


TIME SERIES NO. 18

RELIGION

AN ARAMAIC
BIBLE COMPANION
MONOGRAPH

RELIGION

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph is No.18 in the present series. It begins with a positive definition of religion which however maligned remains true.

The study takes account of major faiths and poses the question as to whether they achieve the status of “true religion” i.e. whether they have genuinely the quality that is quintessential – that restores forgiven man to God. There is a skeleton descriptor on some of the many new religions (so-called) that have risen up to bind our souls in unwelcome chains.

The subject is enhanced by a short coverage of the concept of “one world religion” and a section on the important concepts of mercy and grace in religion. The prophetic perspective which is the stamp of this “Time” series invites the reader to consider that God has ordained there shall be a time when the religion of Christ as Messiah shall command utmost respect in every home in every land.

Bob the Scribbler-Westgate 2013

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(1) RELIGION – A DEFINITION

The lingua franca of preachers is that “They do not believe in religion –they believe in Christianity.” You will often hear the public orator begin his presentation with the words “I am not religious I am just a Christian”. Can this be right? What is being said? Is the intent to indicate a full secular affirmation or is it to distance the speaker from traditional churches or men of the cloth? Is it even a valid statement?

The answer would seem to be “No, it is not” It is a glib denial of the obvious. The public speaker is almost invariably committed to what the bible says and is retailing truth to which most of the main denominations assent freely. But more fundamentally he is addressing religious issues - issues of how man relates to God and expressly how man who is separated from God by sin can obtain a new relationship with God through the New Birth and thus relate to God again (re-ligio by the Latin root having the sense of “being bound back again”).

Technically one might say that the person who uses the language of denial of religion is selling the public a pup and is himself in all likelihood quite unaware that the root meaning of religion is “To relate again to or return to God”. Getting back to God through repentance and faith is exactly what preachers ought to be about so they are most definitively religious speakers expounding the first principles of religion or the doctrine of the recovery in face of the fall through the means of salvation that God provides.

To be very precise if a so called religion does not have a doctrine of salvation in its repertoire it does not qualify as a religion. More expressly if the so-called means of salvation is a delusion it most definitely is either a “spiritual path of

life” or “cultus” or “philosophical concept” - something that may fairly be described as a “false religion” because it claims to do what it cannot do because it lacks the means. In the next chapter the five great faiths we know as world religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism) are examined on their means of salvation under this basic qualifier.

(2) THE BIG FIVE RELIGIONS

THE ANGEL OF MONS

In Country Tyrone I had a church officer who would carry the bible to the pulpit before I entered to minister to the people. He was a lovely character with an extensive repertoire. His diving licence was of the old variety granting permission to drive everything on wheels. He had a little cotton handkerchief printed as a memorial of the “Angel of Mons” and could recount how a marooned battalion of British troops were protected by a cloud and saw an angel exactly as the old idyll of the war asserts. It is to something different that I want to allude. Bob spoke of his RSM’s drilling technique and how he would marshal his men on parade. He would scowl out “Catholic one step forward march, Presbyterian one step backward, Church of England stand steady!”. That statement gives the lie to the make up of her majesty’s forces so far as religion was concerned during the period of the Great War.

THE BIG FIVE WORLD RELIGIONS

(I) CHRISTIANITY

The statement of Isaiah “All we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to meet on him”(Isaiah53.6) is central to the Christian faith. Paul puts it plainly when he

writes to Rome saying “God demonstrates his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”(Romans 5.7-8) and to the precise thinkers of Corinth he wrote “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them...and on this basis committed the word of reconciliation to believers who beseech men to “be reconciled to God” because “He made him to be the sin-offering for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”. This is further described in Ephesians 2 as an “*act of grace* on God’s part received by faith on our part - and that faith is itself given by God”. Barnabas in Hebrews 10.4 isolates the earlier bulls and goats as in and of themselves incapable of putting away sin - and this atonement is tied absolutely to Christ’s once for all sacrifice for sins. The death of Christ alone could deal with the curse (Galatians 3.10-13 & Rev. 22.3) and the judgment of death which fell on man through disobedience since the fall for “in Adam all die” and only “in the circle of Christ” shall all be made alive (1Cor.15.22.24). Thus Christianity has a precise means of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ who as God in the flesh maintained “I am the way the truth and the life”. It is for this reason that Christianity is religion par excellence - it has a prescriptive and perfected way of salvation demonstrated by the Resurrection and enables man to again become a temple of the Holy Spirit so that the saved sinner becomes conscious of God in his or her life(John3.-18 & 4.9-29).

