



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

October 2020

## FROM US TO YOU

The whole world is experiencing a shaking up like it has never seen before! It is the last days before Christ returns for His loved ones for the Rapture of the church. Our [June 2020 issue](#) of “The Good News Letter” goes into more detail about the Rapture. However, it is unlikely to come before the Lord feels His true church is ready for Him. The Lord doesn’t want any lukewarm Christians (Rev. 3:16). The parable of Jesus in Mathew 25:1-13 makes clear the fact that many who consider themselves Christians will be left behind (Matthew 7:22-23). For this planet is just starting to feel the pushing out of Satan’s rule of this world system (Ephesians 2:1-3). And Satan, the devil, is putting up a fierce fight (Revelation 12:12). Simon Peter knew the struggles Christians go through today. Therefore, if you truly love and serve Jesus Christ, *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast”* (1 Peter 5:8-10 NIV).

However, this is only the beginning of the shaking. The shaking will get a lot worse. So be prepared for the battle. We all know about the unusual weather conditions that have gotten more frequent. And human temperaments are at a fever pitch. We, in the United States, have seen the anger and violent rage of political agitators filled with hate. Their riots and anarchy have ruined many cities in this country. And of course, there’s the COVID-19 virus that seemed to hit the whole world with a one-two punch with sickness and death. Then it loused up our economy and caused many other problems. People are wondering why all this is happening.

God knows what is going on. In the past He has blessed our country more than any other nation. Yet He is hurt that even His own people have been taking Him for granted. As in the case of ancient Israel, the more God blessed us, the further the nation drifted away from Him. Remember the words God spoke to Israel. They are somewhat apropos to the United States, *“‘People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to Me,’ declares the LORD. ‘Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, I struck them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to Me,’ declares the LORD. ‘I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to Me’”* declares the LORD” (Amos 4:8-10 NIV).

The Bible tells us why God is shaking things up. Therefore, *“See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, how much less*

*will we, if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven? At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain”* (Hebrews 12:25-27 NIV). So, keep your eyes on Christ and put your faith in Him. Don’t be *“...tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”* (Ephesians 4:14 NIV). Also, see 1 Timothy 4:1). Read your Bible and stand firm on the rock of your salvation, Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21-27). You may know the story about the man who bought a mule. The seller told him, “This mule will do whatever you tell him.” However, the mule would not obey the new owner at all. So, he took the mule back to the seller and told him, “You said this is a great mule and would do anything I tell him. But he won’t even listen to me.” The seller took a big

plank of wood and hit the mule across the nose with it. The new owner said, “Why did you do that?” The seller replied, “First you have to get his attention.” It’s an old story but it fits what we are trying to say. God is trying to get your attention!

Just going to church is not enough, especially in these troubling times. You must live for Christ daily and put Him first in your life. Jesus said, *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against*

*her mother-in-law. A man’s enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it”* (Matthew 10:34-39). Do you love your family more than you love Jesus? Would you die rather than turn your back on Jesus? He didn’t turn His bloody back on you. He is worthy of your love.

So, what do you do? *“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints”* (Ephesians 6:13-18 NIV).

In the love of Christ, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



# CLOUDS OF WITNESSES

By Anne Kaestner

The Bible says, "...since we are surrounded by such a great **cloud of witnesses**, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1 NIV). When you first see this scripture, you might think the translators made a mistake. How could there be a "cloud" of witnesses? It would seem, on the surface, that it is referring to humans. And humans are not made up of a cloud-like substance. Decades ago, when I first noticed the scripture, I thought it was a strange statement. Yet, as we draw closer to the Lord, He reveals things to us, especially to those He has called into a specific ministry. As a result, we go through many experiences that most people do not have. Some of them we wish we had not had. However, if we stay the course, and remain faithful to the Lord (2 Timothy 4:7), we learn so much from them. For we learn through events that occur in our lives. Simon Peter made a statement with which many Christians can certainly identify.

He said, "*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something **strange** were happening to you*" (1 Peter 4:12 NIV). I've certainly been through some strange things, and if you draw closer to Christ, and God has a calling on your life, you probably will too. As for the phrase, "clouds of witnesses," the Bible says that we are not the only intelligent life in this universe. There are angels as well. I firmly believe that there is no intelligent life on other planets. The Bible tells us that God put the stars and the planets in the sky for us. "*And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good*" (Genesis 1:14-18 NIV).

