

## Occupy Till I Come: Redeeming The Time

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### Kingdom Confusion

Both Jesus and John preached, saying, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). Jesus stirred up enemies in a society dominated by secular Sadducees and orthodox Pharisees who refused to repent. Jesus rebuked the time-blindness of scribes and Pharisees, self styled weather men. “Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” (Matthew 16:1-4), i.e., the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Sadly, America has spawned a society of time-blind adulterers who resemble the “generation of vipers” in Judah that Jesus and John the Baptist denounced (Matthew 3:7 & 12:34). We daily abort/kill over three thousand Americans. Families are victimized by “victimless crimes” - unpunished sexual sins. Every week bloody violence explodes in our cities. “How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers ... Thy silver is become dross, thy wine [inflated] with water: ... every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless [in-womb orphans]” (Isaiah 1:21-23).

Many Christians today, as early disciples, tend to confuse the Kingdom of Heaven with the revival of Temple worship and return of a Jewish state. These early disciples’ confusion persists up to Christ’s ascension into Heaven. “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Jesus dismisses their query about a restored Israeli state. “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:7-8). Witness to Christ’s resurrection always has priority.

Paul elaborates on God’s “times [and] seasons.” He observes that in “the fulness of the time ... God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). In history’s prism, we see that Pax Romana (Peace of Rome) providentially reaches its acme during the First Century AD. The Roman Army, 3,674,000 strong, in the First Century BC, sustains 182,200 casualties in its imperial wars. In the First Century A.D., however, Roman Army strength falls to 784,000. Casualties dip to a mere 28,800 men. This maximum of Roman peace offers a window of opportunity to establish churches in the Roman Empire and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

### Millennium Ignorance

Christians are perforce agnostics about timing of Christ’s Second Coming. Jesus has warned “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36). “Time and chance” happens to us all (Ecclesiastes 9:11), as evidenced in 9/11. The only certainty regarding Christ’s Second Coming is it’s constant uncertainty. The next coming of Christ is likened to Noah’s flood that halted wedding parties who “knew not until the flood came, and took them all away” (Matthew 24:39).

We therefore should question millennial theories that insist every mention of “a thousand” in the Bible be taken literally especially in Revelation (20:1-7). Otherwise, we end up asserting that the Lord owns only “the cattle upon a thousand hills” whereas “every beast of the forest is mine” (Psalm 50:10). Often “a thousand” in Scripture just means “a lot” (Deuteronomy 1:11&7:9, Judges 9:49).

Peter forearms us against secular scientists who mock their Creator by hypothetically injecting billions of years into earth history. “Where is the promise of his coming? ... all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (II Peter 3:4). Peter’s answer to such time-geared mockery helps reset our Millennium clocks. “*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (II Peter 3:8; See also Psalm 90:4). Thankfully, Creation research “fact checkers” regularly expose the Solar System’s presumed 4.5 billion year age as an unscientific myth. Indeed, Neil Armstrong’s moon landing proved that scientists’ great fear Armstrong would sink into 4.5 billion years of accumulated moon dust was unfounded in scientific fact.<sup>2</sup>

### Millennium Watchers

Jesus warns His disciples, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come ... Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Matthew 24:42,46) Christians are to “Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13). Our duty to “occupy” parallels God’s primeval command. “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion ... over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28). The “wicked and slothful servant” who fails to invest time and talents is condemned “into outer darkness: ... [to] weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:24-30). We are called to honest work to support our growing families, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

Let us recall that since the Bible equates a thousand years with a day, *Christ's kingdom began just the day before yesterday!* We Christians remain witnesses to resurrection gospel as we “work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling” for God works in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). Further, with holy tithes and Christ’s Kingdom parables of the Yeast, Mustard Seed and Tares, we are ready for victorious revivals despite small beginnings (Luke 13:23). Early Christians, mostly working stiffs, manage to rescue and rear up abandoned Roman infants as Christians utilizing tithe-supported community funds.<sup>3</sup> Church influence increases, ebbs and then sets new high water marks in history<sup>4</sup> fulfilling prophecy: “Of the increase of [Christ’s] government and peace there shall be no end” (Isaiah 9:7). *Christ has not doomed His bride, the Church, to fail in time and history!*

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1. See the “Study of War,” page 548, in Pitirim Sorokin’s **Social and Cultural Dynamics**, Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 1957.
  2. Paul D. Ackerman, **It’s A Young World After All**, Baker House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996, p 19-23.
  3. Will Durant, **The Story of Civilization, Vol. 3, Caesar and Christ**, MJF Books, New York, 1944, p. 598.
  4. Kenneth Scott Latourette, **The Unquenchable Light**, Harper and Brothers, 1941, p 171