

**APPENDICES**

**FOR**

**REVELATION**

**Being A Collection of Notes, Outlines and Clippings  
Designed to Support and/or Expand Upon The  
Book of Revelation Commentary Notes**

# **A Suggested Outline of Revelation**

Warren W. Weirsbe

## **Key verse (1:19)**

### **I. The Things Which Thou Hast Seen (1)**

A. John's vision of the glorified Christ as King-Priest

### **II. The Things Which Are (2-3)**

A. The seven churches reveal the condition of God's people

### **III. The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter (4-22)**

A. The rapture of the church (4-5)

1. John is caught up
2. The Lamb takes His throne

B. The tribulation of seven years (6-19)

1. First half of the Tribulation (6-9)
2. Middle of the Tribulation (10-14)
3. Last half of the Tribulation (15-19)

C. The millennial kingdom of Christ (20)

D. The new heavens and earth (21-22)

# Introductory Notes to Revelation

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## I. Background

The Apostle John took over the pastoral work in Ephesus about a.d. 70, including the churches in the surrounding area, the “seven churches of Asia Minor” of Rev. 2–3. The Roman Emperor Nero had persecuted Christians in Rome, but the “fiery trial” that Peter had promised (1 Peter 4:12ff) had not yet begun. But when Domitian became emperor (a.d. 81–96), the persecution was intensified. Domitian was as cold-blooded a murderer as you will ever meet in the pages of history. He promoted “emperor worship” and began his announcements, “Our Lord and God Domitian commands. . . .” Everyone who spoke to him had to address him, “Lord and God.” He was bitter in his treatment of both Jews and Christians, and it was at his behest that John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, a rocky island ten miles long and six miles wide, in the Aegean Sea. Rome had a penal camp there where the prisoners labored in the mines. It was here in this isolated spot that John received the visions that make up Revelation. He wrote it about a.d. 95.

## II. Character

Revelation is a unique book with characteristics that must be noted. John’s text is:

### A. *Prophetic.*

It is a book of prophecy (1:3; 10:11; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18–19).

### B. *Christ-centered.*

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, not simply a prophetic program. In chapter 1, He is the Risen Priest-King; in chapters 2–3, He examines the churches; in chapters 4–5, He receives worship and praise and the title-deed to creation; in chapters 6–19, He judges the world and returns in glory; and in chapters 20–22, He reigns in glory and power.

### C. *Open.*

The word “revelation” means literally “unveiling.” Daniel was told to seal his book (Dan. 12:4), but John to “seal it not” (22:10). Instead of being a collection of puzzling prophecies, Revelation is a reasonable, orderly unveiling of Christ and His final victory over Satan, sin, and the world-system.

### D. *Symbolic.*

“He sent and signified it” (1:1) suggests that the book uses signs and symbols to convey its message. Some are explained (1:20; 4:5), some are unexplained (4:4; 11:3), and some are explained by referring to OT parallels (2:7, 17, 27–28). This spiritual symbolism would be clear to the Christians receiving the book but would make no sense to their Roman persecutors. Keep in mind that symbols speak of reality. A flag, for example, stands for the existence of a nation. The picture of Christ in 1:12–16 is not literal, but each of these symbols conveys a spiritual truth about Him.

*E. Based on the OT.*

It is impossible to understand this book without referring to the OT Scriptures. Out of the 404 verses in Revelation, 278 contain references to the OT. It is calculated that there are over 500 references or allusions to the OT in Revelation, with Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel being referred to most often.

*F. Numerical.*

There is a series of “sevens” in the book: seven churches, seals, trumpets, vials, lampstands, etc. The number three and one half also shows up often (11:2–3; 12:6; 13:5). We also find the 144,000 (a multiple of twelve) sealed Israelites, twelve stars (12:1), twelve gates (21:12), and twelve foundations (21:14).

*G. Universal.*

Revelation focuses on the whole world. John sees nations, peoples, masses of humanity (see 10:11, 11:9, 17:15, etc.). This book describes God’s judgment of the world and His creation of a new world for His people.

*H. Majestic.*

This is the “book of the throne,” for from chapter 4 to the end, we read about the King and His rule. The word “throne” is used forty-four times; “king,” “kingdom,” or “rule” about thirty-seven times; “power” and “authority” some forty times. We see Christ as the Sovereign of the universe, ruling from the heavenly throne.

*I. Sympathetic.*

Throughout the book we see the sufferings of God’s people and the compassion of heaven for the people of God on earth. John is in exile (1:9); Antipas is martyred (2:13); the church in Smyrna will face imprisonment (2:10); souls under the altar cry for God’s avenging judgment (6:9–10); the hour of trial is coming (3:10); the great harlot has drunk the blood of the saints (17:6; 18:24; 19:2). Yet God will judge the world and save His people.

*J. Climactic.*

Revelation is the climax of the Bible and shows the fulfillment of the plan and purpose of God for the universe.

### III. Interpretation

Good and godly students differ on the meaning of the details of the book. Four broad interpretations have been suggested:

**A. *Preterist*** (from the Latin word *preter*, meaning “past”).

This approach states that everything in the book took place in the first century. John deals, they say, with the war between the church and Rome. He wrote the saints to comfort and encourage them in their time of persecution. But, John states seven times that he is writing *prophecy*. Certainly the book had a special value to those enduring Roman persecution, but its value did not cease with the close of the Apostolic Age.

**B. *Historical***.

Interpreters in this camp claim to see the fulfillment of church history in the symbols of Revelation. They believe that the book outlines the course of history from apostolic times to the end of the age. They search history books to find events that parallel those in Revelation, but sometimes the results are disastrous. One interpreter sees Luther and the Reformation in a symbol that, to another student, stands for the invention of the printing press! Of what value would Revelation be to the believers in John’s day if all it did was foretell world history? And of what value would it be to us today?

**C. *Spiritual***.

These students abandon the idea of prophecy completely and use Revelation as a symbolical presentation of the conflict between Christ and Satan, good and evil. They reject the idea that John writes about actual events; they claim he is dealing only with basic spiritual principles. But, again, John tells us he is writing *prophecy*. While we recognize that Revelation does contain many basic spiritual principles in symbolic form, we must also admit that the book deals with real events that will one day take place in the world.

**D. *Futurist***.

This school emphasizes that Revelation is prophecy; chapters 6 through 22 describe a scenario of events that will transpire on earth and in heaven after the church is raptured. While such students gladly recognize the spiritual lessons of the book, they also recognize that it talks about actual events that will be fulfilled one day. If Revelation is not to be interpreted as prophecy, then God has not given the church a book in the NT to explain the future of the world, the course of events, the victory of the church, the judgment of sin, and the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies found in the OT. This is unthinkable. No, Revelation is that book; and the student who reverently approaches this book as a prophecy of events that will occur after the church is caught away will be rewarded for his or her labors.

## Genesis

Creation of the heavens and earth (chaps. 1–2)

The first Adam reigning on earth (1:26)

Night and seas created (1:5, 10)

A bride brought to Adam (2:18–25)

A tree of life in Eden (2:9; 3:22)

Death and a curse (3:14, 17–19)

Conflict between Christ and Satan (3:15)

Man driven from God’s face (3:23; 4:16)

Believers looking for a city (Heb. 11:13–16)

“Where is the Lamb?” (22:7)

Satan utters the first lie (3:1)

## Revelation

Creation of the new heavens and earth (chaps. 21–22)

The Last Adam reigning in glory (21:5)

No more night; no more sea (21:1, 25)

The Bride prepared for Christ (19:7ff)

A tree of life in the new creation (22:2)

No more curse; no more death or tears (22:3)

Satan’s final doom (20:10)

Men see His face in glory (22:4)

The holy city presented in glory (21:10)

The Lamb reigns (22:3)

Nothing that makes a lie enters the city (21:27)

Revelation, then, outlines God’s program for human history. What began ages ago in the first creation will ultimately be completed in the new creation. This is the “book with a blessing” (1:3, and see the six other “blessings” in 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). It shows us that “history is His story”—that human affairs are in the hands of our victorious Christ. As we study this book, we should be encouraged, inspired to serve, and enabled to live clean lives, that we might be ready when He returns.

# INTERPRETIVE MODELS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

## IV. Introduction

A. The book of Revelation is one of the most encouraging books of the New Testament. In it, John [Though the question of the authorship of Revelation is as problematic as other writings ascribed to the apostle John, on the basis of external patristic evidence, as well as evidence from *Chenoboskion* (Apocryphon of John), it is most likely that the apostle wrote it. The internal evidence may be problematic for this view, but perhaps not insurmountable. Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 932-948; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 25-31.] talks about the ultimate defeat of evil and the glorious return and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. It talks about a time when God will dwell with men and He will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain for the old order (i.e. under sin) of things has passed away (21:3, 4). In the following paper, while not forgetting about the overall broad message of hope contained in the book, we will focus on just one problem, namely, the overall interpretive framework for the book.

## V. Methods of Interpretation

A. There have traditionally been four or five schools of thought on the interpretive framework of the book of Revelation as a whole. There are many hybrids of these approaches; indeed George Eldon Ladd's moderate futuristic approach is really a hybrid of the mostly futuristic approach. In this discussion we will focus on the following five views: historicist, idealist, preterist, mostly future and moderately futuristic.

B. The first one in our consideration is the historicist method of interpretation, apparently made much of by the reformers. In this understanding of the book, the events described therein refer to actual events from the beginning of the church until the time of the interpreter. Thus the reformers could say that the Roman papacy was the antichrist, entrenched in its false doctrine and deception. According to Mounce, in this view, "the Apocalypse was held to sketch the history of western Europe through the various popes, the Protestant Reformation, the French revolution, and individual leaders such as Charlemagne and

Mussolini." [Mounce, *Revelation*, 42.] Apparently the method had a somewhat spurious beginning with a monastic named Joachim of Floris (d. 1602), [Alan Johnson, *Revelation*, in *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 409.] and overall is open to several criticisms. Perhaps the most damaging critique is the fact that such an interpretive framework for the book leads to endless speculation and subjectivity in its interpretation. It is simply very difficult to arrive at a consensus in the identification of referents in history for the symbols in the text. [George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 672. See also John F. Walvoord, *Revelation*, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 926.]

C. The second method of interpretation is known as the idealist method. In this understanding, the contents of the book are not seen to relate to any historical events at all, but only to symbolize the ongoing struggle between good and evil during the church age until Christ returns. Johnson says that, as a system of interpretation it is more recent than the three other [preterist, historicist and futuristic] schools and somewhat more difficult to distinguish from earlier allegorizing approaches of the Alexandrians (Clement and Origen). In general the idealist view is marked by a refusal to identify any of the images with specific future events, whether in the history of the church or with regard to the end of all things. [Johnson, *Revelation*, 410.] The primary benefit of this view is that it renders the apocalypse quite understandable at a basic level. It is simply a book that was written to encourage suffering saints in the knowledge that God will someday conquer all evil and make things right. One of the most significant criticisms brought against this view is the fact that Revelation is of the apocalyptic genre and as Ladd says, apocalyptic documents generally describe actual events in history. [Ladd, *Theology*, 672, 73. See also Mounce, *Revelation*, 43.] This also appears to contradict the clear language of the text wherein the writer says that Jesus will show him what must take place next (4:1). If there is no real chronology according to real historical events, then this statement seems to be superfluous and the section on the churches (2-3) seems to be a-historical as well.

D. A third method of interpretation is the preterist method. In this approach to the book the symbols and content therein relate only to events and happenings at the time of the author. The beasts of chapter 13, for example, are related to "Imperial Rome and the Imperial priesthood." [Johnson, Revelation, 409; Ladd, Theology, 670.] There is no future eschatology in the book whatsoever. This method is based primarily on relating the book to Jewish apocalyptic tracts written at that time to encourage faithfulness during times of persecution. Therefore, the message of the book would seem to be that while the church is threatened by the state and the demand of emperor worship, "those who endure will share in the final victory of God over the demonic powers which control and direct the totalitarian state." [Mounce, Revelation, 41.] According to Johnson the system first appeared in connection with a Spanish Jesuit named Alcasar (ca. 1614) who initially developed some of its particulars. It is held by a great number of scholars today, including those from a more liberal perspective. [Johnson, Revelation, 409.] The benefit of this view is that it interprets the book in its primary historical setting first. This is to be commended and maintained. But, one of the most significant problems with the view however, is that none of what was supposed to happen, happened. Rome was not overthrown by God and the saints certainly did not share in any such victory. In conjunction with this problem is the fact that much of what is in Revelation appears to be prophetic and speaking of a time quite distant from John's time (i.e. the return of Christ and the consummation of all things), but the preterist interpretation cannot account for this. For that reason many interpreters who see the events described by John as extending past the first six centuries of the church are not in agreement with this view. [Johnson, Revelation, 409. According to Ladd, Theology, 671, the preterist interpretation rests partly on the assumption that the genre of Revelation is very similar to other Jewish apocalyptic literature such as the Apocalypse of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, 4 Ezra and Baruch and is therefore interpreted similarly.]

E. I refer to the fourth method of dealing with Revelation as the mostly futuristic method.

[Ladd, Theology, 673 refers to this view as the extreme futuristic view which this author feels, by the use of the term extreme, is unduly pejorative and casts doubt on the view as being a view on the fringe of possibilities. I have chosen mostly futuristic because as a Dispensationalist, this author views the book as referring to the con-

crete historical setting in which it was (1-3), but with the bulk of the content referring to a yet future time (4-22).] In chapter 3:10 the Lord says to the church at Philadelphia that they will be kept from (τηρεσω εκ) the hour of trial to come upon the earth. This is a literary, programmatic statement wherein the hour of trial refers to the judgments described by John in 6-18. According to John, the church at Philadelphia will not even enter that tribulation. Walvoord argues that it is unlikely that just the church at Philadelphia is ultimately in mind here—surely it must be the church as a world-wide body. [Walvoord, Revelation, 939, 41.] Therefore, the seals, trumpets and bowl judgments (6-16ff), which in this system are referred to as a time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), are all future and occur after the rapture (1 Thes. 4:16) of the church. They relate directly to Daniel's 70th week (see Dan. 9:24-27; a seven year period) and therefore concern Israel and not the church. In Walvoord's system, the seal, trumpets and bowl judgments are chronologically sequential, that is, after the seal judgments, come the trumpet judgments and finally the bowl judgments. These all occur in the last 3.5 years of the seven year period of Daniel's 70th week. [Walvoord, Revelation, 950.] The end result of this Great Tribulation is the destruction of ecclesiastical (17) and political (18) Babylon. Then Christ will return with the church and set up his kingdom (19, 20). Ladd is correct when he asserts that this interpretation relies heavily upon the distinction between Israel and the church and the distinctive plan God has for both. [Ladd, Theology, 673. See also J. Lanier Burns, "The Future of Ethnic Israel in Romans 11," in Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 188-229.] Ladd, as well as a host of other commentators, are extremely critical of this distinction between ethnic Israel and the church, but there appears to be significant precedent for it in a post cross setting (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32 and Romans 9-11). Finally, in this method, proper attention is given to the grammatico-historical context of the letter and the churches in chapters 2 and 3 are generally taken as real, literal churches. Therefore, since the first three chapters (one might also add 4 and 5) deal with "things" during John's lifetime and chapters 6-22 deal with "things" to come in the future, I have called this view the mostly futuristic view.

F. The fifth view and the one espoused by Ladd is referred to as a moderate futurist view. According to Ladd, an answer to the problem of the relationship of the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments to one another, could provide the solution to the view of history affirmed in the book. With that in mind, he proposes that the seal judgments represent "the forces in history, however long it lasts, by which God works out his redemptive and judicial purposes leading up to the end." Therefore, Ladd understands the seal judgments to be going on throughout the church age and the trumpet and bowl judgments (really from chapter 7 onward) to be concerned with the time of the consummation. The primary reason he argues in this fashion is because the contents of the book cannot be opened until the last seal and 6:16, 17 explicitly says that the "great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand" (NIV)? This text, according to Ladd, suggests that it had not yet arrived until the sixth seal was broken. Further, Ladd understands the seal judgments to parallel the woes outlined in Matthew 24 and that the white horse in Revelation should be understood to be the victories won by the gospel in an age characterized by evil and death.

There are several problems with this view of Revelation 6. First, it is unlikely for several reasons that the rider and white horse are to be associated with Christ and the gospel. [See Daniel K. K. Wong, "The First Horseman of Revelation 6," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (April-June 1996): 212-26, for a survey of some popular views and their criticisms. He suggests the rider is the antichrist.] It is true, as Ladd points out, that white is generally associated with spiritual victory in Revelation, [Ladd, *Theology*, 674.] but the identification of the rider and 6:2 rests partially on parallels with the rider in 19:11. They are similar in that they are both on white horses, but the parallel is difficult to maintain beyond this. The rider in 6:2 has a bow and a crown and is bent on conquest, the rider in 19:11 is judging to effect justice. Therefore, the purpose and contexts for their actions are different. Also, the language of "was given" (εἰδομένη αὐτῷ/ᾷ) is used of divine permission given to evil powers to carry out their destruction (9:1, 3, 5; 13:5, 7 and 14:14, 15). Therefore its use in 6:2 would tend to argue for the rider and his mission relating to some form of evil, perhaps

military invasion, with the crown symbolizing eventual rulership over conquered peoples. [Mounce, *Revelation*, 153, 54. One also must consider that if the 4 horsemen of Revelation 6 have their literary antecedents in Zechariah 1:8-17 and 6:1-8, then they all probably refer to instruments of God's wrath, since such unmistakably the case in Zechariah. See Kenneth L. Barker, *Zechariah*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 636.] Yet another thorn in the side of Ladd's theory is the fact that 6:2 is part of a series of judgments and calamities and it is difficult to believe that it could refer to the gospel going forth. Chapter 6 and the seals represents profound judgment, not salvation. [J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1958), 360, 61.] Finally this interpretation of the rider in 6:2 seems to promote confusion between Christ opening the seals and also being the one sent forth as the first rider.

## VI. Conclusion

A. For reasons outlined above, the historicist and idealist views seem untenable. The preterist method of interpreting the book cannot adequately deal with the text as a prophetic piece whose many prophecies simply cannot be matched with any known fulfillment in the author's lifetime. The association of the book with Jewish apocalyptic materials is not completely adequate and therefore remains an unreasonable ground for rejecting the futuristic aspects of the book. The moderately futuristic view has much to commend it, in that it sees both the historical setting and the future as playing a role in John's work. The identification of the seal judgments with the church age, however, is dubious for the reasons mentioned, and therefore the method as a whole remains spurious. Perhaps the best model is that which takes into account the historical setting of the book and yet sees the seals, trumpets and bowls as relating to a future time near the consummation. Such a model makes the best sense of 3:10 and realizes that the calamities to come on the earth are greater than anything seen to date.