However, we humans, are not alone in this world. The angels are all around us. They exist in a much faster realm than our own. So, we move like snails compared to them. In the story of Job, "*The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the LORD, 'From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it'*" (Job 1:7 NIV). He could do this because the dimension he is in is so much quicker than our own. And because Satan is a spirit, he and his demon angels are made of a cloud-like material. The whole thing started because, "...there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Revelation 12:7-9 NIV). God created the angelic world long before He created mankind. In fact, one of the reasons why we humans were created was because God wanted children. He wanted to be loved. I am sure the angels who rebelled against Him caused Him great emotional pain. After all, we were made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). And just as we feel hurt when someone we love has said or done something nasty involving us, so does the Lord. So not only were we created physically to look like Him, we have His type of emotions as well.



In the writings of Solomon, we read about the great enthusiasm God felt when He planned this world for us. God's Son, who became our Savior, said, through Solomon, "*I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind*" (Proverbs 8:27-31 NIV). What love Father and Son had for each other! What a sacrifice it must have been for God to allow the Son He loved so much to suffer and die for us, "...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 KJV).

How bitter it must have been when one third of God's own angels rebelled against Him. And how much worse it must have been for Him when His prized creation, mankind, rebelled against Him! "*The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain*" (Genesis 6:6 NIV). If it hadn't been for Noah none of us would be here today. We know it was one third of the angels who rebelled because the Bible says, "*His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth...*" (Revelation 12:4 NIV). It's talking about the dragon's tail. And the dragon is the devil, Satan (Revelation 12:9). And the term "stars" in the Bible often refers to angels. For example, in Job it says, "*while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?*" (Job 38:7 NIV). For it was the devil who influenced the one third of heavenly angels to mutiny, due to his jealousy against God. The Lord said to him, "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High*" (Isaiah 14:12-14 KJV).

God had been so good to Lucifer, and gave him such great wealth and prestige, that it went to his head and he became conceited. He became jealous of God, and wanted to take over Heaven. [The name Lucifer means "morning star" and is translated that way in the New International Version and the American Standard Version Bibles.] After the mutiny, when Satan was defeated, God said to him, "...*You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you*" (Ezekiel 28:12-15 NIV). Sin is like a cancer, it grows bigger and bigger. So, the sinful person wants more and more. They never have enough of what they want. Sin is like yeast, "*A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough*" (Galatians 5:9 NIV).

The Bible says "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the*

waters” (Genesis 1:1-2 NIV). There are two verses here and probably millions of years between them. For we know that originally God created this world. And anything God creates is perfect. For God is perfect (Psalm 18:30). So how did the world get empty, dark, and formless? The Bible says that Satan was kicked out of Heaven and “...hurled to the earth, and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:9 NIV). We don’t know how long they were here but scientists say this world is millions of years old. So, when God made this world for us, He must have used recycled material out of the old world that had been here before. Seems likely that Satan had ruled over the old world and that may explain the dinosaur fossils archaeologists found.

We know that there was a trial held for the mutineers in Heaven. Part of their punishment might have been God allowing this earth to get into the dark, unformed place it became. Then God may have said to Satan, “If you think you’re so smart and powerful, you put it back together.” That’s just conjecture, but it sounds logical. But there was more. Lucifer was very proud of his body. The Bible says it was, “...perfect in beauty” (Ezekiel 28:12). And it was adorned with many precious stones God had given him. However, his body should have been a sanctuary for God, a kind of holy temple. When Jesus was on earth He referred to His body as a temple (John 2:21). Likewise, when we love and serve God, our bodies should also be sanctuaries for God (1 Corinthians 6:19). God said to Satan, “Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings” (Ezekiel 28:17 NIV). It seems that there were nations of angels here on earth at one time, with kings over them. And the Lord humiliated Satan and his demons (fallen angels) in front of them all.

Scripture says that God said to Satan, “By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more” (Ezekiel 28:18-19 NIV). Satan and his demons don’t have flesh and blood bodies anymore. At the trial God burned them up. They were cremated while they stood before Him. Satan is a defeated foe. If it wasn’t for Adam he wouldn’t be ruling this world we live in today. But he is, unfortunately. Jesus never disputed that (Matthew 4:8-10). And the more sinful we humans become, the stronger satanic power becomes, and the greater his control gets over the people. That’s why countries that were founded on Christianity have done so much better socially, economically, and governmentally. And that’s why the United States has done so well in that regard. Europe, too, has been greatly blessed over the centuries because they had a government that was based on rudimentary Christian principles. However, Europe was not always a civilized continent. For example, in ancient England alone pagan worship was practiced. That’s probably when Stonehenge was built. It is believed to be the site of worship of ancient gods, and most likely, human sacrifice.

