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Dear Associates and Friends,

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“[S]ensitive persons live as much in the past or the future, as in the present.” This statement is from the book *Ten Years Later*, one of the later volumes in the long “d’Artagnon” saga of books by Alexandre Dumas. One of the characters, the young Duke of Buckingham, made the above statement that caught my attention. It stimulated me to reflect. It is a good thing to think about the past and the future, if for no other reason that such thought influences your present life. Christians probably think more about the past than most people, and they certainly think about the future (and the future of others) in regard to God’s future acts and resurrections. So in general, I would say believing Christians think more about the past, present, and the future than most people. Note what Solomon says.

“I have seen the travail, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He has made every thing beautiful in his time: also he has set the world [*olam*, the eon] in their heart, [why?] so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end.”

• ***Ecclesiastes 3:10–11***

This verse says that our physical existence in God’s beautiful creation is limited and bound by the time, the age, the eon in which we live. The pre-flood eon was radically different than the eon we live in today. Each eon has its negatives and its positives. Our current eon is in our heart, which means our mind. Each eon (singular, by the way) must have its own “stamp” that God sets into our minds. God has done this to specifically prevent us from knowing His purpose and plan in creation and subsequent salvation.

The purposes of God cannot be understood through the natural realm, through the affairs and observations of men, or even through studying past events. Information about the purpose of creation, the purpose of life, and the nature of God can only be understood through God Himself revealing His purpose and His work to man. This is the reason He commissioned the prophets to write their teachings and predictions down for us, compiled in the Bible. Other eons had other Scriptures from God. The prophets of God wrote about conditions in their times. They also made statements about their near future and the far future as well.

This Month’s Article

The November 2013 article is “[The Book of Zephaniah](#)“ by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. Zephaniah’s prophecies cover a vast period of time, dealing with events both near his time and later events in the distant future. This short, three-chapter Book of the Minor Prophets has a great deal to say about events that will occur during the “**Day of the Lord**” or, more accurately, the “**Day of YHWH.**”

The man Zephaniah was of the Judean Davidic royal line through King Hezekiah (somewhat removed, Zephaniah 1:1). His work as a prophet must have been difficult for him. He likely spent a good portion of time speaking against the royal and religious administration of the kingdom, which included his blood relatives. He also must have performed his prophetic role by writing and “speaking truth to power” beyond what we have in three Bible chapters.

Zephaniah wrote during the reign of King Josiah, apparently before the king died. Josiah was the last good King of Judah who attempted to reform the religious life of his subjects. His work of reform ended with his death. We know his reforms had only a limited effect in Judah because Zephaniah tells us most leaders of the society and members of the royal family (other than King Josiah himself) were lacking in

commitment to YHWH alone.

Only a few faithful prophets and members of Josiah's administration (such as Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Jeremiah's father the chief priest, Huldah the prophetess, and later the prophet Ezekiel, and others) remained faithful. In other words, the king's reforms had strong opposition from large numbers of royalty, the priesthood, prophets, and other leaders of the Judean kingdom. When Josiah died, his religious reforms ended, the people and leaders sinned more and more, and God's punishments began.

As Zephaniah presents in his prophecies, the same will happen at the time of the end before Christ returns. The conditions Zephaniah presents will reemerge before the Day of YHWH (the Day of the Lord). God's punishments on the Day of YHWH will commence because, just as in Zephaniah's day, after an initial reformation and turning to God, normal human nature (as God designed it) will prevail and the people of Israel will again become so sinful and evil that God will punish these unbelievers first before the nations are punished. God will do so just as Zephaniah states. The judgments and punishments will expand to encompass the entire world. And they will be horrific.

The prophecies of Zephaniah tell us about Judah's and Jerusalem's past, their present, their future near to Zephaniah's time, and the far future of Judah, Jerusalem, the nations surrounding Israel, and the world. Therefore, it is important for us to be **"sensitive persons [who] live as much in the past or the future, as in the present."** We must go beyond the thoughts normally in our **"hearts"** [the realm of our thoughts] as Ecclesiastes puts it, and go beyond the limits of the current eon. We need to learn the entire scope of God's plan through all the eons; His plan for us individually and for all the children of Adam.

In my view most believers in Christ's resurrection from the dead are such **"sensitive persons."** They are sensitive to other people and sensitive to God. They "listen" to God as they read His Holy Scriptures. They pay attention to what God says to them as His thoughts enter their minds from the printed page or from hearing the Scriptures spoken. This sensitivity to time-related matters does not give any righteousness. That comes only from Christ through God's Holy Spirit. It does, however, give us a larger picture of the great and important issues of our life and purpose, and informs us about God's purpose for us as His children.

We can only know **"the work that God makes from the beginning to the end"** (Ecclesiastes 3:11) if He tells us what His work is. God has given you that knowledge; you are blessed indeed. You understand information which most other people do not even know they lack. While none of us understand all the details, you should have an attitude of being willing to learn, willing to be educated. You are teachable, as Dr. Martin used to say.

Thank You

In the past few months we have received orders for books, CDs, and/or DVDs from the Netherlands, South Africa, one of the Gulf States, Israel, Turkey, Japan, Australia, France, Malaysia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and of course Canada. Mostly they have come through the ASK website. We provide this service even though we barely recoup costs on material we ship overseas. Sometimes we even lose money on overseas sales due to high shipping costs, but God provides for ASK to do so. He continues to bring people to ASK from all over the world. They order. We fulfill. He has something in mind for those people; God bless them whatever their reasons for ordering. Our job is to make this valuable material available at a reasonable cost, and much is free on the internet, as you know.

We at ASK are prepared to help people learn, wherever they may be, whatever their situation. We will continue to produce and publish as our situation allows. We thank God that you, our readers and fellow students with us, have enabled ASK to perform this service, however small. God will bring the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7, as the apostle Paul exemplifies). God will accomplish His will through your efforts and our efforts. Thank you for your contributions, prayers, and encouragements.

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