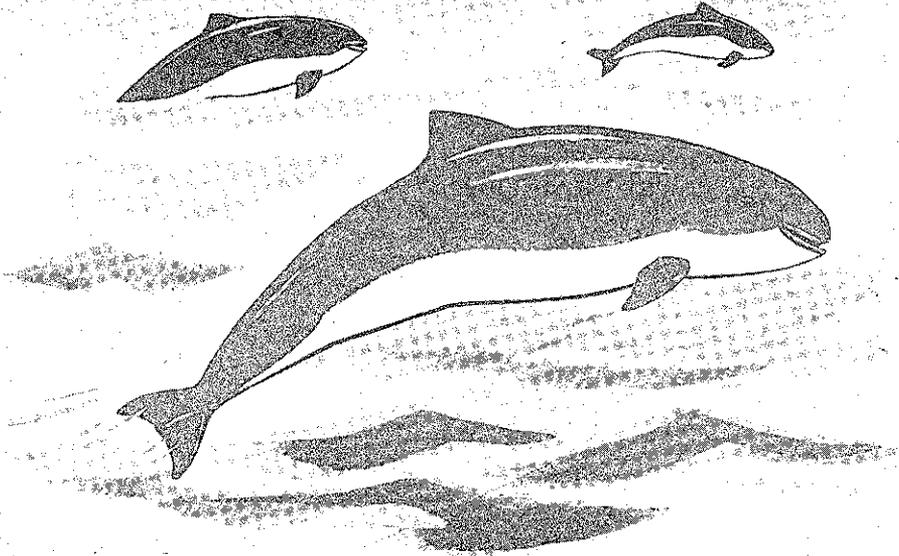


Signs In The Sea



GOD'S NEWS ..BEHIND THE NEWS
RAY BRUBAKER - COMMENTATOR
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Foreword

SIGNS all around us reveal our Lord's Coming is near!

There are Signs in the Stars. When our Lord created the heavens, he declared: "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for "signs."

There are Signs in the Sun. In Luke 21:25 we read where our Lord says: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars..."

And there are signs in the Sea. Our Lord goes on to speak of "distress of nations with perplexity, the SEA and the waves roaring..."

In this booklet we wish to discuss some of the amazing happenings as they relate to the sea and its inhabitants.

At the time of creation the Lord made "great whales," or, as the Hebrew suggests: "Sea Monsters." (Gen. 1:21) The whale is perhaps the largest animal that has ever lived in the sea. Several messages are devoted to this fascinating creature.

The Red Tide is a phenomenon that scientists cannot fully explain. Several messages are featured relating to this scourge that may eventually kill all life in the sea during the days of wrath seen coming on the earth.

As you read these sermons of Signs in the Sea, may they thrill your heart in knowing these are the last days, and our Lord is soon to appear. And may your heart be encouraged to greater love for Christ and to holiness of life in view of our Lord's admonition to "Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

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GOD'S NEWS ..BEHIND THE NEWS

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RED TIDE

The Sea's Mysterious, Killer



Staff Photo by Tom Sawyer

FLORIDA is best known for its exotic flowers....its many varieties of fruit trees....its flourishing palms.

It is also known for an occasional blooming of the Red Tide off Gulf coastal waters...which is not a reference to any of nature's colorful display. Rather, the Red Tide is a mysterious substance in the waters which, when triggered by some unknown force, may turn the sea into a murky-maroon or reddish-brown color, sometimes making the water slimy, and syrupy if you were to run it through your fingers. Lethal concentrations of the microscopic, wiggling cells are not always detected by discoloration.

Florida is also known for its fishing...which is a favorite pastime for some, and a profitable occupation for others. Commercial and party boats are seen leaving their docks to bring back a daily supply of fish except during the outbreak of the Red Tide which seems to hit the coast of Florida periodically. During a serious outbreak you will see millions of fish floating on the water. The grim harvest may result in both large and small varieties, their bodies swelling and rotting in the sun, being washed ashore in the tide or sinking to the bottom of the sea.

Today we are reporting on the RED TIDE that finds tiny microbes multiplying by astronomical proportions causing fish to die by the millions. In Florida, during a siege of the Red Tide, there were hundreds of tons of dead fish hauled away to dumps where they were buried. The beaches, once lined with bathers, had to make way for crews working overtime to rid the shores of decaying and stinking fish. The air for miles around was filled with a stench that defies the imagination.

The Red Tide is a tiny, microscopic organism containing a thin, whiplike tail, actually so small that it cannot be seen with the naked eye. In abundance these tiny creatures are known to eject a poisonous venom that will kill almost any kind of sea inhabitant, and color the waters a brownish red. In connection with this, some people living in the area may experience an irritation of the nose and throat, coughing and watering of the eyes. The toxin produced by these Red Tide microbes is believed to be the most powerful poison known, although when the air is breathed, it is not known to be poisonous. But the irritation caused may require hospitalization for those with respiratory problems, or to persons exposed to it for a prolonged period of time.

The main danger is to the waters themselves where fish found swimming in the tide will usually die in a matter of minutes.

Although millions of dollars have been spent in research, there is no known hopeful solution to combat this plague. A copper one-cent piece dropped into a five-gallon container of Red Tide water will ionize sufficiently to kill these microscopic creatures in a matter of minutes. But it is dangerous to some species of fish to use copper sulphates so that the project would prove both impractical and too expensive.

Certain kinds of fish may be able to withstand the toxic poison that seems to paralyze and then kill. It's usually the slow-moving bottom variety such as the catfish, drums, and grunt which usually are an easy prey to this killer-organism. However, mullet and trout may also fall prey to this strange phenomenon that results in the death of millions of fish. In fact, during the 1946-47 outbreak an estimated half-billion fish died during an outbreak of the Red Tide.

We can't help but wonder whether this Red Tide that has hit the coast of Florida in epidemic proportions since 1947 might not be related to Bible prophecy. Various outbreaks have been reported throughout the century, but the worst Red Tide ever to plague the Florida coast has occurred in recent years.

The Red Tide may have had its beginning in the days of Moses. You may remember how Moses sought to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness that they might worship the Lord as He had commanded them. You'll recall how Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the people go. In fact, he ordered the Egyptian taskmasters to drive the Israelites into working harder.

So, God sent plagues upon the Egyptians, and the first one of these was to turn the waters into blood. Some believe that the Red Sea got its name from a phenomenon such as the Red Tide which came as a curse upon the land because Pharaoh hardened his heart toward God.

Almighty God, to prove His greatness and His power, ordered Moses to command Aaron to smite the waters that were in the rivers with his rod. And we read, "All the waters that were in the rivers turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." (Exodus 7:20-21)

Now, anyone familiar with Bible prophecy knows that something similar to the Red Tide is forecast for the future. In Revelation, you'll find a prediction of things to come. Mention is here made of the woes, plagues and judgments to be poured out upon the world in that day-- a day described by Jesus as one of "great tribulation," such as the world has never seen nor shall ever see again.

