

# Reaching Out

SUMMER 2025, ISSUE 124

## WELCOME TO REACHING OUT

a Christian magazine to serve the community. Our goal is to offer Biblical solutions to the problems facing society today.

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Stepping Stones .....            | P2  |
| Is Rebellion Normal? .....       | P3  |
| Want To Be Unique? .....         | P4  |
| Dad, His Children, and You ..... | P8  |
| Principles of Giving .....       | P10 |
| The End of It All .....          | P11 |

**DINOSAURS AT THE BIRD FEEDER? .. P6**



# Stepping Stones

by Clay Zimmerman

The term "stepping stones" is an ancient one. Where there was no bridge, visible stones in the river, sticking out above the surface of the water, provided a way of crossing. The traveler would then seek to find a way across by stepping from one stone to another until they reached the other bank. Several things were important in selecting the right stones. They had to support the weight of the traveler, they couldn't be too slippery (preferably dry), they needed to be properly shaped to be balanced on, and they needed to be in a position to further progress to the other side. Good choices had to be made. If all went well, the traveler was rewarded with a safe crossing.

Many things in life are still "stepping stones." We move through our education from grade to grade and exam to exam to reach our goal of graduation. Careers and jobs are the same. More training, more experience, and careful choices lead us toward our goals. Our relationships with others often progress with "stepping stones." We learn to know, appreciate, and

relate to each other from step to step.

Stepping stones are a means to an end. They further our progress but they are not the end goal. We are there temporarily as we seek a path of further progress. Some are unpleasant. There may or may not have been a better choice. Each step of any crossing should be a learning experience and should make us wiser. Success is the goal!



The path to God is also a way of "stepping stones." Some were taught the ways of God and knowledge of Him from their childhood. If we look, all of us can see Creator God in nature. Life experiences also teach us that we are incomplete, temporary, and sinful. However, the Bible, God's word, con-

tains the complete "Stepping Stones" we need to reach God. This path is different than others because success is guaranteed if we follow His revealed path. James 4:10 says, "He will lift you up," and Jesus says, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Have a great crossing! Heaven is the goal!

*Would you like to receive each issue of **Reaching Out**, or do you know of a friend who might? Send your requests to the church represented on your back page.*

*Do you care to respond to any of the articles?  
Send your thoughts and comments to:*

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# WISDOM FOR YOUTH

## Is Rebellion Normal?

by Gardell Strite

Psychologists tell us that rebellion is a normal thing for young people. "Youth have always rebelled against the standards of their parents," they say. Music, dress, and moral standards are several areas where rebellion is expressed.

Why would youth rebel against the people who love them and have cared for them since they were babies? Several possible reasons could be these:

- They think their parents do not understand them. A youth may reason, "My parents lived so long ago and are so old that they do not remember what it is like to be young."
- They care much more about what their peers think than what God or their parents think. Social acceptance is very important, and their acceptance by others forces them to do things their parents think are wrong. Young people may feel guilty disobeying and disrespecting their parents, but they will do it anyway for the approval of others.
- They are trying to get their parents' attention. Possibly the parents are wrapped up in their own world of a career or adult socializing. A youth may then rebel against parents in a silent plea for attention.
- They do not want any type of restraint on them. This person will be rebellious against every authority in his life. Everyone from the police officer to the school principal to his parents will be his enemy.

**Let's look at what The Bible, God's Answer Book, says about rebellion:**

- *"An evil man seeketh only rebellion"* (Proverbs 17:11).

- *"He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"* (Proverbs 29:1).
- *"Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"* (Ephesians 6:1-3).
- *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account"* (Hebrews 13:17).
- *"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as wickedness and idolatry"* (I Samuel 15:23).

These Scriptures (and others) clearly teach that rebellion is sin and will receive God's judgment.

Rebellion is "normal" in the sense that all people have a sinful nature that naturally rebels against authority. Very young children will make themselves stiff in defiance of their parents. Children must be taught to obey and respect, or they will turn into undisciplined little brats that are very unpleasant to be around. However, when a person becomes older and moves into their teenage years, they become personally responsible for how they respond to authority over them.