(II) JUDAISM

Judaism teaches that eternal existence hereafter depends on moral behaviour here and now. Judaism maintains also that God always offers the most evil men repentance (teshuva or “turning”) after which one can atone for one’s own sin by

positive action. Judaism - having relinquished the temple sacrifice and the concept of atonement does not have a refined doctrine of salvation beyond its accent on morality as the most proper concern of man here below. Final judgment is left to God.

The best one can say on this score is that the fall is not countermanded in Judaism by a full proof way out of what Paul calls the law of consequences - ie the law of sin and death which condemns man to divine judgment. The ancient concept of the Lamb is not interpreted according to the prophet Isaiah or John the Baptist but under the notion of national freedom in the Passover.

Jews since Ezra have read the Torah in small portions throughout the year. Adherence to its 613 commands represents *Maimonides* highest and unachievable ideal.

(III) ISLAM

Islam in the Koran does not commend redemption.

Salvation depends on a man's actions and attitudes. It is, however, possible that an evil man can be turned toward virtue by repentance (*tauba*) for as *Mohammed* said "the sincere repenter is like him who has committed no sins".

Islam prescribes "submission" and guidance as the way of life. As to judgment sura 17.13 reads "Every man's actions have we hung around his neck and on the last day shall be laid before him a wide open book". Islam recognizes each has a different degree of insight and to live according to the best of one's abilities is how to achieve entrance to heaven excepting infidels who are those unwilling to submit to Islam. Islam preaches 5 Pillars: Kalimah recitation, Salat, Ramadan, Zakat and Hajj. Purity of the body by **Ablution**; **Prayer** as Purity of heart, **Charity** or brother-help [2.5 per cent of one's means], **Fasting during Ramadan**

only(subjection of the passions) and **Pilgrimage** to Mecca (as a sign of life's proper spiritual pilgrimage, incumbent only on the rich). Islam has no priesthood or doctrine of original sin hence no atonement; Islam teaches that animal life stands on the same footing as human life in God's sight- each shall return to the Lord. The muslim faith teaches that salvation is possible for all. God has no Son so man has no mediator. There is a saying of *Mohammed* which runs "It does not matter what you name yourselves - believing Muslims Jews or Nazarenes(Christians) who believe in Allah and act aright their reqward is with their Lord" (Sura 2.59). This saying appears to dismiss other faiths as nice ideas and prescribes submission to Allah.

Islam denies the fact of atonement and any need of it because Allah is almighty. Salvation depends on the Will of Allah on the Day of Judgment so it is not assured. The Koran is considered the final revelation and the Jews & Christians are believed to have corrupted the scriptures.

(IV) HINDUISM

Salvation for the Hindu is escape from the wheel of "birth death and re-birth". It can mean being in the arms of God but at the same time it has to mean the dissolving of all personality into the abyss of Brahman. This is effected by Yoga or self-control in its four varieties-**jnana** or knowledge of the unreal nature of the universe, **bhakti** or devotion and love which reaches salvation by ecstatic worship, **karma** or action that performs good works without hope of gain and **raja** which uses meditation technique. Ultimate escape is viewed as being achieved by a process of incarnations. Hindus are allowed in early life to pursue wealth love of the opposite sex but in later life the idea of progressive self-denial should become normative. The idea

of re-incarnation has supported the unequal caste system. This limits the brotherly aspect of the faith. Hindu religion seeks not to be rid of sin but of separate conscious existence.

(V) BUDDHISM

Buddhism cites ignorance as that which prevents salvation. So when people believe amiss that the world and self really exist that just keeps the wheel of illusion going round. This is called “enlightenment”. **Buddha** holds to its 4 noble truths (1) Life is suffering and cannot satisfy. (2) Suffering stems from craven desire and an attempt to grasp what the world offers (3) Suffering goes when craving ceases. (4) Escape from repeated rebirth is by the eightfold path. This is i Right belief ii Right desires iii Right speech iv Right conduct v Right way of life vi Right aims vii Right awareness and viii Right meditation.