The Red Tide, a mysterious poisoning of the waters, has occurred in India, Africa, Europe, Australia and Japan. However, one of the principal areas affected by this strange scourge has been Florida's West Coast.

But wait until the time described as the coming Day of Wrath, when angels with their vials of wrath are seen pouring forth their judgment upon the world because of its sin! This is during a time when a world ruler known as the Antichrist appears, who will exercise great authority, compelling all to receive an identifying mark in his hand or in his forehead. Those who refuse to do so will be killed. On the other hand, those who bow to his authority, or who worship his image, or who bear his name and number will suffer the wrath of God poured out without mixture.

What happens is recorded here in Revelation, Chapter 16, where we read how the first angel poured out his vial of the wrath of God upon the earth and there fell noisome and grievous sores upon men. Some liken this description to the physical after-effects of radio activity which produces ulcerated sores upon the body as at Hiroshima and Nagasaki following their atomic destruction.

It is then that the second angel is seen emptying his vial which symbolizes the wrath of God poured out upon the waters, and we read how the sea "Became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea."

Think of it! Remember, this is an event that is still future. We can't help but wonder whether what we are seeing off the coast of Florida, on occasion, is a preview of what's coming to the whole world!

Now, notice, when the third angel pours out his vial of wrath, that the waters and fountains, too, become blood. It must be remembered that this is the judgment of Almighty God upon the inhabitants of earth who have rejected Christ and have accepted Antichrist.

If one were to go back to the journals of the past, he would find in prophetic writings forecasts of conditions seen coming

"So terrible that no man will be able to lead a decent life." At least, that is the description given by Joachim Leithauser in 1493, in the famous Nurnberg Chronicle. Leithauser goes on to predict a time when "The waters will bear upon them blood and bitterness, so that the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes in the sea will all perish." No doubt, he was referring to the vials of wrath seen poured out upon the earth during this coming day of wrath. Is God to blame for these judgments? Men in that day are seen blaspheming the God of Heaven who had power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory.

My friends, today is still a day of salvation. As John the Baptist warned those in his day to "Flee the wrath to come," so this is our message. God's will is not that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, finding forgiveness of their sins, and being found ready to escape the coming judgment seen befalling the world.

Why would anyone harden his heart against the truth of God's Word? William Barclay once said: "The most terrible situation in life is when Almighty God is powerless to gain an entry into the citadel of the human heart, for God has given men the terrible responsibility of being able to lock their hearts against Him."

As Pharoah, king of Egypt, hardened his heart and God sent certain plagues, so there are those today rejecting the claims of Christ. And the Scripture comes to mind which says: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3) We would point out that today there is still opportunity to be saved. Not only do we receive the gift of eternal life by trusting Christ as Saviour and Lord, but there is the added hope of escape from these awful judgments seen coming upon the world in this future Day of Wrath.

What is this escape? It is the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ seen coming for His own!

In Thess. 1:10, we are told, "To wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

Did you hear it?

Again, in I Thess. 5:9-11, we read: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

What a glorious hope is ours if we are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. This hope of escape from coming wrath is referred to as "the blessed hope." And it is in view of this expectancy of our Lord's return for His own that we read: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

We might ask, Are you looking for the return of Christ, or will you be left behind at His coming to face the Antichrist and the wrath of God seen falling upon the Wicked?

Lehman Strauss, in his book on Revelation, says: "When the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the air, He will catch away, to be with Himself, every true believer who by virtue of being born again is in His Church, which is His Body. All who have not been born again, though they be in some church or religious system, will be left on earth to pass through the Great Tribulation to experience the wrath of God."

Friend, may we ask--Which will it be? WRATH or RAPTURE?

Remember, today is still an opportunity to repent of sin to trust the Saviour. So trust Christ today and then live for Him daily. For He hath said: "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

RED TIDE -- SIGN OF COMING TRIBULATION

A mysterious phenomenon known as the Red Tide on occasion is known to plague Florida's Gulf Coastal waters as well as other locations throughout the world. A massive explosion of tiny Red Tide microbes is responsible for millions of fish dying whenever the plague sweeps through the sea.

There's coming a day when what the Bible calls "the great winepress of the wrath of God" will be poured out upon the earth.

There's coming a time when according to Rev. 14:15 that the Lord shall give orders, saying: "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

We read of one like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and sitting as it were upon a white cloud who thrust in his sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped.

I verily believe this represents the rapture, and those who are ready are caught up - reaped into the granary of Heaven.

Now notice, we read: "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over FIRE: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."

Did you hear it? After the first reaping there comes a second reaping. The command in the midst of fire is to "gather the clusters of the vine of the earth."

Then the angel thrusts in his sickle, and gathers the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And blood comes out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, or 176 miles.

Think of it! Blood flowing as a mighty river at a depth of nearly six feet, or to the horses' bridles as the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth.

Mention is then made of the VIALS of wrath. Seven angels leave the presence of God, as a voice commands them, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

As the first angel pours out his vial, a noisome and grievous sore falls upon men. There are some who liken this to the physical aftereffects of radioactivity as it produces ulcerated sores upon the body.

At the pouring out of the vial upon the sea by the second angel, we read: "It became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea."

It is this Scripture that comes to mind when we think of the RED TIDE. The Red Tide is known to be result of activity by the deadliest bacteria in the sea. The Red Tide was most prominent in 1947. We would like to point out - the Red Tide, Unidentified Flying Objects, the atomic bomb, and many similar happenings which seem to have prophetic significance all came into prominence around the same time when Israel became a nation. Israel is God's timepiece, and as the prophetic clock began to tick, other associated events began moving with it. With the appearance of the Red Tide, it would seem that the Lord is allowing a preview of what's ahead during the coming Day of Wrath.

I surely don't want to be around then, do you? Remember John went everywhere preaching and warning men everywhere to flee the wrath to come. The DAY OF WRATH was postponed as the Lord ushered in the Church Age, but now the day of grace is soon to close and this DAY OF WRATH will be upon us. I verily believe the Lord would have us take up the cry and warn our generation of this day of wrath soon to descend upon the whole world.

Ah, hear me! It will be "hell on earth!" And except those days be shortened, said Jesus, no flesh would be saved!

In John's day he warned not only sinners of the coming day of wrath, but he also called the most zealous of the religious sects of his day to repent and "flee the wrath to come." You will remember how they said, "We be children of Abraham." That is like saying, "We are Baptists, or Methodists, or Presbyterians, or what have you! Ah beloved, hear me, in that day it won't make any difference. The only hope of escape from this coming day of wrath is not what church you belong to, or denomination you're affiliated with, but whether or not you have repented from your sins, and are truly born again. And it is important at the coming of our blessed Lord that we be found watchful and waiting and safely shut-in with Him while the rest of the world undergoes its blood-bath as the vials of wrath are outpoured upon the earth.

As we mentioned, the pouring out of the first vial brings grievous sores upon men.

