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will be judged to determine the reward of their works. John 5:24. Romans 8:1; Hebrews 8:12; I Corinthians 3:14; II Cor. 5:10.

11. The wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:15; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48.
12. The present earth and heaven shall be pass away. II Peter 3:10, 12; Rev. 20:11; Hebrews 12:26-27.
13. A new heaven and new earth will be revealed. II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1.
14. Christ will deliver the kingdom (the church) to the Father. I Cor. 15:24.
15. The saints will enter into the city, New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:14.
16. The New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven. Rev. 21:2, 10. (Presumably it will come down to the new earth. Note Rev. 21:24-26.)
17. The saints will serve God in the new heaven and earth forever and ever. Rev. 22:3; 21:24-26.

"Therefore, be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

IV. THE COMING OF THE LORD WITH ALL HIS "SAINTS"

By Wilbur Fields

In our notes on I Thess. 3:13 we stated our opinion that the *saints* who will come with Jesus from heaven will be the angels, his "holy ones."

While this teaching has been held by most Bible interpreters throughout the centuries, it is now regarded almost as modernism by some people.

As a sample of the teaching now popular among some people, we quote here from a widely circulated series of prophecy lessons:

"We need to ever keep in mind that there will be a 'second coming' and a 'third coming' of Christ, which some writers prefer to speak of as the first and second phase of Christ's return." "He will return 'FOR his saints,' and he will also return 'with His saints.' When He returns FOR His saints, then it is that He comes only in the clouds. But when He returns with his saints, then it is that His feet will once again stand on the Mt. of Olives."

According to this system of interpretation, the following series of events will occur when Christ comes:

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- (1) He will come FOR His saints in the clouds.
- (2) The dead in Christ will be resurrected.
- (3) The resurrected and the living saints will be taken up out of the world to be with Christ, leaving the unsaved behind. (This taking up of the saints is usually called the "rapture," a term not found anywhere in the Scriptures. See brother Seth Wilson's fine article, "A Secret Rapture Considered," in this book.)
- (4) Following the "rapture" there will (supposedly) be a period of 7 (or $3\frac{1}{2}$) years, during which the Antichrist will rule the world, and a Great Tribulation will occur.
- (5) Then Christ is to return WITH his saints to punish sinners and reign for a thousand years (the millenium).

May we offer three objections to this system of interpretation.

(1) We observe first of all that the Scripture in NO place makes any distinction between Christ's coming FOR His saints, and his coming WITH His saints. It does not even use the expression, "coming FOR His saints." We would be the first to acknowledge that Christ is coming to take up His saints to be with Him, but to make a distinction between that coming and the coming WITH His saints is to make a distinction where the Scriptures make none.

(2) I Thess. 3:13 almost utterly rules out the possibility that Christ is coming back with his people, after having taken them out of the earth previously.

In that verse Paul prayed that the Thessalonian Christians might be established unblameable in holiness *at the coming* of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Now surely no one could say that saints who had been resurrected and transformed in body, and taken up to be with Jesus would need to be further established unblameable in holiness. Only if they were here on earth would they need to be established in holiness when the Lord comes.

Unless the saints (referring to the people) could be in two places at once, we cannot interpret the phrase, "with all his saints," to mean "with all his *people*."

They would have to be on earth where they needed to be established unblameable in holiness. And they would have to be with the Lord coming down from heaven at the same time, if the idea is true that the Lord is coming with all his people.

(3) Thirdly, the word "saints" is frequently applied to angels as well as people.

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The word "saint" means "holy one." Note these references where it refers to angels:

(a) Deut. 33:2—"And he came with ten thousands of *saints*." (This describes how the Lord came down on Mt. Sinai.)

(b) Dan. 4:13—"I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher and an *holy one* came down from heaven." See also Dan. 4:23. The word here translated "holy one," is the same word as is elsewhere translated "saint."

(c) Daniel 8:13—"Then I heard one *saint* (or holy one) speaking, and another *saint* said unto that certain *saint* which spake." These *saints* were the angels that revealed to Daniel the visions.

(d) Psalm 89:5-7—"And the heavens shall praise thy wonders O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the *saints* (holy ones). For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the *saints* (holy ones), and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

(e) Luke 9:26—"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the *holy angels*." See also Mark 8:38 and Rev. 14:10. The word translated "holy" in all of these verses is the same word that is translated *saints* in many other places.

Many verses teach plainly that Christ is coming back with the angels. See II Thess. 1:7; I Thess. 4:16; Mark 8:38; Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Luke 9:26. But the only way that men can "prove" that *people* will be WITH Christ when He comes back is to interpret dogmatically the word *saints* to mean "people," when it does not necessarily refer to people at all.

The view that the "saints" (or holy ones) who will come with Jesus are angels adds light to the following verses:

- (1) Zechariah 14:5—"And the Lord my God shall come, and all the *saints* with thee." (The American Stan. Vers. renders this verse: "And all the holy ones with thee.")
- (2) Jude 14—"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment—." (Amer. Stan. Vers. has "with ten thousands of his holy ones.")

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We agree with R. C. Foster in his statement: "We do not read of two comings of Christ at the end of time, but one great coming on the clouds of heaven even as He ascended, and then the judgment of all the world." (THE FINAL WEEK, p. 114).

V. "THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID"

By Wilbur Fields

"The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke 1:32

These words were spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary, when he told her that she would conceive and bring forth a son, Jesus.

Many people feel that this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and that Jesus has not yet received the throne of his father David. They look forward to a time when Jesus will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and reign for a thousand years.

Sometimes the question is asked, "Who is now sitting on the throne of David?" The answer that is sought in many cases is, "No one."

However, we think that Jesus Christ IS now ruling from the throne of David. Please let us give you five reasons why we think this:

I. *The throne of David is the same as the throne of God.*

- a. Exodus 19:3-6—When the Israelites were constituted into a nation, they became a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God was their king.
- b. I Sam. 8:7—When the Israelites demanded that they have a king to rule over them, God said, "They have rejected *me*, that I should not reign over them."
- c. II Sam. 3:10—This is one of many passages that uses the expression "throne of David."
- d. I Chronicles 29:23—"Then Solomon sat on the *throne of the Lord* as king instead of David his father."
- e. Jeremiah 22:30—God spoke of King Jehoiachin (Coniah) in this manner: "For no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."
- f. These Scriptures point out that God was the original king of Israel. But the Israelites rejected God from being king over them, and chose a king of their own. God permitted this, and the throne of God was to that degree moved from heaven to earth. Thus we find the throne of David being called the throne of the Lord. David's throne was God's