During the “Eight fold path” there are four stages (a) belief in self-existence is broken along with doubt about this teaching and ties to the ceremonies of the Hindu religion (b)& (c) sensuality and unkindness are broken (d) desire for a separate life in this world & the next is broken along with spiritual pride, self righteousness and ignorance. Buddhism avoids extremes - hence it is called “the middle way”.

Mahayana Buddhists strive for the salvation of others as “Heroes of faith” and they seek to aid others who petition them. Nirvana is “a blowing out” of the flame of craving 7 life itself. Additionally there is *Dharma* and *Sangha*.

Dharma gives 5 commands to lay-persons “Do not kill, steal, lie, drink strong drink, commit adultery. Also 3 more not bidding - i.e. Do not eat at night or wear ornaments and use perfume or sleep on a high bed. The last 2 commands of the **Sila** are for monks. They forbid dancing music singing or acting and the use of gold and silver. Sins are divided into

three groups. Bodily sins of killing theft and sexual offences. Speech sins of lying and slander, abusive language and vain talk. Sins of the Mind-coveting, malice, skepticism. Finally the **Sangha** initiation vow “I take refuge in Buddha the Dharma and Sangha” is undertaken. Criminals soldiers debtors slaves and diseased persons are disqualified. The three concepts form a trinity of the Light bringer-the Light and the Lamp. The final stage of Buddhism is “non-being”. The final stage is described as “a condition where there is neither earth nor water, neither air nor light, neither limitless space nor limitless time, neither any kind of being, neither ideation nor non-ideation, neither this world nor the world, neither cause or effect, neither change nor standing still”. Buddhist faith commends “Shedding the character of a householder and wandering around like a rhinoceros”

(3) THE JUDÆO CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW

Fifty years back in 1963 along with other students I had the good fortune to sit in the lectures of *Dr Graham Mulligan* -an international expert on world religion. He first taught us a form of shorthand by which to transcribe his material because it was so extensive. His first lecture was entitled “God man and the world”. In this chapter I retail an abstract or summary of his notes.

- (i) THE SEMITIC WORLD VIEW. God as Supreme Being is personal and anthropomorphically conceived. He is transcendent and our Creator. God and man are separated. Time is linear in conception. Freedom is favoured and the worldview tends to be optimistic and purposeful in character. The type of religion yielded is extrovertent. Dr Mulligan contrasted the Aryan World View with its **impersonal immanent** God. Here God and man are

identified, Time is cyclic and religion is deterministic and pessimistic and introvertent. *Dr Mulligan* noted a radical cleavage in human thought on ultimate reality and man's origins and destiny.

- (ii) THE CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW presents belief through Revelation not speculation. Christianity holds there are distinctions within the Godhead. God relates to the world in terms of John 3.16, Genesis 1.1, Romans 11.36, 1 Cor. 8.6 Eph. 3.9 Col 1 15-17 and Rev. 4.11.
- (iii) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CREATION. In the Christian world view God is moral ruler and creator. Hindus are content with a succession of worlds and with the world emanating out of God. Hinduism believed this but Buddha saw the implication that it would be 're-absorbed and based his system on the non-permanence of the human spirit. Schleiermacher rightly observed "The world is dependent on God both for its origin and course".
- (iv) OBJECTIONS TO PANTHEISM. Sin is excluded yet all conscious states are mixed up-good and bad. The world is illusion but who is deceived - The answer is "God" since he is the only real existence. Prayer and worship are inconceivable for we should be addressing these to ourselves. Pantheism does not provide for the value of personality we instinctively feel and know. It is not a reasonable account of the universe to deny its reality. It is a menace to morals and leads to relativism or to asceticism implying that matter is evil Theologically it makes no room for revelation. In sum (a) all things are both divine and illusory (b) All things are essential yet illusory. (c)

There is no purpose (d) On the cyclic view history is unreal-there is neither beginning middle or end.