If you have been guilty of rebelling against godly authority over you, repent! If you are unsure how to respond to authority over you that seems unreasonable, reach out to an older Christian person for help. And remember, everyone (you and I both!) will give account someday to God, an authority impossible to escape.



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## Want To Be Unique?

by David L. Martin

You already are unique. Your fingerprints are different from anyone else's. So are the irises in your eyes, your gait (the way you walk), and your voice. Practically everything about you is one of a kind. You were not created by a cookie cutter.

Your memories too are your own, maybe including some emotional scars, some regrets, some things you are glad or sad about, things other people might not know. Once again, deep inside, you are unique.

Why should it matter to you? Because everyone likes to be unique, at least a little. It's part of being human. Even John Public has Q. for his middle initial!

Does God want you to be unique? Of course. He made you that way, so you do not have to work hard to be what you already are. Neither do you have to do anything special to get God to notice you. He never says, "Joe, I mean Tom, I mean Jim."

May you develop your individual style? The fact is, you can't help it. Friends recognize your handwriting, your particular sense of humor, your mannerisms. Your front porch (the kind of flowers or the lack of them), or maybe just your apartment door, is likely to take on something of your personality. Besides, there might be some little interest of yours, something you do better

than anyone else. Everyone likes to have his own little niche.

But many of us try too hard to be unique. On a street corner, notice the wild colors of hair, the tattoos, the piercings—anything to make someone stand out from everyone else. Funny thing is, often these techniques make a person look more pitifully like others. He would have been better off leaving good enough alone.

How does the devil look at it? He wants people to lose their identity, or think they are losing it. The fact that people try so hard to make their own mark is a sign that they sense they are drowning in anonymity.

What is the most unique thing about people, the most unique thing about you? The fact that God has His eye on you. No one else can put his spotlight on everyone at once, but God can. When you think you are blending in with a multitude, it may feel that way, but it isn't so.

Scary? If you don't love the Lord, yes. If you do love the Lord, it makes you feel very secure. Confident in your own uniqueness, you can walk into a crowd without a helium balloon, knowing that in God's sight, you will not get lost.

What does the Bible say on the subject?



*"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).*

*"But rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).*

*"Whose names are written in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3).*

*"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5).*

*"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. . . and I will write upon him the name of my God. . . and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12).*

*"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). A seemingly nameless crowd, all wearing the same color, at that!*

Yet what did Jesus promise to the overcomer? *"I . . . will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17).* Think of that. It seems every victorious saint will receive a special new name from Jesus Himself. Unique? I think so.

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## I KNOW HE WATCHES ME

Why should I feel discouraged?  
Why should the shadows come?  
Why should my heart be lonely  
And long for heav'n and home,  
When Jesus is my portion?  
My constant Friend is He:  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.

"Let not your heart be troubled."  
His tender word I hear,  
And resting on His goodness,  
I lose my doubt and fear.  
Though by the path He leadeth,  
But one step I may see:  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted,  
Whenever clouds arise,  
When songs give place to sighing,  
When hope within me dies,  
I draw the closer to Him;  
From care He sets me free:  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.

**I sing because I'm happy—I sing because I'm free—  
For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.**

*-Civilla D. Martin (1905)*





# THE BIBLE & SCIENCE

## Dinosaurs At the Bird Feeder?

by Denton Ford

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind,  
and cattle after their kind, and every thing  
that creepeth upon the earth after his kind:  
and God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:25)

If you go to a natural history museum or read a book that addresses dinosaurs these days, you are very likely to see pictures of dinosaurs with feathers. But since the name 'dinosaur' means 'terrible lizard,' why would they have feathers? One dinosaur researcher, Gregory Paul, put it this way: "*Birds are literally flying dinosaurs.*"<sup>1</sup> You see, among those with an evolutionary worldview, the belief that theropod dinosaurs evolved into birds has become very popular. This oft-repeated idea is obviously incompatible with the account of creation in the Bible, with flying creatures made on day five, and land creatures made on day six. So, are there dinosaurs at your bird feeder, and is this a problem for those who believe the Bible?

### First, What Is a Theropod?

When talking about dinosaurs, the term *theropod* basically refers to those dinosaurs that walked on two legs and are thought to have been carnivorous (among other characteristics). This is the group of dinosaurs claimed to be the birds' ancestors. A couple examples of theropods are *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Allosaurus*.

