THOUGHTS OF NOVEMBER, 2010

1. In America, genetic engineering has enabled Atlantic salmon to grow to full size in 18 months, while in the wild the non-engineered salmon take 3 years because they do not grow in the winter.

At the same time, in New Zealand, genetic engineering has produced a strain of chinook salmon that grows 4 times faster than those in the wild, and can eventually weigh 550 pounds [compared to 100 pounds]. However, these giants have grown tumors and developed deformities, so this year the company abandoned its research and killed and buried the fish [but stored their frozen sperm].

Lots of potential good can be imagined through genetic engineering, which is great, but potential bad is scary. If engineered salmon escaped from their farms and laboratories, and crossbred and competed with wild, native stock for food and spawning sites, the genes would be out of the bottle and be at the mercy of nature.

Remember that Noah’s genetic line was the only human line which had not deteriorated, so God purged the earth of the impure line(s) and started over. Genetic experimentation is a real and present danger whose outcome cannot be predicted.

1. All of human history shows that progress and liberty come only as a result of earnest struggle. That refers to the church, corporately and individually, also. If there is no struggle, there is no progress and no liberty.

If freedom and righteousness are to prevail, they do not come cheaply. If the farmer wants a crop, he must plow. If he wants his crops to grow, he expects thunder, lightning and downpours.

We need not like struggles, but once we have our head set on straight we know they will come. When we have our hearts softened, we have confidence that our faithful efforts will bear fruit.

Those struggles that come as surprises only serve to toughen our resolve to better live in readiness. We have nothing to lose and all to gain by walking the way of preparedness.

1. Here in America we have just come through elections on all political levels. Some Christians do not vote, perhaps in obedience to the Lord’s current working in their lives. Otherwise, there are several reason to vote:
2. Romans 13:1-7 – When we vote we publicly show our submission to God’s established earthly authority.
3. James 2:1 – Voting recognizes the equality of all people, and their right to speak and be heard.
4. Philippians 2:3 – Voting is one way to obey God’s command to seek the good of those around us and our nation as a whole.
5. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 -- Voting indicates that we care about whom are our leaders, and that we will offer intercession and prayers on their behalf.
6. Psalm 34:14 – Voting is a way to do something about politics in our nation. All that is required for evil to prevail is to do nothing.
7. Matthew 5:13 – One vote makes a difference the same way one grain of salt makes a difference, which is how we influence our society for good.
8. Luke 16:19-31 -- Those of us who reap the benefits of living in a free society should play various parts in upholding it. Voting is one way to play a part.
9. James 2:14-26 – Even though we may pray for the election of righteous and capable leaders, not voting weakens our words.
10. Adam’s sin was not the first. Satan first sinned and was cast upon the earth, where he destroyed its surface and probably more. However, the earth was God’s trap and Adam and Eve were the bait.

When Satan took the bait, two things were accomplished: 1] The serpent was snared. He was then transformed from a cunning and beautiful animal into a repulsive serpent. 2] The stage was set, the trigger cocked, the last days were approaching for coming of our Redeemer who would restore all things – not just humanity.

You have known the story since childhood. Now the house lights are dimming.

1. Will you believe that there are about 25 individuals alive today who possess the ability to calculate math faster than an electric calculator? They can quickly multiply five digit numbers by five digit numbers and get the right answer. Yet, they cannot tell you how they do it. Some of them have left brain damage which allows their right brain to develop the ability to perform tremendous feats.

Some can play any song on the piano after hearing it only one time, and they have never had piano lessons. That’s genius performance, but they have IQs below 40. Several of the math geniuses have IQs below 50. There is certainly more to the brain than we know. Something happens during the course of certain severe brain damage that produces that which we may call “biocomputers.”

In other circumstances, mechanical ears can be connected to human brains, allowing the deaf to hear; and video cameras can be connected to brains, allowing the blind to experience a semblance of vision. This type of scientific advance is becoming common-place, almost day-by-day, until “.. nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible [lit.: “withheld from”] for them.” – Gen. 11:6. It appears that someone other than the Lord was feeding information to rebellious mankind, and it was not long until the Lord did something about it.

1. In 1 Samuel 8:11-22 the Lord told Israel [through Samuel] what a civil government among His people would be like. It is not remarkable that the description, being from the Lord, is wholly accurate. It describes a self-centered, heavy-handed government that takes from those it governs. As you read it, you will see that today’s civil governments are far worse than the one Israel got. Yes, far worse because civil governmental headship has fallen from one mostly centered upon the Lord to Laodicean [the people rule and the leaders please them], both in the church and in society at large.

Democracy, one of the worst forms of government, is thought to be the best. It distrusts leadership so regularly replaces it. That’s the process in both the civil and church arenas.

In 1850, Frederick Bastiat wrote: “Once we start from this idea, accepted by all our political theorists [that] ‘The motive force of society is government,’ once men consider themselves as sentient, but passive, incapable of improving themselves morally or materially by their own intelligence or energy, and reduced to expecting everything from the law, in a word, when they admit that their relationship with the state is like that of a flock of sheep to the shepherd, it is clear that the responsibility of the government is immense. Good and evil, virtue and vice, equality and inequality, wealth and poverty, all proceed from it. It is entrusted with everything, it undertakes everything, it does everything; hence, it is responsible for everything.”