As the second vial of the wrath of God is poured out upon the sea, we read that it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. As we have been reporting on the RED TIDE, we have pondered the question as to whether or not we are seeing a preview of things to come.

Sometimes on the radio or television you will be given a preview of the next program. The idea is to get your attention so that you will listen.

Beloved, science and research haven't come up with an answer to the Red Tide! So the Red Tide may be one way God is trying to get the world's attention! He is letting us know

that we are on the very brink of this coming day of tribulation. He wants us to know that unless we make necessary preparation, we may one day find that we missed the rapture, or the coming of Christ for His own, to be left behind to face this fateful day.

Whereas, the Lord has offered salvation to those who have truly repented and are trusting His finished work on the cross, yet we read, "The wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." Believers are warned not to be partakers of the sins of the world lest wrath as judgment falls upon them.

A remarkable passage to substantiate this claim is I Peter Chapter 3 where we read that "When Christ died, He went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were DISOBEDIENT, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

From a closer examination of this Scripture, it would appear that many others could have been spared the flood, and gone into the ark with Noah and his family, but we read - "on account of disobedience" they perished. We aren't told that they were eternally lost, for Christ went and preached to their spirits in captivity. It is further emphasized; "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Pet 4:6)

Another illustration we might give to show how disobedience prevents one from coming into the fulness of the blessing of all that salvation implies is the children of Israel who crossed the Red Sea and yet perished in the wilderness. Concerning these, however, it was not said that they were disobedient but far worse they were guilty of unbelief in departing from the living God. It is very much apparent that these who fell in the wilderness died without God and without hope.

Were we to give one more example yet, we would think of ESAU, of whom we read, "For one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears."

Now, beloved, this should speak to our hearts. There are many today who are holding on to some pet sin. The Scripture here mentions FORNICATION. Many who call themselves Christians are guilty of this sin--either physical relationship among the unmarried, or marital relationships among those who have been remarried whose partners are still living, which to my knowledge of the Word of God is adultery, unless you have some good Scriptural reason to suggest it isn't.

Or this could be a reference to spiritual adultery, intercourse with the world system, materialistic, covetous, greedy for gain, living for time instead of eternity.

I believe when you were born again, or saved, or trusted Christ as your Saviour (whatever terminology you wish to give it), you were given a ticket to eternal life with a "through-non-stop" passage to Heaven!

However, there are enough Scriptures that I could give you to show we can forfeit some of the blessings or rewards because of unfaithfulness, or failure to consider the importance of our inheritance. Like Esau who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, I'm afraid some are enjoying their habits, unwilling to give up sinful pleasure, given in to some lust, that will find them unprepared when Jesus comes.

That's why the Lord says that in view of His coming we are to "Be ready!" We're not told to GET READY! It was expected when you accepted Christ that you "got ready." You bought your ticket. But now you're to watch for your train! Don't miss the boat! In other words, be ready for your transportation when Jesus comes that you will be found watchful, living a holy life, faithful in service, and anxiously awaiting His appearing!

I once made a study of all the admonitions and warnings related to the second coming and I was surprised to discover the great majority of these were directed to believers. We're told to be sober, be watchful, be holy, be faithful, be diligent, so that we will be ready for our Lord's Coming. Like many, I once was under the impression that when a person is saved, he is automatically ready for the coming of Jesus, but now I see the Holy Spirit showing us that we are to live in constant readiness of Christ's Coming.

How can you be ready every day? you may ask. And the answer is very simple. Just fall in love with Jesus. Like the wife of a soldier looks forward to her husband's return, so you will look for Jesus if you fall in love with Him. How can you fall in love with Him? First, come to know Him as your Saviour, then begin taking time in the morning to get alone with your Bible to meditate and pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the Lord Jesus and soon you'll find yourself in love with Him, longing for His coming, desirous only to please Him, and living for Him daily!

Indeed, don't think for a moment that readiness is simply stopping your smoking or quitting your profanity. That's related, but these habits will readily drop off once you really fall in love with Jesus. For it was His love in coming from Heaven to die for your sins that bought you your salvation and purchased a life-time lease to a heavenly mansion, with transportation provided to escape the day when the earth is purged with fire.

Today we discussed the RED TIDE. We believe it could be a preview of the vials of judgment to be poured out upon the world in the coming great tribulation. And we urge you to trust the crimson tide of the blood of Jesus as atonement for your sins, and seek to follow Him in a life of love evidenced by good works and a holy life.

Whereas the substance in the Red Tide is one of the most poisonous substances known to man, the power of the blood of Jesus is the most powerful remedy given to man in bringing salvation and forgiveness of sin.

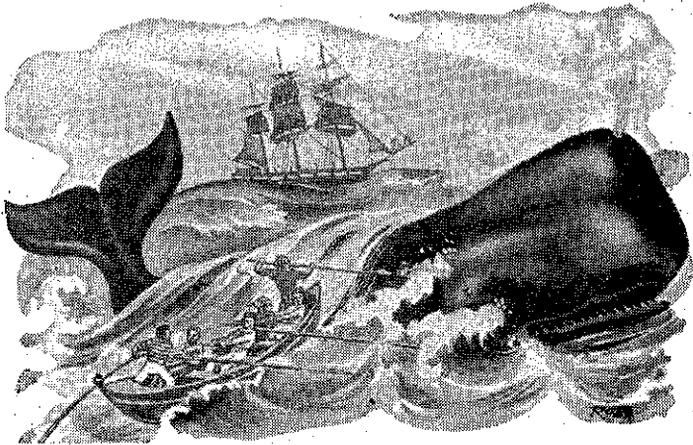
As the songwriter declares: "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day. And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away."

Which will it be? Will you trust Christ as your Saviour today, or face the judgment of God tomorrow when the wrath of the Almighty will be poured out upon the world? Plagues similar to the Red Tide will appear bringing death to creatures which live in the sea and terror to all who witness this plague.

No wonder our Lord warns us to "Watch and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)

So this is our message wrapped up in these words of Jesus when He said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

JONAH AND THE WHALE



Fish stories are a dime a dozen...especially here in Florida. But today we have a tale that is true.

A mammoth sperm whale, measuring 48 feet, 10 inches, came ashore here in St. Petersburg...to die.

The whale was pulled out to sea when it was found in shallow waters where it did die, and it was brought into Ft. De Soto Park where it was buried.

According to Richard Goldston, a local veterinarian, he estimates the whale to be around 60 years old. There are only a few sperm whales that live beyond the age of 70.

When the park supervisor where the whale was buried related how the giant sperm whale was probably the same kind of creature that no doubt swallowed Jonah, our interest was more intensely aroused.

Of course, the Old Testament account of Jonah and the whale makes reference to a "great fish" rather than a whale which God had prepared. Our Lord, however, in referring to His death, declared: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12:40)

Now some would deny that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. One museum curator said, "It would be a physical impossibility for any of the large whales, except the sperm whale, to swallow up a man whole. Their throats are too small."