**B. The mostly futuristic method** is such a model.

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# VIEWS OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

**I. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS:** "Grace and peace to you.. ...from Jesus Christ, Who is the FAITHFUL WITNESS, THE FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD, and THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." [1:5] "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, the ruler of God's creation." [3:14] "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called FAITHFUL AND TRUE. WITH JUSTICE HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR." [19:11]

**II. THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD:** "Grace and peace to you.. ...from Jesus Christ, Who is the FAITHFUL WITNESS, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD, and THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." [1:5]

**III. KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS:** "Grace and peace to you.. ...from Jesus Christ, Who is the FAITHFUL WITNESS, THE FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD, and THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." [1:5] "On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." [19:16]

**IV. THE ALPHA & OMEGA, [FIRST & LAST]:** "...Then He placed His right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST. I am THE LIVING ONE; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I HOLD THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES'" [1:17-18] "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of Him Who is THE FIRST AND THE LAST, Who died and came to life again." [2:8] "I am THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END." [22:13]

**V. THE AMEN:** "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, the ruler of God's creation." [3:14]

**VI. THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES:** "...Then He placed His right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST. I am THE LIVING ONE; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I HOLD THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES'" [1:17-18]

**VII. THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID:** "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of Him Who is holy and true, WHO HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open." [3:7]

**VIII. THE LIVING ONE:** "...Then He placed His right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST. I am THE LIVING ONE; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I HOLD THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES'" [1:17-18]

**IX. THE SON OF MAN:** "...and among the lampstands was someone 'LIKE A SON OF MAN', dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet, and with a golden sash around His chest." [1:13] "I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was ONE 'LIKE A SON OF MAN' with a crown of gold on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand." [14:14]

**X. THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH:** "Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.' Then I saw A LAMB, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. ..." [5:5-6]

XI.**THE ROOT OF DAVID:**"Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.' Then I saw A LAMB, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. ..." [5:5-6] "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." [Isa.11:1]

XII.**THE LAMB:**"Then I saw A LAMB, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. ..." [5:6] "In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is THE LAMB, Who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!' Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: 'To Him Who sits on the throne and to THE LAMB be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'" [5:12-13]

XIII.**THE JUDGE:** "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called FAITHFUL AND TRUE. WITH JUSTICE HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR." [19:11]

XIV.**THE WORD OF GOD:** "He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and HIS NAME IS THE WORD OF GOD." [19:13]

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy."*

Col.1:15-18

# THE BONDSLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST

**“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his *servants* [bond-slaves, *doulos*] -- things which must shortly take place. ... ,”**

Revelation 1:1

## I. BOND-SLAVE: ‘*doulos*’

1. SRN 1401 *δουλος* AV - servant 120, bond 6, bondman 1; 127

a)1) a slave, bondman, man of servile condition

(1) a slave

(2) metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will; those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men

(3) devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests

b)2) a servant, attendant

B. "But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life." [Ex.21:5-6]

C. Unlike a hired servant, a bond-slave was owned and ordered by his Master, upon whom he was fully dependent. The reality of those who would be bond-slaves of Jesus is that it should be the voluntary response of one who has been freed and chooses to serve his redeemer as his slave for life.

## II. WHO ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD? Here are a few of those to whom the title has been given:

A. ABRAHAM - The Prosperous Pilgrim

B. MOSES - The Lawgiver

C. JOSHUA & CALEB - Men of Faith and Action

D. DAVID - Shepherd, Singer, Soldier, & King

E. JOB - Faithful in Misfortune

F. ELIJAH & ELISHA - Powerful Prophets of God

G. THE APOSTLES - Fishermen, Tax Collector, Political Activist, Scholar...

H. ALL DISCIPLES. Notice the great variety of temperaments, personalities, gifts and abilities. The key is not fitting some stereo-type of "Super Spiritual Servanthood", it's making a non-negotiable commitment to the Lordship of Jesus and living it out on a daily basis.

## III. NOTE: SERVANTHOOD BRINGS THE CLOSEST VIEW!

*"He said , 'Listen to My Words: When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?'" [Nu.12:6-8]*

- Note: We make a choice to believe on (trust in) Jesus Christ as our Savior. As a result, we immediately become His Child and a Saint. We are Redeemed and Set Free. It then becomes our further choice whether we will become His Bond-Slave (*doulos*) or not. The first choice determines our destination (Heaven), the second will determine what the Journey will be like. Are you a *doulos* - a bond-slave? Is your ear pierced? ...

## THE SEVEN BLESSINGS OF REVELATION

I.1:3 - "**Blessed** is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."

II.14:13 - "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: **Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them!'" [Death is always gain for the believer - but this marks a time of great tribulation in which death will be a blessing rather than to continue through the normal sanctifying, character-building process of life]

III.16:15 - "Behold, I come like a thief! **Blessed** is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." [We are clothed in righteousness by faith and by faith we stay awake and alert, seeking to please Him with our lives. when we stop walking by faith, we stop abiding in Him and thus no longer produce fruit. Thus our nakedness (faithlessness) is exposed to our shame.]

IV.19:9 - "Then the angel said to me, 'Write: **Blessed** are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God!'" [These are the tribulation (and possibly pre church-age) saints.]

V.20:6 - "**Blessed** and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." [ "...He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death." - 2:11.

A.THE TWO RESURRECTIONS: 1. TO LIFE 2. TO CONDEMNATION cf. Jn.5:28-29 - "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."]

VI.22:7 - "Behold, I am coming soon! **Blessed** is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." [A repeat of the exhortation found in the first blessing.]

VII.22:14 - "**Blessed** are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city." [cf. "To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood.." - 1:5]

# “For the time is near”

Revelation 1:3

A brief look at the Olivet Discourses focusing on those elements specifically connected to the Imminent Beginning of The Tribulation

I. Mt 24:3-14 “3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

## II. THE END IS NOT YET

### A. THE END IS NOT YET

1. Matt. 24:4-6 - “4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”

2. Wars and False Saviors Are *Not* Signs of the End.

a) i.e. They are not to be watched for Prophetic Significance

### B. THE BEGINNING OF BIRTH-PAINS

1. Matt. 24:7-8 - “7 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 “All these are the beginning of sorrows.” [“birth-pains” NIV]

a) WEY: “but all these miseries are but like the early pains of childbirth.”

2. These Things *Are* to Be Watched ...

a) World Wars

b) Famines

c) Pestilences

d) Wide-spread Earthquakes

3. The Key Is ‘Birth-Pains’: ‘Longer-Stronger-Closer’ - A Measurable Increase in Intensity and Frequency

4. But Remember, This is Just The *Beginning*

a) cf. The ‘Shadows’ of The Four Horseman (6:1-8)

### C. THEN THE END WILL COME

1. Matt. 24:14 - “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

2. Lu 21:24-27 “24 “And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 25 “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 “men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. 27 “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

### D. LOOK FOR

1. The Fulfillment of The Great Commission

2. The Fulfillment of the ‘Times of the Gentiles’

3. Signs in the Heavens

4. Distress (widespread and ‘perplex’) Among Nations

5. Fearful Failing Hearts

# JESUS IS COMING!

Revelation 22:7 - *"Behold, I am coming quickly! ... "*

From the very beginning of God's relationship with His People, the promise of His Coming has been the foundation upon which all ultimate hopes have been built. The very Curse brought by sin contained the first assurance - a Promised Seed would come Who would conquer our Enemy, reverse the Curse and restore us to fellowship with our Creator. **The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - was coming!**

Through the Old Testament, we follow what's been called 'the scarlet thread of Redemption' - the line from Eve to Noah to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), and then on through Moses to David and his lineage. Finally closing out the OT with a declaration that God would send Elijah to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. **The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - was coming!**

Then there was silence. Silence for 400 years! Until ...

*"26 ... the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ... 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.""* (Luke 1:26-33)

**The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - HAD COME !**

Jesus came to Reveal God to Us, to Fulfill the Law for us, to Take our Sins upon Himself, and Restore our fellowship with the Creator. He came and saved us. He transferred us out of the Dominion of Darkness and into the Kingdom of Light. He brought us from spiritual death to Life. We are Alive! We are Free! We are His!

He gave us His Holy Spirit to seal our relationship, to be our strength, and to guarantee what was yet to come. But **He also gave us a promise: I WILL COME AGAIN ! ...**

**A Promise Given Before His Death**

*"1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."* (John 14:1-3)

**A Promise Given After His Resurrection**

*Acts 1:9-11 - "9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

## **A Promise Repeated by His Apostles**

Titus 2:11-13 - *"11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,"*

**THAT CONTINUES TO BE HOPE AND STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH TODAY - JESUS IS COMING!**

**JESUS IS COMING SOON!**

## **SIGNS OF HIS COMING**

### **ISRAEL WILL BE IN THE LAND**

*Ezekiel 38:8 - "After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely."*

In 1948, Israel took its place among the nations of the world again for the first time in nearly 2000 years. Students of prophecy recognized this as a primary sign that the end of the age was upon us.

Jesus indicated that the generation born when that happened would still be alive when He returned (Matt. 24:34). *Matthew 24:34 - "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."*

*Amos 9:14-15 "14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. 15 I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God."*

### **JERUSALEM WILL BE IN JEWISH HANDS ...**

*Luke 21:24- "... And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

When this happened in 1967, prophecy experts saw it as another major sign fulfilled.

### **WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS ...**

*Luke 21:10 - "Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*

Depending upon whose intelligence reports you read somewhere between 30 and 50 wars are currently being fought around the world, with many additional disputes threatening to erupt into war at any time.

Note: World-Wide Extent is a Key to Prophetic Significance

## **EARTHQUAKES, FAMINES & PESTILENCES, SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS ...**

*Luke 21:11 "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."*

More frequent and more severe hurricanes, more frequent and more intense earthquakes.

PESTILENCE... Not only new diseases like HIV but also the return of old ones like Whooping cough. But the big news continues to be the likely spread of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu).

## **SIGNS IN THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS ...**

Many recent 'end-of-the-world' tv programs have included the fact that a large asteroid is scheduled to pass very close to the earth on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 2029. It will be closer than our communications satellites. What makes it additionally interesting in terms of prophecy is that current models project that it will return and pass by the earth once again - exactly 7 years later! Could this be a marker from the Lord for the beginning and end of the Tribulation?

The magnetic polar reversal, predicted by computer model for 2012 is gaining more attention since its likelihood was first announced. Having moved several hundred miles across Canada the Magnetic North Pole is currently headed for Siberia. While the effects of a Magnetic Polar Reversal have never been observed by mankind, it has apparently happened in the distant past. What's unique this time is that the Sun is due for a polar reversal at the same time!

**INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE** - *Daniel 12:4 - "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."*

Studies have suggested that the amount of human knowledge is doubling every 8 years. Some of the technologies that are emerging will no doubt have a role to play in Bible Prophecy.

**TECHNOLOGY** - Revelation 13 describes a mark, in the right hand or forehead that will act as not only a form of allegiance or worship, but enable people to buy or sell items - in fact you can't conduct commerce without it. When you hear comments by the head of MasterCard that microchip implants under the skin could be used for commerce - you can't help but see the path we are on. The recent approval of the FDA for implants under the skin for medical purposes will no doubt play a role in this emerging trend.

Note: World-Wide Extent is a Key to Prophetic Significance

## **JESUS IS COMING! HE IS COMING SOON!**

And we believe that the Rapture of the Church is Imminent - It could happen at any moment. Why do we believe in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church? (see 'Seven Reasons for Believing in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church')

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS

Very prominent in the Book of Revelation is the use of numbers - 2, 3, 3 1/2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 24, 42, 144, 666, 1,000, 1,260, 1,600, 7,000, 12,000, 144,000, 100,000,000, and 200,000,000. These numbers may be taken literally, but should also be understood in the context of their symbolic meanings.

**7** The number 7 is used 54 times, more than any other number in the book. 7 symbolizes completion or perfection.

7 CHURCHES

7 SPIRITS OF GOD

7 LAMPSTANDS

7 STARS

7 SEALS

7 ANGELS

7 TRUMPETS

7 VIALS

7 HORNS

7 EYES?

7 PLAGUES

7 THUNDERS

7,000 KILLED IN AN EARTHQUAKE

7 HEADS AND 7 CROWNS ON THE DRAGON OF CHPT.12

7 HEADS ON THE BEAST OF CHPT.13

7 MOUNTAINS

7 KINGS

**12** The significance of the number 12 dates back to the fact of the 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

12 is the number of human government.

12,000 WERE SEALED FROM EACH OF THE 12 TRIBES  $\times 12 = 144,000$

12  $\times$  2 = THE 24 ELDERS OF CHPT.4

12,000 FURLONGS WIDE AND LONG DESCRIBES THE NEW JERUSALEM

12  $\times$  12 = THE 144 CUBIT HEIGHT OF THE WALL

**42 MONTHS OR 1,260 DAYS** This describes the precise length of the great tribulation. This is in keeping with the anticipation of Dan. 9:27 that the last half of the 7 year period would be a time of unprecedented trouble.

**666** Endless speculation has also risen over the number 666, which describes the beast out of the sea in Rev. 13:18. The most natural and simple explanation of this number, however, is that the beast is characterized by the number 6, just falling short of the number 7 and signifying that he is only a man after all. Possibly the threefold occurrence of the number 6 is in vague imitation of the trinity formed by his association with the devil and the false prophet.

# The Trinity

*21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

(Luke 3:21-22)

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. In this passage, we have a clear expression of the Trinity - the Tri-Unity of God.

B. We sing "God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity" and we hear people like Hank Henagraff and the Biblical Theologians of all ages defend the doctrine of the Trinity and declare that it is an essential of our faith. But what about the Trinity, does it really matter? Let's think about it.

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

### A. CONSIDER

#### 1. The 1st Commandment

a) "You shall have no other gods before Me. (Exodus 20:3)

b) Ps 81:9 - *There shall be no foreign god among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign god.*

c) Isa 43:10 - *"You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.*

2. If God is Triune in nature [God in Three Persons], then to worship Him in truth we must recognize, surrender to, and worship each member of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On the other hand, if either the Son or the Spirit are not, in fact, God, then we are guilty of worshipping created things as if they were God - something which, by definition, is idolatry.

#### 3. The Love of Truth

a) "9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved". (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)*

(1) Many Cs today care little about the vital distinctions of Truth [sample - not settle]

(2) Others have confused their love of proving themselves right, with the love of Truth. [Being right vs Doing right]

#### 4. The Defense of Truth

a) "... *I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" (1 Timothy 3:15)

### III. THE FACT OF THE DOCTRINE

#### A. NOTE

1. The doctrine of the Trinity arose as the spontaneous expression of the Christian experience. The early Christians knew themselves to be reconciled to God the Father, and that the reconciliation was secured for them by the atoning work of the Son, and that it was mediated to them as an experience by the Holy Spirit. Thus the Trinity was to them a fact before it became a doctrine.... [New Bible Dictionary - Tyndale]
2. "The word 'Trinity' is not found in the Bible, but the truth of this doctrine is in every part of the book." Donald Grey Barnhouse
3. C. C. Ryrie writes: - "There is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence."

#### B. GOD IS ONE

1. Deuteronomy 6:4, 5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
2. Isaiah 46:9: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me."
  - a) 1 Kings 8:60: "That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else."
  - b) Isaiah 44:6-8: "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."
  - c) Isaiah 45:5, 6: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else."
  - d) Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
  - e) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

#### C. THE FATHER IS GOD

1. "To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:7)
2. Dt. 7:9 - "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

#### D. THE SON IS GOD

1. John 1:1-2, 14 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. ... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*
2. "22 "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." John 5:22,23, NKJV.
3. "44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me." John 12:44,45, NKJV.

4.Jn 10:30 - "I and My Father are one."

5."8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves." John 14:8-11, NKJV.

6."57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." John 8:57,58, NKJV.

7.Ro 9:5 - "..., Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

8.Col 2:9 - For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

9.1Ti 3:16 - And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, ..."

10.Christ is the meeting-point between the Trinity and the sinner's soul. J.C. Ryle

## E.THE SPIRIT IS GOD

1.2 Cor 3:17 - Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2.3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

3."how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

4.THEREFORE - GOD IS A TRINITY [TRI-UNITY]

## F.OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES REGARDING THE TRINITY.

1.The first name used for God: Elohim (Gen. 1:1 is plural in form joined to singular verb.

a)In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

b)"For thy Maker is thine husband" (Isa. 54:5). Here "maker" should be translated "makers."

(1)The plural forms used in Ecclesiastes 12:1 and Isaiah 54:5.

(a)"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12:1). In the original this is literally "thy creators."

2.The creation of man.

a)Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: ..."

3.The expulsion from Eden.

a)Genesis 3:22: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

4.The confusion at Babel.

(1)Genesis 11:7: "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another"s speech."

5.The usage of the word, echad, in Genesis 2:24 and in Deuteronomy 6:4. Echad is Hebrew for "one." These passages teach that God is one, as husband and wife are one.

a)Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

b)"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)

6.The teachings of King Agur.

a)Proverbs 30:4: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son"s name, if thou canst tell?"

## G. NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES REGARDING THE TRINITY.

### 1. The baptism of Christ.

a) *Matthew 3:16, 17: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

(1) **And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form.** It has been suggested that the Spirit descended as a Dove so that He might be revealed to be a person and not merely an operation of the Godhead, and thus demonstrate his proper place in the Trinity.

### 2. The teachings of Jesus.

a) *John 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."*

(1) The Greek word here translated "another" is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. *Heteros* is the Greek word for another of a different kind. It is never used in referring to the Trinity.

### 3. The baptismal formula.

a) *Matthew 28:19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

(1) "... in the Name, not names; there is one essence." Thomas Adams

(2) The Trinity is (not are) God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Barnhouse

### 4. The apostolic benediction.

a) *2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."*

## H. THERE ARE TWO SERIOUS ERRORS ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

1. The error of Tri-Theism. This says that the Trinity consists of three separate (but cooperating) Gods. i.e. Polytheism

a) This, of course, contradicts a basic revelation of God - "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"

2. The error of Modalism. According to this view there is but one God who simply reveals himself through three different modes, or roles. For example, a particular man could be considered a husband to his wife, a father to his children, and an employee to his boss.

a) This makes nonsense of passages as above, or consider Mt. 28:20 - baptizing - in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## I. COMMON ILLUSTRATIONS ATTEMPTING TO DEMONSTRATING THE TRINITY.

1. three-leaf clover

2. the three states of water (liquid, vapor, and solid)

3. the threefold nature of man (body, soul, spirit)

a) the nature of light, consisting of three kinds of rays

(1) chemical rays - rays that are invisible, and can neither be felt nor seen

(2) light rays - rays that are seen, but cannot be felt

(3) heat rays - rays that are felt, but never seen

4. Electromagnetic Spectrum - light / heat / sound / etc.

5. The dimensional example: A book has height, width, and length. These three cannot be separated, yet they are not the same.

6. a triangle

#### J.MANY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO CAPTURE THIS TRUTH IN WORDS

1.C. C. Ryrie writes: "There is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence."

2.Westminster Confession: "In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternall begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

#### K.ULTIMATELY - THE TRI-UNITY OF GOD IS SOMETHING TO BE BELIEVED AND ENJOYED - NOT NECESSARILY UNDERSTOOD

1. Augustine, while puzzling over the doctrine of the Trinity, was walking along the beach one day when he observed a young boy with a bucket, running back and forth to pour water into a little hole. Augustine asked, "What are you doing?" The boy replied, "I'm trying to put the ocean into this hole." Then Augustine realized that he had been trying to put an infinite God into his finite mind.

2.A Theological student came to Charles Spurgeon one day, greatly concerned that he could not grasp the meaning of certain verses in the bible. The noted preacher replied kindly but firmly. "Young man, allow me to give you this word of advice. Give the Lord credit for knowing things you don't understand." [Tans 1985]

#### IV.THE PERSONAL APPLICATION - THE TRI-UNITY OF GOD MEANS

A.AS FATHER: GOD IS AWESOME, SOVEREIGN AND INSCRUTABLE

B.AS SON: GOD IS FLESH & BLOOD, A PERSON, KNOWABLE AND UNDERSTANDING

C.AS THE HOLY SPIRIT: GOD IS INTIMATE, PRESENT AND INCREDIBLY CLOSE

D.THIS ALL COMES TOGETHER IN PRAYER: "God the Holy Ghost writes our prayers, God the Son presents our prayers, and God the Father accepts our prayers. And with the whole Trinity to help us in it, what cannot prayer perform?" Spurgeon

•True prayer is the living experience of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit's breathing, the Son's intercession, the Father's will, these three become one in us. — Andrew Murray.

