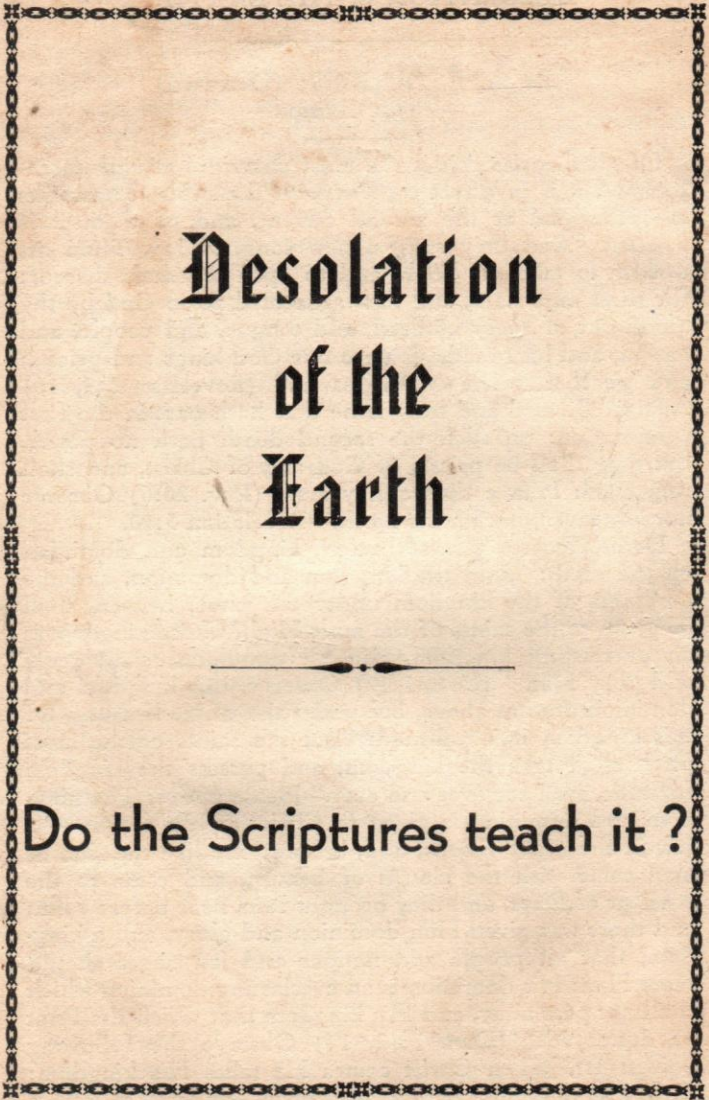




Desolation of the Earth



Do the Scriptures teach it ?

DESOLATION of THE EARTH

By A. F. DUGGER, (Deceased)
—Sixth Edition—

Of all theories this is the most unscriptural and unreasonable; it is in direct conflict with the Bible. The saints are redeemed at the second advent, and of them it is written: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth:" (Revelaton 5:9, 10) Again, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6) Observe not in heaven, but **on the earth.**—Revelation 5:10.

Daniel located Christ's reign, kingdom and dominion on the earth: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." (Dan. 7:27) Observe, this kingdom and dominion are not above, but **under the whole heavens.** Of this kingdom it is affirmed: "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Please notice: The kingdom and dominion is given to Christ at His return.—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him; and there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13, 14) Observe the following points: 1st, When Christ comes He takes His kingdom; 2nd, His kingdom is on the earth—under the whole

heavens; 3rd, The saints at this time take possession of the kingdom and are to possess it forever. All people, nations, and languages, are to serve Him. These points can never be reconciled with the theory of the utter desolation of the earth at Christ's second advent.

According to Isaiah, Christ is to occupy David's throne. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6,7) To the same import are the words of the angel to Mary: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:30-33) Be careful to note these particulars: When Christ comes, he comes to reign; then he reigns upon David's throne; David's throne was not in heaven, but on the earth, and as Christ reigns on the throne of his father David, he must reign on the earth. Christ is now on his heavenly Father's throne. (Heb. 10:12; Rev. 3:21) When he comes to receive the kingdom, he will then sit upon the throne of his glory: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."—Matt. 25:31.

The prophets, apostles, and the faithful of past ages will then receive their promised kingdom. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:27, 30) "Jesus said unto them, Verily I say

unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, (restoration, renewal of the earth), when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28) Christ's throne is upon the earth. We are to sit with Christ upon his throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne:" (Rev. 3:21) occupying a seat with Him. We shall reign with Him, "If we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him," (2 Tim. 2:12) not in heaven, but in Mt. Zion, where David's throne is located. "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth ever forever." "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one."—Zech. 14:9.

