



MINUTES WITH MESSIAH

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THE FINAL TIME CHANGE

In late October much of the United States will change from Daylight Savings Time (also called “Summer Time” in Europe) to Standard Time. This time change is a ritual dreaded by clock collectors the world over. Twice a year a year many people have to change their clocks from one “time” to another, “gaining” or “losing” an hour along the way. In Europe the change is made at the same time (1:00 AM Greenwich Mean Time) across all time zones. In the United States the change is made at 2:00 AM in each time zone. The common explanation for this unusual time is that the bars (pubs) close at that hour, so making the change doesn’t reduce their potential income by an hour. Some states, like Arizona, don’t change from Standard to Daylight Savings Time. They in effect just change time zones. While 7:00 doesn’t change for Phoenicians, they still have to figure out whether it is that time in California or in New Mexico.

Time is a gift of God to man. By it we measure our lives, “by coffee spoons” (in T. S. Eliot’s phrase). We count time by multiple measurements: seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia, eras. Our obsession with time has led us to develop more sophisticated timepieces. Try living today by a sundial or a sand-filled hourglass. You will miss your bus, lose out on overtime pay, and have difficulty recording your favorite TV shows.

God measures time differently, even in the context of our lives. Instead of years he uses another time unit, the “vapor.” (Jas 4:14) He even introduced the Theory of Relativity thousands of years BE (before Einstein). (2 Pet 3:8) But even these terms show that God is now measuring time.

The time change is inevitable each year. It happens twice a year, just like clockwork. It is so predictable and unavoidable that personal computers and some VCR’s can even reset themselves. As we change our clocks this year, it might be good to remember one other time change, which is equally unavoidable. The computers can’t predict when it will be, but it is coming just the same. That is the time change between “time” and eternity.

It will happen in “a twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor 15:22)—another measurement of time. Suddenly there will be no more time. How do you divide eternity? After

the time change we will still exist. We may still know joy or pain, love or hate. So what does this impending time change mean to us? It means we should consider now where we want to be after time changes. Once the clocks are reset (or unset?) we can no longer change whether we will experience joy or pain. Only the decision we make here can determine whether telling your girlfriend you will love her “till the end of time” will be literal, or whether you will be able to love beyond the end of time.

The good thing is that God lets us choose “this day whom you will serve.” (Josh 24:15) On the one hand, one can choose to ignore God. For this choice one need do nothing. Failure to choose to follow God is to choose to remain in sin. Of Jesus Peter said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) So simply refusing to rely on his blood for forgiveness of sins is sufficient to keep one from salvation from sin. And that is sufficient to keep one from the presence of God. On the other hand, one can go into the change from time to eternity knowing that they will enjoy the joy and favor of God. One must choose to die to a former life of sin and be reborn through immersion in water and resurrection to a new life. (Romans 6) Even so, there is another passage that deals with time that applies. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb 3:12-13)

Now is the time to make a decision, and stick with it. There is a time change coming. Make sure you are ready for eternity. There will not be another change again.

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MEN WITH A NAME OF GOD

Will Shakspeare wrote, “What’s in a name?” This has been the attitude of mankind since. But long before Shakespear, man felt that there was much in a name. There was power, perhaps, or a hint of a man’s character. Thus we hear of Jacob (Supplanter) becoming Israel (Prevails with God), or the account in 1 Sam 25:25 concerning Nabol, which means fool, that “as his name is so is he.” In a time when a name meant so much, how great would a man be who had as his name the name of God? A number of people in the Bible have names that include the name Jehovah (Jah, Yahweh) in some form. Others have names including other names of God. I feel that we can learn a lot about the nature of God from these names or these people. Some are well known, others less so, but all reveal an attribute of our God. Space does not permit an exhaustive list at this time. Since many are similar, they may even fall into natural categories.

Miscellaneous God-named people

First let us look at a few “minor” names, and some of God’s attributes. Two kings of the divided kingdoms had the name “God is Father”—Joab and Abijah. (Abba is father.) Some have said that God is not

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called Father until the New Testament. This is clearly not so. God has been father from the beginning, and even reminded kings of that fact.

A number of men had variations on the name that God is our supporter or aid. These would include Josiah, Joash, Jonathan, and Joseph. It must have been a comfort to this latter person to realize through thirteen years of trouble that God would give him aid. Sometimes, though, he may not have believed his own name. Yet even in prison “the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” (Gen 39:21) God lived up to Joseph’s name.

At least four people, including an advisor to David and the priest who saved Joash, had the name

Jehoiadah (God knows). It is an appropriate name for a teacher or advisor, as these men were. It would be nice to take advice from someone who constantly reminds us that God knows, so his advice is good.

There are several Johanan’s (God is gracious) and a Jotham (God is perfect). A woman even makes the list, and not just any woman. The mother of Moses was named Jochebed (God is gracious). God was truly gracious to make her the mother of one of the greatest and most humble men who ever lived.