#### BENEDICTION

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."*

2 Corinthians 13:14

# WHAT HELD JESUS TO THE CROSS?

"22 Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."

Acts 2:22-23

**INTRO:** Consider suffering and death of Jesus... Symbol of the Cross

More than any other, the Cross is the symbol of the Christian Faith. But when you think of what the Cross was, it seems strange that it should be the chosen icon of a Faith that professes to have good news to share. After all, the Cross was an instrument of death, of excruciating torture, and of extreme humiliation. Sufferers were reduced to a pitiful showcase of prolonged pain and agony. Jesus, who had already been literally beaten to a pulp - beyond recognition - suffered on the Cross! [read or relate sufferings of Christ]

So why do believers look to the Cross as a symbol of victory? It is because of what Jesus accomplished there - atonement for our sins - and because it reminds us of what motivated Him to go to the Cross. So - the glory of the Cross can be found by seeking an answer to the question: "What held Jesus to the Cross?"

## I. WHAT HELD JESUS TO THE CROSS?

### A. AN INVESTIGATION: THE NAILS HELD JESUS TO THE CROSS

1. Zec. 12:10 - "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.
2. Ps. 22:16 - "Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet."
3. Jn. 20:25 - "So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

## II. WHO NAILED JESUS TO THE CROSS?

### A. THE SOLDIERS / PILOT / THE JEWS

1. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" ... "His blood be on us and our children!"

### B. BUT WAIT ... IT WAS GOD'S WILL

1. Acts 2:23 - "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."
2. Isa 53:10 - "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer ..."

### C. WHY? FOR OUR SINS!

1. Isa. 53:4-6 - "4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
2. 1Cor. 15:3 - "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,"

### D. IT WAS OUR SINS THAT NAILED JESUS TO THE CROSS!!! ...

### III. BUT WHAT HELD JESUS TO THE CROSS?

A. No power in Heaven or Earth could forcibly hold Jesus to the cross.

B. He is the One Who...

1. walked on water
2. calmed the storm
3. raised the dead
4. could call a legion of angels to his side
  - d. Mt 26:53 - "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"
  - e. [2Kings 19 - 1 angel put to death 185,000 assyrians]
5. said Jn. 10:18 - "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord...."

C. THEN WHAT HELD HIM TO THE CROSS? HIS LOVE FOR US!

1. Jn. 3:16, Rom. 5:8,
2. 1Jn. 4:10 - "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

### IV. THE CROSS IS GLORIOUS BECAUSE IT TELLS US HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US

I asked God, "How much do You love me?"  
and He went to the Cross and stretched wide His hands  
and said,  
**"This much!"**

## **AND HAS MADE US KINGS & PRIESTS**

*"and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father.."*

### **KEY VERSES**

- Rev.5:9-10 - "9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us **kings and priests** to our God; And **we shall reign on the earth.**"
- 1 Pet. 2:4-5,9-10 - "As you come to Him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be **a holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." ... "But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."
- Rev. 3:21 - "To him who overcomes I will grant to **sit with Me on My throne**, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."
- Rev. 20:4, 6 - "4 And I saw **thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.** ... 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**"
- 1 Cor. 6:2 -3 "2 Do you not know that **the saints will judge the world?** And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that **we shall judge angels?** How much more, things that pertain to this life?"
- 2Tim. 2:12 "If we endure, **We shall also reign with Him.** If we deny Him, He also will deny us."
- Rev. 22:5 "There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And **they shall reign forever and ever.**"
- Dan. 7:18, 27 - "18 'But **the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.**'" ... "27 Then **the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.** His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

### **SUMMARY**

- Believers Will Reign With Christ as 'Kingly Priests'
  - We Will Rule
  - We Will Reign
  - We Will Judge
  - We Will Declare His Praises

### **•FOREVER!**

# Robert L. Thomas on 'The 7 Spirits Who Are Before His Throne'

from 'REVELATION 1-7, AN EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY,  
Kenneth Barker, General Editor' published by Moody Press

## Excerpts From Pages 66-68 (greek and footnotes removed)

The identification of the seven spirits is problematic. The name occurs again in 3:1; 4:5; 5:6, and these other mentions must figure into efforts to identify the meaning. Two main proposals for identification are that they are angels (i.e., supernatural created beings) or the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

To support the identification of the seven spirits as angels, it is sometimes noted that (*pneuma*, "spirit") is frequently used for angels, both fallen and unfallen, in the NT (Walvoord). It is also observed that the location of the seven spirits before God's throne shows that they are created beings. This, a position of subordination, is quite inappropriate for a divine being, but angels are regularly positioned in this manner. Furthermore, the similarity of the language here to that of Luke 9:26 and I Tim. 5:21 (Moffatt) and the prominence of angels in connection with the Tribulation period (cf. Matt. 13:41), which is presumably the period covered by Revelation 6-18 (Smith), are further factors that favor the angelic identification.

[One effort to support the angelic identity of "the seven spirits" resorts to the seven archangels who were known to Jewish tradition of the time: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraquael, Gabriel, and Remiel (Enoch 20:1-8; cf. Tobit 12:15; Esd. 4:1; Dan. 10:13) (Mounce). These originally were astral deities who supposedly were degraded into angels to protect the monotheism of Judaism (Charles). This suspicious rationale for the angelic identification represents a strange intrusion of Jewish tradition into Christian thought, however (Mounce). (from pgs. 73-74)]

Arguing against angels, some have noted that though seven angels are mentioned in 8:2, these angels are never referred to as *pneumata*, and that angels in this book are distinctly called angels and are seen in distinct angelic form whereas the seven spirits are always represented in symbolic form (Alford; Beckwith). Both the singular and plural of *pneuma* in this book refer only to the Spirit of God or to demons, with the exception of Rev. 11:11 and 13:5, and neither of these exceptions refers to angels (Lee; Johnson).

The most decisive consideration against a reference to angels is the impossibility that created beings could be seen as a source of an invocation of grace and peace in 1:4-5. This would place them alongside the Father and the Son as equals, and the strict prohibitions against angel worship elsewhere in the book (19: 10; 22:9) make it inconceivable that angels would be placed side-by-side with the Father and the Son in such a role (Charles; Beckwith).

It is more satisfying to identify "the seven spirits" as a reference to the Holy Spirit, and thus as an additional *divine* source for the greeting of v. 4. It is improper to associate anyone less than Deity with the Father (1 :4) and the Son (1 :5) (Swete; Morris; Mounce). Further confirmation is noted in Christ's hold upon the seven spirits (3: 1) and in the relationship of the seven spirits to both God and Christ (4:5; 5:6).

This is in keeping with NT usage where the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son is taught (e.g., John 15:26). He is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (eL Rom. 8:9) (Beckwith).

Against the Holy Spirit identification it has been contended that this passage does not purpose to portray the Trinity, but to designate the high court of heaven as having jurisdiction on earth, with angels as those who assess the situation (Bullinger). It is further argued that nowhere else is the Holy Spirit associated with the Father and the Son in an epistolary salutation (Bullinger). These objections, however, do not appear to be sufficient to counteract the stronger consideration that a reference to angels would indeed be an intrusion of created beings into the Holy Trinity.

It is better, then, to see in "the seven spirits" of 1:4 a reference to the Holy Spirit. But this raises a further question: Why is He referred to in this way? In thirteen or fourteen places in this book He is referred to in a more conventional fashion as "the Spirit" or something comparable (e.g., 19: 10). Suggestions have varied. Is it because the churches in which He operates are seven in number? This proposal is inadequate because the descriptions of 4:5 and 5:6 relate to what is fundamental and universal, not just to the seven churches (Beckwith).

Another idea is to trace the title to Isa. 11:2 where a supposedly sevenfold designation of the Spirit is found (Lenski; Walvoord; Morris; Caird). This notion is inadequate, however, because Isa. 11:2 points out only six, not seven, energies of the Spirit (Alford; Beckwith). The fact that the LXX breaks the poetic parallelism of the three couplets by inserting (*eusebeias*, "godliness") to increase the in the Apocalypse little weight is assigned to the LXX.

Another approach is to see "seven spirits" as a means for expressing the Spirit's perfection and His sevenfold energies' Rationale for this derives from the symbolic use of the number seven to denote completeness (Alford) and from the manifold working of the Spirit indicated in such passages as 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:32; Heb. 2:4; Rev.

22:6. Though it is true that the Spirit operates in a variety of ways (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4) and that seven can express the fullness and perfection of those operations, an emphasis on such fullness is absent in all four contexts where this title is used for the Holy Spirit (Charles; Beckwith). The uses of the title require a reference to a concrete being, not to abstract energies.

The most satisfactory explanation for the title "the seven spirits" traces its origin to Zech. 4:1-10 Zechariah 4:2, 10 speaks of the seven lamps (cf. Rev. 4:5) that are "the eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the whole earth." This has a close similarity to John's "sent out into all the earth" in Rev. 5:6 (Mounce). Because Revelation 4 and 5 carry the same symbolism as Zechariah 4 and the title used in the opening of this book must relate to themes occurring later on, the tracing of the title to this OT passage is an obvious solution (Beckwith). The prominence of the Holy Spirit's activity in the world in Zech. 4:2-10 is established by the words "not by might or power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). John's use of Zechariah 4 furnishes an example his kaleidoscopic variations on OT imagery (Caird). In deriving the title, John identifies the seven eyes of Zechariah with the seven spirits that belong to the Lord (Zech. 4: 10; cf. Rev. 5:6). The seven lamps of Zechariah (Zech. 4:2) are also synonymous with the seven spirits (Rev. 4:5).

## **THE SEVEN MENTIONS OF HIS COMING IN REVELATION**

I.1:7 - "Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen."

II.2:25 - "Only hold on to what you have until I come."

III.3:3 - "Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."

IV.3:11 - "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown."

V.22:7 - "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

VI.22:12 - "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

VII.22:20 - "He Who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon!' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

## THE SECRET COMING OF JESUS

Charles Taze Russell was born in Allegheny Pennsylvania On Feb.16 1852 As he grew up and was exposed to the church he was troubled by various church teachings like the Trinity and especially on hell because he felt they were unreasonable. He became a skeptic at age 17.

In 1870 he was exposed to the teachings of William Miller who was one of the originators of the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent movement. Miller had taught that Christ returned in 1843 then 1844 . When this didn't occur E.G white received visions and understood this to be that Christ went into the Holy of Holies in judgement (now known as the investigative judgment in the 7<sup>th</sup> day Adventists) In 1874 another 2<sup>nd</sup> day Adventist Nelson Barbour, announced Christ's return invisibly in 1874 (*STUDIES, Vol. 7, p. 54*). Russell already influenced by prophecy from them personally met with Barbour, who convinced him of Christ's invisible presence returned on earth. Despite the failed prophecies, Barbour and Russell jointly published "Three worlds or plan of redemption in 1877, and in 1874 he founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society.

"Our lord, the appointed king, is now present since Oct. 1874. According to the testimony of the prophets to those who have ears to hear." (studies in the scriptures vol.4, pg.621)

1879 "Christ came in the character of a Bridegroom in 1874.... at the beginning of the Gospel harvest." (Watchtower, Oct 1879, p. 4)

"Christ's presence and the harvest began in 1874." ( *STUDIES, Vol. 2, p. 239*)

Lets pause here and consider that Christ said in John 4:35 "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" Matt. 9:37-10:1 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Luke 10:2- Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

Christ recognized the harvest was when he was here physically on earth and sent them out to do their harvest this is when it began. The Gospel harvest was proclaimed at Pentecost when 3,000 were saved.

"six thousand years of evil which ended in 1874 ."(*STUDIES, Vol. 7, p. 301*)

*Did evil end on this date?*

"The scriptures show that his second coming presence was due in 1874....This proof shows the Lord has been present since 1874..." (W.T.pg.67, Mar.1, 1923)

The Watchtower has always confused the presence of Jesus as a spiritual one and his physical return to earth.

So sure was Russell on this fact that he calculated "Eighty-eight proofs that the Lord's Second Advent occurred in the fall of 1874 (*STUDIES, Vol. 7, pp. 68-71*)

It wasn't so much the bible as it was Russells fascination with pyramidology "The grand gallery' measures **1874** inches long at the top **1878** inches long at a groove cut in its sides about midway, at the bottom....between bottom and top and 1881 inches. Now notice how aptly these three distinct dates (**1874, 1878, 1881**.) are marked by the pyramid ..."(*WT 5/1881, p. 225*)the 1878 date was his formal inauguration of his kingly office (Studies in the Scriptures, vol.4, pg.621)

"The Millennium began in 1874, with the Return of Christ."(*STUDIES, Vol. 7, p. 386*)

The Millennium is what Jehovah Witnesses teach is paradise earth when Christ comes back, here we see Russell claiming that it already occurred.

"Surely there is not the slightest room for doubt in the mind of truly consecrated child of God that the Lord Jesus is present and has been since 1874." (WT.Pg.5, Jan.1,1924)

He was so sure that they published "We can see no room for changing the figures- nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours." (WT July 15, 1894 p.226)

"The autumn of 1874, anxiously expected, finally came, but the earth rolled on as ever"... "they said , surely we had been in error-but where? Surely it is taught that Jesus would come again; perhaps our calculation of time is at fault."...Then the prophetic arguments were carefully re-examined. Was error found? No, they stood the test of all investigation and the jubilee argument and the "1335 days" of Daniel could not possibly be prolonged beyond the fall of '74 or the spring of 1875 and these periods were both past."( Zion's W.T p.3 Feb.1881)

The head and originator of the Watchtower was faced with a dilemma since he will not admit the date is wrong then what is the answer?... "With the remembrance that the time arguments above referred to had been found faultless and unalterable and proved that Jesus was due here in the fall of 1874 came the thought- can it be possible that Jesus does not come in a fleshly body at his second advent."

Here Russell is challenging the very core beliefs of Christianity and the clear teaching of the Bible! No matter, they changed so many other doctrines why not the essential one that justifies someone.

He actually goes on refuting this in speaking about Acts 1:11 "this had generally been supposed to teach that Jesus would come in the flesh and be seen of men, as he was seen of the disciples." ... "But the angels language seemed peculiar- this same Jesus as though there had been another Jesus: Examination revealed the fact, that Jesus since his resurrection is a totally different being from the Jesus who died." (Zion's W.T p.3 Feb.1881) He admits this is another Jesus which is what scripture warns us of in 2 Cor.11:4. It was the Gnostics that taught that Jesus could not take up a real human body because flesh was evil and god cannot come in the flesh. This is exactly what the J.W's teach and take this even further by saying he could not take up the same human body in his post resurrection life.

Barbour has had more influence on early J.W doctrine than most care to give him credit on. "Brother Barbour first began to preach the message, and soon started a paper, which he appropriately called the midnight cry,"...there was a general re-examination of all the arguments upon which the midnight cry was made" conclusion..." expectation of Jesus in the flesh at the 2nd advent was a mistake...".. The midnight cry was correct, and that the bridegroom came in autumn of 1874, and appeared to the eyes of faith..."

"If bro. Miller and Barbour were his instruments, then that midnight cry based on the prophetic and other statements and evidences, was correct...we believe that the midnight cry was of God."(Zion's W.T p.3 Feb.1881)

This next statement brings home the 7th day influence on Russell (note that 7th day Adventists in the beginning taught Michael the arch angel is Jesus, today they still believe Jesus is Michael, but angel Michael is not Jesus.)

"If our application of Scripture be correct, the favor has now ended and the language of the parable,"the door was shut".(ibid)

When Christ did not return for the false Adventists prophets, some had claimed that the Adventists had been right about the date, but wrong about the event. So they began a search for some other event that could fit the prophecy date. Ellen G. White wrote "I was shown in vision, and I still believe that there was a shut door in 1844". (Selected Messages, vol.1p.63)

"At the time I had the vision of the midnight Cry I had given it up in the past and thought it future, ....AFTER I HAD THE VISION and God gave me light,...The view about the Bridegroom's coming I had about the middle of February, 1845, ... Many of them did not believe in a shut door. I suffered much at the commencement of the meeting. Unbelief seemed to be on every hand....The Lord worked in mighty power, setting the truth home to their hearts....MOST OF THEM RECEIVED THE VISION, AND WERE SETTLED UPON THE SHUT DOOR"(Letter B 3 1847, Letter to Joseph Bates, July 13, 1847, from the Whites)

The Jehovah's Witnesses adopted her view and modified it saying later that Heaven's doors is open to only 144,000. The rest are to stay on planet earth.

Notice the name of her vision "the midnight cry" Just what Barbour printed, a concept of a shut door with Russell is hardly coincidence considering his previous affiliation with Adventism.

So the Jehovah's Witnesses have a false 2nd coming, a secret one that Jesus himself warned about in Mt.24:26 "If they say to you, look he is in the desert! do not go out;or look he is in the inner rooms! do not believe it." WHY? Because he describes his coming like this "For as the lightning flashes from east to west so will the coming of the son of man be." Everyone can see lightning no matter what religion they would belong to, even if they did not believe in God. There is no secret coming to establish his kingdom on earth.

Not only do the Jehovah's Witnesses have an invisible coming of Jesus but they have an invisible resurrection for the apostles and the 144,000.'... that in the spring of 1878 all the holy apostles and other 'overcomers' of the Gospel age who slept in Jesus were raised spirit beings." (*STUDIES, Vol. 3, p. 234*)

In 1878 the process of setting up the kingdom began. The Lord raised the sleeping saints. (WT 6/1/1922, p. 174)

End of gospel age, the rapture of the saints. (Three Worlds p.68; Proclaimers p. 632; Divine Purpose p19.)

One of the many enlightening spiritual truths that God gave his witnesses about the members of God's spiritual nation who had died physically. This was 1927. In that year the witnesses understood that the dead spiritual Israelites had been raised in 1918 to life in heaven with Christ Jesus. It was an invisible resurrection, of Course.(From Paradise lost to Paradise Regained p.192, 195) Which date is correct?

The Rapture of the saints, included Russell and other Bible Students. (WT Jan. 1881 (reprint p.180), Dec. 1880 (reprint p.172).

Now we have a whole group of special people that were raised to go to heaven when the bible already promises this to all believers in 2 Cor.5:8 "to be absent from the body is to be present (immediately) with the Lord." This not only contradicts Gods promise to all but they have a resurrection that is not mentioned in the Bible, since it says in 1 Thess.4:13-17 the dead will rise at the same time those who are alive and all will be caught up to Christ in the air together.

Before we look at who the Jesus is that came back after he died, we need to examine what the Watchtower did about this date of 1874 and the **invisible 2<sup>nd</sup> coming**.

"The indisputable facts, therefore, show that the "time of the end" began in 1799; that the Lord's second presence began in 1874." (The Watchtower, March 1, 1922) Through the 20's, 30's the date of 1874 was taught as the true date of Jesus return until 1943 where in the book "The Truth shall make you free" said ..." This moved forward the end of the 6,000 years of man's existence into the decade of the 1970's. Naturally this did away with the year 1874 C.E as the date of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginning of his invisible presence or parousia." So they corrected themselves on a false teaching that was held by every faithful witness for 74 years. However they still are not right. (*Gods kingdom of a thousand years has approached* p.209-210 1973)

This teaching has given rise to what the Watchtower teaches every J.W. today that Christ when he died no longer existed and had to be recreated like any other human being. Because when the body dies the spirit ceases to exist, there is no after life for anyone, not even Jesus !