The desolation of the earth for a period of one thousand years finds no support in the Bible, either before or after the return of the Lord. As to its being a subsequent event the testimony of Daniel removes every doubt. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44) This testimony is either true or untrue. If true, how can it be said that there are a thousand years to elapse between the coming of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of God of earth, during which time the earth is to be desolate? To assume this position is to deny the plain letter of Scripture teaching: (2 Tim. 4:1) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word." This kingdom is to be associated with his second appearing upon the earth. Daniel says that the setting up of the kingdom is in the days of these kings, and elsewhere locates the territory under the whole heavens. We have as much reason to deny the second coming of Christ as to deny the work he does at his second coming, for both are taught with equal clearness.

We are told that when the people believed the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised. (Acts 8:12) How are we to believe things concerning the kingdom of God unless we accept the statements of Daniel relative to the coming of Christ and the time and place of the establishment of his kingdom? And how is it possible to credit Daniel's statements and endorse the theory of the desolation of the earth?

John's testimony is to the point and should forever settle the question: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15; Micah 4:9) In the face of these positive statements deduced from the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, it is strange any one should teach the very opposite, and appeal to the Bible for proof of its truthfulness. But when we take into consideration the fact that the passages, referred to as evidence of the desolation of the earth, are, without a single exception, of a metaphorical character and that metaphors cannot originate doctrine, but that any and every doctrine must first be set forth in positive and literal terms and then figures may be used to illustrate, explain and enforce it, all is clear and harmonious. Now being governed by these correct principles of interpretation, let us briefly examine the proofs offered in favor of the desolation of the earth.

The word earth like other words is used in a variety of senses. We determine its meaning by its translations and connections. It is taken (1) for the literal globe on which we live: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) (Psa. 115:16) (2) It often stands for those who inhabit it: "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." (Gen. 11:1) "Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth." (Psa. 96:1) (3) The word earth is sometimes used in a restricted sense, limited to a certain territory, district, land or country. In this sense it is used to represent the empire of Chaldea and Assyria, (Ezra 1:2) the land of

Canaan, or the land of the Jews. In Luke 4:25, we have the expression, "Throughout all the land," and in Matt. 9:26, "And the fame thereof went abroad throughout all that land."

The word translated "land" is, in the Greek, earth, so by the use of metaphor the kingdoms of Chaldea and Assyria, and the district of Canaan, are represented as being the whole earth. These very representations are subjects of prophecy, and these prophecies with their threatened temporal judgments against the people and countries above specified, are quoted as proofs of the desolation of the earth when Christ comes.

Take, for instance, the prediction of Jeremiah, "Thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." (Jeremiah 4:27.) This is the same land, district, or country, referred to by Luke, Matthew, and other New Testament writers, as already quoted. The judgments are temporal, and the desolation confined to the particular territory which is the subject of the prophecy, and the earth, by metaphor, is said to mourn. (Verse 28) It is also said to be without form. (Verse 23.) The word "form" in Scripture is used in various senses. It not only means a shape, or likeness of a thing, but it also, by a metaphor, signifies splendor, dignity, grandeur and glory. In this latter sense it is used by the prophet, and must not be construed literally. Of this use we have an illustration in the life of our Saviour: (Isaiah 53:2) "He hath no form nor comeliness." He did not come in kingly splendor, as anticipated by the Jews, and because His form in this respect did not fill their expectations, they therefore rejected Him. The splendor and glory of that people were gone, and their land was desolate, and they were left to mourn. Hence the word form, as applied to the earth in this text, does not represent the chaotic condition of the earth prior to its creation. This is all that need be said on this prophecy. There is not an iota of evidence in this whole chapter, or any other chapter in the Bible, of a universal, or even a partial, desolation to come over the earth subsequent to the second advent of Christ, or at any other time.

Isaiah 13:13 is quoted, and the word earth literalized to do service to the theory in question, where as the context clearly shows Babylon to be the subject of divine threat, and the subsequent portion of the chapter shows the word earth to apply to the removal of the people (see verse 14), and the Medes to be the chosen agents for the execution of God's temporal judgments upon that country and people. The earth, as we have seen, is, in a figurative sense, frequently used to represent the people. As, for instance, "Sing unto the Lord, all the earth." The earth can only be said to sing by the use of a metaphor. "He cometh to judge the earth," or people, (Psa. 96:13) "The earth (or people) was corrupt." (Gen. 6:11) The Scriptures abound with examples of this kind.