I wonder just how much of a shock world-minded societies will have when their governments are changed from various forms of democracy to an evil dictatorship during the tribulation, and then to a perfect and righteous dictatorship during the millennium? It’s exciting to think about.

1. In Philippians 4:13 Paul says that he [and we] can do all things through Christ Who strengthens him/us. Of course, that’s true. But here is my expected “but.” May it be that we use that truthful resource when we are in a tight squeeze, when we should have instead used it to prepare far and near ahead of time for the known-coming tight squeeze? It is common that the Lord would prepare us in what is known as “a responsible way,” by years of study, growth in righteousness, etc.

That is to say that an electrician cannot rely on that source of “all things” if asked to do brain surgery. It is the pre-trained person who can rely upon the Source.

1. Here is an observation. When the Lord joins new souls to a fellowship of believers, the person with the gift of administration perceives how he may plug them into life and ministry in the fellowship so they may function. On the other hand, the one with pastoral gifts will be concerned with how he can draw them into life together and how he can give himself to them to raise them up.

The human body is wonderfully made. The body of Christ is even more wonderfully made. Both require the proper function of all its parts.

1. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” – Prov. 15:1 Let’s not forget that a gentle answer/word can be firm, immovable and hard.
2. In Acts 8:25-40 is the account of Philip and the Egyptian eunuch. The message is that the eunuch was a believer in Jehovah, had been to the temple in Jerusalem to worship Him, had [probably purchased] a copy of part of the book of Isaiah which he was reading as he rode along in his chariot, and realized and confessed his blindness to its message. He was blessed.

In contrast, the Jews in the temple in Jerusalem, from whence he had just come, had the same scriptures, the same Jehovah and the same blindness, but they did not realize or confess their blindness. The results in their lives were remarkably different.

The same contrast can exist in our lives. We do not need to be highly informed. The condition of our hearts covers a multitude of deficiencies.

1. When the Lord brings revival, it is common that the church outside the confines of its building is more obvious and powerful than the one within the building. That’s what we see going on here in Corpus Christi. The marketplace has become spiritually alive, while the offices of the church are praying about their responsible part. The established church is called to repent and to live and preach the full gospel, then offer itself as servant-brother to those outside the usual ministries of the church.

1. Without the evangelist, the prophet gets sloppy, the pastor gets gooey, the teacher gets hypocritical, and the apostle gets lazy. Each office-type minister of the word of God has his particular [encouraging, correcting, enlivening, enabling] effect upon the other four.
2. There is no authority except God-granted authority. That matches up with “all authority is of God,” which was spoken to Paul by the Holy Spirit when heathen Rome was the predominant civil authority.

What do you think of the following? “There is no God-granted authority in the kingdom if one is not under kingdom authority.” In that respect, consider Apollo, John the Baptist, the Old Testament prophets, Matthew 23:2 and Jesus Himself. I have heard that quote used, but have much doubt about its too-general applicability.

1. Why the millennium? We are headed for God’s presence, face to face with Him, and He does not allow sin in His presence. When we die this earth-death, we do not them show up before the Lord perfect. The millennium is the time of God’s human-type rule on earth, designed to solve that problem. It is the time for Jesus the man and His co-human overcomers to rule on this planet, and probably over all the rest of creation.

Why is that important in answering “Why the millennium?” Not because the Lord promised Adam, David and others that He would literally rule here, although those individual and focused promises are certainly built into the plan, but because only the holy will be able to go into the eternal hereafter in God’s presence, seeing Him face to face, living with Him and talking with Him forever.

For that to be allowed, humanity must be holy, unblemished, functionally clean in God’s eyes, perfect as is our Father in heaven – Matt. 5:48. That process started here on earth during our present earth-life and, to be accomplished for all believers, will continue throughout the millennium. Some will become overcomers during this first offer [the one we are now living out], while others will become overcomers during the millennial “mopping-up” process. So, the millennium is not only the time when the Lord fulfills His promises to specific Old Testament saints [and those believers of the O. T. and N. T. who consider Him truthful and able, and lived according to His commands and promises], but is a time of grace for the saints who did not trust and obey Him in the here-and-now. That group will be judged by Jesus at His pre-millennial judgment seat as “non-overcomers.” They will have to go to “summer school” because they did not pass the course, did not run the race well, their first time around.

That’s grace, because only the holy or pure in heart will see God. That starts with our reception of the imputed character of Christ, which must become our chosen and functional character.

1. Faithful obedience always results in that which the Lord designed it. Like His word, our faithful obedience never falls to the ground with unfulfilled purpose. It always accomplishes that which the Master planned for it. Repeat: Faithful obedience always accomplishes that for which the Lord designed it.

We may not receive those results in this earth life, but we can see them through smoked glass and will see all about them later. All results, including their timing, are in the Lord’s hands. In my judgment [take that for what you think it is worth], it is good/encouraging to see some of those results in the here-and-now, quickly and earth-timely, but don’t “require” that the Lord fulfill all of His word on our schedule according to our perceived need.

This Thought is the message of Hebrews 11 where you have noticed that in just one chapter there is a wonderful mix of those who believed and received, with those who believed and did not receive [verses 13-16 and 32-40].

Selah.