

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

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...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

The Furnace Of Fire

Matthew 13:42 speaks of a furnace of fire. Could this be the torture chamber for the unsaved wicked humans? What is this furnace of fire? Where is it? For what is its purpose? Is it a literal furnace of fire, or is it symbolic of something?

The three Hebrew children in the third chapter of Daniel were cast into a literal furnace of fire. Daniel called it a fiery furnace. The three would have instantly been turned to ashes, as did those mighty men who threw them into it, but the Lord saved them by manifesting His mighty power before Nebuchadnezzar.

Moses describes Mount Sinai as the smoke of a furnace because the Lord descended upon it in fire. (Ex 19:18) The Lord spake to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush which did not burn up. (Ex 3:3,4) Here is a supernatural kind of fire which does not consume. When the Lord returns to earth, He will consume His enemies with the spirit of His mouth and destroy them with the brightness of His coming. (II Thes 2:8)

Deuteronomy 4:20 speaks of Egypt as an iron furnace, or as in I Kings 8:51, **"...from the midst of the furnace of iron,"** or for the smelting of iron. **"For they be Thy People, and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron."**

How can Egypt be a furnace from which Israel was freed? A symbolic furnace can be a torture chamber for humans. Egypt was a torture chamber for Israel. They were reduced to slavery. They were afflicted by taskmasters. Their lives were made bitter with hard bondage. They cried out to their God Who Only could help them. They were alive, body, soul, and spirit in this chamber. Some could remember the days when life was not a torture.

Why the torture now? **"But Jeshurun**

(referring to Israel as the Upright One) **waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; THEN he (Israel) forsook God Which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods..."** (Deut 32:15,16) Read this chapter, but remember that God, although He SAYS He does these things to Israel, He says it as the Sovereign God Who allows the enemy to chastise His Own People.

When Israel entered Egypt, the Pharaoh said to Joseph, **"Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:... The land of Egypt is before thee; IN THE BEST OF THE LAND make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell..."** (Gen 47:5,6)

In the land of Goshen **"...the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."** (Ex 1:7) Jeshurun waxed fat and settled down in the world. Jeshurun forgot his God. God had to allow the enemy to afflict them in order to attract their attention. He needed to bring them out of Egypt, the world, so HE allowed Egypt to become a smelting furnace. A smelter gets rid of dross.

We should be able to understand this in our own day. We Christians have waxed fat, settled down in the world, and have served other gods. The fire in the smelting furnace has been lit and is beginning to heat up. God's own people need to be refined. Much dross needs to be removed. The furnace was not for the Egyptians who knew not God, but because light and darkness cannot dwell together, it was the Pharaoh who

prepared the furnace and who was eventually destroyed because of it.

Matthew 13:38-40 **"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom (of heaven); but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them (the tares) is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world (age); and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares (bad seed) are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (age)."**

The book of the Revelation depicts the last seven years of the seventy weeks (490 years) in Daniel 9:24. The tares are: lying apostles (2:2); false Jews of the synagogue of Satan (2:9); those who hold the doctrine of Balaam (2:14) and of the prophetess Jezebel (2:20) (both connected with idolatry and fornication); those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (2:15) and their deeds (2:6); (who appear to be ecclesiastical lords over the laity); and those who have no need of God (3:17).

The weeds in a garden are not replanted somewhere else, nor are they saved for some purpose. They are burned to ashes. The devil's seed are NOT children of the kingdom. The devil's seed are to be destroyed, reduced to ashes. **"For THIS PURPOSE the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."** (I Jn 3:8)

"The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend (that are stumbling blocks), and them which do iniquity (are nonobservers or transgressors of the law); And shall cast them into a furnace of fire:

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there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Mt 13:41-42)

“So shall it be at the end of the world (age): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked (with evil intent as in the parable concerning the kingdom in Matthew 18:23-35); **from among the just, And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”** (Mt 13:49-50)

The angels are gathering those out of His kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, which began with John the Baptist who sowed seed by the wayside (Mt 13:4); the Lord Jesus Christ Who sowed seed in stony places (13:5); the Apostles during the Acts period who sowed seed among thorns (13:7); and the final sowing on good ground during the time of Israel’s final torture chamber as related in the book of the Revelation.

These children of the kingdom are those who caused the others to stumble in their walk of faith. They offended many. They violated the law either willfully or ignorantly. They did not wholly follow the Lord. They did not walk by faith and without faith it is impossible to please the Lord.

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I WILL REQUIRE IT OF HIM.” (Deut 18:18-19)

This is NOT said to Satan’s seed. This is said by God to His Own People Israel. They were given a law and sin is imputed when there is a law, Romans 5:13, which means they will be judged according to their works.

Matthew 13:38 has to do with the good seed God has planted. Matthew 13:41-42 has to do with the just (righteous) and the unjust (unrighteous) among God’s People Israel.

