

THE



HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

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INHERITING THE EARTH FOR EVER

In view of so very many Scriptures clearly acknowledging the material, temporary existence of this present world and foretelling its eventual destruction, consider several passages which appear to teach just the contrary. Passages such as:

ECCLESIASTES 1:3-4

"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever."

This passage speaks of the passing of one generation to another which follows and replaces it, and then it contrasts this with that which does

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not so soon change. The earth was intended by God to be the abiding place for the human race as long as the human race existed and had need of it. In contrast to man's relatively short span of life, the earth appears to be permanent.

Similar use of language is found in Exodus 12:14, where the Passover was spoken of as "*an ordinance FOR EVER.*" But just ten words earlier, "*for ever*" was qualified to mean "*throughout your generation.*"

Similarly, Exodus 21:6 provided that a Hebrew servant who wished to remain with his master should have his ear bored "*through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.*" It would be understood, of course, that "*for ever*" referred to the life span of the servant, and not eternity.

The expression "*for ever*" in this passage from Ecclesiastes is translated from the Hebrew "OLAM" (Strong 5769). This same word is translated as "*everlasting*" in Genesis 21:33, "*Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.*" While both "*for ever*" and "*everlasting*" were translated from the identical word, their meaning must be determined from the context in which they were used. As it pertains to God, this expression conveys the idea of being ever present. But as it relates to the earth, "*for ever*" speaks of lasting as long as it serves God's purpose.

This is not unusual, though, for in our present speech as well as in Scripture, we make use of terms which must be determined by the setting in which they are used. The word 'house' might refer to a dwelling (Matt. 2:11), a family (1 Cor. 16:15), or the body in which one's spirit exists (2 Cor. 5:1).

Clothing might be used of that which covers nakedness (Gen. 3:21), of one's outward appearance (Matt. 7:15), and of our eternal nature (2 Cor. 5:3).

"For ever" in the passage in question refers, therefore, not to eternity, but rather to the earth's long-lasting continuance in comparison with the relative short length of each generation.

PSALMS 25:12-13

"What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth".

The question is raised as to how one could "inherit the earth" if the earth were to be destroyed? But the thought intended in this verse is not that the righteous will receive a continuing, permanent earth. This would invalidate Jesus' promise in John 14:1-3, *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

Jesus was to "go" and prepare a place. To go would make it necessary, of course, to leave where He was when He uttered that statement. We are informed in Acts 1 that Jesus left the earth (v. 9) and was taken up into heaven (v. 11). Those present were assured of His return (v. 11). He had promised to take the prepared people to the prepared place. It is obvious that Jesus' intent for His people was in heaven, not on the earth.

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This passage is to be understood in the same way as Jesus' beautiful and similar teaching in the sermon on the mount, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*" (Matt. 5:5). The lovely thought expressed is that the meek will enjoy more fully the treasures inherent in living a godly life -- treasures which others simply do not understand. These include such things as: joy of heart, contentment even in lack, being able to see through gloom and disappointment, expectation of grand and precious blessings beyond the difficulties of this life, victory in patience, and the comfort of confident hope.

This is in stark contrast with the temporary, material advantages gained by those who seek to live in and of this earth. Of such as these Paul said, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Cor. 2:14). In describing the vain end of worldly pursuits, Paul wrote to Timothy, "*She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth*" (1 Tim. 5:6). John wrote of that expected, heavenly inheritance in his second letter, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is*

of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:16-17).

The proper understanding of "*inherit the earth*," therefore, refers not to a place which other Scriptures clearly show is to be destroyed, but rather expresses the sublime state of being enjoyed by God's people and which those of the world cannot comprehend.

APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING

Such phrases as "*for ever*" and "*inherit the earth*" must not be isolated and made to mean that which would clash with other Bible teachings. One could prove almost anything if he took liberty to handle God's precious word in this manner. The understanding of these passages as herein expressed is not only in harmony with other passages, but it is also necessary. There would otherwise be conflict and contradiction with such Scriptures as 2 Peter 3:10-11, "*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*"

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WHEN WE ARE TOLD WE CAN BUY SOMETHING
"FOR A SONG" IT IS WISE
TO CHECK THE ACCOMPANIMENT!

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Where did Rachel hide the things stolen from Laban, her father?
2. To whom did Jesus say, "Do ye now believe?" in John 16?
3. Was the Samaritan woman at the well aware of the coming of the Messiah?
4. What animal was used as a sacrifice when a leader of the people of Israel sinned, according to Leviticus?
5. What did Rahab the harlot ask the spies for in return for her hiding them?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who was the Jew that was born in Alexandria, mighty in the scriptures, and was helped by Aquila and Priscilla? **APOLLOS (Acts 18:24-26)**
2. Solomon imported horses from Kue and what other country? **EGYPT (1 Ki. 10:28)**
3. Paul states in 1 Corinthians that he had made himself a servant to all men so that he might do what? **GAIN MORE MEN TO CHRIST (1 Cor. 9:19)**
4. What is the longest book in the Bible? **PSALMS**
5. How was Israel to handle the "religious items" of the Canaanites? **DESTROY THEM (Deut. 7:5)**

<p style="text-align: center;">THE TROUBLE WITH A LITTLE SIN IS THAT IT WON'T STAY LITTLE.</p>

TRAINING OUR CHILDREN TO WORSHIP GOD

Isaac asked his father, Abraham, "*Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*" (Gen. 22:7). This inquiry was made as Abraham and Isaac journeyed to the place where the latter was to be offered by the former. The exact age of Isaac is unknown. However, he was old enough to carry the wood for the offering (Gen. 22:8). It should be of note that Isaac knew something about what was involved in worshipping God. Evidently, he had observed his father as the family worshipped God under the Patriarchal dispensation. This shows the importance of children learning how to worship God. Children, as well as some adults, must be taught how to worship God.

Solomon, the wisest of the ages, except for our Lord, wrote, "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6). The word "train" means, literally, "to narrow"; figuratively, it means "to initiate or discipline." Abraham did this. God said of him, "*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*" (Gen. 18:19). The word "child" spans the years from infancy to maturity. The expression "*in the way he should go*" means a course of life or mode of action. Parents need to discipline their children to follow the Lord's way. This is done both by precept and example. When this is obeyed, children will not turn from the Lord. This is the rule, but there may be exceptions to the rule. They should be brought up "*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4).

A knowledge of how to worship God is not inborn. Though the capacity to worship God exists in the hearts of everyone who has reached the age of accountability, all must still be taught how to worship God. Jesus said, *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:23-24). The writer of Hebrews said, *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"* (Heb. 12:28). One learns how to worship God by both instructions and examples.

Children, as well as adults, need to understand that when we worship God, we are in the presence of God. Moses was in the presence of God at the burning bush (Exo. 3:1-6). God appeared to Israel at smoking, shaking Sinai (Exo. 19:20). The Psalmist said, *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him"* (Psa. 89:7). The prophet Habakkuk wrote, *"But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him"* (Hab. 2:20).

Children cannot learn how to worship if they are not in the worship services. Children were to observe the commemoration of the Passover (Exo. 12:26-27). In the repeating of the law, Moses said, *"Gather the people together, men and women, and children, ... that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law"* (Deut. 31:10-13).

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