

God's Eras End

GOD IS LONGSUFFERING, BUT HE'S NOT STAGNANT.

We are so used to living in an era of grace that we forget there was such a thing as an era of law, when God's very people were stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath. On a more global scale, we forget that, at one time, God inundated the planet with a whole bunch of water, saving only eight people and killing the rest.

Feel better about gutting it through a hard winter?

We now live in the era of the grace of God. If any of my readers are trying to win the lottery, look around. You've already won it. God is at peace, not only with you personally, but with the world. You have no idea how easy life is without 75-pound hailstones and locusts that look like Phyllis Diller.



Not only are you blessed to be living during a relatively accommodating time—hailstone-wise—but you will also be seated with God when the present era ends and the shaking starts.

Be an ambassador of peace; then, tell someone about God's present attitude toward humanity. Most of the world thinks God is in a terrible mood. He's not. Forwarding this newsletter could literally save someone's life.

Nothing can save Phyllis Diller's hair. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love,
I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Ambassadors of peace to be withdrawn before war

God will soon declare war on the world. The coming destruction described in the book of Revelation will make Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds* look like a Tom Cruise movie. (Oh, wait—it *is* a Tom Cruise movie.) Even though you are members of the body of Christ, many of you still write to ask whether or not you will be called upon to endure the terrors described in this book.

You won't be. Here is one reason why:

All is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation. For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, 'Be conciliated to God!'
—2 Corinthians 5:18-20

We are living in an era wherein God implores humanity to be at peace with Him. Being the strong, silent type, God speaks through the members of the body of Christ. This is God's "diplomatic solution" to a world that hates Him. Because of the cross, God simply refuses to recognize conflict. The world can spit on God's face, flip Him the middle finger, and call His Son every name in the book. His reaction? He smiles and says, "I am conciliated to you."

He won't always come across this way.

God will soon change His tactics. You say, "Martin, God does not change." True. The "changed tactics" will appear so only from the relative vantage point of Earth. Absolutely speaking, God has planned to "change tactics" for a long time.

Back in the day, our country tried to make nice with Iraq. They wouldn't listen, so we rattled their windows a little bit. The result? They listened after that. This is basically what God does, except His reasons and goals are loftier. There will come a time when this present era of grace will end, and God will use alternative means to bring the world in worship to His feet.

God disciplines. If you don't believe that, read



Hebrews, chapter 12. Then read the entire Old Testament. God disciplines for good—always.

Back to Iraq. Before the United States—or any nation—declares war on another nation, that nation withdraws its ambassadors. The reason is self-evident, but I will state it anyway: The warring nation does not want its ambassadors blown up.

We are ambassadors of peace, not war. Our mission is to declare conciliation. When God places that conciliation on the back burner, we will be more out of place here than SpongeBob Squarepants in a Tom Cruise movie.

The U.S. military relieves conscientious objectors of military service because killing other

"The warring nation does not want its ambassadors blown up."

humans compromises the objectors' belief system. God killing a third of humankind compromises *our* belief system. Our belief system is the gospel of grace as found in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

Even God's eras come to an end. Paul said in Romans 11:25, "Callowness, in part, on Israel has come, *until the complement of the nations may be entering.*" There are a finite number of people in the body of Christ. When that last member enters, this present window of grace closes until the physical return of Christ.

So teach grace while you still can. In the meantime—prepare to be evacuated. ■

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY KIDS!

Dear Martin, I am a believer, but I am worried about my kids. I am not sure that they are members of the body of Christ. You say that only members of the body of Christ will get snatched away to be with Christ. I can't stand the thought of me going to be with Christ and not having my children with me. I can't stand the thought of them going through the Tribulation. What comfort can you offer me? Thank you! —Anne

Dear Anne, My comfort to you is that God loves your kids much, much more than you do. I am not going to water down my response to you. It is true that, if God has not graced your children with belief, then they are unbelievers. This is a hard truth. When Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:14 about children being hallowed by a believing mother, this does not mean that the children have saving faith and are members of Christ's body. No one "rides to heaven" grasping onto another person's shirttail. (God gives "to each" the measure of faith—Romans 12:3). In the same context, the unbelieving



husband is also hallowed; notice he is called "unbelieving" and "hallowed" at the same time. This hallowing simply means that the husband and the children are set apart ("set apart" is the meaning of "hallowed" or "holy") to be blessed by the physical and spiritual blessings (peace, for instance) that come to the household via the believing wife.

Teach your kids the truth. Do not send them to church, where they will hear lies. You can plant and water, but only God can cause growth. Only He can give faith. Trust Him. Even if your children are raised and you blew it with them, still trust God. Never stop trusting Him, Anne. He is bigger than your mistakes. God made you the way you are for a reason. He is in control of the universe, so surely He is in control of you and your children. And all your loved ones.

Again, God loves your children more than you do. God is love.

Your wicked imagination of what *might* happen is not love. Your morbid thoughts are not God's thoughts. Turn off your morbid mind. God does not protect you from your own imagination. Think of things which are true and just and pure. This is too big of a burden for you to bear, Anne. You have a *Father*.