Consider Matthew 13:43 **“Then shall the righteous (the just) shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** This verse corresponds with Daniel 12:3. **“And they that be wise**

The Furnace Of Fire...cont’d shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Here are those who are **“...purified, and made white, and tried** (refined). (12:10) These are among those who awake out of a sleep in the dust of the earth, to everlasting life. These will reign with Christ in the millennium. This happens soon after Michael, the archangel, stands up for Israel. (Dan 12:1; IThes 4:16; Rev 12:7-9)

Now notice another group among these wise ones who are resurrected. **“...some awake to shame and everlasting contempt.”** Daniel is talking about Israel in the last days of the seventy weeks. **“And many of THEM...”** (Dan 12:2) The ‘them’ are God’s People Israel that shall be delivered and their names are in the book. The wise have their names in the Book of Life, Revelation 3:5, because they are overcomers. The rest have their names in the books according to their works. (Rev 20:12; Acts 24:15) **“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”**

This should make more clear a portion of Scripture much debated. **“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.”** (Jn 5:29) Those who hear the voice of the Son of God (11:45) will be resurrected. Satan’s seed will never hear His voice, so these are God’s People. Those that have done evil, acted unjustly, must be refined.

Daniel 12:2, Matthew 13:41,42, and John 5:29 are talking about the same people of Israel who will spend a thousand years out among the Gentiles, in order to be refined for the day of God.

In summary, the unjust (unrighteous) among God’s People Israel at the end of the age will be resurrected and cast into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing (denoting every outward expression of grief) and gnashing (grating or grinding) of teeth. A literal fire would consume the human body totally and would have no time to wail and gnash the teeth. This is a symbolic furnace of fire which will

be out in darkness among the Gentiles, the world, Egypt.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people (peoples): but the Lord shall arise upon thee (Israel), and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” **“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”** (Isa 60:1-3)

These Israelis will wail and weep when they see they have missed the privilege of ruling and reigning with their long awaited Messiah. **“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God (The kingdom of Daniel 2:44), and you yourselves thrust out.”** (Lk 13:28) They will be thrust out among the Gentiles for the purpose of shedding the dross in preparation for the day of God when there shall be a **“...new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”** (IIPtr 3:13)

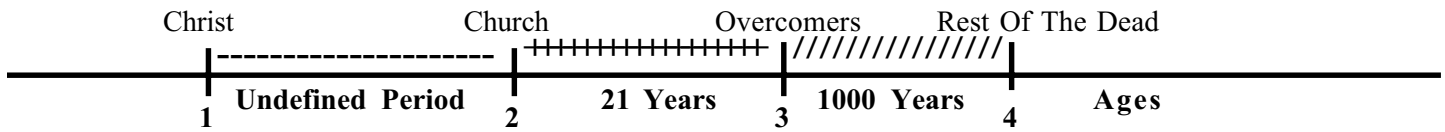
This furnace of fire does not pertain to the Church which is the Body of Christ of Ephesians 1:22-23. This church has no part in the kingdom of heaven. There may be a parallel of which we have spoken many times in II Timothy 2:12. There will be those who will qualify to reign with the Lord and those who will not qualify for that privilege.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Col 3:23-25) The inheritance is **“above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”** (Col 3:1) The reward is to reign with Him.

P.S.

An addendum: Words like evil, wicked, just, unjust, righteous, unrighteous; words that do not pertain to salvation, but do pertain to how people act, must be considered with the context to determine if God’s seed are involved or Satan’s seed.

Resurrection #14



In previous articles it was indicated that there are resurrections at four points in time.

They are:

1. Christ, Who has already risen, The future resurrections of:
2. The Church which is the Body of Christ
3. The overcomers of Israel's purpose
4. The rest of the dead

The sequence of these resurrections is shown on the line above but what about the number of years between each point?

This present Church age began about AD64 when God revealed His secret purpose to the Apostle Paul for us Gentiles. Its duration is not told us, but we know that it will end when Christ appears (is seen) in glory. For when He appears there, we will appear with Him. (Col.3:4)

The period between the resurrection of the overcomers and the rest of the dead is told us in Revelation 20:4 and 5. It is said to be 1000 years.

But what about that period after the Church has risen and before the overcomers of Israel's purpose rise? How did the writer arrive at the number of 21 years? It was calculated from a message that God gave to Daniel, a prophet of Israel.

In answer to Daniel's prayer for his People Israel, who had forsaken God's ways and were in captivity, God sent the angel Gabriel to him with these words:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy People and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” (Dan.9:24)

Gabriel told Daniel that seventy weeks are determined upon THY

PEOPLE and THY HOLY CITY. We understand the Hebrew meaning here to be 70 weeks of 7 years or 490 years. The period is a judgment upon the nation (Israel) and the city (Jerusalem) for the transgression, sin, and rebellion of the People. This has nothing to do with the Messiah's comings or His cutting off which is the subject in the next verses.

