round about His house (Zech. 9:8), and His people will be there dwelling safely (Ezek. 38:10-18), Jehovah their trust. Gog will gather all the earth as fishes are gathered in a net—possibly communism (Hab. 1:15). The twelve tribes now returned will at first be afraid and will go to Egypt for help (Isa. 31:1), but they will finally hear the teachers who will be sent to them (Isa. 30:18-21), and they will be resigned to trust Jehovah. Jehovah shall be the peace as the Assyrian attacks (Mic. 5:5).

The attacking nations will probably gather in a circuit around Jerusalem (Joel 3:16; Zech. 12:2,3). Gog will come from the north; Edom on the south has been responsible for this confederacy of nations. As the battle takes place, the Lord will roar out of Zion against Gog and all of his host. Fury will rise in the face of Jehovah. Fire, pestilence, and the sword will be the means used, and the Assyrian, Gog, will fall on the mountains of Israel. It will take seven months to bury the dead—seven years to burn the wood -from the battle. This judgment of the nations at Jerusalem will extend for two hundred miles to Edom (Obad.).

In this final conflict that decides the controversy of Zion, Jehovah must appear in His glory of judgment. The throne of His glory will then be set up (Isa. 14:32), and every eye shall see Him. At the same time He shall show His people His hands and His feet, and there shall be great mourning as never before as they realize that they were the ones who put the wounds there. This is the day of atonement (Psa. 130). He shall display His Church before all as identified with Himself as His bride.

As the restitution of all things takes place, ushering in the millennial day, the bent of creatures will be changed. The lion will eat straw like the ox, the child shall play with the serpent (Isa. 11:1-9; Isa. 65:17-25). The Spirit shall also be poured out. The land shall be apportioned so that each tribe will have its inheritance directly touching the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Euphrates River on the east (Ezek. 48). The curse gone, vegetation shall flourish (Amos 9:13). Satan and all his hosts will lie bound for one thousand years (Isa. 24:21,22). Rest, peace, prosperity shall fill that tranquil kingdom, reaching out until the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

At the end of the millennial period of rest and splendor, Satan shall be loosed for the last test of man. Myriads who have been accepting the blessings of that age of goodness but have never had a personal acceptance of Jehovah as King and Savior, will follow Satan as he deceives all who are not real in their hearts and leads them to attack the beloved city. Fire from heaven soon disposes of these as Satan is cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

The time will then come for the third setting of the throne. The first was to reward the heavenly saints and to provide them with garments pure and bright (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:8), the second to order the kingdom on earth for one thousand years (Matt. 25:31), and this to judge the dead (Rev. 20:11). What a solemn tribunal it shall be. No opportunity for rebuttal, only the sentence now to pronounce and that from the lips of the One who could have been their Savior to spare them this eternal woe. They shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

A new heaven and a new earth shall appear on the horizon. All things shall be new, no more sea (Rev. 21:1-8). On the earth, the heavenly city shall come down. God Himself shall wipe away all tears; sorrow and crying vanish as the former things pass away. In the heavens the

various families, each in its place, shall enjoy the kindness of a God who honors those who honor His Son, bowing through grace to His Word (Eph. 2:7). The bride, now with Christ as a Man, forever shares the honors of the Son at home in the Father's house, as the Father lavishes His exceeding kindness on the children who lie in His bosom (Eph. 3:21).

Perhaps you are a youth at school, a young parent, or an older person. What is your prospect, your destiny—heaven or hell? Will you be in that light unstained, or will you be where the worm (conscience) dieth not and the fire (eternal punishment) is not quenched forever (Mark 9:44)? Your choice is made now, at this very moment, because this moment is all you may have. Be wise and act for your eternal welfare before "or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." Eccl. 12:6. He stands at the door and knocks. Will you open the door so Christ can come in?

May these few meditations on creation, death, destiny serve to awaken each heart to a realization of the solemnity of life and the importance of the decisions we make, step by step along its way, until we enter scenes where all things are of God—where He has reconciled us to Himself forever—provided we are resting on the finished work of Christ, the eternal Son of God.

Creation's light and brightening hue,

Where all was fashioned for man anew,

Where each oncoming creature fills

The grassy land, the sea, and rills;

There man upright, with God would see

Communion sweet on bended knee.

'Twas soon to change, because the foe

Would tempt the man all good to know,

Mistrust of his God, 'tis this we see

Has led to his sad destiny.

Then death its pall cast far and wide.He forfeits life because of pride.

But in the purpose still I see

That God in love would rescue me,

A sacrifice, made in my stead,

Would cause my soul to look ahead;

And in His counsel, long ago,

He made a plan and told me so.

The sin that once had led amiss

Has caused instead to show me this:

That in a Man, the woman's Seed,

The One who on the cross did bleed,

The second Man, from heaven we know,Has turned to bliss my doom of woe.