"We deny that he raised in the flesh, and challenge any statement to that effect as being unscriptural." (*The Finished Mystery* p.57 1917)

"Having given up his flesh for the life of the world, Christ could never take it again and become a man once more." (*You can live in Paradise on Earth* p.169 1982)

Christ's natural body not raised is also believed by occultists such as Johannes Greber who agrees with them... "The 'resurrection of the dead' has therefore not the slightest reference to the resurrection of the physical body." (*Communications with the Spirit World*, p. 385) "-The body of Jesus similarly to the bodies of Enoch and Elijah have been dissolved into God." (ibid p.385)

"Our Lord's human body was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples, who were not yet instructed in spiritual things - for 'the spirit was not yet given.' John 7:39 We know nothing about what became of it, except that it did not decay or corrupt... Many Christians have the idea that our Lord's glorious spiritual body is the very same body that was crucified and laid away in Joseph's tomb: This is a great mistake," (*Time is at Hand* p. 128)

What happened to his body then? "The scriptures answer; It was disposed of by Jehovah God, dissolved into its constituent elements or atoms," (*Watchtower*, p.518, Oct.1, 1953) the further explain what happens in the event of death. "Adam ceased to be a breather, or soul, and went back to the lifeless dust from which he had been taken. It was the reverse of the creation process. No part of him lived on. He went completely into non existence."

So what happened to Jesus is no different than what happens to anyone else "Jesus was dead, he was unconscious,

out of existence. Death did not mean a transition to another life for Jesus ; rather non existence." (*Awake* p.27 July, 22 1979)

This is the Jesus they have, this is the Father they have as Jehovah. He destroyed the Son. Not to worry he's got a good memory and can make him all over again.

What does resurrection mean to a Jehovah Witness?

"What will be resurrected? The body? NO. for it has disintegrated and its atoms have become part of other living things. Which in turn may have become part of other living creatures." (*W.T* p.346 June 1, 1959)

"Jesus became a living spirit creature as he had been before coming to earth." (*Happiness-how to find it* p.118, 1980)

..."he was the first to be raised a spirit person." (*You can live in paradise on earth* p.172 1982)

"Jesus Christ was not made a human creature at his resurrection but was made a spirit, which accounts for his invisibility." (*WT* p.101-102 April 1, 1947)

Therefore he is ANOTHER JESUS

What does resurrection mean in the Bible ?

1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God "**the man**" Christ Jesus ." He was raised in the same flesh and bone body, he is not a spirit named Michael the Arch angel. He is still in the body he took in the incarnation, he is a man according to the bible who is at the right hand of the Father.

**Christ resurrected**

In.2:19-21 "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up "... "But he was speaking of the temple of his body." Not only does he say the same body will be raised up But that he will do this. How does one accomplish this fact if they are out of existence. [Click here > and go to the Trinity in the resurrection](#)

Acts 2:24-28 "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death". What dies the body nowhere do we find a spirit being resurrected in the scriptures. Peter sums up his sermon in v.31 "he, forseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades nor his flesh see corruption" Christ went as a living soul to paradise, not to annihilation. Scripture states he did not see corruption, meaning his body was not left to rot in the ground but was brought out as the firstfruits unto eternal life 1 Cor. 15:20, 23. Jesus is not raised from non existence but from the dead.

If Jesus did not rise from the grave in a physical body then what is the significance of an empty tomb?

Rev 1:18 "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

Rev 2:8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, **who was dead**, and came to life.'"

Nowhere does Jesus say he went out of existence. Like I was and now again exist!

### **Not believing the Resurrection**

1 Cor. 15:11-15 "Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And *if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty*. Yes, and **we are found false witnesses of God**, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up-- if in fact the dead do not rise."

Paul says those who do not believe in a physical resurrection are "Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God."

[What are Jehovah's Witnesses in light of this statement?](#)

**From: Secret Coming of Jesus**

<http://www.letusreason.org/JW2.htm>

## A LOOK AT SOME TITLES FOR GOD IN REVELATION

### “WHO IS AND WHO WAS AND WHO IS TO COME” - USED *ONLY* OF THE FATHER

Rev. 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from **Him who is and who was and who is to come**, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Rev. 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*,” says the Lord, “**who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty.”

Rev. 11:17 saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, **The One who is and who was and who is to come**, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

Rev. 16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, **The One who is and who was and who is to be**, Because You have judged these things.

### “ALPHA AND OMEGA” - USED OF *BOTH* THE FATHER AND SON

Rev. 1:8 “I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, *the Beginning and the End*,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Rev. 1:11 saying, “I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Rev. 21:6 And He said to me, “It is done! I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Rev. 22:13 “I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, *the Beginning and the End*, the First and the Last.”

### “THE BEGINNING AND THE END” - USED OF *BOTH* THE FATHER AND SON

Rev. 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Rev. 3:14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, **the Beginning of the creation of God**:

Rev. 21:6 And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, **the Beginning and the End**. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

### ‘FIRST AND LAST’ - USED *ONLY* OF THE SON

Rev. 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, the First and the Last.”

Rev. 1:11 saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, **the First and the Last**,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am **the First and the Last**.

Rev. 2:8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says **the First and the Last**, who was dead, and came to life:

Rev. 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, **the First and the Last**.”

## **THE ALPHA & THE OMEGA**

### **Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of Creation**

John 1:3 - "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

Col. 1:16 -17 - "16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

IF JESUS CAN HOLD THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER - HE CAN KEEP YOU TOGETHER

### **Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of The Bible**

Lk. 24:25 -27 "25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE HEART OF THE BIBLE - LOOK FOR JESUS

### **Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of Our Salvation**

Rev. 13:8 - "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

John 19:30 - "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Heb. 7:25 - "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

acts 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

IF YOU WANT TRUE, ETERNAL LIFE - IT BEGINS AND ENDS IN JESUS

### **Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of Our Faith**

Heb. 12:1-2 - "1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ..."

Romans 12:3 - "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."

IF YOU NEED MORE FAITH - KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS

### **Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of Heaven**

The first One that a soul entering heaven looks for is Jesus.

All the Praises of Heaven are offered at His feet. All the Glories of Heaven shine from His Throne. All the Host of Heaven bows at the mention of His Name.

Then, if you strain to see through the years of Eternity to the end of the most remote age ...

All the Praises of Heaven are offered at His feet. All the Glories of Heaven shine from His Throne. All the Host of Heaven bows at the mention of His Name.

DO YOU WANT A TASTE OF HEAVEN? FALL AT HIS FEET, PRAISE HIS NAME and GIVE HIM GLORY!

# PATMOS



"Image courtesy of " [www.HolyLandPhotos.org](http://www.HolyLandPhotos.org)

Patmos is a Greek island in the Dodecanese group, located about 40 mi. [65 km.] west of the western coast of Turkey. It was here that John was exiled received the revelation that he wrote about in the New Testament book of Revelation (Rev 1:9). Tradition maintains that he was exiled to Patmos during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96). He was eventually released and returned to Ephesus (located about 60 miles to the northeast of Patmos).

Patmos is shaped somewhat like the letter “C”—open to the east. It is composed of three parts connected by two isthmuses. It was a safe place to anchor during storms and was therefore important to ancient navigators. It was the last stopping place when traveling from Rome to Ephesus and the first sopping place on a return trip to Rome. The larger northern part is connected to the central (main) part by a narrow isthmus. The island is about 7 miles long, and up to 3 miles wide. It is 13 sq. miles in area and today has a population of about 2,750 persons.



Patmos (or Patnos) is also known as “The Jerusalem of the Aegean”, as it was referred to in one 5th century inscription. It was here that St. John the Theologian was exiled between 95 and 97 A.D. and was inspired to write the Apocalypse, or “Book of Revelation”. Situated between Leros and Ikaria, it is a mountainous island with rocky soil and an abundance of small coves. It’s barren nature made it a natural choice by Rome as a penal colony (along with other islands in the group).

Later the emperor Alexios Komninos ordered the monk Christodoulos Letrinios to found a monastery in honor of the Apostle. Thus the holy monastery of Patmos was built, the most important landmark on the island.

The majestic fortress-monastery crowns the hill above the port, surrounded by cubelike white houses which spill down its flanks. The construction of the monastery began in the 11th century. It’s circumscribed by massive stone walls with battlements that protected the main church and other five chapels. Its extraordinary treasury contains Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons, sacred vessels and other priceless objects, while its library houses parchment documents, patriarchal seals, manuscripts and rare old books.



In the chapel dedicated to Our Lady, frescoes can be seen which date to 1210-1220.

## REVELATION IS A LOUD BOOK

1. Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a **loud** voice, as of a trumpet,
2. Rev. 5:2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a **loud** voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"
3. Rev. 5:12 saying with a **loud** voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"
4. Rev. 6:10 And they cried with a **loud** voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
5. Rev. 7:2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a **loud** voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,
6. Rev. 7:10 and crying out with a **loud** voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
7. Rev. 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a **loud** voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"
8. Rev. 10:3 and cried with a **loud** voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.
9. Rev. 11:12 And they heard a **loud** voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.
10. Rev. 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were **loud** voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
11. Rev. 12:10 Then I heard a **loud** voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.
12. Rev. 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of **loud** thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.
13. Rev. 14:7 saying with a **loud** voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."
14. Rev. 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a **loud** voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand,
15. Rev. 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a **loud** voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."
16. Rev. 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a **loud** cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."
17. Rev. 16:1 Then I heard a **loud** voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."
18. Rev. 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a **loud** voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"
19. Rev. 18:2 And he cried mightily with a **loud** voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"
20. Rev. 19:1 After these things I heard a **loud** voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God!"
21. Rev. 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a **loud** voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,
22. Rev. 21:3 And I heard a **loud** voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

# KEEPING THE SABBATH

21 This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. 22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers. (Jeremiah 17:21-22)

## · INTRODUCTION

- The issue of keeping the Sabbath is one that continues to surface for believers...
- cf. 7th Day Adventists...
- It is an issue that has prompted volumes of writings, debates and even division in the body of Christ. We cannot pretend to take an exhaustive look at it in a single Sunday morning message. However, I believe it would be helpful to take time this morning to give an overview.
- This may seem to be a secondary issue - but I assure you it's not. If we do not keep the Sabbath in it's True sense, we cannot be saved - so please stay with me and, by the time we're done - I pray you'll see the point and make sure that you're keeping the Sabbath. Although you may be surprised at what it means to truly keep the Sabbath.

## I.BACKGROUND

### A.ESTABLISHMENT

1.1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:1-3)

2.Note: Manna sit. reveals familiarity with concept

- a)"He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: `Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.'" (Exodus 16:23).

### B.INCLUSION IN THE LAW: CODIFICATION

1. 8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

### C. ELEMENTS OF ITS OBSERVATION

1.2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day." (Exodus 35:2-3).

2.3 ""There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:3).

### 3.BOTTOM-LINE:

- a)DO NOT - WORK, LABOR OR STRIVE
- b)DO - REST IN THE LORD

### D. THE PROPHETS' INSISTENCE

1.13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 58:13-14).

### E. TRADITIONALIZATION DURING 'SILENT YEARS'

1. They invented many prohibitions respecting the Sabbath. cf. false teeth, etc.

- a)It became a legal burden rather than a profession of faith
- b)cf. 'Sabbath Day's Walk [2,000 cubits - 1,000 yards] but would get around it by putting food at limits and declaring it a 'temporary residence'.

2. That this had become very general in our Savior's time is apparent from the objections to acts of his on that day and from his conduct on occasions to which those objections were sure to be urged. #Mt 12:1-16; Mr 3:2; Lu 6:1-5; 13:10-17; Joh 6:2-18; 7:23; 9:1-34 |

## II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS TO THE SABBATH

### A. HE OBSERVED IT - FULFILLED ITS REQUIREMENTS & OBLIGATIONS

### B. HE EXPOSED ITS ABUSE

1.10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. 14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" 17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. (Luke 13:10-17).

### C. HE CLARIFIED ITS PRIORITIES

1.27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mk 2:27).

### D. HE IS LORD OVER THE SABBATH [claim of Deity]

1. "... the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:28)

### E. HE TRANSFORMED IT THROUGH HIS FINISHED WORK ON THE CROSS

1. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

## III. THE SABBATH TODAY

### A. THE CHURCH IN GENERAL TRANSFERRED IT'S CUSTOMS TO 'THE LORD'S DAY' - 1st Day of Week

#### 1. THE LORD'S DAY -

a) The Sabbath was a memorial of creation. A work vastly greater than that has now been accomplished - the work of redemption. We should not be surprised if it appears that the Lord established a new day to commemorate His new, completed work of Redemption.

b) We know for a fact that the first day of the week has been observed from apostolic times, and was observed by the apostles and their immediate disciples. This, we may be sure, they never would have done without the permission or the authority of their Lord.

c) His resurrection took place on the first day of the week

(1) 1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (Matthew 28:1).

d) After this, we never find Christ meeting with his disciples on the seventh day. But he specially honored the first day by manifesting himself to them on four separate occasions - Mt 28:9 Lk. 24:34, 18-33 Jn. 20:19-23

e) Thus the Lord is seen instituting a new day to be observed by his people, a day to be known as the "Lord's day." The observance of this "Lord's day" as the Sabbath was the general custom of the early churches, and must have had apostolic sanction and authority, and so the sanction and authority of Jesus Christ.

(1) 7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. (Acts 20:3-7).

(2) 1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. (1 Cor 16:1-2).

#### 2. THE LORD'S DAY AS THE CHRISTIAN 'SABBATH' cf. Chariots of Fire

## B.SOME ATTEMPT TO KEEP IT AS UNDER THE OLD COVENANT

1.cf. 7th Day Adventists

2.1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4 Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? (Galatians 3:1-5)

## C.THERE IS ROOM FOR SOME FLEXIBILITY RE. THESE THINGS

1.cf. Rom 14 - 5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. (Romans 14:5-6)

2.Key: The Mature will fulfill their convictions while not condemning others - The Weak [or Immature] are not at peace unless everyone else agrees with their particular convictions

3.16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)

## D.\*BUT\* EVERYONE MUST KEEP THE SABBATH IN IT'S TRUE & PERFECT SENSE

1.KEY: Heb. 4

a)Hebrews 4:8-10 - *"8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."*

## IV.CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

A.THE SABBATH WAS ESTABLISHED BY GOD TO COMMEMORATE HIS FINISHED WORK OF CREATION

B.IT WAS MADE AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT OF HIS COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE - TO FAIL TO OBSERVE IT WAS TO DIE

C.OBSERVANCE OF IT CONSISTED OF...

1.DO NOT - WORK, LABOR OR STRIVE

2.DO - REST IN THE LORD

D.AS 'LORD OF THE SABBATH' JESUS CAME TO FULFILL IT'S REQUIREMENTS AND REVEAL IT'S TRUTH

E.UNLESS WE ENTER INTO HIS REST WE REMAIN DEAD IN OUR SINS

F.THE RESPONSE?

1.DO NOT - TRY TO WORK FOR SALVATION - CEASE FROM STRIVING

2.DO - REST IN THE LORD - BY TRUSTING IN HIS FINISHED WORK

3.REJOICE IN THE VICTORY CRY OF OUR SAVIOR - 'IT IS FINISHED!'

# WRITING MATERIALS

*"What you see, write in a book..."*

Revelation 1:11

**Clay** The Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian clay tablets are well known. Baked clay tablets were preserved easily in almost any climate. They were suitable, however, only for a straight-line form of writing such as cuneiform, and were therefore not appropriate for the rounded Aramaic form of Hebrew script.

**Papyrus** The papyrus rolls of Egypt have been used as a writing surface since the early third millennium bc. The Greeks adopted papyrus around 900 bc, and the Romans adopted its use later. The oldest extant Greek rolls of papyrus date from the fourth century bc. The inner pith of the papyrus plant was called *byblos*. From this comes the Greek word *biblion* ("book") and the English word "bible." The word "paper" is derived from "papyrus."

Unfortunately, papyrus is perishable, requiring a dry climate for its preservation. That is why few papyri have been discovered anywhere other than in the desert sands of Egypt. Some papyrus fragments have also been found in the caves near the Dead Sea, where the climate is likewise sufficiently dry.

**Potsherds** Broken pieces of pottery furnished an inexpensive writing material because the supply was so abundant. The Samaria and Lachish ostraca are examples.

**Wood** Wooden tablets covered with stucco or wax were sometimes used as a writing surface. A NT example is [Luke 1:63](#).

**Leather, Parchment, and Vellum** These are all made from animal skins. Leather (tanned skins), the forerunner of parchment, has been in use about as long as papyrus, but it was rarely used because papyrus was so abundant. The ancient Hebrews probably used leather and papyrus for writing materials. The Dead Sea Scrolls were sheets of leather sewed together with linen thread. Metal scrolls also existed (e.g., copper).

Parchment, made in the beginning from sheep and goat skins, began to replace leather as early as the third century bc, though actual parchment codices date from the second century ad. To prepare parchment or refined leather, the hair was removed from the skins and the latter rubbed smooth. The most common form of book for OT and NT documents was evidently a roll or scroll of papyrus, leather, or parchment. The average length of a scroll was about 30 feet (9.1 meters), though the famous Harris Papyrus was 133 feet (40.5 meters) long. Scrolls were often stored in pottery jars ([Jer 32:14](#)) and were frequently sealed ([Rv 5:1](#)).

Vellum had a finer quality than parchment and was prepared from the skins of calves, lambs, or kids. In the fourth century ad, vellum or parchment as a material and the codex as a form became the norm.

**Paper** Paper, made from wood, rags, and certain grasses, began to replace vellum and parchment as early as the tenth century ad in the Western world, though it was used considerably earlier in China and Japan. By the 15th century, paper manuscripts were common.

## Kinds of Books

**Scroll** The scroll is a roll of papyrus, parchment, or leather used for writing a document or literary work. The papyrus scroll of Egypt can be traced as far back as 2500 bc. One of the most famous literary productions of ancient Egypt is the Book of the Dead. Jews used leather scrolls for writing the books of the Old Testament. Most of the scrolls discovered from the Dead Sea area were written on leather, with a few having been written on papyrus.

**Codex** An important development in the evolution of book production occurred with the advent of the codex in the middle of the first century. A codex was constructed much like our modern books by folding sheets of papyrus or vellum (treated animal hide) in the middle and then sewing them together at the spine. This kind of book was advantageous because it enabled the scribe to write on both sides; it facilitated easier access to particular passages (as opposed to a scroll, which had to be unrolled); and it enabled Christians to bind together all four Gospels or all Paul's epistles or any other such combination.



**Ancient Codex of Paul's Epistle** Two leaves of Romans in Chester Beatty Papyrus II (late second century)—P46.

**Writing Utensils and Ink** Different kinds of writing implements were used, depending on the writing surfaces in use at various periods of history. Metal chisels and graters were used for inscribing stone and metal. A stylus was used for writing cuneiform ("wedge-shaped" characters) on clay tablets. For writing on ostraca (potsherds), papyrus, and parchment, a reed was split or cut to act as a brush. In Egypt rushes were used to form a brush. Later, reeds were cut to a point and split like a quill pen. Apparently this was the type of pen or "calamus" used in NT times ([3 Jn 1:13](#)).

Ink (cf. [2 Jn 1:12](#)) was usually a black carbon (charcoal) mixed with gum or oil for use on parchment or mixed with a metallic substance for papyrus. It was kept in an inkhorn as a dried substance, on which the scribe would dip or rub his moistened pen. It could be erased by washing ([Nm 5:23](#)) or with a penknife, which was also used for sharpening pens and trimming or cutting scrolls ([Jer 36:23](#)).

