

EDITORIAL

Selling the End of Time

Play Today

It's a Friday night in 1996. Your mom just picked you up from school and took you through the McDonald's drive-thru. You've already opened the toy that came in your Happy Meal box and are playing with an object that, if sold in a store thirty years later, would probably cost at least ten dollars.

You eat your nuggets and fries in the parking lot of the video rental store, where you know you're about to go in and pick out a video game to play for the weekend. The games are heavy, at least compared to today's discs, and come in a plastic case touched by hundreds of eager hands before yours.

You're already concerned because you know you're about to make a crucial decision: which game are you going to pick? Your choice is going to impact your entire weekend. Are you going to be happily pursuing an adventure or shooting bad guys, or are you going to be horribly frustrated, bored, or worse?

As I sit next to my five-year-old child in 2026, I watch her scroll on the kids' tablet that has replaced the Nintendo and Sega Genesis of old. She has, easily, thirty games to choose from and a library of hundreds of others free and at her fingertips. When she tires of one she can swipe it closed and open another.

I understand technology, at least for now. I've grown up with it and alongside it, and I chuckle as I tell her tales of yesteryear. "You know, when Daddy was a kid..."

Then I stop myself. I realize what's happened. I'm telling an, "I walked five miles uphill in the snow," story. The time has come and, for good or ill, I have arrived.

"What, Daddy?" my daughter asks. I proceed to tell her about plastic cartridges and weekend rentals and the thrill and anxiety of having to make a choice and commit to it. I even take her to the family room where I've recollected many of my childhood favorites, which are now considered "vintage" games.

Despite my elaborate tale and trying every way in the world I can to get her to understand, she simply can't. She hasn't had to make a choice and commit to it. For good or for ill, the thrill and sometimes disappointment associated with this weekend ritual, a staple for so many kids my age, is lost to her.

As I watch her select a game, play it for thirty seconds, tire of it, and switch to another, I wonder about the deeper impacts of this phenomenon. What is this habit teaching her? How will this translate to her eventual adulthood?

As a result of my childhood experiences I learned to make mistakes. I learned to consider options, alternatives, and to live with the consequences of my actions. Now, one can undo a mistake with the push of a delete key or, more jarringly, by hollering, "Hey, Alexa" into the next room.

The joy and anticipation of waiting all day to rent a physical piece of media to cram into a physical machine all to play a game that used less processing power than a modern wristwatch is forever lost to my daughter's generation. The days of instant gratification, diminished responsibility, and the failure to connect choices to consequences are here. And they're here to stay.

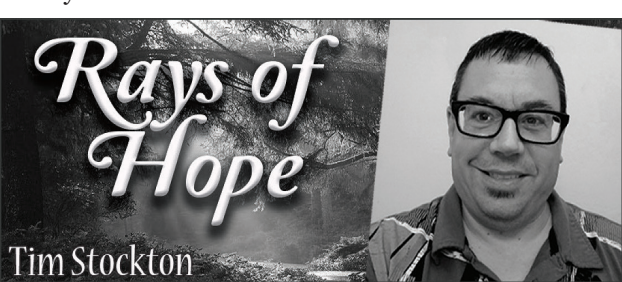
Every generation laments what they perceive to be the shortfalls of modernity. My parents told, "When I was a kid," stories, and their parents told them before them. However, at no point in human history have discrepancies like those between my childhood and my daughter's been wider and more different.

As I watch my daughter tire of this amazing device less than a minute later and toss it aside to get down on the floor and play with her Legos, something occurs to me.

I lay my own phone down, realizing as I do the hypocrisy of levelling judgments at a child who doesn't and never will understand a life before this technology. I slide quietly to the floor myself, instantly reliving memories of Christmas mornings and birthdays and weekends playing with very similar toys.

As I pick up one of my child's many minifigures and begin snapping Legos together alongside her, she looks up at me and smiles. Maybe there's still hope.

Maybe.



Crossing on Dry Ground (Part 4)

This article will conclude the series on "dry places." To review the previous three columns they were

1. About how we can become dry and thirsty

See **Crossing**, Cont. on **Page A3**



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Matthew 24: 36 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Unless one is living on a desert island and hasn't seen another human in many years, the obvious capitalizing of certain conditions and concepts is drowning us every day of our lives.