For that reason, perhaps our interest was greatly intensified in this sperm whale that came to St. Petersburg to die and was buried here. Eventually as the flesh of the whale decays, its skeleton-frame will be resurrected and placed in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington in the interest of Science.

The whale is perhaps the largest animal that ever existed. For while skeletons of gigantic prehistoric creatures have been found and their size estimated, nothing begins to compare with the giant whales which roam our seas.

We think of the African elephant as the largest animal, but a whale's tongue alone weighs as much as a full-grown elephant. Think of it!

The whale buried at St. Petersburg's Ft. DeSoto Park may have weighed as much as 35 tons, or around 70,000 pounds.

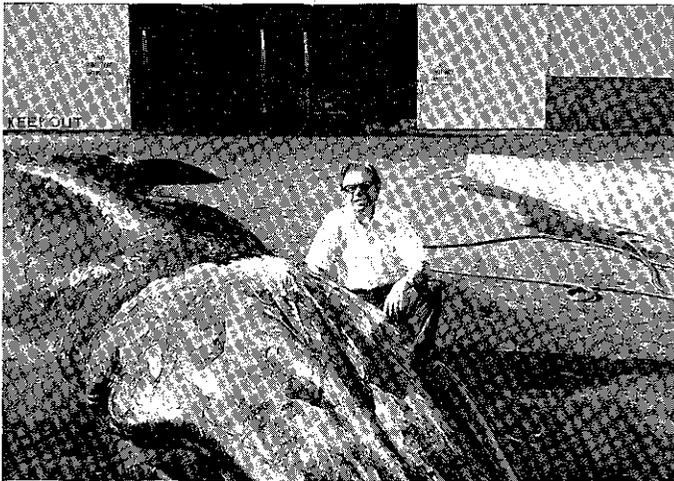
First estimate of the whale's weight was placed at 15 tons. But when 25-ton cables being used to drag the whale to its burial spot snapped, it was thought the giant creature could weigh as much as 35 tons.

A crane, a bulldozer, and two tractors all were used to move the whale into a 60-foot grave. A channel was dug to give the carcass enough buoyancy so that it could more easily be dragged to its final resting place.

Soon after the sperm whale was buried, another suddenly appeared--a baby blue whale, approximately 33 feet long.

The whale had been injured, a rope having been fastened around its body, cutting long, deep gashes into its side, some six inches deep.

Here you see its partially mutilated body.



The blue whale is fast becoming extinct with some 6,000 estimated to be in existence. They are a protected species except for Japan and Russia where they are still hunted and killed.

When this whale died, it was brought ashore. We had the privilege of going to a Tarpon Springs Marina where the whale was awaiting an autopsy.

Tarpon Springs is a quaint, little town known for its sponge industry as well as its fishing. Shops like this one along the waterfront would indicate many of the inhabitants are of Greek descent.

Again it was unusual for this blue whale to locate here in the midst of this Greek culture. We are reminded of the Apostle Paul who declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16)

Incidentally, the New Testament was penned in the Koine Greek of our Lord's Day.

So, it was an interesting sidelight to find this blue whale brought ashore for an autopsy in this unusual setting among Greek inhabitants who, no doubt, were descendents of some to whom the Apostle Paul may have ministered in his day.

The 33-foot whale was buried alongside the 48-foot sperm whale. It doesn't sound right to call a whale of that size a "baby." But blue whales grow to be 100 feet or more in length, and may weigh more than 100 tons.

In his book, *THE GREAT STORY OF WHALES*, by George Blond, the total weight of a big, blue whale could be as much as 286,000 pounds.

Now, if you were to hoist such a creature onto the scales as they do the big tarpon and sailfish in Florida, in order to balance the scales you would have to put at least 36 elephants on the other side. Or, if you used people to balance the scale, it would take the entire population of a town of 2500 inhabitants.

The whale, which is a mammal, suckles its young. Someone has said that a baby blue whale gains ten pounds an hour--240 pounds a day.

Now you don't feel so bad about your weight, do you?

It actually isn't unusual for whales to be spotted occasionally off the coast of Florida.

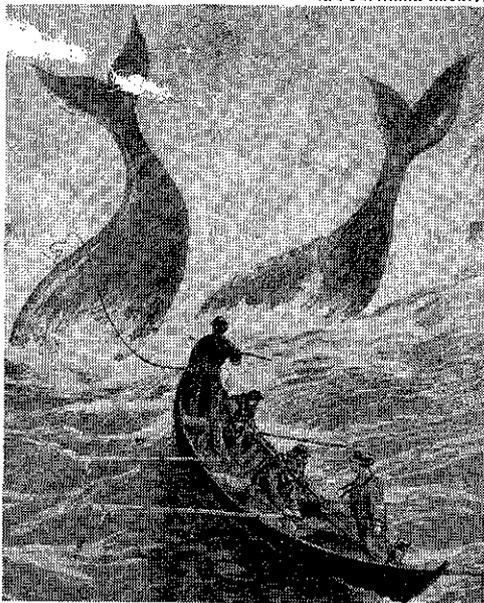
In April of 1962 a humpback whale showed up off Egmont Key. The humpback is said to be the most playful of the big whales.

At one time there was estimated to be over 100,000 of these humpback whales. The estimate today is closer to 5,000. Because they are slow of speed, many have been killed--slaughtered in the sea by sportsmen who shot them simply because they were big and mysterious.

But these giants must have been of great importance to God who made them a part of His initial creation. In Genesis 1:21 we read how on the fifth day of creation...“God created great whales...”

The account is given of a monstrous shark that was harpooned. In the attempt to capture the shark, a sailor fell overboard and was swallowed by the giant fish, to the consternation of his friends. Forty-eight hours later the shark was again spotted and shot by one of the deck guns aboard ship. The shark was then towed to land and his carcass opened so that they could give the sailor a Christian burial. To their amazement they found the man was still alive. He was rushed to the hospital where he was found to be suffering from shock, but otherwise not greatly harmed.