From 'Tyndale Bible Dictionary' [see 'Wikipedia' entry for more]

# PROPHETIC VISION AS A HEAVENLY 'LANGUAGE'

[some thoughts in process]

We use language to communicate with words to each other. Spoken language involves sounds that have specific meanings attached and which, when put together in a certain order, bring communication and understanding. Written language involves certain symbols which also have meaning attached and, when put together in a certain order, bring communication and understanding. Words are the essential unit of communication.

In English, and many other languages, we use alphabets of letters to construct our words. However, not all written languages use alphabets in the same sense as we do. Chinese and Japanese use an alphabet made of drawings or symbols which contain more than just the idea of a word in many of them. Perhaps Egyptian hieroglyphics is a better example. Pictures or symbols which may look like simple art are, in fact, a sophisticated language with the order of the pictures, or hieroglyphs, telling a story.

home = a dwelling / hacienda = a dwelling / οἶκος (oikos) = a dwelling /  = reed shelter

When God communicates to man, He does it in many ways.

cf. Hebrews 1:1, 2 - "1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;"

Verbally, He speaks to man in our languages and we then write them down in our language and later translate them as needed.

But Visually (i.e. in Visions), God speaks in pictures which have meaning and which, when put together in certain ways, bring communication and understanding. This is more than just a visual language because it involves things that appear to be real and 3-dimensional and may be moving. However, it still appears to be a heavenly 'language' that is known and 'spoken' fluently by the Heavenly hosts - especially we see it in the angels. The exchange between Zechariah and the angels in his prophecies illustrates this. He's shown a vision and then asks the angel for the interpretation. The angels ask "Do you not understand what these are?" as if surprised that Zechariah can't 'read' what he's seeing - and then gives the interpretation.

If I look at it this way, it helps me understand the process. It also gives me great excitement to consider that, one day, I will be able to 'read' the visions of Heaven as if they were an English book. However, what's communicated and understood will be much, much more sophisticated, full, deep and clear. [3-D vs Multi-D]

Zechariah 4:1-14 "1 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3 "Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." 6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. 7 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"' 8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. 10 For who has despised the day of small things?"

For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth." 11 Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" 12 And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" 13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

This also reminds us that God's ultimate communication is more than a language or words or symbols: His ultimate communication is His Son, Jesus - The Word Who became flesh in order to live with us and die for us.

"1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:1, 14

# THE HISTORY OF HELL

“... and I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

Rev. 1:18

## I. BEFORE CHRIST

A. Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, the spirits and souls of all who died went to Hades.

B. Hades was divided into 2 sections: “19 “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 “But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 “desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ 25 “But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ 27 “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, 28 ‘for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ 29 “Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 “And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 “But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’” Luke 16:19-31, NKJV.

### 1. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS - PARADISE

- a) They were in the section known as "Paradise" [Lk.23:43] or "Abraham's Bosom" [Lk.16:23]
- b) Pre-Calvary believers were safe in God's keeping, trusting His Word that someday the redemption price would be paid and they would be freed.

### 2. FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS - A place of fire and torment.

- a) This is the Gehenna Section of Hades - HELL
- b) The word occurs in Mt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mk. 9:43,45,47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6
- c) In all but one instance, the word was spoken by Jesus. He described it as the place where "worm does not die, and fire is not quenched" (Mk.9:48).
- d) Mt. 8:12 "But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'."

## II. DURING THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, & ASCENSION OF CHRIST

A. Paradise is where the spirit of the Lord went in triumph, where He spent the three days between crucifixion and resurrection. When He rose from the dead, He emptied the Paradise section of Hades of every soul that was there.

1. Lk.23:43 "Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise'."
2. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross and His body was placed in the tomb, His spirit "descended first into the lower parts of the earth" [Eph.4:9].
3. In fulfillment of the prophecy of Ps. 16:10, Jesus didn't stay there - "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in [Hades], neither His flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).
4. Therefore, after He went and proclaimed His victory to the evil spirits still incarcerated in prison
  - a) ["18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison," 1 Peter 3:18-19, NKJV.],
  - b) cf. "4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartaros - (the deepest abyss of Hades - Strongs 5020) found only here in N.T.] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;" 2 Peter 2:4, NKJV.

5."When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" [Eph.4:8-10].

a) Rom 10:6-9 - 6But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7"or 'Who will descend into the deep? [lit. 'abyss' (abusso) '" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

#### B.PARADISE HAS BEEN RELOCATED TO THE THIRD HEAVEN!

1.2Cor.12:2-3 - "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - God knows. And I know that this man - whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows - was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell."

2.In His trip to Hell and back, Jesus secured the keys of death and Hades.

a)Heb. 2:14-15 - "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

### III.NOW THAT JESUS HAS THE KEYS

A.Today, when a believer dies, the body goes to dust in death; the spirit and the soul are present with the Lord

1.2Cor.5:6-9 - "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

B.They have gone to be with Christ which is far better

1.Phil.1:23 ". I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far."

C.The unsaved dead remain in Hades, from where they will later be brought forth for eternal judgment [Rev. 20:13].

D.AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT - THE SECOND DEATH

E.

F.ABYSS

1."30 Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the **abyss** [bottomless pit]." Luke 8:30-31, NKJV.

2."6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or," 'Who will descend into the **abyss**?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." Romans 10:6, 7, NKJV.

3."1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And [abyss] I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to **the bottomless pit** [abyss]. 2 And he opened **the bottomless pit** [abyss], and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit." "11 And they had as king over them the angel of **the bottomless pit** [abyss], whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon." Revelation 9:1, 2, 11, NKJV.

4."7 When they [two witnesses] finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of **the bottomless pit** [abyss] will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them." Revelation 11:7, NKJV.

5."8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of **the bottomless pit** [abyss] and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Revelation 17:8, NKJV.

6."1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to **the bottomless pit** [abyss] and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into **the bottomless pit** [abyss], and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while." Revelation 20:1-3, NKJV.

#### IV. DEATH AND HADES: Additional notes from Barnhouse, Morris and Chuck Smith

**A. BARNHOUSE:** Many people have found great confusion in their Bible study because they fail to see that Hades (intermediate state) contained two divisions - that for the souls and spirits of those in torment and that for the souls and spirits of the believers in joy - and between the two there was a great gulf fixed (Lk.16:23-26)

1. Christ now has its key, so we are guaranteed new bodies like unto His resurrection body (Phil.3:20-21)

2. Before the resurrection of Jesus, the spirits and souls of all who died went to Hades.

3. Hades was divided into 2 sections:

a) FOR THE RIGHTEOUS - They were in the section known as "Abraham's Bosom" [Lk.16:23] or "Paradise" [Lk.23:43, cf. 2Cor.12:2-3]

b) FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS - A place of fire and torment.

4. Paradise is where the spirit of the Lord went in triumph, where He spent the three days between crucifixion and resurrection. When He rose from the dead, He emptied the Paradise section of Hades of every soul that was there.

5. Those who had been there, with sins covered but not yet atoned for, now knew what it was to be fully justified and with Him to ascend into Heaven [Eph. 4:28].

6. At the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits (1Cor.15:23, Lev. 23:10), a sheaf of these O.T. saints, were raised with Christ (Matt. 27:52-53). All are now in heaven.

7. Today, when a believer dies, the body goes to dust in death, in sleep; the spirit and the soul, though absent from the body, are present with the Lord (2Cor.5:8).

8. They have departed from the body to be with Christ which is far better (Phil.1:23).

9. They are the living stones built upon Christ the Rock so that the gates of Hades shall never swing shut against them. The One Who was dead and who is alive now forevermore has robbed death of its sting, Satan of his power, the grave of its victory. He has in His hands the keys of the prison house of the body on the one hand and of the soul and spirit on the other. This victory sets the heart of the believer at rest and dispels all fear of judgment.

10. In His trip from Heaven to Earth to Hell and back, Jesus secured the keys of death and Hades. Heb. 2:14-15 - "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

#### **B. MORRIS**

1. Hades is the greek equivalent of the Hebrew "sheol", both terms describing the abode of departed human spirits.

2. Views of Hades:

a) Modern science - neither Hades nor Heaven has any real existence.

b) Popular view - Both do exist but in some kind of different state of existence, completely outside the framework of our present physical universe.

c) Bible - both heaven and hell literally exist in the present cosmos, and this teaching has not been refuted in any way by modern science.

3. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross and His body was placed in the tomb, His spirit "descended first into the lower parts of the earth" [Eph.4:9]. These lower parts of the earth are also called "the deep" (lit. "Abyss" from the grk. word abussos as in Rom. 10:7), and are apparently the same as Hades.

4. He didn't stay there in fulfillment of the prophecy of Ps. 16:10 "He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in [Hades], neither His flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

5. Until Christ descended into Hades, it had housed all the souls and spirits of all people who had lived and died before that time. Those who died in faith were comforted in one compartment of Hades; all others were separated from these by a great gulf and were in torments (Lk.16:23-26).

6. Pre-Calvary believers were safe in God's keeping, trusting His Word that someday the redemption price would be paid and they would be freed. [Heb.2:14-15]

7. Thus, after He proclaimed His victory to the evil spirits still incarcerated in prison [1Pet.3:18-20], "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" [Eph.4:8-10].

8. This is all a part of the revelation that Jesus now holds the keys of Death and Hades. [Heb.7:25, Rom.6:9]

9. Now, those who die in Christ are translated to "be with Christ" [Phil. 1:23] in heaven. The unsaved dead remain in Hades, from where they will later be brought forth for eternal judgment [Rev. 20:13].

10. In the meantime, the great abyss in the heart of the earth continues to "enlarge herself" [Isa.5:14] with multitudes dying in their sins.

## C.CHUCK SMITH

1. Jesus told us about this division when He talked about the rich man and Lazarus. #Luke 16:19-31 A certain rich man fared sumptuously every day. A beggar was brought, daily covered with sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Also, the rich man died and went into Hades. He lifted up his eyes being in torment and, seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus being comforted, he cried unto him and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received the good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." "Then I pray thee," the rich man said "that thou wouldst send him to my father's house for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." This man was not sleeping. He was very conscious in Hades. Lazarus also was conscious. He was being comforted in Abraham's bosom.
2. In another Biblical allusion to Hades, Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise." #Luke 23:43 And they descended into Hades.
3. In the second chapter of Acts, Peter on the day of Pentecost stood up to preach. A crowd had gathered to observe the interesting phenomena of the sound of a mighty rushing wind and they heard people magnifying God in many languages. When they questioned what this meant, Peter told them, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Then Peter began his sermon by declaring, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be held by it." And then Peter quoted from one of the prophetic Messianic psalms of David. "David speaketh concerning him... thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. And so," Peter said, "I testify unto you that God did not leave his soul in Hades. But this same Jesus hath God raised from the dead and he is ascended at the right hand of the Father, and he hath now shed abroad this which you see." #Acts 2:14-36
4. When Jesus died He descended into Hades and preached, according to Peter, to those souls in prison. #1Peter 3:19 According to Paul, when Jesus ascended He led these captives from their captivity. #Ephesians 4:8
5. He emptied that portion of Hades where the faithful with Abraham had waited for God to fulfill His promises. Speaking of Abraham and all these people of faith in the Old Testament period, the Bible says, "For these all died in faith, not having received the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made complete." #Hebrews 11:39-40 They could not come into the heavenly scene until the blood of Jesus Christ had been shed for the sins of the world. The Old Testament sacrifice had covered their sin. Their faith that God would send the Messiah brought them salvation. God imputed their faith in Christ for righteousness. But they couldn't be brought into the heavenly scene until Jesus descended and led them out of prison.
6. Isaiah speaks of Christ's ministry of opening the prison to those that are bound. #Isaiah 61:1 Jesus was to open the prison to those that were bound by death. It was not possible, the Scripture said, that He could be held by death. #Romans 6:9 So, he broke the bars of the prison of death and led captivity captive when He ascended on high.

# JOHN THE VETERAN

A Look at Revelation 1:9-18 focusing on  
what we learn from and about John

## I. THE VETERAN - "I John"

### A. HIS RECORD

1. Fisherman, Disciple, Inner Circle, Disciple whom Jesus loved, eye witness of crucifixion, Mary's Provider, First Pentecostal, First to Suffer [w/ Peter], Witness, Later Pastor of Ephesus, Last Living Apostle, An Elder in the truest sense, probably in his 80's or 90's. According to Eusebius during Domitian's persecution [81-96 A.D.] they tried to boil John in oil without effect and so exiled him to Patmos where he received the Revelation. He later returned to Ephesus where he died. He may have written the Revelation afterwards at Ephesus.

2. He needs no credentials - just "I John"

### B. HIS RELATIONSHIP - "your brother and companion"

#### 1. HE WAS A "BROTHER"

a) He has now learned humility - Whose mother had schemed position for and Who had talked of being greatest.

#### 2. HE WAS A COMPANION

a) He was experiencing the same things they were

b) He wouldn't be found in some Ivy Tower or Penthouse Suite

## II. THE VETERAN'S VIEWPOINT

### A. THREE THINGS THAT ARE OURS IN JESUS

#### 1. SUFFERING

a) From Jerusalem to Patmos

#### 2. KINGDOM

a) THE VETERAN PUTS SUFFERING IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

(1) Rom. 8:18 - "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

(2) Acts. 14:21-22 - "They [Paul and Barnabas] preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. 'We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,' they said."

#### 3. PATIENT ENDURANCE

a) MATCHED BY GOD'S GRACIOUS COMFORT

b) 2 Cor. 1:3-5 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows."

4. NOTE: THE "FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERING" - 1 Pet. 4:12-13 - "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed."

### B. IF YOU CAME TO JESUS TO...

1. Escape suffering

2. Be treated like a King

3. Avoid the need for Patience and Endurance

4. YOU CAME TO THE WRONG PLACE

### C. IF YOU CAME TO JESUS FOR...

1. Comfort in Suffering

2. A Kingdom Worthy of our Allegiance

3. Strength for Patience and Endurance

4. YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE

### III. THE VETERAN'S VITAL DISCIPLINE - "On the Lord's day I was in the Spirit.."

#### A. HE KNOWS HIS NEED FOR SUPPLIES

1. Maturity doesn't decrease our need, it increases our appreciation
2. The Veteran knows where to find his supplies

#### B. IF YOU'VE COME TO JESUS TO...

1. ESCAPE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE - WRONG
2. EXPERIENCE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLESHIP - RIGHT

### IV. THE VETERAN'S VISION

#### A. A HIGHER, MORE AWESOME VISION OF THE LORD - vs. 12-16

1. "12I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13and among the lampstands was someone 'like a son of man,' dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."

#### B. A LOWER, MORE HUMBLE VIEW OF SELF - VS. 17

1. "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. ..."
2. cf. Job. 42:5-6 - "My ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

C. A GREATER EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S GRACE & ASSURANCE - vs. 17-18 - "... Then He placed His right hand on me and said, "DO NOT BE AFRAID! I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

D. cf. Isaiah 40:28-31 "28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no-one can fathom. 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. 30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

# A PROPHETIC OVERVIEW OF THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

## I. EPHESUS: THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

A. "Historically, Ephesus is the early Church, the Apostolic Church that existed up until the time of the death of John (c.99 A.D.).

B. Although the church has little to fear from the outside, it has much to be concerned about on the inside, for the church is not perfect - but far from it. Even at the time of John's writing, the fire of love had begun to wane a bit in the early Church. When they first started out they were fervent. They went everywhere preaching the Gospel. The love of Christ was driving them throughout the world. Now, they were already becoming a bit established, leaving the first love."

## II. SMYRNA: THE CHURCH UNDER ROMAN PERSECUTION

A. "Historically, Smyrna is the church that followed Ephesus. For the next couple of centuries (2nd to 4th centuries) it went through tremendous persecution from the Roman government. It is thought that perhaps as many as six million Christians were martyred for their faith during the Roman government's attempt to wipe out Christianity."

B. "Jesus has nothing bad to say about the church of Smyrna. No call to repentance. Smyrna is the church that will be purified by persecution. They'll be martyred and experience great tribulation. Tribulation never hurt the Church. It always had a purifying effect."

## III. PERGAMOS: THE CHURCH MARRIED TO THE WORLD

A. Pergamos means "Elevation" and "Marriage" - It represents the church married to worldly government and power. As the church became married to governmental authority and elevated to a place of acceptance, it declined in spiritual blessing and power.

B. Prophetically, this is the period from the accession of Constantine in 320 A.D. to the rise of the papacy in the 6th century. Constantine adopted many pagan practices and brought them into the church where they were accepted. It was the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church.

## IV. THYRATIRA: THE CHURCH CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD

A. The 'Jezebel' of Thyratira represents the rise of corruption in the Church of Rome. The Jezebel system is the introduction of idolatry into the Church and spiritual fornication.

B. Note: The Downward Progression - The Deeds of the Nicolaitans - to the Teaching of the Nicolaitans - to the marriage of the church to the World and the exaltation of the priesthood over the people - to the church exalting itself above the Word of God and leading God's people into the "deeps things of Satan" - thus making God's people liable to judgement if they do not repent.

## V. SARDIS: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

A. One thing about the Protestant Reformation—it didn't reform enough. Actually, the Protestants continued to use the many pagan customs adopted by the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira. They still had infant baptism. They still had so many pagan symbols. They still had the pagan holidays. Their reformation was incomplete. The Lord says, "I've not found your work complete before God."

## VI. PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS

A. The church of Philadelphia is God's faithful church in the last days. God help us that we would be the church of Philadelphia.

B. "We're not really powerful. We have a little strength. Thank God for the little strength that we have. "You have kept my word." God help us to be faithful to the Word, to study the Word, and to keep the Word as the paramount issue within the Church. And we've not denied the name of Jesus Christ; we've not denied Him and who He is."

## VII. LAODICEA: THE LUKEWARM CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS

A. The church of Laodicea is the lukewarm church of the last days. A human institution without spiritual life. Laodicea - "the rule of the people"

B.3:15 - *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold-- I am about to spit you out of my mouth."* niv

# QUICK FACTS ABOUT ANGELS

## I.THERE ARE MULTITUDES OF ANGELS

A.Heb. 12:22 - "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly."

B.Rev. 5:11 - "Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,"

## II.ANGELS ARE A HEAVENLY AUDIENCE

A.1 Cor. 4:9 - "...We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men."

B.1 Cor. 11:10 - "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head."

## III.ANGELS ARE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH GOD'S WORD & WORKS

A.They were used in bringing the Law to Moses (Gal. 3:19, Acts 7:53, Heb. 2:2).

B.They were active in communicating prophetic truth to Daniel (7:16-27; 8:16-26; 9:20-27; 10:1-12:13) and to Zechariah (1:9; 2:3; 4:1, 5; 5:5; 6:4-5).

C.Angels announced the birth of John to Zacharias (Lk. 1:11-20) and of Jesus to Mary and Joseph (Lk. 1:26-38, Matt 1:20-21).

D.Because of this, it should not surprise us to find angels involved in revealing the events and contents of the book of Revelation.

## IV.THEY ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE GOSPEL

A.1Pet. 1:12 - "It was revealed to them [the prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

B.Eph.3:10 - "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## V.THEY ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS SENT TO SERVE US

A.Heb. 1:14 - "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

1.cf. Peter's angelic 'jail-break' - Acts 12:5-10

B.John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, told of how one night hostile natives surrounded his missions headquarters, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. He and his wife prayed through the entire night, and when daylight finally came, their attackers all left. A year later, the chief of the tribe became a Christian, and Paton asked the man about that night. The chief replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary explained that only he and his wife were there. The chief insisted that he had seen hundreds of big men with shining garments and swords circling the mission headquarters, so the natives were afraid to attack (Billy Graham in Angels, God's Secret Agents, page 3).