But how, I pray, midst all this gloom

That gave the Son of God a tomb,

Could ever yet a path be known

That in its end would bring a throne? '

Tis only judgment here I see,

But in the end how rich 'twill be!

The curse remove, the heart renew,

Because a Man, from heaven's blue,

Took up the wretched sinner's case

And died for man's apostate race.

The thing required of you and me

Is only faith, God's gift, you see.

But shall my eye as yet behold

A paradise on earth unfold?

Ah, no! Rejected here was He,

So where He's gone my place shall be.

In new creation life I'll prove

That God is just—that God is love.

The starry heaven I'll soon pass by

And reach my home beyond the sky;

The Father's house, 'twill soon be so,

The robe, the ring, the shoes to go;

The fatted calf He has set by

To swell the praise that fills the sky.

Then, deeply satisfied, He'll see

The fruit of all that set me free.The heart's deep longings, on my part,

Will soon be filled, and I will start

To learn, as endless ages roll,

The kindness great that saved my soul.

Then with the Bridegroom evermore,

As man, forever to explore

The depths of love that made it so,

I'll share with those who're given to know

A bride's full part in wedded bliss,

Pity and grace, that led to this.

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The Way Into the Holiest, Hebrews 5:1-10 (5:1-10)

The subject of the priesthood of Christ is now pursued as having either a contrast or an analogy to that of Aaron. Aaron, as priest, could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is encompassed with infirmity. (See also Mal. 2:4-7.)

When in this world, "in the days of his flesh," the Lord Jesus felt need, testings, temptations, weariness, being alone, being misunderstood, having His life threatened.

He learned obedience "by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8,9).

In Heb. 5:6 the 110th Psalm is applied to Christ. He is "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" by divine decree.

Address—C.E. Lunden

I would just like to make a few remarks on the subject of perfection. Now I know this may raise a smile with some because. We know in ourselves by nature there's no perfection, but I do believe that scripture teaches perfection in a certain sense. And there are two scriptures I'd like to call attention to. You know, I worked with a man. I met a man on the train once who said that he didn't send. I worked with another man. I worked with a man once who. Said he didn't sin but. Being in the building lines that he put a lock in upside down and I asked him what that was and he said it was just an error. And so on. Men will be deceived, you see, by Satan, and they use scripture wrongly. So there's no such thing as human perfection here. But there is such a thing as perfection in the sense in which Scripture teaches it. And I think we should be clear as to the subject of perfection because there are doctrines about us that really bring men into ******* because they're not happy in their souls when they feel that they are not doing anything wrong. We have to be in the exercise of soul continually before God. Not that we're occupied always with evil or that wrongdoing which might be in our lives. We should be occupied with Christ, but we have to be alert continually as to the attacks of the enemy upon us. Now, the first passage I'd like to turn to briefly, and I'm not going to take long. Is in Philippians Philippians, the third chapter? 10th verse The apostle says the apostle Paul, Philippians 3 and 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained either were already perfect. But I follow after. If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing I do for getting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in anything He may he be otherwise minded. God shall reveal even this unto you. Now what is the apostle Speaking of when he first he says he is not perfect, but then he also says as many as are perfect? Well, you see in Philippians it's it's really the wilderness and it's Christian experience down here. And there is such a thing as perfection in the sense of Christian experience. That is, the Apostle has set before us his own path. He doesn't even look around to see if someone is running as fast as he is. He's not occupied with anything except that one object before him. That's what he calls perfection. Philippians here in the wilderness, if there is going to be perfection in that sense. We have one object before our hearts to preserve us as we pass through this wilderness, and to enjoy Christ along the way. Now he says, if if anyone be otherwise minded, God should reveal even this unto you. Now I'm going to turn to another passage in Hebrews where we have perfection again, and that's really what I had before me. Hebrews. The 5th. The 6th chapter of Hebrews. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and so on.