What right have we to literalize the word earth in these and numerous other connections? Can we symbolize literalisms and literalize symbolisms, and hope to have clear conceptions of the teachings of the Bible? "Hard times," "Over head and ears in debt," "Trampling upon the rights of the people," are common metaphors used in common conversation. No one is at a loss to comprehend them. Should we attempt to literalize these figures, and therefore claim "times" to be a material substance tested by the five senses, and "rights" to be a physical bodily composition, which can be crushed by the mechanical action of literal feet: to say the least such a theory would be absurd. Nevertheless, the theory in question is originated and supported by just such figures.

There are two other texts not generally quoted by the representatives of this school of theology, but sometimes referred to by the laity, which perhaps should receive a passing notice "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2, 3) To assume from this promise that the saints are to be taken to heaven is to assume what the text does not say. The assumption also contradicts the words of Jesus, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I

said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." (John 13:33) This is definite and to the point, but not more so than the statement of Solomon: "The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth."—Proverbs 10:30.

The argument that would turn our Saviour's words, "In My Father's house are many mansions," Into a statement that the saints go to heaven, would contradict the sentiment quoted. The Saviour says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Compare this with the statement: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2), and it certainly gives us an idea of the place prepared, and the many mansions. Unfortunately for those who hold to the theory of desolation, instead of the righteous going to the city prepared, that city comes to them, in line with the words of Jesus: "Whither I go ye cannot come." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thes. 4:16, 17) Compare the phrase, "caught up" with the statement, "the righteous shall never be removed from the earth," (Proverbs 10:30) and you see at once that the inference that the righteous are removed from the earth and go up to heaven is not admissible.

The air surrounds and is connected with the earth, and so long as they are in the air they are not away from the earth. Take them above the air and you prove Solomon's statement and the promises and prophecies of God false. The phrase "caught up" is by the Emphatic Diaglott and other translations rendered "caught away". When Philip had baptized the eunuch he was "caught away". No one supposes Philip was removed from the earth and went up to heaven. Just so with the righteous living, they are caught up or away in clouds to meet the Lord. When the Lord descends from heaven to earth the moment he en-

ters the air (so it appears,) his presence, like the principle of attraction, draws his saints, both dead and living, toward him, from all points of the compass. They come from the east, west, north, and south; they come to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, (Luke 13:29) located on earth under the whole heavens.—Dan. 7:27.

What a grand meeting that will be when we go out to meet the Lord in his second advent to earth again. I am glad to know from the signs of the times that this grand event is just upon us. We need to make the necessary preparation, that we may greet His coming with joy and gladness of heart.

Note:—We do not wish the reader of the foregoing to assume that the Church of God believe and teach that people are to have another chance to accept God's plan of salvation during the millennium, for that is not our teaching. Now is the time of salvation, and those to whom the light has gone will be judged worthy or unworthy, at His second coming.

There is to be a glorious reign of peace after the coming of the Lord, and the binding of Satan, as set forth in numerous scriptures. See Isaiah 11:1 to 9, where it is said the "wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Verse 8 says, "The suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

These clear cut statements of the Lord cannot be harmonized with the thousand year desolation theory for several reasons. 1. The weaned child and the suckling child are there. This cannot be after the saints have been in heaven for one thousand years, as some teach, for these children would be at least one thousand years of age. These events cannot come before the coming of the Lord, neither can they be after the 1000 years, hence they are during the millennium.

The wolf, lion, leopard, bear, cow, kid, and lamb, are mentioned. Also two kinds of snakes. If all parts of the earth were subject to fire at the same time, and the whole earth were melted, and burned at once, these animals could not endure and have their existence perpetrated.

The abomination of desolation was to stand in the holy place (See Matt. 24:15), and a careful study, receiving the testimony of all of God's witnesses without prejudice, will reveal the solemn truth that the desolation referred to, is the holy land, the land granted to Abraham and his seed, who, because of disobedience, were scattered to every part of the earth, and from the river Euphrates to the great river Nile, famine and pestilence have infested the places until that land for nearly two thousand years, has been a desolate wilderness. These prophecies have all been literally and wonderfully fulfilled.

When Jesus comes, the earth is to be redeemed from the curse and restored. The children are to come again from the land of the enemy, (Jer. 31:15,16; Matt. 2:17, 18) and broken families reunited, never again to be separated by death's cruel blow for Jesus will reign until the last enemy, which is death, will be destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:21 to 28) How glorious the promise, and how real to those who wait patiently in willing submission to God, will they behold with rapturous thrill, the coming of the Lord, and witness with others the final purpose accomplished, "peace on earth, good will toward men," and His will being done "in earth as it is in heaven."

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