## VI.INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS HAVE ANGELS ASSIGNED TO THEM

A.Matt. 18:10 - "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven."

## VII.THEY MAY BE SEEN "UNDERCOVER" OR "IN UNIFORM"

A.Heb. 13:2 - "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

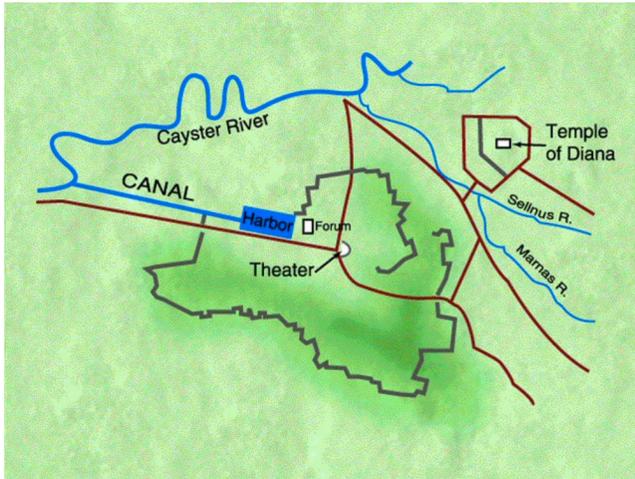
1.cf. Burglary Protection

2.cf. Gold Run Experience

## VIII.THEY ALWAYS INITIATE CONTACT WITH US - LEAVE IT THAT WAY!

## EPHESUS - [from Eerdman's Bible Dictionary]

[ĕf ə səʒ] (Gk. Ephesos). † A seaport in the Roman province of Asia, about 5.5 km. (3.5 mi.) south of the Cayster river; opposite the island of Samos.



The "marble way" in Ephesus (B. Van Elderen)

### I. History

A. Pre-Christian Period Conquered from the Carians ca. 1044 B.C. by Androclus of Athens (Strabo Geog. xiv.1.3 [632–33], 21 [640]), Ephesus was incorporated into the twelve-city Ionian League. Situated at the intersection of two major overland routes, the city thrived not only as an important port, but as a center of commerce and finance and as a place of worship for pilgrims visiting the sanctuary of the goddess Artemis (still recognized as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world). ca. 555 the Lydian king Croesus captured Ephesus, dedicating it to Artemis (Herodotus Hist. i.26). After a subsequent defeat, Croesus was forced to surrender the city to Cyrus the Persian (ca. 546). In the Ionian revolt (ca. 497), at a time when the noted philosopher Heraclitus made Ephesus his home, it was the only Ionian city-state spared by the Persians.

With his defeat of the Persians in 334, Alexander the Great brought an end to their two centuries of dominion over Ephesus. His successor Lysimachus, one of his generals, forced the populace up the slopes between the steep hills of Coressus (Bülbül Dagh) and Pion (Panajir Dagh) (Strabo Geog. xiv.1.21 [640]); Lysimachus also constructed a new harbor and, by concluding a treaty with Ptolemy I, opened the city to Egyptian influence. The latter, however, was thwarted when Seleucus I defeated Lysimachus in 281 (Pausanias, Description of Greece I.16.2) and introduced Hellenism. Seleucid rule lasted until the second century B.C. In 133 B.C. the city was annexed to the Roman Empire as a bequest from Attalus III.

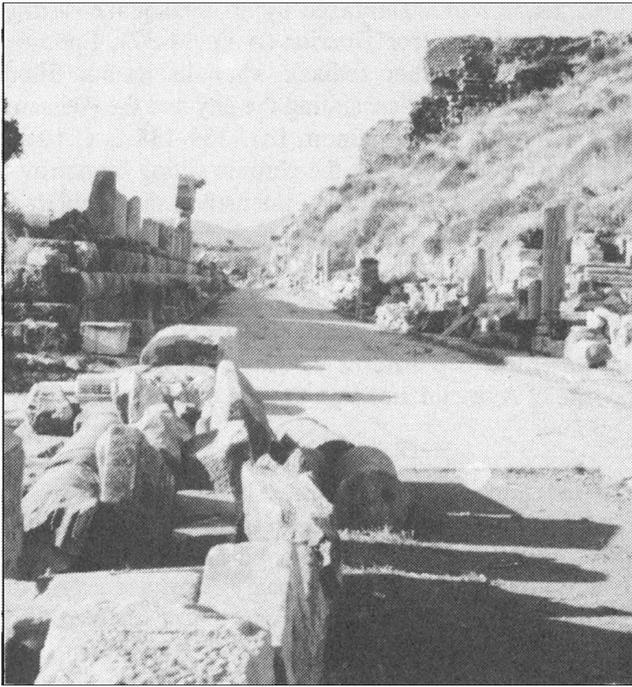
Joining Mithradates VI of Pontus, the Ephesians mounted an unsuccessful revolt in 88 B.C. Subsequently Ephesus grew in significance under Roman rule and became the chief seat of Asia early in the Christian Era.

B. New Testament Times Ephesus began to flourish during the reign of Caesar Augustus, becoming increasingly more cosmopolitan as an international trade center. It was considered one of the most sacred cities of antiquity, largely because of the temple of Artemis and its magnificent statue fashioned from a meteorite. This temple provided a lucrative business for the guild of silversmiths who made miniature silver shrines of the deity (cf. Acts 19:24). The city had its own assembly (vv. 32, 39) over which a town clerk presided (v. 35); Luke records that this clerk successfully quieted the commotion caused when Demetrius, a silversmith, spoke out against Christianity as detrimental to his business.

Paul visited Ephesus on two different occasions. He passed through the city on his second missionary journey in the fall of A.D. 52 following his stay at Corinth (Acts 18:19–21), and returned on his third journey in the spring of 54. While there he taught in the synagogue for three months (19:8) and then for two years in the hall of Tyrannus (vv. 9–10). His ministry was successful: many came to believe in Jesus Christ and demonstrated their new faith with acts of love (v. 18). Luke describes a moving farewell scene between Paul and the Ephesian elders at the end of his third journey, when he stopped at nearby Miletus en route to Jerusalem (20:16–37).

If the Letter to the Ephesians was indeed addressed specifically to the church at Ephesus (see Ephesians, Letters to the), it reveals certain tensions within that church, among members of families and between slaves and masters who failed to practice genuine love for one another (5:1–6:9). Another letter, written by the aged apostle John (who, according to tradition, spent his last days at Ephesus), compliments the believers for their patience and undying labor in behalf of the risen Christ (Rev. 2:2–3), but also notes the influence of the heretical Nicolaitans, who had diverted many away from their first love (v. 4).

C. Later Years Damaged by an earthquake during the reign of Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), Ephesus received yet another setback when its harbor filled with silt, effectively separating the city and the Aegean. (King Attalus of Pergamum [ca. 159–138 B.C.] had previously sought to halt the chronic silting by narrowing the channel but actually intensified the problem.) Nevertheless, the Christian church flourished locally, while the Jewish population declined. In A.D. 431 the Council of Ephesus met here to discuss the doctrine of sin and to condemn Nestorius for his sharp distinction between the two natures of Jesus Christ. Today the village of Ayasoluk lies over the site of ancient Ephesus.



## II. Archaeology

On the northeast end of the site is the Church of St. John, called Ayasoluk (Gk. *hágios theológos* "holy theologian"), said to be the burial place of John, Jesus' mother Mary, and Timothy, who according to 1 Tim. 1:3 labored at Ephesus in Paul's absence. To the southwest lie the ruins of the Artemision, the famous temple of Artemis, burnt on the birthday of Alexander the Great in 356 B.C. and rebuilt two centuries later; uncovered by J.T. Wood, who began excavations in 1863, the remains measure 128 m. (420 ft.) by 73 m. (240 ft.). Next in a line along the western edge of Panajir Dagħ are the ruins of the stadium and the large theater. The theater, which faced the ancient harbor, had a seating capacity of some twenty-four thousand. The main street, 10.5 m. (35 ft.) wide and 8 km. (.5 mi.) long, connected the theater with the harbor and was flanked

on either side by a colonnade. Another important feature of the ancient city was the agora, the marketplace located southeast of the harbor; here were located the assembly hall, commercial and administrative offices, and the shrine of the perpetually burning hearth. On the eastern edge of Panajir Dagħ is the catacomb of the Seven Sleepers, so-called because, according to tradition, seven young men who had fallen asleep during the Decian persecution (ca. A.D. 250) remained dormant until two hundred years later when they awoke and testified to their faith.

Bibliography. J. T. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus* (1890; repr. Hildesheim, N.Y.: 1975); O. F. A. Meinardus, *St. Paul in Ephesus and the Cities of Galatia and Cyprus* (New Rochelle: 1978).

# DIDACHE: THE TEACHING OF THE LORD TO THE GENTILES BY THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Translated by J.B. Lightfoot. Adapt. and mod.  
(c) 1990. ATHENA DATA PRODUCTS

Didache 1:1 There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways.

Didache 1:2 The way of life is this. First of all, thou shalt love the God that made thee; secondly, Thy neighbor as thyself. And all things whatsoever thou wouldst not have befall thyself, neither do thou unto another.

Didache 1:3 Now of these words the doctrine is this. Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies and fast for them that persecute you; for what thank is it, if ye love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles the same? But do ye love them that hate you that hate you, and ye shall not have an enemy.

Didache 1:4 Abstain thou from fleshly and bodily lusts. If any man give thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect; If a man impress thee to go with him one mile, go with him twain; if a man take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also; if a man take away from thee that which is thy own, ask it not back, for neither art thou able.

Didache 1:5 To every man that asketh of thee give, and ask not back for the Father desireth that gifts be given to all from His own bounties. Blessed is he that giveth according to the commandment; for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receiveth; for, if a man receiveth having need, he is guiltless; but he that hath no need shall give satisfaction why and wherefore he received and being put in confinement he shall be examined concerning the deeds that he hath done, and he shall not come out thence until he hath given back the last farthing.

Didache 1:6 Yea, as touching this also it is said; Let thine alms sweat into thine hands, until thou have learnt to whom to give .

Didache 2:1 And this is the second commandment of the teaching.

Didache 2:2 Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not corrupt boys, thou

shalt not commit fornication, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not deal in magic, thou shalt do no sorcery, thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born, thou shalt not covet thy neighbors goods,

Didache 2:3 thou shalt not perjure thyself, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not speak evil, thou shalt not cherish a grudge,

Didache 2:4 thou shalt not be double-minded nor double-tongued; for the double tongue is a snare of death.

Didache 2:5 Thy word shall not be false or empty, but fulfilled by action.

Didache 2:6 Thou shalt not be avaricious nor a plunderer nor a hypocrite nor ill-tempered nor proud. Thou shalt not entertain an evil design against thy neighbor.

Didache 2:7 Thou shalt not hate any man but some thou shalt reprove, and for others thou shalt pray, and others thou shalt love more than thy life.

Didache 3:1 My child, flee from every evil and everything that resembleth it.

Didache 3:2 Be not angry, for anger leadeth to murder, nor jealous nor contentious nor wrathful; for of all these things murders are engendered.

Didache 3:3 My child, be not lustful, for lust leadeth to fornication, neither foul-speaking neither with uplifted eyes; for of all these things adulteries are engendered.

Didache 3:4 My child, be no dealer in omens, since it leads to idolatry, nor an enchanter nor an astrologer nor a magician, neither be willing to look at them; for from all these things idolatry is engendered.

Didache 3:5 My child, be not a liar, since lying leads to theft, neither avaricious neither vainglorious; for from all these things thefts are engendered.

Didache 3:6 My child, be not a murmurer, since it leadeth to blasphemy, neither self-willed neither a thinker of evil thoughts; for from all these things blasphemies are engendered.

Didache 3:7 But be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth.

Didache 3:8 Be long-suffering and pitiful and guileless and quiet and kindly and always fearing the words which thou hast heard.

Didache 3:9 Thou shalt not exalt thyself, neither shalt thou admit boldness into thy soul. Thy soul shall not cleave together with the lofty, but with the righteous and humble shalt thou walk.

Didache 3:10 The accidents that befall thee thou shalt receive as good, knowing that nothing is done without God.

Didache 4:1 My child, thou shalt remember him that speaketh unto thee the word of God night and day, and shalt honor him as the Lord; for whencesoever the Lordship speaketh, there is the Lord.

Didache 4:2 Moreover thou shalt seek out day by day the persons of the saints, that thou mayest find rest in their words.

Didache 4:3 Thou shalt not make a schism, but thou shalt pacify them that contend; thou shalt judge righteously, thou shalt not make a difference in a person to reprove him for transgressions.

Didache 4:4 Thou shalt not doubt whether a thing shall be or not be.

Didache 4:5 Be not thou found holding out thy hands to receive, but drawing them in as to giving .

Didache 4:6 If thou hast ought passing through thy hands, thou shalt give a ransom for thy sins.

Didache 4:7 Thou shalt not hesitate to give, neither shalt thou murmur when giving; for thou shalt know who is the good paymaster of thy reward.

Didache 4:8 Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in want, but shalt make thy brother partaker in all things, and shalt not say that anything is thy own . For if ye are fellow-partakers in that which is imperishable, how much rather in the things which are perishable?

Didache 4:9 Thou shalt not withhold thy hand from thy son or from thy daughter, but from their youth thou shalt teach them the fear of God.

Didache 4:10 Thou shalt not command thy bondservant or thine handmaid in thy bitterness who trust in the same God as thyself, lest haply they should cease to fear the God who is over both of you; for He cometh,

not to call men with respect of persons, but He cometh to those whom the Spirit hath prepared.

Didache 4:11 But ye, servants, shall be subject unto your masters, as to a type of God, in shame and fear.

Didache 4:12 Thou shalt hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.

Didache 4:13 Thou shalt never forsake the commandments of the Lord but shalt keep those things which thou hast received, neither adding to them nor taking away from them.

Didache 4:14 In church thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and shalt not betake thyself to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

Didache 5:1 But the way of death is this. First of all, it is evil and full of a curse; murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magical arts, witchcrafts, plunderings, false witnessings, hypocrisies, doubleness of heart, treachery, pride, malice, stubbornness, covetousness, foul-speaking, jealousy, boldness, exaltation, boastfulness;

Didache 5:2 persecutors of good men, hating truth, loving a lie, not perceiving the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to the good nor to righteous judgment, wakeful not for that which is good but for that which is evil-from whom gentleness and forbearance stand aloof; loving vain things, pursuing a recompense, not pitying the poor man, not toiling for him that is oppressed with toil, not recognizing Him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the creatures of God, turning away from him that is in want, oppressing him that is afflicted, advocates of the wealthy, unjust judges of the poor, altogether sinful. May ye be delivered, my children, from all these things.

Didache 6:1 See lest any man lead you astray from this way of righteousness, for he teacheth thee apart from God.

Didache 6:2 For if thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect; but if thou art not able, do that which thou art able.

Didache 6:3 But concerning eating, bear that which thou art able; yet abstain by all means from meat sacrificed to idols; for it is the worship of dead gods.

Didache 7:1 But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (running) water.

Didache 7:2 But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm.

Didache 7:3 But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Didache 7:4 But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able; and thou shalt order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.

Didache 8:1 And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week; but do ye keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation (the sixth) day.

Didache 8:2 Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, thus pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 8:3 Three times in the day pray ye so.

Didache 9:1 But as touching the eucharistic thanksgiving give ye thanks thus.

Didache 9:2 First, as regards the cup: We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 9:3 Then as regarding the broken bread: We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 9:4 As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Didache 9:5 But let no one eat or drink of this eucharistic thanksgiving, but they that have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

Didache 10:1 And after ye are satisfied thus give ye thanks:

Didache 10:2 We give Thee thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which Thou hast made known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 10:3 Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for Thy name's sake, and didst give food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might render thanks to Thee; but didst bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son.

Didache 10:4 Before all things we give Thee thanks that Thou art powerful; Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 10:5 Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love; and gather it together from the four winds -- even the Church which has been sanctified-- into Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

Didache 10:6 May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any man is holy, let him come; if any man is not, let him repent. Maran Atha. Amen.

Didache 10:7 But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.

Didache 11:1 Whosoever therefore shall come and teach you all these things that have been said before, receive him;

Didache 11:2 but if the teacher himself be perverted and teach a different doctrine to the destruction thereof, hear him not; but if to the increase of righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.

Didache 11:3 But concerning the apostles and prophets, so do ye according to the ordinance of the Gospel.

Didache 11:4 Let every apostle, when he cometh to you, be received as the Lord;

Didache 11:5 but he shall not abide more than a single day, or if there be need, a second likewise; but if he abide three days, he is a false prophet.

Didache 11:6 And when he departeth let the apostle receive nothing save bread, until he findeth shelter; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet.

Didache 11:7 And any prophet speaking in the Spirit ye shall not try neither discern; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.

Didache 11:8 Yet not every one that speaketh in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord. From his ways therefore the false prophet and the prophet shall be recognized.

Didache 11:9 And no prophet when he ordereth a table in the Spirit shall eat of it; otherwise he is a false prophet.

Didache 11:10 And every prophet teaching the truth, if he doeth not what he teacheth, is a false prophet.

Didache 11:11 And every prophet approved and found true, if he doeth ought as an outward mystery typical of the Church, and yet teacheth you not to do all that he himself doeth, shall not be judged before you; he hath his judgment in the presence of God; for in like manner also did the prophets of old time.

Didache 11:12 And whosoever shall say in the Spirit, Give me silver or anything else, ye shall not listen to him; but if he tell you to give on behalf of others that are in want, let no man judge him.

Didache 12:1 But let every one that cometh in the name of the Lord be received; and then when ye have tested him ye shall know him, for ye shall have understanding on the right hand and on the left.

Didache 12:2 If the comer is a traveler, assist him, so far as ye are able; but he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, if it be necessary.

Didache 12:3 But if he wishes to settle with you, being a craftsman, let him work for and eat his bread.

Didache 12:4 But if he has no craft, according to your wisdom provide how he shall live as a Christian among you, but not in idleness.

Didache 12:5 If he will not do this, he is trafficking upon Christ. Beware of such men.

Didache 13:1 But every time prophet desiring to settle among you is worthy of his food .

Didache 13:2 In like manner a true teacher is also worthy, like the workman, of his food .

Didache 13:3 Every firstfruit then of the produce of the wine-vat and of the threshing-floor, of thy oxen and of thy sheep, thou shalt take and give as the firstfruit to the prophets; for they are your chief-priests.

Didache 13:4 But if ye have not a prophet, give them to the poor.

Didache 13:5 If thou makest bread, take the firstfruit and give according to the commandment.

Didache 13:6 In like manner, when thou openest a jar of wine or of oil, take the firstfruit and give to the prophets;

Didache 13:7 yea and of money and raiment and every possession take the firstfruit, as shall seem good to thee, and give according to the commandment.

Didache 14:1 And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.

Didache 14:2 And let no man, having his dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled;

Didache 14:3 for this sacrifice it is that was spoken of by the Lord; In every place and at every time offer me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great king, saith the Lord, and My name is wonderful among the nations.

Didache 15:1 Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers.

Didache 15:2 Therefore despise them not; for they are your honorable men along with the prophets and teachers.

Didache 15:3 And reprove one another, not in anger but in peace, as ye find in the Gospel; and let no one speak to any that has gone wrong towards his neighbor, neither let him hear a word from you, until he repent.

Didache 15:4 But your prayers and your almsgiving and all your deeds so do ye as ye find it in the Gospel of our Lord.