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE



AMERICAN WHALING (19TH CENTURY)

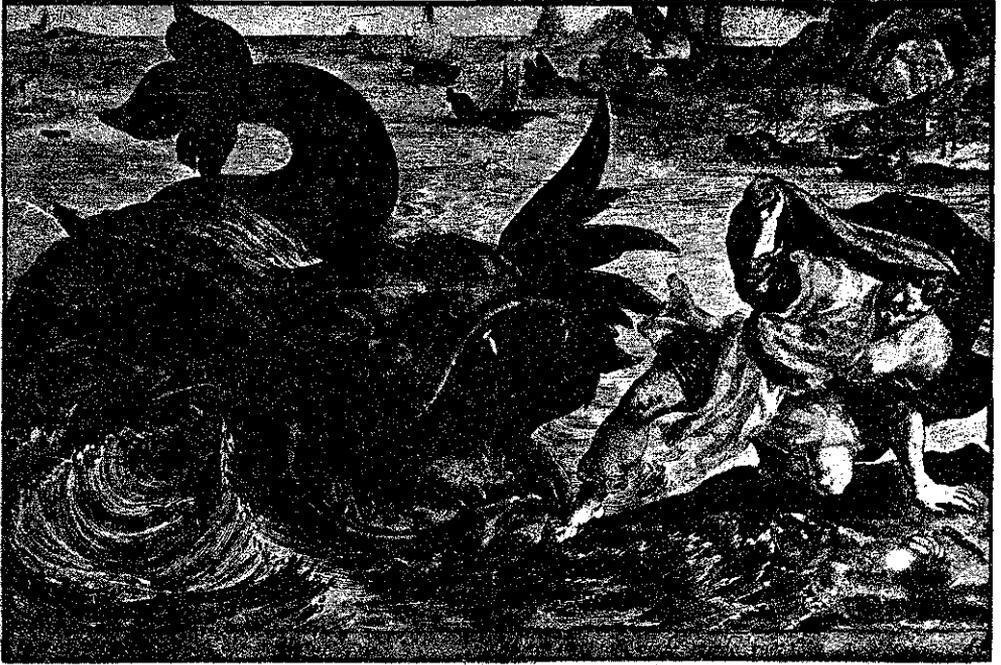
Too late the piety.

Dr. Harry Rimmer relates how this man became known as “The Jonah of the 20th Century.” He was exhibited in a London museum where those wishing to see him had to pay a shilling admittance fee.

Here was a man whose appearance was rather odd in that his entire body was devoid of hair. And there were odd patches of yellowish-brown color covering his entire skin as though he had been partly bleached.

Wrote Dr. Rimmer: “Does it not seem reasonable to concede that if a man, in the ordinary course of nature, can exist for two days and nights inside a marine monster, a prophet of God, under His direct protection, could stand the experience a day and night longer?”

For that indeed was true of Jonah, who spent three days and three nights in the whale's belly--an episode referred to by Jesus to describe the three days and nights he would spend in the heart of the earth.

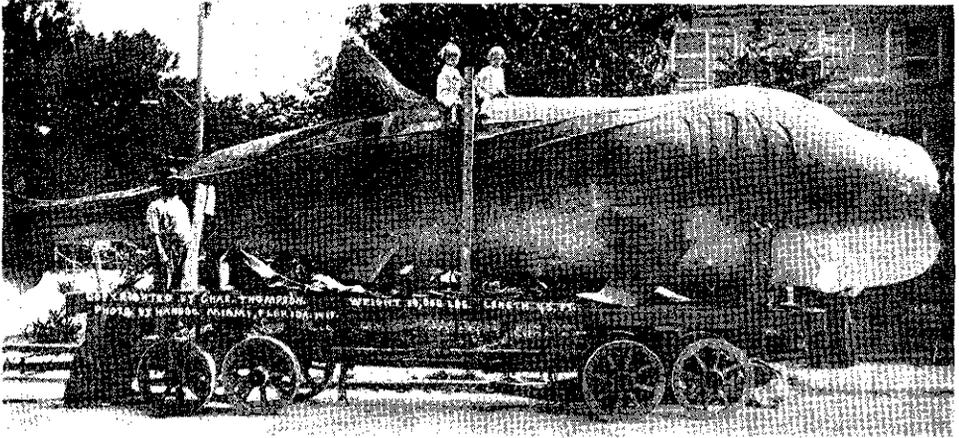


The story of Jonah in the belly of a whale three days, says Bible critic Floyd, is "*just another fish story.*" Preacher Rimmer replies that Jonah could have fitted nicely into the air-tank compartment of the whale's head.

In one of our past issues of the RADAR NEWS we related how in 1912 a huge fish weighing 15 tons was caught in the Atlantic Ocean just southeast of Miami. Captain Charles Thomson, who spotted the giant fish, fired a harpoon into its body from one of his workboats. For 39 hours the fish pulled the small boat around the Atlantic at a speed of 40 to 50 miles an hour. The fish's bladder had been injured and it could not submerge, so the men were able to capture it.

Upon pulling the giant fish to shore, it was found to have contained another fish which weighed 1500 pounds, which it had swallowed whole. Besides, there was a huge devilfish in its stomach which measured 18 feet across. And, there was over a ton of crushed coral rock in the fish's stomach as well.

Scientists who examined the fish said, "It could have swallowed 20 average-sized men and given it no cause for indigestion!" And to think there are those who would doubt the account of Jonah.



The big fish caught in 1912 off the coast of Florida, weighed 30,000 pounds, and was 45 feet long. Photo courtesy of Rev. T.P. Douglas.

Old-timers in Florida relate having heard of this fish or of having seen it. For 3-1/2 weeks it was placed on exhibition in various cities, and over 200,000 people paid a dollar each to walk through the fish's mouth and roam around in its throat. One minister related standing in the fish's mouth, and holding his hands above his head, still unable to reach the top of its mouth.

Thus the story of the great fish that swallowed Jonah should not seem incredible. It is certainly not a myth as some would have us to believe.

As a matter of fact, the story of Jonah is one of the most amazing and inspiring in the Bible to reveal the love of God for fallen man. The theme verse of the book is found in chapter 2, and verse 9, where we read: SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

If you think God is not interested in man's salvation, simply read the book of Jonah.

Here you'll find Jonah, God's prophet, sent to Ninevah, to cry against it, for their wickedness had reached to Heaven.

At least three times the word, "great," is used in this book of only 31 verses, referring to Ninevah as that "great city" - later on to the "great wind" that God sent, and finally to the "great fish" that God had prepared.

Ninevah was the capital of Assyria, the avowed enemy of Israel. It is called an "exceeding great city" (3:3).

Perhaps it isn't any wonder that Jonah should refuse to go to Ninevah. Instead, he buys a ticket for Tarshish. Secretly he may have hoped that Ninevah would be destroyed, for the people were heathen.

But God is not willing that any should perish, and He knew that if the people could be warned, they might repent. So He had said to Jonah, "Arise, go to Ninevah, that great city, and cry against it!"

While enroute to Tarshish - going in the opposite direction - a great wind began to work havoc with the vessel so that it nearly brake. The mariners aboard ship were frightened and cried every man to his god. To lighten the boat, they cast forth their wares.

All of this time Jonah was fast asleep down in the side of the ship.

When the shipmaster discovered Jonah, he cried: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that (Jehovah) God will think upon us, that we perish not!"

Then those aboard ship decided to cast lots to try to determine for whose cause this evil was come upon them. And as they cast lots, the lot fell upon Jonah.

They asked Jonah all kinds of questions - What was his occupation? From whence did he come? And, of what people was he?

Jonah replied, "I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land." Then Jonah related how he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, and told the men that if they would cast him forth into the sea, it would become calm!

This they were reluctant to do, for they did not want to be responsible for the blood of this Israelite, so they rowed hard to get to shore, but in vain.

One of the amazing aspects of this story is that God used this disobedience of Jonah to testify to these men on board ship who began to pray to Jonah's God.