### Are They Really That Different?

On a superficial level, theropod dinosaurs and birds do seem to have the same body shape overall, but the similarities run out fast when you take a deeper look. Birds are amazingly designed for flight, and as we'll see, dinosaurs were not.

### How Does One Make a Bird?

To evolve a bird from a dinosaur, here are just a sampling of the changes necessary. From the fossil evidence, it seems dinosaurs primarily had scales, while birds have feathers. This in itself is an enormous difference, because feathers are highly complex structures that form out of a follicle and have a central vane, or rachis, supporting an amazing interlocking system of hooks and barbs. The follicle is connected to nerves and muscles, so that movement of individual feathers is possible. On the other hand, reptile scales are much simpler, being made of folds in the skin.

The respiratory system of birds uses a highly efficient pass-through design that lacks a diaphragm muscle. This is far different from a reptilian dinosaur respiratory system, which was more like our lungs and had a diaphragm.

The ability to fly is a major difference between dinosaurs and birds. Most of the theropod dinosaurs had large hind legs and small arms unsuitable as wings. Bird wings are well designed for flight, with their extra-large wing muscles anchored to an enlarged space on their sternum called a keel.

These are just a few differences, though we could also mention how birds have an oil gland for preening their feathers, or how birds and dinosaurs have a different point as their center of balance, among many others. Suffice it to say

<sup>1</sup> Gregory S. Paul, "*The Princeton Field Guide to Dinosaurs*" (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010) p.13

there are major hurdles to evolving a dinosaur into a bird.

### But What About the Fossils?

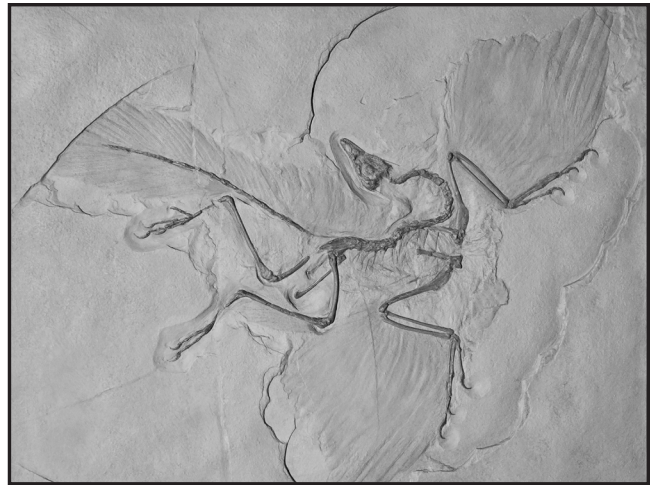
While above it was mentioned that feathers are unique to birds, there are claims of dinosaurs that have been found with feathers. Let's investigate some of them. (Prepare to encounter long scientific names!)

First, most of the claims of feathered dinosaurs fall under the category known as 'dino-fuzz.' These are fossils that have somewhat of a fuzzy outline that evolutionary scientists often interpret as something they call 'protofeathers.' Notice these are not full flight feathers like we would see on a bird, but what is hypothesized to be early precursors to feathers. A good example of a fossil that had this fuzzy outline is a dinosaur called *Sinosauropteryx*. There is disagreement over what this fuzz is, though, and there is a lot of evidence that it could be frayed collagen fibers from decaying skin,<sup>2</sup> not protofeathers. This seems particularly to be the case, since similar 'fuzz' has been found in a fossil *Ichthyosaurus*

(marine reptile), a shark, and various other animals that obviously didn't have feathers.<sup>3</sup>

There are other fossils that don't have dino-fuzz, however. These fossils have fully formed flight feathers. Some of these include *Archaeopteryx*, *Caudipteryx*, and *Anchiornis*. When we look at the skeletal anatomy of these fossils, though there are some unusual features, what we see is bird anatomy,

and it seems the best identification for these fossils with fully formed feathers is that they were true birds. They are unusual birds, but often extinct members of a group seem unusual to us.