- (v) THE MUSLIM WORLD VIEW. The relationship between God and man is distorted in the opposite direction of **extreme transcendence**. God creates but is by no means Father. Relation to the world is that of exclusion. *Al Bedawi* argued that Moslem religion showed neither the glory or love of God but his power. The first thing Allah created was “The pen” and he said to it “Write” and it wrote all that was and will be to eternity(*Zwemer Moslem doctrine of God*). *Zwemer* put it in this way “Muhammad teaches a God above us; Moses teaches a God above and yet with us, Jesus Christ teaches God above us, with us and in us”.
- (vi) THE CHRISTIAN POSITION The world depends absolutely upon God. Pure reason can't lead to certainty about ourselves or God. Nature gives no certainty as to God's righteousness love or holiness. Without revelation we cannot account for man's intuitions concerning good and evil or his sense of responsibility. The Christian idea is that God is a Personality manifested as Creator and Father, through the person of the Word or Son and through the personal leading of the Holy Spirit. The Church and the Christian conclude that this three-fold manifestation corresponds to that which eternally exists and is infinite in God. St Paul wrote of God's transcendence, personality and righteousness (Eph.4.6) and also wrote of God limiting himself as in Philippians 2. God's power is spiritual and ethical. Man and the universe exist in and for God but are not consubstantial with Him. Man is “in the image of God” And he can both know and within limits oppose

the will of God. As *principal Caird* said “Man’s life is intensively one with God’s though not extensively and exhaustively”.

(4) NEW RELIGIONS

Traditionally the adversaries to godliness have been the world the flesh and the devil. Another adversary has arisen in the form of deception masquerading sometimes under the name of one of the big world faiths but as far from living righteous before God as the east is from the west.

Another form of deception is the proliferation of cults which have no relation to revealed religion. These have mushroomed towards the end of the 20th century and it is now difficult to keep track of them. Among their pathfinders were the Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons.

I will give a potted introduction to the range of cults in the following pages working on an alphabetical style. I have drawn on the work of Irving Hexham “*New Religious movements*” in compiling this skeleton list of cults and their central pivot of belief.

TODAY’S CULTS & SOME DISTINCTIVES

Ahmadiyya A branch of islam when Ahmad claimed to be the Mahdi of Zoroaster Buddhism Hinduism & Islam entitling him to worship. His credibility depended on whether he merged with Mohammed and whether or not Sura61 applies to him.

Ancient Rosicrucianism-a mystical occult movement emphatic on reincarnation and strong on wealth promotion.

Applewhite’s”Heaven’s gate movement” which engaged in a mass suicide in 1997 - it was derailed into UFO teachings

Bahai I met a fervent member in College. The transcendent one is only knowable by prophets. A peace movement with HQ near Jerusalem. It believes in the unity of mankind.

Bhagavad Gita. Written about the time Christ appeared. A Hindu work claiming that Lord Krishna the form of a chariot driver.

Branch Davidians all saw tragic TV pictures of their last stand where fanatics of the sect were burned alive in Waco in 1993. They had laid claim to special knowledge about Christ's advent.

Children of God led by David Berg who prophesied the end of California. They chat up the opposite sex and use prostitution to promote their so called "godly socialism".

Christadelphians deny the Trinity and that Christ is divine.

Christian Science –founded by Mary Baker Eddy used yoga to attempt healings.

Doctrine and Covenants of Joseph Smyth –the founder of *Mormonism* which claims special angelic revelation.

Universal redemption proxy baptism, Animals rise. Celestial marriage. Whilst in Southport two mormon elders converted to faith in Christ as Lord and joined the church. They had been trained in Utah. The Mormons teach works are essential for salvation-and baptism is one such. Smith maintained people lived on the moon and it is an article of faith that Eden is in Mississippi. Adam has the key of eternal life so Mormons build geneology and baptize by proxy to try to save the dead.

Falun Gong - founded in the 1990's based on meditation and meditative-of Chinese origin.

Hare Krishna led by Swami Bhaktivedanta - saffron clad adherents await being picked up by Krishna by the knots in their pigtail. A Hindu cult whose monks sold literature on the streets a decade ago. Their presence has waned.

Hubbard's scientology based on dianetics (whirling round).
Jehovah's witnesses began with advent ideas and pyramidology but now emphatically deny the incarnation and the Trinity. The modern face of Arianism. In 1975 the world did not end as they predicted. I was in Edinburgh where they were dancing on the streets - but they continue to gather converts despite the signal failure of their teaching. I have been to a teaching session and queried the instructor. I found their zeal outstanding but their teaching highly vulnerable. Their *Kingdom Interlinear* bible was supposed to be translated by scholars but American courts found they had no knowledge of original languages. It is deficient in scholarship.

Rastafarians worship Haile Selassie and smoke marijuana play reggae music and have a distinctive hairstyle.

Satanism is associated with sacrifice and defiling the communion in its ritual. It practices sexual type ritual and worships satan. It stands out from the cults as connected definitively to Satan

Scientific pantheism believes *the cosmos* is divine. There are no individual spirits. It promotes tolerant variety of views.

