

## 80 years old? Here's a lollypop.

You think you have lived a long time, and perhaps you have— from your perspective. You have seen a couple World Wars, gotten married, raised children, and now your children are having children, and some of *them* are procreating. You have buried several relatives, crying each time and



mourning for months. How old are you now? 80? That's old by modern standards, but in vast

schemes, it's childhood. 80 years is but 8% of a thousand. Imagine living ten more of what you have already lived. And you've still got 200 years to go.

And I speak now merely of the thousand-year kingdom.

God has supplied us an example of the pain/joy, short/long concept: Childbirth. It goes like this: OUCH for a few brief hours (a rather large OUCH for several minutes), then you forget much of it when the baby comes (or so I hear). Life in a nutshell is this: 80 years of groping in apparent darkness with lots of toe-stubbing and crying, interspersed with good restaurants and some exceptional films—and then you die. Next thing you know: a thousand years of pure pleasure, purchased on the ticket of your flicker (80 years) of relative misery (don't forget the restaurants).

And a thousand years is only a thimble-full of the coming the pleasure. ■

# 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.

## Like a dream in the night

The secret is realizing during the pain that relief and joy wait in the wings

People seek constantly for a Nirvana; a Panacea. They try drugs and music and sex—as well they should. I'm serious. It is important to find out what doesn't work. Thomas Edison tried hundreds of times to find the perfect filament for his light bulb before finding the perfect filament for his light bulb.

If you can manage it, it is wise to observe and learn from others' failure. This is to be desired over repeating them. General Electric, for instance, learned from Edison's mistrials and never repeated them. If your friends need to crash and burn on drugs before crying to Jesus, then so be it. If this it what happens, it is exactly what they needed. Not one snort less, nor one minute less misery, would have brought them crying to Christ. That was their route to finally giving up; it was their path to the end of self.

If you can learn from that and not repeat it—wonderful. You will suffer some other thing, trust me. Your path is different. No one gives up apart from pain, and God brings pain. There are several varieties of pain, and God has a large file cabinet labeled, "Pain." He is faithful that way. Yes, I said faithful, because after the pain comes the giving up. And only after the giving up does relief and joy ensue.

Picture three dominoes: □ pain, □ giving up, □ relief and joy. This is the divine order, and it happens no other way—ever. The pain buys the joy; there can be no joy apart from it. So the joy comes, and the pain *only then* gets appreciated as a necessary prelude; an essential domino.

This is why I say: *God is doing it for you, not to you.* The secret to happiness is realizing, during the pain, that relief and joy wait in the wings.

"Well, just give me the relief and joy, and skip the pain," someone says.



I see you haven't been paying attention. Pain *must* precede relief and joy, otherwise there is no contrast. Contrast is essential.

"But why does the pain go on and on and on?"

Relatively speaking, it doesn't. Your life is ridiculously short compared with eternity. Even in that short life, the true, hardcore pain comes only occasionally. And consider this: God mercifully lets you sleep a third of your life away. Lesson: God dispenses quickly with pain, yet lingers over relief and joy.

"I always dream at night. But then in the morning, I can hardly remember my dreams."

Beautiful. That's how this life will one day seem to you: like a dream in the night. When we are with God, we will remember our hardships here, but the picture will be fuzzy. We will barely be able to recall them. Imagine, saying to yourself, "Did I used to be a mortal? *Oh, yes. Now I remember.*" Imagine having to work hard to recollect this seemingly endless life.

"I can use that information."

You and me both. ■

## The week: an intimation of divine order



**S**even is an important number to God, and He is telling truth through it.

Have you ever wondered where the week comes from? Maybe I'm the only one. We assume the existence of Sunday through Saturday. By this construction, God is acquainting us with a finite yet fantastic plan.

The week is a system of order. God invented it so that your dentist could say, "Your appointment is Thursday." Otherwise

it would be, "Come in whenever." Nothing would work.

God brings Earth out of chaos in six days, then stops on the seventh. On the seventh day, He is satisfied. The Hebrew word for seven, *sheba*, literally means, satisfaction."

This is why God told the Jews to rest on the seventh day. He had their satisfaction in mind. It was a dim imitation of His work back in Genesis, chapter one. It is also an *intimation* (dim as well) of coming satisfaction.

We work for six days, then relax for one, satisfied with our labor. In the big picture, we struggle on this earth as a race for 6000 years, followed by a 1000 year era of peace and plenty.

And that's only the beginning. ■

## What a revelation!

WHEN THERE IS NOT YET PROPHETIC FULFILMENT, SCOFFERS INVENT IT

**"In the last days, scoffers will be coming with scoffing, going according to their own desires and saying, 'Where is the promise of His presence? For since the fathers were put to repose, all is continuing thus from the beginning of creation.'**

**"For they want to be oblivious of this, that there were heavens of old, and an earth cohering out of water and through water, by the word of God; through which the then world, being deluged by water, perished."**

—2 Pet. 3:3-7

People are impatient. When God doesn't fulfill His promises fast enough, the first thing folks do is scoff at His apparent tardiness. Next, they invent fulfillment where none yet exists.