Cast of *Archaeopteryx*

### What The Bible Says About It

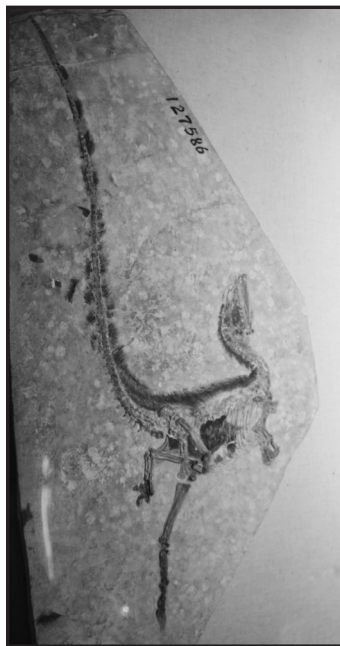
In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, the creation of flying creatures such as birds, and land creatures such as dinosaurs is described. Not only did God create the animals "according to their kind," He even created birds and dinosaurs on separate days. The only reason to interpret the fossil evidence as showing an evolutionary transition is if we are already operating out of an evolutionary worldview. The fossil evidence itself is consistent with the Bible.

### Science Is Not At Odds With The Bible

While this has been a very brief look at a topic about which whole books could be written, it seems there is no need to be intimidated by the dinosaur-bird evolution topic. There are enormous differences between dinosaurs and birds, and when we look at the fossil record, we see two separate kinds of animals, just as we would expect considering the creation account. Once again, the Bible makes sense of the evidence around us.

### A Different "Transitional Form"

While we don't see evidence of clear evolutionary transitions in the fossil record, there is a transition the Bible talks about. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." More than a transition, this is a transformation! Jesus died to reconcile you to Himself. Have you experienced His transformation?



Picture of *Sinosauropteryx*

<sup>2</sup> Alan Feduccia, "Riddle of The Feathered Dragons: Hidden Birds of China" (London, UK, Yale University Press, 2012) p.130-138

<sup>3</sup> T. Lingham-Solair, "Evolution of Birds: *Ichthyosaurus* Integumental Fibers Conform to *Dromaeosaur* Protofeathers" (Naturwissenschaften 90, 2003)



# THE CHRISTIAN HOME

## Dad, His Children, and You

by Caleb Martin

**Writer's Note:** *I like it when writers include a note about themselves along with their writing. It helps me understand the perspective that a writer is coming from. This gives me more tools for parsing the writer's work. I understand why he might emphasize a particular point or miss another important thought. I also tend to read sympathetically when I know his background.*

*This article is more like one long biography, not because my dad and I are better than anyone else, but because I want you to know where I'm coming from in future articles for this column. And I hope we can learn some lessons from my dad.*

**"[He] openeth [his] mouth with wisdom; and in [his] tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).**

God gave my dad and mom a girl and ten boys. God gave my wife and I four girls and three boys.

I'm slowly realizing what Dad must have gone through to raise all of us boys. I wonder if my children will turn out like I did, or, in other words, I wonder how similar I am to Dad. I wonder if I am making all the same mistakes he made. I may never know. Maybe I should ask him sometime. But I'm pretty sure he will shake his head, smile, and say something like "God gives grace to those that need it." In the end, that about sums it up.

In the meantime, you and I must think and pray and read and write and pursue the best course of action for our children. God gives children to all different kinds of people, but mostly young and ignorant parents. That's a good thing, as any 45-year-old man will tell you. But I certainly was (and am) no exception. However, I have benefited tremendously from my dad's wise influence.

Let me try to distill a few of the main things that stand out to me.

Dad was a man of patience. We boys bickered and argued and fought and whined and complained and cried. One boy doing all those things is bad enough. Ten of them stretched out over thirty-five years takes a lot of patience. Patience is an invaluable virtue to learn. It takes discipline and an eye on the future. It maintains a firm grip on the emotions at all times. A patient man learns to prioritize his child's well-being over his own. Patient people learn to enjoy the challenges that life brings and lean heavily on the Lord for wisdom through each moment.

One thing Dad taught me that I am still struggling to learn is to be slow with my words.

Frustration only compounds the problem and the best way to curtail frustration is to hold the tongue and wait for reason and the Holy Spirit to provide a suitable reply. The first thing that comes to your mind is probably not the best response. A wise response remedies the problem. A frustrated response only makes it worse. Maybe this is taking patience a step too far, but sometimes no response may even be the best response.