Trust your Father, Anne. Trust Him. ■

"You say we're not going through the Tribulation? You're going to have to give me some verses on that, Zender."

OKAY.

"Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him." —Romans 5:9



"And you became imitators of us and of the Lord ... waiting for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation."

—1 Thess. 1:6, 10



"For God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." —1 Thess. 5:9



You are not one of the 144,000.

144,000

The book of Revelation speaks of 144,000 human beings who, in the closing days of this eon, will be sealed by God and carried safely *through* the harrowing days of God's

coming indignation. The context plainly states these 144,000 to be sealed "out of every tribe of the sons of Israel"; 12,000 are to be sealed from each tribe.

I am mildly amused (considerably agitated, actually) when people ask me what I think God means when He says, "a hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel," (Rev. 7:4-5). My standard answer: He means what He says.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that 144,000 is the total number of people—of all time—who

are saved and going to heaven. Before you roll your eyes too hard at this, consider that not a few standard-issue Christians claim to have been given the revelation by God that they are "one of the 144,000." Interesting that they take the number literally, but discard God's explanation as figurative. Unless you're an Israelite (and a celibate male, at that—see Rev. 14:4), you can kiss your pipe dreams of "following the Lambkin wherever It should be going" good-bye.

You do not want to be one of the 144,000 anyway. If you are of that number, you have no part in Christ's body. The body of Christ is an entity distinct from "the bride of the Lambkin," which is Israel. It is Israel's job to shepherd the nations of earth; that is why they remain here. We, on the other hand, shall be reconciling the heavens (Ephesians 2:6-7).

Guess where we must be for *that*? ■

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.

God likes me, so I let Him

YOU CHOSE THE RIGHT PERSON, GOD. GREAT CALL.

I refuse to make excuses as to why I am in the body of Christ and other people aren't. It is as simple as this: GOD LIKES ME. It is true that I am a likeable person, but this is not why God likes me. He likes me because He chose to like me. This is in accord with His grace, not my actions. You may say, "That's not fair."

Let us rid ourselves of this notion that God is fair. He's not fair; He's right. Everything He does is perfect. God intends to save everyone—*perfect*. But He chooses only certain people to be rescued from indignation—*perfect*. I am one of His chosen ones—*perfect*. They guy down the street is not now chosen—*perfect*.

See how easy this is? It takes a theological seminary to beat this type of common

sense out of a person.

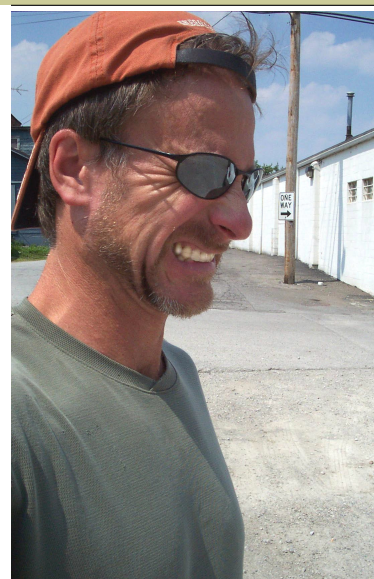
We think we do God a favor when we whine at His throne and say, "Why me,

God? I am so unworthy. Discard me like a rotten banana peel, O Wise One!"

Of course we are unworthy. Duh. But here is the news flash: *Our call is about Him, not us.*

When will we let God be happy about His choices? His calling of us is "in accord with the delight of His will" (Eph. 1:5). When we say, "Why me?" it's the same as telling Him

He made a mistake. Let's quit robbing God of His delight. Here is God's word to me, followed by a response that delights Him:



GOD: Martin, I have chosen you for a special salvation. You are coming in before a lot of other people. Lots of people are going to die during the Tribulation—but not you. Lots of people will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death—but not you. I love everyone and will reconcile all to Myself in the end, but I have an *especial* liking of you, simply because it delights Me to laud you with all My treasure. So welcome to My family, Martin.

MARTIN: Awesome, God! Thanks!

It takes far more faith to trust God with the rest of humanity than it does to complain to Him because He saves some now and some later.

It takes far more faith to say, "Thank You, God," than, "You chose the wrong person." ■

This "silver bullet" puts us with Christ when the trouble starts.

People look for a "silver bullet" verse that proves we will not be here during the killer days of the coming indignation. I have one. It's 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9—

"... it is just of God to repay affliction to those afflicting you, and to you who are being afflicted, ease, with us, at the unveiling of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful messengers, in flaming fire, dealing out vengeance to those who are not acquainted with God and those who are not obeying the evangel of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."

The two key phrases are, 1) "ease, with us," and,

2) "dealing out vengeance." The critical proof word is "at."

"The Unveiling of Jesus Christ" is the actual name of the book of Revelation. At the same time these events begin ("at") we will be having ease. These following two events, then, are concurrent:

- ▶ Christ unveiled, dealing out vengeance
- ▶ our ease

And that's all I have to say about that. ■