However, in order to calm the ship, they threw Jonah overboard to be swallowed up by a great fish which God had prepared.

Do you believe it? Or do you think this is just another fish story?

Some time ago a whale was washed up on a beach near Los Angeles. Christian businessmen of Los Angeles bought it and had a carpenter construct a boardwalk from the beach to the whale, into the jaw, and down the gullet. They even built a table in the stomach of the whale, and ten men sat down together at one time and ate their lunch. This was given as a testimony to prove the story of Jonah was true -- not a myth.

While in the fish's belly, Jonah prayed. And lest anyone would suppose that it was like an air-conditioned motel, we read of Jonah's description of it all. Says Jonah - "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head."

Not a pleasant picture, is it? - Jonah, in the belly of the fish, suffering cramps from the abnormal atmospheric pressure, and being bleached by digestive juices. No doubt, after three days and nights, when the fish finally vomited out Jonah upon the dry land, he was a sight to behold!

So we see Jonah now willing to go to Ninevah. We see him crying in the streets, "Forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown." The king receives word of this strange prophet, and the sea-going episode, no doubt, helped to convince him that here was indeed a messenger from God. So, he puts on sackcloth and proclaims a fast and calls all the people of Ninevah, from the least to the greatest, to turn from his evil ways, saying: "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"

God heard their cry, and recognized their sincerity of heart, and spared that generation!

Oh, hear me today! We, too, need to hear this message. Could it be that God sent this whale all the way to St. Petersburg, Florida, so that you would hear this message? Jonah's God still lives. As he was willing to spare Ninevah from destruction, so he will spare all who repent of their evil deeds, and turn to Him for salvation!

The story of Jonah, with its amazing and incredible facts, is surely a testimony that SALVATION IS OF THE LORD! And you can experience this salvation if you will acknowledge your need of the Saviour, and turn to Him for forgiveness and cleansing.

To that end may we encourage you - to trust Christ, live for Him daily, and be ready when He comes. Indeed, be ye therefore ready for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

THE RESURRECTION

Remember the mammoth whale that came to St. Petersburg to die? A giant whale, 48 feet long, was buried in Fort DeSoto Park and now awaits the day when the flesh decays and the skeleton of the whale is to be resurrected and taken to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, to be placed on exhibition.

As a youngster I would love to bury birds that died, and would take Christmas boxes and line them with silk and place in them the bird or small animal for burial. Then I would dig a grave and while the slow descent was taking place I would sing--"We are going down the valley one by one."

I recall on one occasion having been in the hospital for an emergency operation but hastening home because that afternoon I wanted to attend a funeral. I had a concept that funerals were not the frightening, morbid encounter we think of them as being. Rather, in view of our Christian faith and a belief in the resurrection and eternity there is no fear of death to the Christian--absent from the body is to be present with God. As the caterpillar being placed into the ground only to come forth a beautiful butterfly, so is the Resurrection.

For several years we were engaged in a Christian ministry that took us to the county fairs of Ohio. One of the projects we had was a "Bring em back to life" experiment.

What we did was to go down to the sheep barn, or the cow stables, or pig pens and catch flies which we kept in a glass container. When it came time for the experiment we would drown these flies by holding them under the water with a wire screen until they no longer moved. Then we would lay them out on a napkin for all to see. We would ask our audience--Are these flies dead? Without hesitation they would answer in the affirmative.

Then we continued. When something is dead what do you do with it? You bury it, don't you? And we proceeded to pour a mound of salt on these flies. We would recount the Scriptures as to how one of these days there is going to be a resurrection. Those who are ready to meet the Lord are going to be "caught up" to be forever with our blessed Lord.

By that time we would see a little movement in the salt. If it was a hot day you might expect some of those flies to suddenly break through that salt mound and take off with great excitement. A fly breathes through its skin, so it drowns when it becomes soaked with water. But the salt has a drying action so that the fly is revived and it buzzes and kicks and soon takes off as alive

as it has ever been. So one at a time these flies are brought back to life, and the audience marvels at the experiment. One Sunday School teacher exclaimed that it was the most vivid portrayal of an object lesson she had ever seen.

You might ask--What happens when some of the flies do not come back to life? Sometimes in catching the fly he may be injured and so he does not respond to the salt treatment. In other words, he stays dead when the rest of the flies have flown away.

Well, then we tell our audience how it will be when the Lord comes. Not everyone will be raised from the dead. The rapture is only for those who are born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The rest of the dead do not rise until later.

So, we feel that our fly experiment is accurate in every detail.

Today we would like to discuss an amazing and most unusual passage found in Philippians 3:10-15. In this passage the Apostle Paul seems to have some questions concerning his own personal readiness for the resurrection.

Let me read it to you. Paul is saying here: "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."

Do you see at once that Paul presents some question as to his own resurrection. This is a Scripture that finds theologians baffled. Preachers do not understand it. Bible scholars have difficulty in explaining it. What about it?

Let me continue. Paul writes: "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, forgetting those things that 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 any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

What an amazing and unusual passage of Scripture. What does it mean? What is the upward calling to which the Apostle Paul is pressing?

It is apparent that our knowledge is limited and we are somewhat confused when it comes to the resurrection.

For instance, Daniel writes of a time coming when "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2)

We might ask--Could it be that at the rapture some believers will be resurrected who will exhibit shame and everlasting contempt?

In the vision General Booth had of Heaven he relates how there was evident displeasure shown by our Lord for his lack of witnessing when he had the opportunities to talk to others about their soul and failed to do so. Booth was a Christian who attended church, gave toward Christian work, taught a Sunday School class, and visited the sick. Yet, in the vision when facing the Lord, and expecting to hear him say "Well Done," instead he saw on the face of Jesus pain and not pleasure. Opportunities were shown him of those whom he could have led to the Lord--a father whose son was not saved; a mother whose daughter was close to the kingdom but no one attempted to win her to the Lord

Said Booth: "With remorse I realized my life could have won for me the approval of Heaven's King, but instead it was lived amidst paltry ambitions and pleasures of earth. To receive his loving welcome would have been worth a hundred deaths at the stake or being torn asunder by wild beasts." Instead, however, there was on the face of Jesus a sad displeasure, not one of anger, but yet not one of approval.

The Lord then addresses Booth: "Go back to earth, I will give thee another opportunity. Prove thyself worthy of my name. Shew to the world that thou possessest my Spirit by doing my works, and becoming a Saviour of men. Thou shalt return thither when thou hast finished the battle, and I will give thee a place in my conquering train, and a share in my Glory."

Booth, realizing God's call upon his life went on to found the Salvation Army.

Again we ask--Is it true, as Daniel suggests, that some will be resurrected to shame, and everlasting contempt? Will there be those who will regret throughout eternity that they did not win a loved one to Christ, or did not sacrifice themselves to get out the Gospel?

Speaking of being ashamed at the coming of Christ is referred to by the Apostle John who encourages believers to "abide in Christ; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Or, as the Greek text suggests, it is possible that some in shame may actually shrink back from Him at His coming!