Seventh Day Adventists *I came across Eric Brownlee years ago and managed to get a a subsidy from Sir Martin Baker to help him repair his home. Both men were Adventists and they worship on Saturday and do not indulge in tea coffee and alcohol but they should be regarded as fully orthodox.*

Spiritism The belief in and communication with spirits who interact with their devotees. In Southport I came across some who sought them for healing, others for relief of earthquakes and yet others for comfort in communicating with the departed. I once visited Delphi where information from throughout Greece was processed for oracular use. Spirits should be exorcised and are obligated to Jesus' authority.

Swami Saraswati reformed Hinduism to worship one God.

Taoism practicing humility and non violence is ascetic and health conscious but non activist. It seeks long life and happiness.

Transcendental meditation founded by Maharishi Yogi was stripped of its religious status by American courts. It merely practices yogi with word formulae or mantras.

Unification Church has transitioned to a federation for world peace. Its founder Sung Myung Moon was regarded as “Father”. It organized mass marriages and seemed set to grow strongly but has self imploded.

Whhabiya –Wahabis interpret the Quran allegorically and require good works to show one’s faith. Ibn Sa’ad took Riyadh and established the Sauid dynasty. Public prayer is demanded and the simple style of the mosque is down to their principle. Is profound belief in the will of Allah. Today this brand is strengthening Moslem growth worldwide. Ben Laden came from this significant branch of the Moslem faith.

Zen Buddhists holds to the path of self discipline and enlightenment. A Japanese oriented Buddhist set.

(5) ONE WORLD RELIGION

CHRISLAM

In the United States the talk is of “Chrislam” which ahs come about because of the inter-faith conversations of Christian leaders and Moslem Imams and scholars. There are many movements loosely affiliated in their thinking to the New World Order ideal which would aspire to unite mankind but they have an uphill journey whilst Chritianity and Islam remain mutually exclusive and singularly successful in continuing to attract members.

NEW WORLD ORDER & ANTICHRIST

WORLD UNITY WITH HORRENDOUS CONSEQUENCES

The real hope for the “One world faith” people will come with the Rapture. When the trumpet sounds and the church militant and triumphant meet in the air and like the massed hosts of heaven’s angels on the first Christmas they are gone away (again) into heaven the Antichrist must arise.

ANTICHRIST’S JERUSALEM INSTITUTION

Supposing that day is near the Antichrist of whom scripture speaks might well be on earth today. However that may be the apostle John said “there are now many antichrists” who peddle their false beliefs as the previous chapter attests but when this latter day figure comes He will sit in the sacrum or holy mountain and exalt himself above every god (Daniel 7.8, 11.36, Apoc.13.8).

A RECONSTITUED EUROPE

From the Apocalypse comes singular prophecy of a Mediterranean power combining world powers into one. It recovered from a mighty crisis of war and had the imprimatur of Satan. Its infamy stretched to *speaking against those raptured and persecuted who tabernacled in heaven and against those who still tabernacled on earth with poor shelter and it warred with halcyon success against Israel* – all this during the first 3.5 year segment of the tribulation (Apoc.13.5-7). Up until the end of this short time the two witnesses of Apocalypse 11.6-7 protected Israel until they were slain. An airlift (Apoc.12.6) spared the holy people and simultaneous with war in heaven mighty earthquakes strike the earth and the warfare of Apoc.14.20 ensues. To pick up on the second beast or succeeding latter day power it combined with the penultimate authority compelled worship of that

power through economic and monetary control now generally thought of as chip technology (Apocalypse 13). The base of the penultimate power is Europe and would appear to be Rome (where the treaty bonding modern nations was signed).

THE PURPLE WOMAN & PERSECUTION

In Apocalypse 17 after the prediction of the seven vials of wrath which bring agony to this world renowned nation (Apocalypse 16.10) the punishment of the “prostitute” is explained to John for all biblical readers to understand. The connection is with an historic persecution of those who bore testimony to Jesus. The woman ultimately gained the support of the last beast or world power. The angel puns on the eternal attributes of God to humiliate the penultimate beast saying “It was and is not and is to come”. That tells us that the angel’s advice was given immediately the vial descended on the throne of the beast.