This leads me to the second important concept that Dad lived out for me. He gave us boys enough room to make mistakes. Maybe I should state it this way—he wasn't a helicopter parent. We roamed the neighborhood while Dad read the newspaper. We had a healthy idea of what Dad expected from us, but we never looked over our shoulder to see if Dad was watching us. We knew he wasn't sneaking up on us to see if we followed his instructions. He trusted us and this gave us the space to develop our own convictions. As a parent, I find this a very delicate balance to strike, and I doubt Dad knows how he



accomplished this. I suspect he would chalk this up to the grace of God.

But I'm also sure that Dad thought about this topic and prayed for us. Dad believed that his children had the potential to go far beyond him in service to God. He didn't try to map our life out for us. He trusted us to God and dreamed of all the places that God would use us in His Kingdom. He held on to us but loosely. His aim in raising us was not selfish ambition or pride but unwavering commitment to God.

Dad modeled a disciplined life for us. He didn't waste his money on home upgrades and fancy vehicles. He provided us with space to learn gardening and farming. We mowed the yard with push mowers and weeded the flower beds and gardens with our hands. When we were older, he taught us to frame houses. Ten energetic boys can frame up a house in no time! Dad wasn't harsh. But he taught us to work. Even when the Florida summers peaked over 100 degrees, he would doggedly raise the walls and frame the roof. Dad was tenacious. At the end of the day, even after us boys would be edging towards the truck, hoping to go home, Dad would be striding the job site, straightening boards, sweeping the floor, or picking up trash, whistling all the while.

Dad demonstrated a life of commitment to God. I'm sure he would argue this point strenuously with me because he is a humble man and recognizes his flaws, but all of us children would testify to this fact. It started with his teaching about God constantly. Dad set aside about half an hour daily for leading us in singing, Bible reading, and prayer. This family worship time was obviously meaningful to Dad. He didn't call us



together out of duty. He believed in it passionately. Cumulatively, we spent hours each week, learning new songs, discussing the meaning of Bible passages, and interceding for others in prayer.

But Dad's commitment to God went much beyond teaching. He lived it out by honesty in his business. He helped the poor. He dedicated time to the church. He denied himself pleasures and riches for the sake of the gospel.

Did Dad make mistakes? Of course. But I love Dad because I see a man that loves God and lives sincerely. This love gave me the stable foundation I needed to strike out in faith on the path that my father walked. And you know, Dad wasn't the first man to walk that path. Come to think of it, Grandpa did for Dad what Dad did for me. And I suspect that chain goes far back in time. I pray that you and I can become one more link in this long chain. And that when our children are parents and have a moment to breathe and reflect, I pray that they will smile and say, "Thank God for Dad."

#### **Correction Notice:**

On page 6 of Issue 122 of *Reaching Out*, in the article "What About Aliens?" we mistakenly printed that the closest star to earth besides our sun is around 4.25 trillion light years away. The correct distance is 4.25 light years away. We apologize for this error.

-The Editor



# MONEY AND ME

## Principles of Giving

by Gary Miller

### Give the first fruits

In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to give of their first fruits. Each time they experienced an increase, such as at harvest, they were to give some back to the Lord. This served as a constant reminder of where these blessings came from. First-fruit giving provides an insight into the heart of God. He wants us to acknowledge His hand in every good gift. All of us experience times of increase. Maybe we are able to sell an item for more than we thought, or we receive a raise or bonus at work. These are excellent times to show our thankfulness to God by giving a portion of the increase back to Him.



### Give sacrificially

Jesus seemed more interested in the size of a man's sacrifice than the size of his gift. As He watched a widow throw two mites (pennies) into the offering box, His assessment must have shocked the disciples. We usually think the amount we give is the most important part. But Jesus said this woman had given more than all the rest, simply because she had given everything she had.

Analyze your giving for a moment in light of

this teaching. Are you willing to sacrifice to give? Sometimes our giving consists mainly of the unwanted and unneeded. It is not difficult to give money if we can't think of anything we need. There is no great sacrifice in giving time if it is spare time anyway. But are you willing to sacrifice to share? Can you consciously abandon something in order to give? Remember the widow and her two mites. We tend to focus only on what is given, but God's eye also looks at what is kept.