God Is

Jesse, whose name means “God Is,” was the father of King David. Just as Jesse preceded David the King, so God’s existence precedes his only-begotten son, Jesus.

The first attribute of God we must accept is his existence. We live in a world where many would rather deny that. Some evolutionists and all atheists do not accept the existence of God. There are even Christians who indirectly try to show that God does not exist. Many biblical scholars try to prove the existence of two writers of Isaiah or several in the book of Genesis. They then say that the book that they spend so much of their lives studying is not inspired, but a creation of man. Others explain away the miracles. They say that manna was the natural secretion of a particular bush or that the nation of Israel happened to cross an arm of the Red Sea at low tide. Jericho’s walls fell during an earthquake and the earth came into existence by an accident. People want to explain away God because they don’t want to have to deal with him.

God exists. Genesis 1:1 doesn’t explain God, it just assumes God. One of the “names” of God, as told to Moses, is “I AM.” (Ex 3:14) This may also be translated “I was” or “I will be” because it is a simple statement of God’s existence. The writer of Hebrews put acceptance of the existence of God as a prerequisite to pleasing God. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6)

God is Exalted

A king (Joram or Jehoram) and a prophet (Jeremiah) have names that point out that God is high above all else. We serve God because he is exalted. Jeremiah taught that the people of Judah should return to God because he is exalted. “The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as

they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.” (Jer 25:30) He frequently complained about the people worshiping on the “high places,” because his own name taught that God was the one who should be on high.

How high is God? Psalm 99:2 says, “He is high above all people.” A few psalms later we read, “The Lord is high above all nations; his glory above the heavens.” (Ps 113:4) Several times (Acts 7:48; Heb 7:1; and others) God is called the “most high.” There is nothing higher than most high.

Even though God is exalted, he paradoxically humbles himself. “Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.” (Ps 138:6) More than this, he even lives among the lowly. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa 57:15)

The son of God, heir to exaltation, likewise humbled himself. Only then could he be exalted.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:5-11)

So God is exalted, and his son is exalted. What responsibility does that lay on us? If we want to be exalted like God, then we have the responsibility to be humble. If we do not humble ourselves, we can not be exalted. Jesus stated that on more than one occasion. “For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 14:11; 18:14) He further gave example of this principle on the night he was betrayed into the hands of those who wanted him killed.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not

greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:12-17)

If we are to serve God, we must be willing to serve his people. Yet there is another obligation laid on us by God’s exalted nature. “And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.” (Isa 30:18) God’s mercy is an exalted virtue, and grows naturally out of his exalted nature. If we are to be like God, we must also practice mercy. “Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” (Lk 6:36)

Unless we are merciful we will not receive mercy. (Matt 5:7) We must be merciful, for Jesus was merciful to us. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” (Col 3:12-13) This mercy includes forgiveness, but goes beyond that. Mercy includes understanding, even when

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forgiveness is not requested. It includes forbearance when wronged, or when we see someone who does not follow God. Mercy keeps us from condemning the homeless, the hopeless, and the homosexual. Mercy is the high virtue that allows us to go to them, where they are, and teach the gospel without judgement or condescension. Because God is exalted, this is the sort of mercy we must practice.

These are but a few of the attributes of God given in people whose names include the syllable “Je.” Another time, Lord willing, we may look at others with that syllable, and even some whose names contain more than one name of God. Even if we do not possess one of these names ourselves, though, people can know that we wear the name of God. Whatever our given name, we can also wear a new name—the name of Jesus the Christ. Let us defend that name that it not be diluted. Let the name of Jesus Christ show in everything you do.

THE 144,000

Now that my question and answer web site, What Does the Bible Say About..?, is again part of my Minutes With Messiah web site, I may occasionally include some of the questions and my answers in this publication. Here is one I found informative.

Question

Who are the 144,000 that are mentioned in Revelations?

Answer

The book of the Revelation (it is one revelation, not several revelations) mentions one or two groups of 144,000 people. The first is in Revelation 7:2-4.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The passage goes on to list the twelve tribes of Israel and say that 12,000 were sealed from each of the twelve tribes. The second mention of the number is in Revelation 14:1-5.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven,

as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

These may be the same as the ones in Revelation 7.

But who are they? The passages say they are from the tribes of Israel and that they were the first converts to Christianity. Since the book of the Revelation is a book of symbols, we can tell a couple of things about them. As Jews who were the first converted, they clearly symbolize the church. The number 144,000 is symbolic of a vast number. Almost any time a prophecy speaks of thousands, it should be given this meaning, rather than taking it literally. Since there were twelve tribes and twelve apostles, then 144,000 would probably represent a large number of Jews taught by Jesus followers and converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah. Since they were "firstfruits" they are clearly the first ones converted. Since the Revelation reveals things that are, at John's time, "soon to come to pass" (Revelation 1:1), then these must represent the church that then existed, which are about to resist the power of the Roman Empire.

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