This 490 year period is required to finish the Peoples' transgression, to make an end of their sins, to bring in righteousness, and to anoint the millennial Temple described in Ezekiel 40-48. These 490 years of Israel's desolations usher in that righteousness which comes only when Messiah comes to establish it. Therefore, we know that the 70 weeks will end when Christ returns and reigns in righteousness. It will be when Israel's sins are gone and when their Temple is in the holy city.

We know the end of the 70 weeks (490 years) but when did they begin? Most of Christendom goes on to the next verses, Dan.9:25,26, for the answer. There we read, **“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: . . . And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off. . .”** These verses concern Messiah's first coming and His cutting off. They do not speak about God's judgment upon the People and the holy city. However, Christendom takes that prophecy concerning Messiah which starts from the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, and they apply it to the People and the city. They begin to count the 490 years of desolation on the

People and the city at 454BC, the time of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem. They say that the prophetic clock stopped at Christ's cutting off at the cross, at AD29, 69 weeks or 483 years later. From that conclusion, they calculate that 1 week or 7 years of Israel's desolations remain to be fulfilled.

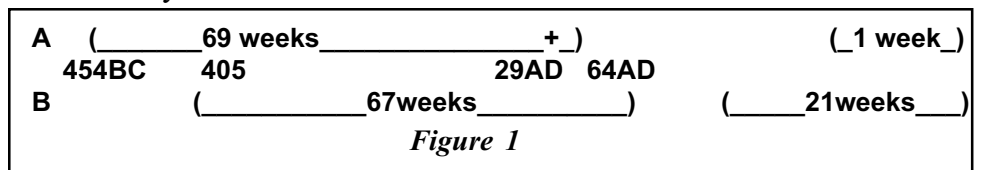
This view is shown at point A in Figure 1 below.

In contrast to that view, some Bible scholars have pointed out that the start of the 70 weeks determined upon the People and the holy city is not said to be at the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem. They also remind us that God does not count prophetic time for His People when they are “Lo Ammi” (not My People). Not until they are His People does God's prophetic clock move. The People were not His People, united in Jerusalem, with the temple completed and dedicated, until 49 years after the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Not until 405BC were they “Ammi” (God's People). It is suggested that from that point that the 70 weeks (490 years) should be calculated.

In addition, the prophetic clock of 70 weeks did not stop at the cross. For 5 weeks more, 35 years longer after the cross, Israel were God's People. They were offered the King and kingdom throughout the period covered in Acts. They had opportunity to repent and have Christ return to reign. Most of Christendom fails to count those 5 weeks because they believe that God set Israel aside at the cross and began the new Gentile Christian Church at Acts 2.

If we begin counting the 70 weeks at the dedication of the temple in 405 BC,

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Resurrection #14 ...cont'd

we see the 70 weeks (490 years) could have been completed at AD85. However, at Acts 28:28, AD64, because Israel on the whole were in unbelief and had rejected their King-Savior, God set Israel's purpose aside. The prophetic clock stopped for them. If we calculate from 405BC to that point at AD64, we find that 469 years or 67 weeks of the desolations have passed. There remain then 21 years or 3 weeks of the 70 weeks determined upon the People and the city. These are the 21 years that are indicated on the chart. They will come after the resurrection of the Church. They will end before Christ returns and before the overcomers are raised at point 4.

This view, shown at point B in *Figure 1*, is accurate in the writer's view in that:

1. It does not go beyond the subject of the People and the city.
2. It includes the 5 weeks after Christ's ascension, while Israel was still a People and a nation recognized by God.
3. It provides 21 years for that 4th sowing that Jesus spoke about in Mt. 13:8,23, when the kingdom out of heaven will be preached again and when a great multitude will believe.

For more in detail on this subject see: [The Alphabetical Analysis](#). By Charles

H. Welch, Vol.4, pg248-; Vol.8, pg155-; Vol.9pgs197-212

[Truth for Today](#), by Oscar M. Baker, Vol.22 #2; Vol.30 #9

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The Deity Of Christ # 14

We hear more about God's judgments in the Old Testament. But that was because those were in the past. The future is still before us. When Israel as a nation once more become Jehovah's people (at present they are considered Lo-Ammi, not my people), we will probably hear some more about the Great Judge. And this time it will be in the person of Christ.

God, the Judge Only God can really judge man, as He created man. God, the Judge and man's recognition of this is evident in many places in the Scriptures. See Genesis 18:25, "**That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**"

Again, in Judges 11:27, we see a reference to "**the Lord, the Judge**", even though there were other "judges" in the land. God was the ultimate judge.

Psalms 9:7,8 tells us "**the Lord shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness...**". In Isaiah 33:22 we read, "**For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.**"

Christ's role as Judge is also quite clear, e.g., we read in 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:1, Revelation 19:11: "**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in His body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**" "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He That sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war."

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