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CHAPTER ONE THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD IS HISTORY

Had I grown up in our Brooklyn neighborhood perhaps I would have been a better Jew. We moved out to the suburbs with its greenery, upward mobility and American confidence. Ronald Reagan was telling us that progress is our most important product.

In such contrast with old world Judaism having tagged along across Europe, over the ocean and into the midst of another gentile culture. Confusing as a youngster to fathom this anachronism overlaid upon the new world. There in New York harbor is the Statue

of Liberty proclaiming this New Heaven and New Earth. Yes, certainly, but not as yet. Not for a long time.

"Naeem" is the word in Hebrew for those years of calm in blessed America as we lived our advantages and viewed the outside world. So "held back" they appeared then and also now. It did not make any sense, this snafu of Jewish belief and ritual superimposed upon the enlightenment. Many of us merely ignored it as we traversed our school years, competitive sports, kissing parties and summer vacations. Into early adulthood, others attempted escape from Jewish prison, assimilation by intermarriage or even into Jews For Jesus. A smaller number were somehow funneled to a connection with the National Resurrection in the State of Israel.

It did not make any sense, these goys having such grace alongside their darker side of prejudice, alcohol, violence and Romans Eleven high-mindedness ("Be not high-minded, but fear"). Some of my wonderful childhood friends, they completed their catechism homework and then we played baseball or cops and robbers. Well, one day they start fooling around with another game. I was the "makey" this time. I pretended not to understand but after we again moved up and out I never looked back their way.

Another time on Halloween a fellow trick-or-treater says to me "let's not go to that house, won't get much from cheap Jews". That got my adolescent gander up and I belted him one square on the schnaz. Later that evening our doorbell

rang. There was that kid direct from the hospital bandaged up with a broken nose. His father was with him. They both apologized as I peeked down from our split-level staircase. Have to admire that.

That was all about the time that the Dodgers left Brooklyn. For progress, money and a "better future". I did not know that there was anything better than the Brooklyn Dodgers in Ebbets Field, Jackie Robinson handling a hot one at third base. Even then as a youngster I could sense the intrigue. This bold American way understood by living the blend of tremendous freedom and its twin requirement, individual responsibility. But where does that lead, to what end and for what purpose?

America's worldly greatness and

goodness is obvious and proved. Her spiritual destiny is another great saga, but a crucial fraction of a wavelength apart. A perturbation of difficulty, a needed correction, out of phase and off kilter. The loss of God Blessed America is a certainty and already underway I lament fifty years later. How our jealous God brings down those great ones! I also know that America is restored to a holy nation, her future even better than her past.

I admit that when I was in the synagogue, there was a comfort and even a truth. In high school and college, athletic talents had me pole vaulting my way towards it. What I found out later was that the way up is down. Humility! While working on Wall Street I could not take it any more. This pursuit of God knows what.

My bosses complained that I was not motivated by conventional rewards. During one of the inevitable bear markets, my yuppie days were over. This failure was like getting hit by a truck and I went to Israel for recuperation just after the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

One digression to a week in March, 1963. A controversial evangelist from the Midwest, William Marrion Branham, was preaching the Seven Seals of Revelation. Many know of this but most do not. Certainly most do not or can not come to grips with what the Christian Bible says. Yes, the meaning is hidden, written in verse and between the lines, for "eyes only". In March 1963, when the Seven Seals were opened and spoken by Mr. Branham, the God-man Lamb Jesus took the Book and came off His

Throne of Mercy. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof..... a Lamb as it had been slain.....And He came forth and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne."

Please, nothing physical about this. Nevertheless, the outcome of these heavenly occurrences is that gentile time ended, that mercy and saved by grace opportunity ended. Lamb to lion, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler". (I Chron. 5:2) It was the end of the 2000 year long Christian religious dispensation. It is a pause in the era of American blessings.

One can grapple with all this in the