Now going on to the end of the chapter. The 13th verse we'll read from the 11Th verse. And we desire that everyone of you to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope under the end that she be not slothful, but followers of and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife, wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of. Immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath that by two immutable things. In which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation. Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hopes set before us. Which hope we have is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. In which enter into that within the veil, whether the forerunner is for us entered. Even Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Now here we have perfection in connection with. The object also. Of the soul. It's also a wilderness book, but in just a little different sense. And here we have the truth brought right down to the Gospel level at the end of this chapter, the man fleeing for refugees. But it's connected with perfection as the chapters introduced with perfection. Now in the previous chapter we have perfection mentioned and that's maturity I suppose. And there is such a thing as. The Spirit of God maturing us all, and the things of God, I believe. But here it's just a little different thought. Now his first speaks of all of those things that occupied the believer when he first was saved, but now he says, let's go on to perfection. And beloved, what's the book of Hebrews about? Why? It's about the one who was once down here, but now he's in the highest place. He's seated up there and he's there interceding for us. Christ, in fact, is Jesus. It's Jesus in Hebrews. It's the blood of Jesus, not the blood of Christ. Perhaps once, but it's his person that's before us in Hebrews. The person of Christ. And why is he up there? He's a man up there. What is he doing? It's taking up your cause and mine. He's taking up our car so we can go on happily through this world and be preserved. He's our great high priest to maintain us in happy relationship with God. That's his present work. Well then, what's perfection? Here the perfection in Hebrews, beloved, is for our hearts and minds to be set upon that person. And heavenly things. Hebrew speaks of the better things. Now, better than what? Better than these earthly things around us? Yes, but that's not the point in Hebrews. The point in Hebrews is to leave all that which belongs to earth or religion. The religion of the flesh, Just leave it, set it aside. As long as you and I are attached to anything in a religious way that belongs to this earth, we still haven't shaken off the grave clothes. And so there isn't perfection. But now going to the end of the chapter because I want to be brief. I'm sure there are others who have something to say. In the end of the chapter, I'm going to be brief about it. Here's a man who is fleeing for refuge. A man is fleeing for refuge. A very simple picture, isn't it? And God wants to give strong consolation. Now, there may be some on there this afternoon that's fleeing for refuge. They're not yet clear in their souls. They're not at rest. They're fleeing for refuge. You know, there's a, there's an illustration in the Old Testament of a man. The Spirit of God gives us that record of how God had provided 3 cities of refuge.

Children of Israel. And later on, when the land was established, he provided three more cities of refuge. And a man who was in trouble because he had slain someone, not willingly, but perhaps the axe head came off of the axe, we'll say, and it struck someone. He could easily flee to a city of refuge and be safe if he ran. And can't you just picture a man who had not intended to kill anyone, but as he was hewing a tree, the axe had fell off of the hell of the axe, and it struck his neighbor. And in order that the Avenger doesn't take him, he runs to the city of refuge. What a beautiful picture. I'll take a moment to tell them a story. I was visiting the Indians in Canada. And I came into a little village with my wife. We drove in and. We noticed the unions were seemed to be afraid of us. They didn't greet us as we'd expected and so we didn't want to disturb them and we started to turn around and go out and an elderly woman came out and she said are you with the redcoats? I said no. She said. What's your purpose here? To tell you about the Lord Jesus? Oh, she says, will you come back tomorrow? I said, why not today? Oh, she said. My boy has killed someone and he's hidden in the woods and I want you to talk to him. So we came back the next day. And. Here were all the Indians in a big circle. In a green grassy place. And here was this boy he had been hunting with another boy. And in some

way he had mistaken this boy for the game that he was after, and he shot the boy and he didn't mean to do it. And I had the opportunity of telling him about that lovely story in the Old Testament. About one who hadn't intended to kill anyone. But he had a city of refuge to go so no one would kill him. But I said, You know, my dear boy, I said, you and I are sinners. And we really deserve to die, but there's one who has taken our place and all we need to do is flee to him for refuge. It was a lovely occasion with this group of Indian people, dear people, They were to tell them the story of Jesus and a refuge. Now that's what we have here. But we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge. Now God wants to assure our hearts this afternoon, dear ones, that we have strong consolation. And our hope is steadfast. Who have fled for refuge. And. This is perfection and I'll tell you why. Notice this part of the verse. 18th verse. We might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold. Notice that to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul. Both sure and steadfast. And which entered into that within the veil? Now in this chapter we have two things that God assures us by. That we have a strong refuge in consolation. One is himself. God has worn by himself. He can't swear by anything high, or can he? Or his word will say. But then also he's given an oath on top of that. Now you'll get the oath in the next chapter. In the 21St verse.

For those priests I should say the 7th chapter in the 21St verse. For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath by him that said unto him, the Lord swear, and will not repent. Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. So we have then God's own word. And then an oath. And who does the oath have to do with? Why is the Forerunner that centered? That's the last verse of our chapter, the Forerunner who was entered. Is sworn by an oath that we have a strong consolation. And so this we picture this man. Or you say, well, I can't attain to perfection. No, you can't, but you can enjoy it. How just what we have here. Like the man who threw himself across the threshold. And once he has thrown himself across the threshold of that city of refuge, he has a strong consolation. He has God's word, and he has that high priest who's already entered. The brother once said to me that. I believe it's in a meeting, he said. I believe the meaning of this passage is like this, he said. I used to operate a sailing ship. And we used to fish in the northern waters. And he said sometimes when we went into the harbor, it was between the rocks and if the wind was up, we couldn't get in. So we'd send a little boat in with a man with a line and he'd fasten the line to a rock and then we would guide the ship in, he said. That's what this means. There's a man, beloved, who has gone online. Jesus. The most precious name that's ever been on human lips. Jesus. He's on high. Now God is sworn with an oath. Will it ever change? No, God is sworn beside that He's given us his precious word. We have a strong consolation. Who have fled for our refuge. That's perfection in Hebrews to have the heart fixed on that one who is already in the in the highest place. God is sitting there a man.

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