CHRIST IS COMING TO RULE

Together with the message and the judgment goes the word “Look I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed so as not to be shamefully exposed.” This second mention of Christ coming as a thief stands alongside the first which refers to the earlier rapture of saints. cf Apocalypse 3.3 & 1 Thess. 5.4. The second beast or world power will have but short dalliance with the purple woman and ultimately the constituted authorities and armies at its command reject and “burn” the harlot” and follow the alternative authority of the beast. The dragon (Satan) stood witnessing and abetting the dual role of the woman and beast but God will tear the syndicate apart as Europe and its trade comes to a final nemesis. The rest is in the hands of the Lord Jesus as He comes to conquer in the war that is set to

conclude on the plains of Megiddo and around Jerusalem itself. This war brings in all nations including the Kings of the East (Apc.16.12). Much is made of the fall of Babylon-and it has to be remembered that the Lod is speaking to John who had witnessed terrible atrocities under Nero and under Domitian- and many more were to come over the centuries of follow.

(6) MERCY AND JUSTICE AND GRACE CONSTITUENTS OF TRUE RELIGION

Having cast a glance ahead at the nemesis of autocratic religion which does prejudice to the wholly spiritual nature of the church and combines with the state and looking around at the religious pluralism that has developed since the day Noah lived whom God seen as a man of faith and “alone righteous” before him-and indeed since the days when our Lord brought crystal clear revelation to mankind we do well to proceed to isolate the essentials of true religion. James the brother of our Lord in one sense did exactly this. He said “True religion and undefiled is to visit the widow and fatherless and keep oneself unspotted from the world.” He was speaking of the outworking of a bond with God in Christ which demanded this action to share the burdens of others whilst maintaining holiness. This is still a rubric of Christianity. Besides this fruit there must be the root of justice mercy and grace.

JUSTICE

Divine justice is declared in the action of Christ dying on behalf of the ungodly. He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God. Without this act of atonement and substitution there cannot be forgiveness of sins that aggregated under the

law in our lives or power for purity or ultimate averting of judgment. This Jesus declared to be the only way of righting wrong (John 14.6).

MERCY

Behind the death of Christ there is an eternal covenant of love. Its arms stretch backwards to Adam and onward through the millennium (Isaiah 55.3, 61.8, Jeremiah 31.31-6, Ezekiel 37.26-28 and **Hebrews 13.20**). God determined that Israel and the nations who would thought the Lord and the apostles know the Lord should find mercy through the atoning death of Christ. The death of Christ that averts the judgment of God was enabled by the Love that reconciles. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5.19).

GRACE

The absolute need for God to freely pardon and freely receive the sinner comes as a result of the otherwise inexorable judgment of death that ensues from the fall. But in addition God mounted a credible challenge to evil and provided a pragmatic means of overcoming evil in the gift of faith through the provision of His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Holiness does not come separately. With the work of conviction and conversion the Holy Spirit is initially at work. This prevenience of God we experience in the New Birth. It necessarily goes on to Christlike living facilitated by the fullness or baptism of the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer and enables victory where defeat was before. Without the favour of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit there is really no true religion but merely religious conceptions and substitute beliefs which do not add up to the gift of the Holy Spirit and faith.

(7) EARTH FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The present era has seen the spread of Christianity which retains its ascendancy numerically in face of the militant challenge of other widely popular and growing faiths. The coming days will see a further series of cataclysmic events economically and politically if we are to accept the reality of the message of the bible in the Apocalypse.

The military effect of another major world crisis will be catastrophic. The diminished population of the earth foretold in the Apocalypse issuing from the devastation of war and famine is accentuated by the homecall of the church in the rapture. The season of tribulation is detailed in Apocalypse 5-19. These are days which Jesus said would be shortened lest no flesh should be saved. The Lord further said they would be as the days of Noah when mankind faced the most overwhelming destruction since creation. Christ further characterized the tribulation as hitherto unprecedented even by the flood of Noah.

Despite the dark times ahead scripture is adamant that mankind shall come through to better days but not without the nations standing before Christ to finally divide those who cared not for others nor for the Lord's purposes. The joys of the Lord's rule follow. The prophet Habakkuk in his great 2nd chapter tells us (a) that "the just will live by faith" as has been the case especially since the Church era emerged at Pentecost. Then (b) the prophet goes on to state "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea!"(Habakkuk2.14). God speed the day!

FINIS

Bob the Scribbler Westgate September 23 2013