The “gods” people have worshipped over the centuries are not really gods at all. There is truly only one God and He comes as a Holy Trinity family of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. So, these so-called “gods” that people have worshipped are really demons posing as gods. The Bible tells us how angry God was at Israel when, after all He had done for them, they worshipped these demon “gods.” Scripture says, “They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear” (Deuteronomy 32:17 NIV). Even now the demons still have many of the talents that God gave them originally when they were created. But they use them for evil, to

persuade people to worship them instead of God! That’s why so many worldly human performers have gifts of music, artwork, etc. They are called “stars” because they are worshipped as idols due to the influence of demons. The 1951 movie, “The Three Faces of Eve” starring Joanne Woodward, was based on a real-life person, who had nineteen different personalities in her. I saw the real woman interviewed on a television show many years ago. She brought some paintings to the set that she said were done by one of her personalities. This fits the description of demonic possession (Luke 9:38-42), which may come as a familiar spirit mentioned in the Bible (see Acts 16:16-21).

The American habit of celebrating Halloween has its basis in demon worship. Demons pose as “gods” to idol worshippers. As for Halloween, its origins can be traced back to Druidism, the religion of the ancient Celtic tribes who lived in Britain, Germany, and France, from the 2nd Century BC until the 2nd Century AD. The Druids, or wizards of the Celts, filled the roles of teachers, judges, and civil administrators. They held supreme authority over various tribes the same way that evil leaders have traditionally retained power, through fear and intimidation. The Druids ritualistically set aside one day every year for the purpose of honoring the Celtic god of the dead. They called him Samhain. That day was October 31st, the same day that American children traditionally celebrate Halloween!

The Celts believed that Samhain assembled all the souls of the dead on October 31, the eve of the Celtic new year, freeing them to return to their homes, where their families were to entertain them. If they didn’t find an acceptable welcome, the spirits would cast spells or cause other problems for the living, thus the first form of “trick or treat.” Therefore, in order to prepare for the arrival of these spirits, the Druids built huge bonfires, sacrificing animals, crops, and even human beings! The fire was also used for divination, a practice strictly forbidden in the Bible, as is every other form of the occult (see Isaiah 47:12-13, Revelation 21:8). Also forbidden is the practice of worshipping, seeking advice from, or praying to the dead (Isaiah 8:19, Micah 3:11, Acts 16:16-19, 1 Timothy 2:5). This not only includes departed loved ones, but even saints of God (1 Samuel 28:6-19, 1 Chronicles 10:13-14). As Jesus stated, “...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8 KJV). The Druids spent several days celebrating the “god” of the dead (whom Christians call Satan).

After several attempts by the Romans, they were finally able to successfully invade and conquer Celtic territory in 61 AD. They had their own religious belief, and the people of Rome worshipped many gods. One of them was named Pomona, who was said to be the goddess of fruits and gardens. They celebrated their harvest season every year, and worshiped Pomona just about the same time as the Celts celebrated Samhain. Therefore, the Romans and Celts had no problem reaching a mutual consensus regarding their annual celebration which began on October 31st. As the Celtic people were, by then, living under Roman law, the Romans added their own celebration of their harvest “goddess” to the Celtic religious ritual. Then, after Rome converted to Catholicism, a compromised version of Christianity (313 AD), many things changed. Among them was the putting aside of conventional Roman idols. The citizens of Rome, and her colonies, were encouraged to worship Christ, His mother Mary, and dead Christian saints instead.

The yearly celebration of Harvest was also changed. It was no longer for the purpose of honoring Celtic and Roman gods. It became a day for saint worship. Consequently, the ceremony became known as “All Saints Day.” In Christianity



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there have always been those who truly want to live for Christ and to seek out His will in all they do. Then there's the majority of churchgoers (Matthew 7:13-14), who prefer to think only in terms of rituals and tradition (Mark 7:8-9). Unfortunately, most people, even in those days, fell into the latter category. As a result, they began to merge together much of the pagan practices of their past, and to incorporate them into the Christian faith. Their legacy has continued right up to this day in the American practice of Halloween. We have "trick or treaters" at our house every Halloween. It puts true Christians in a tough situation. You risk offending your neighbors if you don't open your door. And in some communities, you may end up with vandalism of your property. So, it becomes a problem for the serious Christian, who doesn't want to have anything to do with this evil "holiday." We solve the problem by giving out candy and Christian comic books, which the children usually enjoy. It's an opportunity to spread the word of God.