Cancer is big business, body fat is big business. Sex, power, prestige, personal appearance and hygiene make many feel less than adequate in today's world; thus the selling of products.

Videos, articles, books, movies and TV shows are profiting from "End of Time" scenarios. Many are pre-occupied with the fore-knowledge of how the world will end and what will become of us when it happens.

As the leading scripture indicates, only God knows when and exactly how the end will come. Speculations have been made by the thousands and few, if any, of those coincide with scriptural teachings.

Jesus said in Matthew 24: 9 "then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Old Testament writers indicate times of great distress that correspond to Jesus' statement. Zephaniah 1: 14-18, Joel 2: 1-2 and Daniel 9: 24-27 tell us of times that will be terrible to all mankind left on earth.

This time of tribulation has likely

been considered in the present many times in history. During wars, famines, epidemics, political coups and uprisings; millions have been killed, homes burned, rapes and torturing leading many to believe they were experiencing the tribulation.

The Biblical signs of the end times are ever present somewhere in the world and it is understandable why so many may have had such a thought.

There is a sequence of events that will take place. First, the return of Christ to take up His church (those true believer-followers of Him) 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18.

Second, the tribulation (in which thousands will die and the earth mostly destroyed) will take place for 3/12 years with a subsequent 3 1/2 years many call The Great Tribulation.

And thirdly, Christ's return at which time the prophesy in Philippians 2: 10-11 will be fulfilled. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Then Christ will establish His 1000 year millennial reign on earth. This listing is debatable and many have other opinions. Students of the Bible and those curious are encouraged to read the scriptures and determine their own thoughts.

Sources of similar information vary in these events. Whereas 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17 indicate the Lord will "descend" from Heaven

to take up the believers but will return with them to Heaven. This considered, He will return to the earth after the tribulation.

Some listings of the events elaborate into more than the four I have stated. These are only an outline and a listing of the major occurrences.

Attempting not to sound convinced of any certainty of the order, scriptural references of those end time events seem to be happening before us in our current existence.

The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Timothy over 1900 years ago. 2 Timothy 3: 1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent (out of self-control), fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Does this description fit our world in this twenty-first century? It certainly does and one doesn't have look very far to see it! Perhaps in the mirror would be a good place to start.

Paul's description of mankind in the above scripture is only a beginning of the scriptural prophesies; the world conditions and the human attitudes and actions that will be manifested in the end.

Is this dire warning and description of Versus Woman #167,345. My bride and I just passed 58 years, not counting dating time. Time can be a very vague measure to us.

It's Sunday morning. Are you ready for church? Just a minute. Translation. I now have time to warm up car, move it to the driveway, tune up Bluegrass Gospel music to channel, mind away from the world to church and catch up on face book birthdays. Just saying. Old guys advise. It does not get any better. Enjoy it!!!

Dan Vickery



RE: Jared Criswell
I really enjoyed your 02-11-26 piece on Man



"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

This is the most universally known verse from the Bible. It was spoken by Jesus to the religious leader, Nicodemus. It's the answer to the needs of fallen man. Everyone has sinned. According to the Bible, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin are death, so man is in a lost state in need of salvation.

In order to receive salvation, we are in need of a Savior. John 3:16 is the answer to that universal need of all humanity. God, the Father, took the initiative in saving a lost world from their sin. He so loved that he GAVE His ONLY begotten SON. God's love is revealed in action. The son also revealed His great love for us when he said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay

down one's life for his friends."

Jesus' life was not taken from Him as a martyr, but was given willingly as a sacrifice. "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

What greater gift could the Father give us than His own Son? In return. The Father does not ask for some great work in order to receive this gift of His love. It simply says Whosoever BELIEVES in Him shall have everlasting life. This does not cheapen the gift given, but, in reality, reveals its greatness.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

From the great Hymn, Rock of Ages, "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

This great love has transformed millions from lost to found, bound to free, sinner to righteous, sorrowing to joyful, hopeless to hopeful, and rejected to accepted in Him. Thank God for the Father's love that saved a wretch like me.

"I asked Jesus, 'How much do you love me?' And Jesus said, 'This much.' Then He stretched out His arms and died."

- Unknown

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"In the hearts of those who loved you, you will always be here."