Didache 16:1 Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour the hour in which our Lord cometh.

Didache 16:2 And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season.

Didache 16:3 For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate.

Didache 16:4 For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began.

Didache 16:5 Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself.

Didache 16:6 And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead;

Didache 16:7 yet not of all, but as it was said The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him.

Didache 16:8 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

# WHY SUFFERING FOR BELIEVERS?

## I. INSTRUCTIONAL - TRIALS

A. *“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered”* (Hebrews 5:8)

B. *“3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”* (Romans 5:3-5)

## II. DISCIPLINARY

A. *30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.* (1 Corinthians 11:30-32)

B. *3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees! 13 “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.* (Hebrews 12:3-13)

## III. PREVENTATIVE

A. Paul's thorn - *“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.”* (2 Corinthians 12:7)

## IV. TESTIMONIAL

A. Acts 9:16 - *“I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”*

# C R O W N S

## BEYOND THE CROSS THERE IS A CROWN

*“and I will give you the crown of life”*

Rev. 2:10

### I.THERE ARE VARIOUS CROWNS FOR BELIEVERS

#### A.Crown of Life

1.“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,” (James 1:2)

#### B.Crown of Righteousness

1.“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Tim 4:8)

#### C.Crown of Glory

1.“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” (1 Peter 5:4)

#### D.Crown of Gold

1.“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads”. (Rev 4:4)

#### E.Crown of Rejoicing

1.“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?” (1 Thess 2:19)

2.“Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” (Philippians 4:1).

#### F.Incorruptible Crown

1.“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever.” (1 Cor 9:25)

### II.THE CROWNS ARE TO BE GIVEN TO CHRIST

A.Rev. 4:9-11 - *“Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne and who live for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne, and worship Him Who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.’”*

## RE: MEANING OF PERGAMOS

Dear John,

This is just if you find a moment. I forgot to ask you when we had coffee and I forgot to ask you when I sent you the info on the news summary so it's obviously not a great priority....In your course on Rev. you state Pergamos means "marriage". I can't find that in my ref. I only find that it means "elevation" or "citadel" derived from "a fortified tower". I can only go to the ref. I have and I only really know enough Greek to realize I need more study.  
>thanks, bill

Thanks for your note. I haven't checked my printed commentaries yet, but put a few excerpts from other sources below. One of the weaknesses in reading the outlines notes for a class without taking the class is that there are sometimes notes which are elaborated on in class. 'Height or Elevation' seems to be the most common assumption as to the word's lit. def. Although, depending on what manuscript tradition you follow - there is a possibility that you have a compound word made up of 'perge' - 'earthly' and 'gamos' - marriage - which is very interesting in that the label most commonly given to Pergamos from a prophetic church-history overview perspective is The Church Married to the World. As you can also see, some trace the word back to their production of parchment. Which indicates that none of the definitions are completely settled.

Hope this helps some.

Willmington's Guide To The Bible: "Pergamos (314-590) name means marriage.î The Compromising Church."

Barclay: "There is a difference in the name of this city in the different translations of the New Testament. The King James Version calls it Pergamos, while the English Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version and Moffatt call it Pergamum. Pergamos (4010) is the feminine form of the name and Pergamum the neuter. In the ancient world it was known by both forms but Pergamum was much the commoner and the newer translations are right to prefer it."

J. Vernon McGee: "Not only did Pergamum boast great temples, but it also had the greatest library of the pagan world. It was a library of over two hundred thousand volumes. In fact, the city got its name from the parchment (pergamena) which was used. This great library was the one which Marc Antony gave to his girl friend, Cleopatra. She lugged it off to Alexandria in Egypt, and that library was considered the greatest library the world has ever seen -- and it originally came from Pergamum."

- Letters To The 7 Churches by Sir William Ramsey : "Not only did Pergamum boast great temples, but it also had the greatest library of the pagan world. It was a library of over two hundred thousand volumes. In fact, the city got its name from the parchment (pergamena) which was used. This great library was the one which Marc Antony gave to his girl friend, Cleopatra. She lugged it off to Alexandria in Egypt, and that library was considered the greatest library the world has ever seen -- and it originally came from Pergamum."

4011 perge Perge {perg'-ay} probably from the same as 4010;; n pr loc

AV - Perga 3; 3 Perga = "earthy"

1) a town in Pamphylia, on the river Cestius, at a distance of 7 miles (10 km) from its mouth, and famous in antiquity for the worship of Artemis (Diana)

1062 gamov gamos {gam'-os} of uncertain affinity; TDNT - 1:648,111; n m

AV - marriage 9, wedding 7; 16

1) a wedding or marriage festival, a wedding banquet, a wedding feast

2) marriage, matrimony

# Pergamos: The Church 'Married' to the World

[Notes From Chuck Missler]

## Babylonian Legend

Tammuz was born to Nimrod and Semiramis. He was associated with the sun god; he "dies" at the winter solstice (~Dec 22); is "resurrected" as the days get longer. Thus, celebrated by burning a "yule" log (Chaldean: infant), replaced by a trimmed tree the next morning (Jer 10:1-5). Also mistletoe (fertility); wassail, etc. [Hislop, *The Two Babylons*.] In addition, celibate priests, purgatory, Mariolatry, all trace their origins to pagan Rome, a thin veneer over the Babylonian system (Cf. Rev 17:15-18).

## Babylonian Roots

It was Nimrod who founded the original Babylonian religion; virtually identical to Phaethon—or Aesculapius—eventually developing into the worship of his widow Semiramis and his posthumous son:  
Semiramis & Tammuz of Babylon  
Ashtoreth & Tammus of Phoenicia  
Isis & Horus of Egypt  
Aphrodite & Eros of Greece  
Venus & Cupid of Rome — Alexander Hislop

## The Migrating Priesthood

When Cyrus conquered Babylon, the Babylonian priesthood and their initiates fled and set up shop in Pergamos. As the centroid of power ultimately shifted to Rome, this same religious system adopted Latin labels and formed the foundation for pagan Rome.

There is a fascinating footnote of history in connection with this. In the 1880's, a German archaeologist working in the city of Pergamum removed that throne, that Satanic seat, from the hillside and took it to Europe. Today it is in the Pergamum Museum in the city of East Berlin! For over 100 years Satan's throne has been in East Berlin. If that has any connection with the rise of the Nazis I leave to you to judge. But East Berlin is also where Hitler's headquarters were located.

## Pontifex Maximus

When Cyrus conquered Babylon, they founded a new center at Pergamos and that king became *Pontifex Maximus*, the high priest of that pagan system. [Pember] Subsequent transfer of the cult from Pergamos to Rome, with the appointment of successive Caesars as high priest. By 378 A.D., Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, completed the absorption of Babylonianism into the Roman Church. [Hislop & Pember]

## History of Rome

753 B.C. Rome founded,  
343-272 B.C. Subdued Italy,  
264-146 B.C. Conquered Carthage,  
215-146 B.C. Greece, Asia Minor,  
133- 31 B.C. Spain, Gaul, Briton, Teutons,  
63 B.C. Conquered Judea. In its zenith, it spanned from the Atlantic to Euphrates and from the North Sea to the African Desert. Population: 120 million.

## Caesar Worship

Augustus inaugurated emperor worship in order to give the empire a bond of common sentiment. Although not the seat of imperial and judicial authority, Pergamos became the center of the official religion of emperor worship. The first temple of this cult was erected at Pergamos in 27 B.C. Under Vespasian and his successors, it became a test of one's loyalty if one would or would not offer incense to the statue of the emperor

## The Rise to the Zenith

- 46-44 B.C. Julius Caesar
- 31-14 A.D. Augustus Christ was born in his reign.
- 12-37 Tiberius Christ crucified in his reign.
- 37-41 Caligula Unsuccessful attempt at desecration of the Temple.
- 41-54 Claudius
- 54-68 Nero Blamed his burning of Rome on Christians; executed Paul.
- 68-69 Galba, Otho, Vitellius
- 69-79 Vespasian Titus destroyed Jerusalem (70)
- 79-81 Titus
- 81-96 Domitian Most violent; thousands slain; John banished to Patmos.
- 98-117 Trajan Sought to uphold the laws; Christianity regarded illegal.
- 117-138 Hadrian
- 138-161 Antoninus Pius Bar Kochba revolt; Aelia Capitolina replaces Jerusalem.
- 161-180 Marcus Aurelius Severest since Nero. Peak of Roman power.

## **Decline and Fall**

- 180-192 Commodus
- 192-284 Barrack Emperors Appointed by army. Civil War.
- 193-211 Septimius Severus
- 218-222 Caracalla Tolerated Christianity.
- 218-222 Elagabalus Tolerated Christianity.
- 222-235 Alexander Severus Favorable to Christianity.
- 235-238 Maximinus
- 244-249 Phillips Very favorable to Christianity.
- 249-251 Decius Persecuted Christians furiously.
- 253-260 Valerian Killed Origen.
- 260-268 Galienus Favored Christians.
- 270-275 Aurelian
- 284-305 Diocletian Persecuted Christians most furiously. Systematically attempted to abolish all by tortuous death.

## **Constantine**

312 A.D: Constantine set out to defeat the forces of Maxentius, his rival, for supreme power in the empire. His father had prospered when he had prayed to the God of the Christians, and Constantine, in his extremity, resorted to the same action. It is said that on the next day he saw a shining cross in the sky with an inscription above it: *in hoc signo vinces* : "In this sign thou shalt conquer." He defeated Maxentius at the Milvan bridge, and immediately declared his conversion to Christianity

- 325 A.D: Edict of Toleration established freedom of religion; favored Christians at court; exempted Christian ministers from taxes; issued a general exhortation to all his subjects to become Christians.
- 330 A.D: Moved the capital of the empire to Byzantium, calling it Constantinople. Constantine ceased the gladiatorial fights, reduced the killing of unwelcome children, abolished crucifixion as form of execution, repealed the persecution edicts of Diocletian, assumed leadership of the church, advanced Christians to high offices, declared Sunday a day of worship (forbid work on Sunday), and reduced slavery.

## **The Marriage Consummated**

- 361-363 Julian, "The Apostate" sought to restore paganism.
- 363-364 Jovian reestablished the Christian religion.
- 378-395 Theodosius made Christianity the state religion, forced conversions filled the churches with unregenerates. Ambition to rule, heathenism, and pomp emerge in the world church

## **Corrupted By 'Marriage'**

- Heathenism was Christianized; pagan temples became Christian churches; heathen festivals were converted into Christian ones.
- Pagan priests slipped into office as Christian priests.
- Change was mostly nomenclature
- *What persecution didn't accomplish marriage to world did... The underground Christians exchanged the rags of oppression for the silks of the court...*

# Satan's Throne

## Revelations from Revelation

By Adela Yarbro Collins [From 'BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW' May/June 2006]



In the Book of Revelation, a prophet named John experiences a vision of the risen Christ, who asks him to convey a message to each of the seven Christian congregations of Asia Minor—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodikeia. To the Pergamon congregation, this is the message:

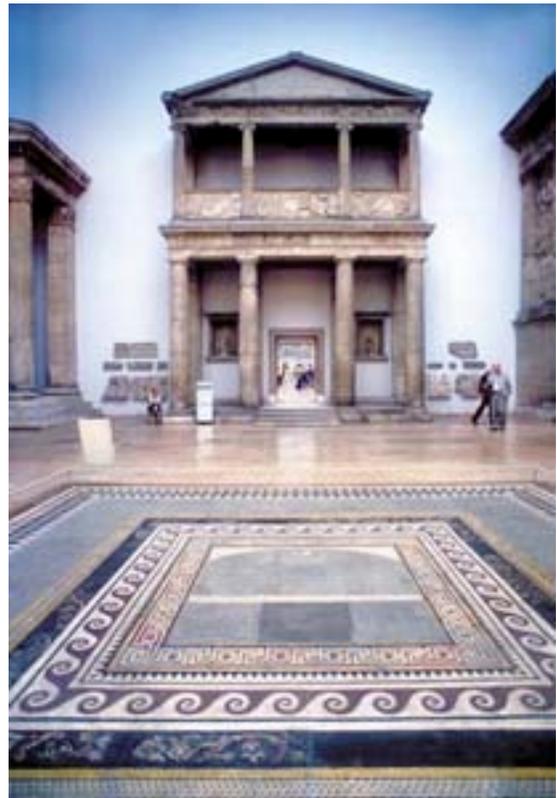
And to the angel of the congregation that is in Pergamon write: "Thus says the one who has the sharp, two-edged sword:

*'I know where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is, and you hold fast to my name and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas, my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.'*

(Revelation 2:12–13)

On a symbolic level, the "throne of Satan" mentioned in this passage represents a power in opposition to God, a power that is embodied in Roman imperial might. Throughout Revelation, a system of symbols associates Satan, depicted as a dragon or serpent, with the Roman Empire and emperor depicted as a beast.

Unlike other early Christian writers, John the prophet did not encourage his audience to honor and obey the emperor; but instead encouraged—by means of his symbols and rhetoric—resistance.



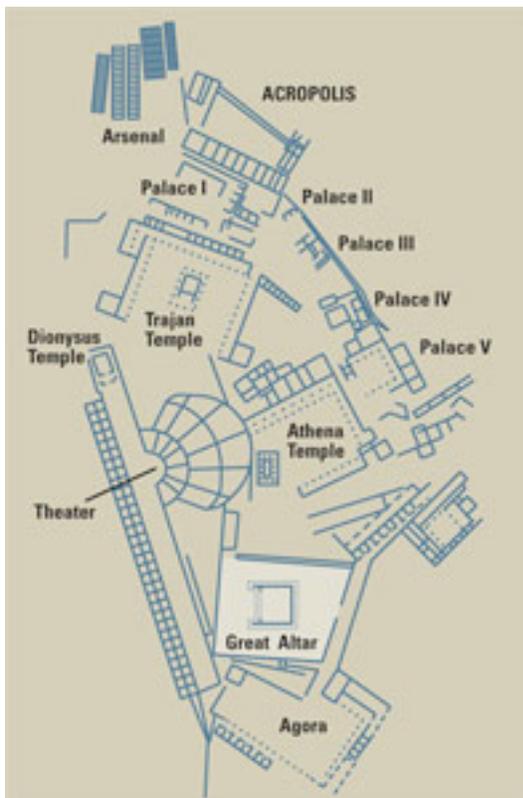
In principle, during the first century C.E., Roman officials tolerated believers in Jesus as the Messiah insofar as they could be regarded as Jews. Jews were expected to honor the emperor and to pray for his welfare, as well as for the welfare of the empire. As monotheists, however, they were normally not expected to worship the emperor, as most Greeks and Hellenized provincials did with enthusiasm. Nero's police action against the Christians of Rome in 64 C.E., however, apparently set a precedent for executing Christians merely for being such, and by the time of Trajan (emperor from 98–117 C.E.). Christians who refused to curse Jesus Christ and to worship the emperor, along with the traditional gods, were liable to execution as stubborn adherents of "superstition." Nero's action marks the beginning of the end of Roman acceptance of Christianity as a Jewish movement.

John's imagery in Revelation is more than symbolic, however. The very explicit association the author makes between the "throne of Satan" and the city of Pergamon suggests that something visible in the city inspired the phrase. Taken together, the archaeological and textual evidence points to the same candidate: the Great Altar of Pergamon, one of the most significant (and stunning) monuments to survive from the Greco-Roman world. To John of Revelation, it is the "throne of Satan."

Pergamon (modern Bergama, in Turkey) is located on the Caicus River in western Asia Minor in the region traditionally called Mysia. In John's time, Mysia was part of the Roman province of Asia.



The oldest part of the city is the acropolis, which is considerably higher and steeper than the acropolis of Athens. The earliest record of settlement comes from Xenophon, a Greek who lived in the fourth century B.C.E. He writes about Pergamon's role in the Spartan campaigns of 399 B.C.E.<sup>1</sup> In the third century B.C.E. Pergamon was the center of the Hellenistic kingdom of the Attalids. When the last Attalid king died in 133 B.C.E., he willed his kingdom to Rome, and the Romans transformed the old Attalid kingdom into their province of Asia. Pergamon was one of the three most prominent cities of that province (along with Ephesus and Smyrna). Pergamon continued to be a leading city until the fourth century C.E.



The ruins of the ancient city visible today include a temple dedicated to the emperor Trajan and a theater on the top of the acropolis. The base of the Great Altar lies prominently on a terrace on the southern slope of the acropolis. A lower city circled the base of the acropolis. A road led from there to a compound dedicated to the god Asklepios. This compound served as a medical center, a spa and a center for rhetoric and the arts, as well as a shrine to the deity.



The Pergamon altar itself is now housed in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. In the second half of the 19th century, stones from the ancient citadel on the acropolis of Pergamon were being burned in order to procure lime, so excavations sponsored by the Berlin Museum were carried out between 1878 and 1886. The Great Altar and many of its sculptures were removed with permission of the authorities in Turkey and taken to the museum in Berlin.

The purpose of Pergamon's Great Altar is uncertain and continues to provoke debate. Was it a real altar on which meat from sacrificed animals would be burned or was it a victory monument with no sacrificial function?<sup>2</sup>

As for its date, however, a consensus has emerged that the Great Altar was constructed during the reign of the Attalid king Eumenes II, who was born in 221 B.C.E. and reigned from 197 to 159 B.C.E.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that the altar was intended as a monument celebrating the victories of Eumenes II's predecessors, as well as his own, including the Roman victory over the Seleucid king Antiochus III, with the assistance of Eumenes II, in 189 B.C.E. The altar was never completed,<sup>4</sup> but it was unquestionably one of the city's most important landmarks in antiquity.

The altar was probably dedicated to Zeus and Athena, since they are in equal proportions the two most prominent deities on the eastern part of the altar's outer frieze (the horizontal band on the face of

the base), decorated with sculptures of the gods doing battle with the Giants (a group of divine beings).

Only two small fragments of the dedicatory inscription survive, but Max Fränkel, the editor of the inscriptions from Pergamon published in 1890–1895, reconstructed it on the basis of other Pergamene dedications as a decree honoring Attalos III, who reigned from 138 to 133 B.C.E.<sup>5</sup> As reconstructed, the Pergamon altar's inscription reads: "King Eumenes, son of King Attalos and Queen Apollonis, for the favors that have been shown to us, to Zeus and Athena Nikephoros (bringing victory)."

This suggests, if it does not prove, that the altar was dedicated to Zeus and Athena, to whom the king was offering a votive.

At the end of the first century C.E., when the Book of Revelation was composed, the main residential area of Pergamon was on the southern slope of the acropolis. Above this area rose an impressive monumental complex with three foci: the Great Altar, the sanctuary of Athena and the sanctuary of Zeus. Temples dedicated to Athena and Zeus had been built in the second half of the third century B.C.E. by Attalos I, but the whole area was expanded and these sanctuaries were remodeled by Eumenes II in the first half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>6</sup>



In my judgment, the Great Altar probably served as an altar of burnt offering for the two temples dedicated to Zeus and Athena, respectively.