That the resurrection, or the rapture, could be a meritorious reward is certainly referred to by Jesus who spoke of those who were "accounted worthy" to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead. (Luke 20:35)

Not for one moment would we suggest that salvation results from any worthiness on our part. Rather, it is by grace that we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

Yet, would it not appear that one's righteous acts are brought into account at the return of Christ?

Listen to these words of Jesus as he states: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (Or, the word should be "condemnation.")

Now the Bible does not speak of the righteous and the wicked all coming forth at the same time in a general resurrection. Rather, the wicked dead will not be resurrected until a thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous. (Rev. 20:5-15)

So, it is evident that our Lord's reference to the resurrection of those who have done good is a reference to their receiving the Gospel of salvation which has resulted in good acts and deeds worthy of commendation at the time of the resurrection. On the other hand, the resurrection of condemnation could again refer to those who stand unprepared to hear the words of the Saviour saying "Well Done," at the time when the believing dead are raised.

Now, let us look again at this passage in the book of Philip-pians, chapter 3, verse 10, where Paul is saying: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection...." And in the next verse he adds: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (v 11)

What was the Apostle Paul trying to tell us? Was there some question in his mind concerning his own personal resurrection? Was he afraid that he might not be resurrected?

Indeed not. In all of his writings the Apostle Paul testified boldly of his faith in the resurrection. Before Felix we see Paul standing and asserting that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

Surely the Apostle Paul had no question but that he would be included in the resurrection of the just. He knew of a certainty that he was justified. He was absolutely certain of his conversion.

But it is apparent that what the Apostle Paul was not sure of was whether or not he would be raised at the rapture! The Apostle Paul is the one who told us of a day coming when the "dead in Christ" shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Isn't that the hope of believers? Are we not desirous of being raised from the dead at the rapture? Indeed, no one wants to go through the awful great tribulation if there is the possibility of escape? And the Scripture does offer escape which is based not only on one's faith in Christ, but also upon one's worthiness in being found ready for that event.

Notice again the words of Jesus when he says: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be ACCOUNTED WORTHY to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)

Did you hear it?

Some object strongly to the idea that our worthiness should enter into any aspect of readiness for rapture, or for the kingdom. But if you were to turn and read the first chapter of II Thessalonians you will discover that this is mentioned twice. Here again, our worthiness is taken into account.

For instance, in verse 5 we find the Apostle Paul writing of those who "may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God..."

Again, referring to the coming of the Lord, Paul writes, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would COUNT YOU WORTHY of this calling..." (v 11)

What then we are suggesting is this--that there is a state of readiness or worthiness to which the believer should seek to strive that would result in his escape from the coming tribulation, and that would also find him occupying a role in the kingdom age. You will remember our Lord discussed the possibility of the saints ruling over certain cities depending on one's faithfulness in the talents entrusted to him. We might ask--Is it true that all believers will be rulers over cities? Or, is it not better understood that the kingdom will find some who will be rewarded for their loving service rendered for Christ while upon earth. This is more in keeping with the reasons for reward which shall also, no doubt, take place at the rapture.

Again let us take one more look at Paul's assertion when he writes: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The Greek text would more correctly state--"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD."

Now listen to this -- Revelation 20:5 tells us the FIRST RESURRECTION will take place following the reign of Antichrist when those who refused to worship him and were beheaded are resurrected to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. We read, "This is the first resurrection." (Incidentally this verse is the reason given why some believe the church will go through the tribulation.)

However, apparently what Paul is referring to when he speaks of attaining unto the resurrection OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD, is the event we call the rapture, which precedes the first resurrection. Thus, depending on one's worthiness, one can escape the tribulation and be raised from the dead to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Hallelujah!

In fact, the Apostle Paul goes on to suggest this is his firm and ultimate goal. He writes: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting 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 any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

In other words, Paul is saying again that he is not positively sure he will be resurrected or that he will be caught up at the rapture. But this is his goal--his supreme objective. Like a runner reaching forth to win the race so he is found pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling...or

as the Greek word might be better rendered--UPWARD CALLING, or to be caught upward at the coming of our Blessed Lord. This seems to be the meaning of this passage where Paul either hopes for the resurrection that occurs before what is in reality, the first resurrection. He is reaching for the goal of worthiness or preparedness when our Lord shall suddenly appear and those that are ready are "caught upward" thus escaping the cruel reign of Antichrist.

While Paul is emphasizing the prize to be attained by pressing toward this goal of being caught upward at the rapture, this does not minimize the reward of those who will be found faithful in the midst of tribulation--who die a martyr's death, and who are resurrected before the thousand years reign of Christ begins. Whereas, in Hebrews 11:35 mention is made of those suffering tortures as obtaining a "better resurrection," isn't it right that we emphasize the importance of living for Christ so as to escape the tortures seen coming upon the earth during the tribulation period. No one seeks persecution or torture. Nevertheless should this be our lot it is declared, "if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him."

Whatever the future holds, we know our Lord has given admonitions and warnings lest we succumb to temptations, and surrender to the lukewarm age depicted in the endtime. Rather, let us arise and trim our lamps and stand prepared for whatever lies ahead--looking for and expecting our Lord to return as the Bridegroom for His bride.

This is the blessed hope of the believer who is watchful and waiting for this glorious event of which Jesus spoke when he said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

In conclusion, we would sum up what Paul is saying by stating that there is what we refer to as "the first resurrection," which the Scripture says precedes the thousand year reign of Christ and which follows the great tribulation. But this is not what the Apostle Paul is anticipating. Rather, he is looking for a resurrection out from among the dead when a select company of saints (those who are ready and deemed worthy for this honor) will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at the time of rapture.

That this is a goal to achieve, and a reward for which to strive, is made clear from Paul's statement when he declares, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Or, he might be saying, "I press toward the prize to be caught upward at the coming of Jesus." And Paul takes all of us into consideration, saying: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

Beloved, is this your hope? Are you waiting for the return of Christ? Do you want to escape the tribulation and be ready for the rapture? Then make this your goal. Strive by your love and devotion to Christ, and faithfulness of service, to be ready for His coming, living a life of purity and holiness in the light of that glorious event.

Is it not true concerning the marriage to be consummated at the return of our Blessed Lord that it is said: "His wife hath made herself ready"?

Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

HOW TO HAVE THE VICTORY OVER SIN



The world's largest fish is the whale shark which grows to more than 50 feet in length and may weigh several tons.

The smallest fish is the tiny goby, an inhabitant of fresh-to-brackish water lakes in Luzon, Philippines. It seldom is longer than a half inch at adulthood.

Altogether, it is often estimated that some 20,000 different species of fish inhabit the seas of the world. But there are actually so many varieties that it could be twice that amount, we are told.

One of the most amazing reports concerns fish that live in the salty brine of the world's oceans. You would suppose those fish would taste salty. Shark meat, for example, is salty--as salty as the sea itself. But we are told that more than 240 species of fish contain so little salt that doctors often recommend them in salt-free diets.