The television media has traditionally spread the message that the devil doesn't exist and that there is no such thing as ghosts. We sometimes watch old television shows from the 1950's and 1960's and that is their message. However, that isn't true. The Bible tells us that the devil does exist and that he can even enter the body of a human who doesn't have the holy spirit in his heart protecting him or her (Luke 11:24-26). Jesus, Paul, and other apostles actually cast demons out of people. Mary Magdalene, who loved Jesus greatly, had seven demons in her until Jesus cast them out (Luke 8:2). As for ghosts, dead people do not come back to haunt the earth. There is no returning to this earth after death. "...*Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27 NIV). That's why the Bible tells us to remember our Redeemer before it is too late to repent and your body returns to dust (Genesis 2:7) "*and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it*" (Ecclesiastes 12:7 NIV).

However, many seemingly credible people have claimed to have seen a ghost. Yet demons are servants of Satan. And Jesus said that "...*there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44 NIV). He is "...*that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him*" (Revelation 12:9 NIV). His angels, of course, are the demons who mutinied with him. And they deceive people into believing that they are dead humans. That's why they come in a cloud-like appearance. As stated previously, they don't have solid bodies anymore. Under normal conditions we can't see them, because they exist in the spirit world. But they can see us and, along with God's angels, watch us continually. They are the "cloud of witnesses" and when you sin against God, they see you do it, and it's written down in the Lord's book (Daniel 7:10 and Revelation 20:12). And it makes the devil happy, because you are doing his will. And he will have greater control over you. That is unless you come to the Lord and repent.

Earlier in this article I quoted the apostle Peter saying that events can occur to some Christians as if "...*something strange were happening to you*" (1 Peter 4:12 NIV). I've had a lot of personal experiences that were very strange. I remember when I was a little girl in school one day feeling as if I was being watched by some spiritual beings. I was about five years old. Children often seem to sense things that

adults don't. At the time, I never actually experienced anything truly spiritual. It was just a feeling. However, as an adult an occurrence happened about ten years ago. I walked into my bedroom to get ready for bed. And it was as if God peeled back a veil in the spirit world and I sensed thousands upon thousands of spiritual beings watching me. It was so strange! It only lasted for a moment. But it was rather unsettling. Actually, the Bible tells us that there are certain angels called "watchers." The book of Daniel says that they are powerful angels of God who record every important thing we humans do or say. It will be in one of the books God will have opened on judgment day (see Daniel 7:10 and Revelation 20:12).

These "watcher" angels also have authority to make decisions in the lives of us humans. It says, "*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones...*" (Daniel 4:17 KJV). As I said earlier, the devil and his angels do exist in this world and can influence us humans. However, if you truly love Christ, are Born Again (John 3:3) and do your best to live according to God's laws, the Lord will protect you from demonic mischief. I remember one occasion when I was at home. I left our family room and began heading through a small hallway toward our living room. Almost as a reflex action, I heard myself say, "Oh, excuse me." That's

because I sensed a human-like presence there. But it was not human. It was obviously an invisible demon spirit. I didn't see anything there, but it was as if a force field of some type was blocking my way. It all happened so quickly, my conscious mind couldn't think about it fast enough to be afraid. But, in a blink of an eye, to my left-hand side, I instantly saw a flash of brilliant white that I know was a guardian angel. And he must have moved the demon out of the way, because the force field was gone and I was able to proceed on my way.

Thank God for guardian angels! I am so glad I love and serve Jesus Christ! Many other experiences have occurred over the years as well. God has saved our lives many times. The Bible says, "*If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels*

*concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone*" (Psalms 91:9-12 NIV). Of course, we cannot do something stupid and dangerous, believing that God's angels will protect us. When Satan tried to tempt Jesus to do this "*Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test''*" (Matthew 4:7 NIV). We will all go through difficult times to test our faith.

On another occasion, my husband and I were driving on a busy expressway in Virginia. We had to keep up with the other traffic so we were going about seventy miles an hour. We were in the far-left lane when the van we were in got a flat tire. We were totally surrounded by other vehicles. Eric had trouble controlling the van. It was moving into the next lane, which was filled with other vehicles. I screamed out, "Jesus help us!" Then I looked out the window. The cars, which had been totally surrounding us moments ago, were way in the distance behind us. Eric was able to pull over to the grass that was next to the right lane. As he changed the tire, I sat on the grass, praising God. God has many more heavenly angels than the devil has demons. Praise the Lord!