### Give quietly

Jesus gave us a method to analyze our motives: Are we willing to give unnoticed? If our hearts are motivated by love for the Lord, we won't mind if He is the only observer. It's not always easy to know our motives. It is easy to slip into a habit of doing or giving to be seen. But it is very important to practice giving quietly. Do everything possible to ensure that only the Lord is aware of your gift. However, there are times when it is impossible or even imprudent to hide what we are involved in. And it is possible to get so cautious about how things are done that very little gets done.

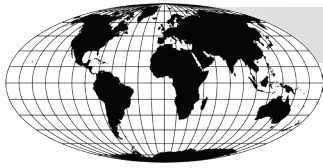
But Jesus knew our fleshly tendencies. He knew our tendency to desire praise and our "sanctified" ways of getting attention. The Lord has provided quiet giving as a way for us to analyze our motives and ensure it is His Kingdom we are primarily interested in building and not our own.

This principle is very important. Learn to analyze events and activities not just by results, but in light of Scriptural principle. Many types of fundraisers can be effective and raise large amounts of money for good causes. But do they enable the donor to remain unnoticed? Is it possible that God is more interested in the principle than the amount of money raised?

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# THE WORLD TODAY

## The End of It All

*by Daniel Allgyer*

Tariffs. Borders. Recessions. Terrorists. Wars.  
Flooding. Tornadoes. Fires. Earthquakes.  
Measles.

Debt. Inflation. Taxes. Payments. Collapses.  
Space Travel. Robots. Artificial Intelligence.  
Self-Driving Cars.

The modern world in 2025 is screaming along. Some are excited. Some are hopeful. Some are worried. And some are scared.

Technology leaps ahead almost daily. Information is ever expanding, whether it's true or fake. The used must be updated, while the old is outdated.

To what end is this mad race leading? Will the end be good or bad?

In the Bible, we read of an expected end. To the time of the end, Daniel writes that many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased. Jesus predicted wars, commotions, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes at the time of the end.<sup>1,2</sup>

The Bible prophesies of economic turmoil and a forced monetary system controlled by a possessed leader at the time of the end. It even predicts an end time image that is alive and can speak (think artificial intelligence).<sup>3</sup>

The Bible says that evil men in the world will get worse and worse. And that deception will be a mark of the end.

These things prophesied by God to happen appear to be happening. This is no surprise. When God says a thing will take place, it always does.

So as trouble and evil and deception increase, what will be the end of it all? Again, the Bible clearly shows an expected end.

The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven to deliver his saints and to bring judgment on all

sinners who reject Him. This world and its rulers and dominions will be consumed and destroyed in the end. King Jesus will take over and set up an everlasting kingdom which shall never be destroyed.<sup>4,5</sup>

In the world today, God is still offering mercy and forgiveness to sinners. He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But at the time of the end, God will pour out His wrath without mixture upon the evil on the earth. Without mixture means without mercy. And justice alone is terrible.

Today, we can humble ourselves and fall upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, and be broken and contrite, allowing Him to redeem us. Or we can harden our hearts and rebel against God, until, in the end, the Rock falls upon us and grinds us to powder. The wheels of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.<sup>6</sup>

At some point in our lives, each one of us must choose. We must choose to either accept or reject Jesus Christ. We can choose whatever we want to and do what seems right in our eyes. But remember, at the end, we will stand alone and answer to our God.

God will be the King, the Judge, and no one (not even the dead) will escape justice. But mercy and truth have come through God's Son, Jesus Christ. Today is the day of salvation, if we choose to soften our hearts, believe, and open ourselves to the lordship of Jesus.

For the ungodly, the end is destruction and death. For the disciple of Jesus Christ, the end is deliverance, peace, and everlasting life.

Choose you this day, whom you will serve and what your end will be. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

### References:

- 1 Daniel 12:4
- 2 Matthew 24:7

- 3 Revelation 13:15-17
- 4 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 5 Daniel 7:26-27

- 6 Matthew 21:44
- 7 Joshua 24:15