What do you think of that? That's a terrific illustration of what a Christian, living in an ungodly world, should be like. We should not be contaminated by the world's lust or the world's sin.

The Bible says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15)

What an indictment of those professing to be followers of Christ, and yet who look like, smell like, and act like the world they live in.

We are in the world, but not of the world. Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36)

We hear a lot today about religion. James writes: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27)

Did you hear it?

What do we do that reflects the purity of our faith? We stress the need of witnessing for Christ, which is what every Christian should do. We believe in baptism as a testimony of our faith--and every believer should be baptized. We empha-

size tithing--and everyone who loves the Lord will give in proportion to his income, plus extra, if possible, because of his love for Christ.

But the verse we just quoted says: "to keep oneself unspotted from the world" is an indication that we have true faith. Also, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Helping orphans and widows is definitely a part of true faith, along with total separation from worldliness.

If the world adopts standards of immodesty and impropriety, what is the Christian to do? Go along with the fashions? Of course, the reason for following fashions is that unless you make your own clothes you must keep up with the times and wear what is in the stores. But somehow I believe there are clothes available, if we wanted to buy them, that would be modest and proper for Christians to wear.

How the world seeks to influence our lives and oftentimes we are not aware of it. We are so influenced as not to be able to detect the harm that is done to a believer's life and testimony.

A man smoking a cigarette and carrying a Bible is a poor testimony, isn't he?

Or someone who is living with a woman who is not his wife and calls himself a Christian, what kind of person is that?

Although God is the judge in human relationships there is sufficient indication in the Word of God that when we are genuinely born again we are different from the world. We are to come out and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. (II Cor. 6:17)

When we are unclean, we cannot tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

It reminds me of a man who smells his clothes after he wears them for a day and they don't smell bad at all. He thinks he will wear them again tomorrow. Then he goes and takes a shower and comes back to put on those same clothes and he can't stand them. The smell is nauseating to him. Why? Because he is clean and the clothes are dirty.

People would not have to write in to a radio preacher to ask--Is it wrong to do this, or that, if they got genuine salvation. They would know the difference between the sinful and the worldly and between the good and the holy.

My Bible says: "Follow peace and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

Too many, I am afraid, are following their lust and pride and are not aware of their condition. They have never been truly bathed in the cleansing waters of salvation. I am not speaking about being baptized, but by being cleansed, through Jesus Christ. The Bible says: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) When we are truly cleansed from sin we loathe it, hate it, abhor it, condemn it, and forsake it. When we have not been born again we still love it, enjoy it, and tolerate it.

May God give us a holy hatred of sin through an experience of regeneration that will not only save us, but assure us of being ready for the soon coming of our blessed Lord.

The Bible says: "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The world has no respect for the hypocritical kind of profession that finds a man in church on Sunday, but cheating in his business on Monday. "Depart from iniquity," say the Scriptures.

Again we read--in view of the coming of the Lord, "Let every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3) This is a reference to the hope of Christ's coming. And we are reminded that if we are looking for our Lord's Return we are going to turn from wrongdoing to truly trust Christ for our salvation and deliverance.

Some apologize for their sin saying they are still sinners but the only difference is that they are "saved" sinners. Well, if you are still doing the same things you did before you claim you were saved, you do not have much of an experience.

The Apostle John goes on to say: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

My friend, Jesus died to save you IN your sin and he died to deliver you FROM your sin. You do not have to go on sinning if you have the life of Jesus Christ in you. And certainly if you are looking for His coming you will want to forsake sin. We are told to "lay aside sin" and even those things in our lives we do not call sin, yet they are weights that hold us from gaining victory over the devil. And they are weights that may keep us from being ready for the coming of our blessed Lord.

In view of Christ's Return which is imminent (and each day brings us closer to that event), we are told to purify ourselves.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that we are purified as we obey the truth through the Spirit. When the Spirit of God tells

you something, or you are condemned by the Spirit of God for a lust, or habit, in your life, do not rationalize and accept it as your "pet sin." Rather, away with it. It is doing you great harm. It is part of Satan's work. Find forgiveness through the cleansing blood of Christ who died on the cross to save you from your sin, and rose again to give you liberty and freedom from sin. This is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit and comes as a result of your obedience to the Word of God.

How we need to hear and heed this message today. Too many think we can sin and get away with it. They suppose we can sin every day and then pray a little prayer and the Lord forgives that sin.

God is good, and He is gracious, but there comes a time when He has to chasten His children who are sinning.

In Hebrews 10:26 we read: "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. 10:26-27)

Did you hear it?

Don't think you can keep on sinning and get away with it. And do not think God will put up with such nonsense, for that is as though Christ had to die again every time you sin. Rather, He died once and for all to bring perfect deliverance.

Paul in Romans 6:18 speaks of being made "free from sin." What does he mean? He means that sin no longer has the upper hand. Again we read: "For sin shall not have dominion over you." (Romans 6:14)

What is the matter, you ask? Why then am I sinning? Why does sin have control of me?

The answer is, my friend, that you have never seen yourself as you really are--a dirty, downright filthy sinner. And you need to go to that cross where Jesus died and look upon the mutilated face of the Saviour whose eyes are filled with love for you, and say: "JESUS, IF YOU DIED FOR ME, I'M GOING TO LIVE FOR YOU!" AND THEN HANG ON THAT CROSS WITH HIM, ENDURE HIS SHAME, SUFFER HIS AGONY, AND YOU WILL NOT BE THE SAME FROM THAT DAY FORWARD.

Listen to what Paul writes: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed..." DID YOU HEAR IT? We read further, "that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:6-7)

That does not mean you have to wait until you die to be freed from sin. But this Scripture tells us that we can be freed from sin now by putting our old carnal, sinful self on the cross and letting it be crucified. Crucifixion is not easy! But it is what the Lord demands. And when we put to death our lower nature, and yield our all--body, soul, and spirit, to God, we come to know the fullness of the blessing of victory. That includes victory over sin.

This does not mean that a person can then relax his vigil. Satan will always be around to stick his foot out to try to make you fall. But God is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before His presence with exceeding joy.

The secret to daily victory is daily dying to self and to sin. As Paul said: "I die daily."

Every day you must pray and read your Bible and claim victory over sin and self. But thanks to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, He died that we might live. And He lives on High as our mediator in order that our faith fail not and that we be victorious over sin.

While we need that experience of identifying with Christ in His death on the cross in a once-for-all renunciation of sin, do not suppose that this replaces the daily death to sin which we can maintain as believers. In other words, while we need this experience of what we might call sanctification, there is no experience that replaces a daily walk with the Lord.

And yet, this is how to be ready for our Lord's Coming-- by being saved, by confessing Christ as our own personal Saviour, and then by dying to sin and self so that He can become Lord and Master of our lives. This we repeat is the way to be ready for our Lord's Return.

For remember he hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."