"Preterism." This is the name of a belief system contending that the events of the book of Revelation are history, fulfilled in 70 AD. Preterists do not believe that Jesus Christ will physically return to earth. Rather, He returns "spiritually" inside His people. There are no literal hailstones to the Preterist, no literal antichrist, and no literal ecclesias in Asia Minor. The thousand-year kingdom? Figurative. Same with the new heavens and new earth. In fact, according to Preterists, we now live in the literal new creation. *What's the matter? Can't you tell?*

Let's get real. All prophesy concerning the "end times" got put on hold in Acts when Israel refused the testimony of the twelve at Pentecost. In Romans, chapter 11, Paul calls this "a secret." The secret is that God paused Israel to call out members of a new ecclesia: the body of Christ. When this work concludes, "end time" prophesies concerning Israel resume.

Haughty people unaware of God's timing, Peter called "scoffers." Paul calls them "ignorant" (Rom. 11:25).

We call them "Preterists." ■

## This eon is wrapping up

**W**e know from Revelation 20:4 that the coming kingdom will last 1000 years. This is helpful information after learning that a thousand years is as a day to God. From 2 Peter 3:8—

**"Now of this one thing you are not to be oblivious, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."**

Take the seven days of the week and extrapolate. That is, cut the seven days from your calendar, enlarge them, and apply them to vast eras. The coming satisfaction for earth and earthlings is 1000 years long. This resembles the sabbath day—yes? Now: there have been nearly 6000 years since Adam, and a thousand years is as a day to God; God created the earth in six days, then felt good about it (*sheba*) on the seventh day. Our week is six days of work, followed by one of satisfaction. Are you seeing a pattern here?

2 Peter 3:8 is a formula, I believe. God is handing us the key to a treasure map.

Once again, God fashioned the earth in six days and spent day seven in blissful satisfaction. He copied and pasted this

seven-day pattern onto our calendars, giving us the week. To the Jews he said:

**"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath...in it you shall not do any work...for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth...and rested on the seventh day..." (Exodus 20:9-11).**

As a race, we labor upon this oblate spheroid for 6000 years, followed by 1000 years (and that's just the beginning) of feeling good about it. The 6000 years is the necessary prelude to the 1000 years of satisfaction. Is the 6000 years a long time? Not to a God Who considers 6000 years as six days. And not when you see how satisfying the 1000 years is. (Besides, reader, you and I only experience a tiny fraction of the 6000 years of labor—80 years worth, possibly. But as believers, we experience every blessed second of the Satisfaction known as the Millennium—and beyond.)

No one knows the exact day when the 5999.99 on God's divine odometer clicks over to the magic number, but it is close, I believe. And in motion picture parlance, it's coming to a theater near you. ■





# Rants & Stuff

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

## Do Sundays feel creepy? Here's why

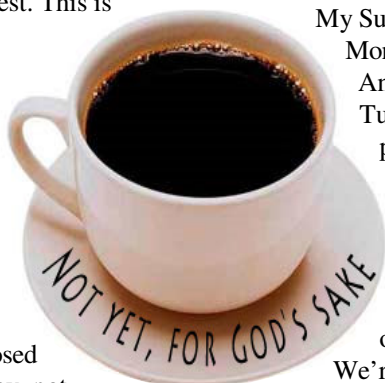
I JUST LOVE THE THIRD DAY OF THE WORK WEEK—TUESDAY

In God's wise plan, one day rest follows six days work. (Maybe I should say: six parts work; one part rest.) The rest is only sweet because of the six days work. If there are no six days work, there can be no rest. This is why the wise man of Ecclesiastes 5:12 says:

**"The sleep of the working man is pleasant."**

Sunday always felt weird and creepy to me. Now I know why. It took me years to realize that I was supposed to be working on Sunday, not resting. Sunday is the first day of the work week. As soon as I started working on Sunday, the day felt normal again.

Living this revelation means fighting modern culture, that's true, because



everyone else is attending church or watching football. I have to wake up and say repeatedly to myself: *It's the first day of the work week; it's the first day of the work week.*

My Sundays finally feel like Mondays now—thank God.

And Mondays feel like Tuesdays—the Lord be praised. As for Saturdays, I love goofing off then.

I credit the sweetness of Saturdays to the previous six days work. God said, "Goof off one day; that's it."

We're wired to goof off one day a week. Goof off more than that, and you feel like a slacker.

Treat Sunday like a holiday, and coffee breaks lose their meaning.



I'm not saying that in God's grand scheme we return to work after the 1000-year kingdom. We don't. I'm simply saying it's the pattern for now. The work/rest cycle eventually stops. In glory it will all feel like rest, even while producing the most marvelous things.

My wife's grandparents retired and moved to Florida, where they lived a life of leisure. I remember Melody calling her grandmother one day and asking, "What are you doing right now, Grandma?" And her grandmother said, "We're taking a coffee break." Melody told me this when she got off the phone. I was flabbergasted. I said, "What the heck are they taking a break from?" ■

## Hump Day

Let's take a look now at a really big calendar and consider the eons. "Eon" is a scriptural word meaning a long period of time. Paul calls the era in which we live: "the present wicked eon" (Gal. 1:4). There have been two previous eons (Eph. 3:9), and two will follow (Eph. 2:7). Thus, we are in the middle eon. Something monumental occurred in the *middle* of this middle eon. Can you guess what it was?

**"Yet now, once, at the conclusion of the eons, for the repudiation of sin through His sacrifice, is He manifest." —Heb. 9:26**

We learn from this that when Christ visited Earth in first-century Judea, the eons began concluding. Since God is orderly and symmetrical, I believe Christ's appearance was the hub around which lay the eonian times. I picture it something like this:

+  
— — — — —  
**THE EONS**

On God's giant Calendar, therefore, the coming of Christ was hump day.

So hang on, folks—we're heading into the weekend. ■