Although previous scholars have identified the Great Altar with the "throne of Satan" in Revelation 2:13, these scholars did not have the benefit of recent archaeological and architectural research, and therefore inappropriately viewed the altar in isolation from the temples of Zeus and Athena. As Klaus Rheidt has shown, however, the design of the monumental complex built by Eumenes II makes clear that the Great Altar is related both to the temple of Athena and to the temple of Zeus.<sup>7</sup>



The sculptural frieze on the altar depicts the battle between the Greek gods and the Giants, as recounted in Apollodorus's *The Library*. According to Greek myth, the Giants were a clan of monstrous appearance descended from Ge (Earth) and Uranus (Heaven). They were fierce warriors who attacked the Olympian gods, the clan of Zeus. The gods learned that they could defeat the Giants only if they were aided by a mortal. As a hero, Heracles counted as a mortal, born to a human mother and a god. So the gods enlisted Heracles on their side and thus were able to kill the Giants. Zeus and Athena were the leaders of the gods in this battle. In later art, including the sculptures on the Great Altar, the Giants are portrayed as men with snake-like legs. In classical and Hellenistic times, the myth was interpreted in terms of the conflict between civilization (the gods) and barbarism (the Giants).<sup>8</sup>

The battle is thematically organized on the Great Altar. On the northwestern side of the altar, gods and goddesses associated with the sea are shown fending off the Giants attacking that part of the cosmos. On the southern side, deities connected with time are portrayed defending that aspect of order. Although portions are missing and others are hard to identify, it is likely that the whole band of sculptures was intended to portray the Olympian gods' defense of the order of the cosmos against the Giants who attempted to transform that order into chaos.

Although the Giants were all destroyed, the Olympian gods lived on, according to Greek mythic tradi-

tions. The existence of those gods and the practice of offering sacrifice to them was problematic for ancient Jews and Christians. They dealt with this problem by identifying the gods of other peoples with angels or daimones. Among Greeks this term was originally positive and meant "gods," often of a minor type. Later, however, it came to mean demons. According to Paul, Greeks and Romans were really sacrificing to demons, not to gods (1 Corinthians 10:20). In the apocalyptic, dualistic framework of the Book of Revelation, Satan, as the chief of the fallen angels (compare Mark 3:22–27), would correspond to Zeus, the ruler of the gods.



Deuteronomy 32:8 states that the Most High fixed the boundaries of the peoples of the earth. He made this allocation, the Hebrew text states, according to "the sons of Israel." But the Dead Sea Scrolls (and the Greek text of Deuteronomy in the Septuagint) indicate that the original reading was "the sons of God" or "the sons of the gods."<sup>a</sup> This Hebrew phrase was interpreted by the second-century Christian writer Justin Martyr to mean "messengers of God" or "angels." Justin thus concluded that God had committed the care of human beings to angels. He then concluded from Genesis 6 (which recounts how "the sons of God" fell in love with human women) that the angels entrusted with the care of human beings transgressed this appointment by having sexual relations with human women. The children who were begotten in this way were demons. Justin went on to describe how these demons then subjected human beings to themselves and taught these humans to offer sacrifices, incense and libations to themselves (the demons). Justin said that the Greek and Roman poets and mythologists did not know that it was the fallen angels and their offspring the demons who did these things, but thought that the demons were gods. From the point of view of the poets and mythologists, their people honored "God himself" (Jupiter, or Zeus) and his brothers (Neptune, or Poseidon, and Pluto, or Hades). From Justin's point

of view, however, Zeus (Jupiter) was the leader of the fallen angels or demons and thus equivalent to Satan.

Another factor that makes the Great Altar a likely candidate for the throne of Satan is its high position on the southern slope of the acropolis. The cultures of the ancient Near East, Israelite religion, and Second Temple Jewish texts all attest to a tradition that the throne of a deity was on a mountain or was the mountain itself. Yahweh, the personal name of the Israelite God, was associated with Mount Zion, Baal with Mount Zaphon,<sup>9</sup> and Zeus with Mount Olympus. Zeus was also associated with other mountains. For example, an inscription found in Scythopolis (Beth-Shean), one of the cities of the Roman decapolis in ancient Palestine and Transjordan, is dedicated to "Zeus Akraios," the god of the mountaintop and of fortresses (akra).<sup>10</sup> In Mesopotamia, the sun-god Shamash was pictured sitting on a throne that was depicted as a stylized mountain.<sup>11</sup> The throne of Solomon is described in 1 Kings 10:19 and 2 Chronicles 9:18 as having six steps. Geo Widengren has argued that the six steps together with the seat made the throne of Solomon like the world mountain with its seven tiers from Mesopotamian tradition. If so, the structure of the throne would suggest to audiences of Kings and Chronicles that Solomon's throne was modeled on God's own throne, the world mountain.

The Book of Revelation expresses the expectation that God's throne will be on earth in the new age. The new Jerusalem will come down from heaven after the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1–2). God's throne will be in that city, and from it will flow the river of the water of life (Revelation 22:1). John characterizes his own time, however, as a period in which Satan was actively working through other human beings to afflict and persecute the followers of the risen Christ (Revelation 2:9, 13). The dramatic account of the battle in heaven in which Satan is cast down to earth (Revelation 12:7–9, 17) also reflects the idea that Satan is still powerful on earth. According to John, Satan will wreak havoc until he is seized and bound with a chain in the pit for a thousand years. At that time, some of the dead will rise and reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1–6). At the end of this period, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented forever and ever (Revelation 20:7–10).

Since divine thrones on earth were depicted as mountains, John may have adopted this image for Satan's earthly throne, as well.

The hypothesis that John imagined Satan as having a throne on earth finds support in depictions of the many thrones of gods and heroes cut into rocks in Asia Minor. Some of these date from prehistoric, Mycenaean and Archaic times; others are later. A good example is the throne on the peak of the mountain near Magnesia, in the region traditionally called Lydia. Pausanias,

who wrote an introduction to various regions and cultures called the Description of Greece in the second century C.E., described this throne cut into the rock of the mountain as the throne of Pelops, the hero who gave his name to the Peloponnese of mainland Greece. Below his throne was a shrine of a mother-goddess.<sup>12</sup>

Pergamon's acropolis was unusually high and steep and may for this reason have captured John's imagination. It may have appeared to him as a fitting place for the throne of Satan, the highest of all fallen angels, evil spirits and demons.



In John's message to Pergamon, the risen Christ says that Antipas, "my faithful witness," was killed "among you, where Satan dwells" (Revelation 2:13). "Where Satan dwells" is synonymous with "the throne of Satan," a phrase that occurs earlier in the same verse. The term "witness" implies that Antipas made public verbal testimony to Christ. The Greek term translated "witness" later took on the connotation of one who had been executed by the authorities because of loyalty to Christ. The use of the term here implies that Antipas was interrogated by the Roman governor, who then ordered his execution when he refused to curse Christ and worship the emperor along with the traditional gods. The linking of public witness, execution and the place "where Satan dwells" or "the throne of Satan" indicates that Satan is connected with Roman rule. This interpretation is supported by the vision of the beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1-10. The beast from the

sea has “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation” and “all who dwell upon the earth will worship him” (Revelation 13:7–8). In John’s time this description only fit the Roman Empire and the emperor. It is explicitly stated that the dragon, Satan, had given his authority to the beast (Revelation 13:4; see also 12:9). Furthermore, among those who enthusiastically accepted Roman rule, the Roman emperor was understood to be Zeus’s agent on earth, or even to be identified with Zeus himself. This link between the emperor and Zeus makes sense of the portrayal of the death of Antipas (at the hands of Roman power) in the place where Satan dwells or is enthroned. In John’s view, the Roman governor, the emperor’s agent, was a tool of Satan, who was worshiped as Zeus in his temple and on the Great Altar.



The Book of Revelation was probably written when Domitian was emperor (81–96 C.E.). During his reign, he was honored with a coin minted in Ephesus that portrayed him on the front (obverse) and Olympian Zeus on the back (reverse).<sup>13</sup>

Although the Great Altar’s frieze was created in the second century B.C.E., as noted above, to celebrate victories of the Attalid kings over the Seleucids (and the Celts [Gauls]), the altar was still a prominent feature of Pergamon at the time Revelation was written. The mythological battle of the Giants with the gods was probably interpreted by the Attalids as signifying the struggle between civilization and barbarism. Since the battle was typically seen as symbolic of historical battles, it is likely that the Pergamenes updated their interpretation of the battle depicted in the sculptures as symbolic of the military victories of Rome. Hellenized and Romanized Pergamenes could see, for example, Rome’s victory over the Jews in the Great Jewish Revolt (66–70 C.E.) as a victory of civilization over barbarism. John, however, who speaks of Rome as a new Babylon, would see this battle as inspired by Satan, rather than as a divine victory.

As noted earlier, the Book of Revelation was probably composed toward the end of the first century C.E. The second-century Christian writer Irenaeus says that the revelation of John was “seen” at the end of the

reign of Domitian. Since he ruled from 81–96 C.E., Irenaeus’s date would be 95–96 C.E. in our reckoning.<sup>14</sup> As we have noted, the association of Domitian with Zeus Olympios at Ephesus is well attested. Since one of the messages of the Book of Revelation is addressed to Ephesus, and since John probably spent time there, it is likely that he was aware of the association of Domitian with Zeus. Such an association may also have existed in Pergamon, but that would not be necessary for John to associate the then-current emperor with Zeus and buildings that honored him.

There is also evidence for the close association of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian with Zeus in Pergamon. A bilingual inscription in Greek and Latin, found near the Temple of Trajan and dated to 113 or 114 C.E., mentions games founded by one Julius Quadratus, a wealthy citizen of Pergamon “in honor of the temple of Jupiter Amicalis [=Zeus Philios] and the emperor Trajan.” At least nine other inscriptions from Pergamon endow Hadrian with the epithet “Olympios” (that is, Zeus).

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the God of the Jews, Samaritans and Christians was often understood by outsiders as equivalent to Zeus (Roman Jupiter). According to 2 Maccabees 6:2, Antiochus Epiphanes rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem to Zeus Olympios and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim to Zeus Xenios (Zeus the friend of strangers). It would have been a small step for John to invert this common perception into an identification of Zeus with Satan. The notion that Satan had given his power and throne and great authority to the beast would then be John’s critical assessment of the idea current in the province of Asia at the time, that Domitian was the embodiment of the power of Zeus on earth.



In sum, the “throne of Satan” in Revelation 2:13 would have evoked both Zeus and the Roman emperor for the earliest audiences of Revelation. According to Revelation 12:7–9, Michael and his angels defeat the great red Dragon<sup>15</sup> and his angels in a heavenly battle and cast them down to earth. This dragon is explicitly identified with Satan in 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the ancient serpent, who is called ‘Devil’ and ‘Satan,’ who leads the entire inhabited world astray.”

In the next vision, a beast arises out of the sea (Revelation 13:1–10). This beast is identified with the Roman Empire in several ways. God allowed the beast to make war against the saints and to conquer them (Revelation 13:7a). This is an allusion to the defeat of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 70 C.E. The beast was also given authority over “every tribe and people and tongue and nation” (Revelation 13:7b). Only to Rome could such authority be attributed in the first century C.E.

This beast has seven heads (Revelation 13:1), and one of its heads had a mortal wound (Revelation 13:3), but this wound was healed. The detail of a mortal wound that was healed is significant for two reasons. On the one hand, it recalls Jesus, who was killed and then rose from the dead. On the other hand, it appears to allude to a third stage in the evolving Nero legend.<sup>16</sup> According to Roman historians, Nero committed suicide in 68 C.E. A rumor began to circulate almost immediately, among his supporters, the common people in Rome and especially Hellenized and Romanized residents of the eastern provinces, that he had escaped to the East and would return with an army to regain power in Rome. In the ongoing struggle between East and West, Nero would act as a savior-king for the East. In books four and five of the Sibylline Oracles, Jewish writers inverted this legend to depict Nero as an adversary of God and God’s people in the last days, instead of as a savior-king. John created a third version of the legend by portraying Nero as an anti-Christ figure, although he does not use the term. Just as Jesus died and was raised from the dead, so also did Nero. He had received a mortal wound, yet he lived, just as the Lamb who was slain also lived.

The majority of the Hellenized elite of the Roman province of Asia, however, focused on the current living emperor, not on Nero. They placed Domitian at the focal point of mediation between the human and the divine. But in John’s view, only Christ could play that role.

Reference for this article:

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# THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH OF R O M E

The Roman Catholic Church is a world-wide church with the largest official membership of any christian denomination. Most people have at least seen a Catholic Church, or noticed the distinctive garments of nuns and priests, or seen the Pope on TV. However, very few people are clear about just what the Catholic Church believes and teaches.

Part of the reason for this is the great diversity found in the Catholic church throughout the world. Another significant factor is the voluminous amount of documents created by the Catholic church establishing official doctrine.

However, there are certain basic teachings which have been continuously reaffirmed by the Roman Catholic church which are sufficient to give us an appreciation of the fact that the Roman Catholic church has consistently sought to exercise for itself an authority greater than the Word of God. This fact is seen in the dogmatic teaching of things which are blatantly contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

Please understand that the purpose of this paper is not to put-down Catholics as people but rather to bring to light a few of the many unscriptural teachings of the Catholic Church.

## I. THE WORSHIP OF MARY

- A. The Catholic church officially denies worshipping Mary, saying that Mary is only a creature, highly exalted, but still a creature, in no way equal to God.
- B. However, the Catholic Church technically divides worship into three kinds:
  1. Latria - the supreme worship, given to God alone
  2. Dulia - a secondary kind of veneration given to saints and angels
  3. Hyperdulia - a higher kind of veneration given to Mary.
  4. See comparison in "Roman Catholicism" pg.138-141 - comparing scripture with quotations from the book "The Glories of Mary" by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori. The editor's notice says, "Everything that our saint has written is, as it were, a summary of Catholic tradition on the subject that it treats; it is not an individual author; it is, so to speak, the church herself that speaks to us by the voice of her prophets, her apostles, her pontiffs, her saints, her fathers, her doctors of all nations and ages. No other book appears to be more worthy of recommendation in this respect than 'The Glories of Mary'. [1931 edition; Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn.]"
- C. some additional quotes...
  1. "The Name of Mary, because she is the Mother of God, is honored with multiple titles: She is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Co-Redemptrix, the Mediatrix of All Graces, the Blessed Mother." "The Catholic Encyclopedia", Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.375
  2. "Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ; she is rightly honored by a special cult in the Church." .... "The sacred synod teaches this Catholic doctrine advisedly and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and that the practices and exercises of devotion towards her, recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries be highly esteemed, and that those decrees, which were given in the early days regarding the cult images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed."
    - a) VATICAN COUNCIL II, 'The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents', Austin Flannery, O.P. Gen. Editor, Liturgical Press, 1980, pgs. 421-422
  3. "We often obtain more promptly what we ask by calling on the name of Mary, than by invoking that of Jesus"
    - a) [pg.248] 'THE GLORIES OF MARY', by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori, 1931 edition; Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn. [the Roman Catholic Church has canonized Liguori]
  4. cf. Phil.2:9-10 - "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and earth and under the earth."

D. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - teaches that Mary was born without sin.

1. "We declare, pronounce and define that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, by the singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, and that this doctrine was revealed by God, and therefore must be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful" [The original decree setting forth this doctrine issued by pope Pius IX, on Dec. 8, 1854]. From the Papal bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, quoted in *The Tablet*, Dec. 12, 1953.
2. Rom. 3:23 - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
3. Ps.143:2 - "Do not bring your servant in to judgment, for no one living is righteous before You."
4. Rom.3:10 - "As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one.'"

E. ASCENSION

1. This relatively recent addition came on Nov. 1, 1950, with the ex cathedra pronouncement by pope Pius XII from St. Peter's chair, that Mary's body was raised from the grave shortly after she died, that her body and soul were reunited, and that she was taken up and enthroned as Queen of Heaven. To this pronouncement there was added the usual warning that "anyone who may henceforth doubt or deny this doctrine is utterly fallen away from the divine and Catholic faith." Thus it is a mortal sin for any Roman Catholic to refuse to believe this doctrine.
2. Note: "Queen of Heaven" was the title given to the High Priestess of the Pagan Temples, especially Astarte [Venus], the goddess of fertility

II. THE POPE

A. "Pope" is the latin papa meaning Father

1. Matt. 23:8-10 - "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'Father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ."

B. "Pontiff", which literally means "bridge builder" comes from pagan Rome, where the emperor, as the high priest of the heathen religion, was called "Pontifex Maximus" [i.e. the chief bridge builder between this life and the next].<sup>1</sup>

1. [pg.125] 'ROMAN CATHOLICISM', by Loraine Boettner, © 1962, 21st Printing 1982 by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. [note: the preface to the 5th Edition, written after Vatican II, affirms the fact that Vatican II did not bring any significant changes in Catholic doctrine, only in certain areas of church practice.]

D. The New York Catechism says:

1. "The pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth... By divine right the pope has supreme and full power in faith and morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the entire church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and the judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the world, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth."

E. "Vatican II further teaches:

1. "This is the infallibility which the Roman Pontiff, the head of the college of bishops, enjoys in virtue of his office, when, as the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful, who confirms his brethren in their faith, he proclaims by a definitive act some doctrine of faith or morals. Therefore his definitions, of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, are justly styled irreformable, for they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, an assistance promised to him in blessed Peter. Therefore they need no approval of others, nor do they allow an appeal to any other judgement'."

a) 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.292

2. "The primatial power of the pope as the successor of St. Peter is .... an ordinary, immediate, episcopal, full, universal jurisdictional power that is supreme, that is, there is no higher authority in the Church, not even an ecumenical council (Documents of Vat.I & II)."

a) 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.493

3. "This teaching concerning the institution, the permanence, the nature and import of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office, the sacred synod proposes anew to be firmly believed by all the faithful..."

a) 'VAICAN COUNCIL II, Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents', Austin Flannery, O.P. Gen. Editor, Liturgical Press, 1980, pg.370

F. What a Contrast with Peter [the supposed first 'Pope'] in 1Pet.5:1-3

"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

G. The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one Head of the Church - Jesus.

1. Eph.1:9-10

"And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ. to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."

2. Eph.4:15-16 - "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

### III. THE EXALTATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

A. Council of Trent...

"The priest is the man of God, the minister of God.... He that despiseth the priest despiseth God; he that hears him hears God. The priest remits sins as God, and that which he calls his body at the altar is adored as God by himself and by the congregation. .. It is clear that their function is such that none greater can be conceived. Wherefore they are justly called not only angels, but also God, holding as they do among us the power and authority of the immortal God."

B. They have power to 'call up' God in the Mass

1. "Without the priest, the death and passion of our Lord would be of no avail to us. See the power of the priest! By one word from his lips he changes a piece of bread into a God! A greater fact than the creation of a world." [from a book carrying the imprint of the Archbishop of Ottawa, Canada]

a) quoted in 'Roman Catholicism', pg. 51

2. [Liguori] - "With regard to the power of the priests over the real body of Christ, it is of faith that when they pronounce the words of consecration, the incarnate God has obliged Himself to obey and come into their hands under the sacramental appearance of bread and wine. We are struck with wonder when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests - Hoc est corpus meum [this is my body] - God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes whenever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come He remains, entirely at their disposal and they move Him as they please from one place to another. They may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give Him for the food of others."<sup>5</sup>

a) 5. 'The Dignity and Duties of the Priest, by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori

3. "The priest does not have to ask God to forgive your sins. The priest himself has the power to do so in Christ's name. Your sins are forgiven by the priest the same as if you knelt before Jesus Christ and told them to Christ Himself"

a) 'Instructions for Non-Catholics, pg.93

C. 1Tim.2:5 - "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

4. Matt.20:25-27 - "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.'"

5. 1Pet. 2:4-5,9 - "As you come to Him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." ... "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."

#### IV. PURGATORY

- A. "The souls of those who have died in the state of grace suffer for a time a purging that prepares them to enter heaven and appear in the presence of the beatific vision. The purpose of purgatory is to cleanse one of imperfection, venial sins, and faults, and to remit or do away with the temporal punishment due to mortal sins that have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance. It is an intermediate state in which the departed souls can atone for unforgiven sins before receiving their final reward." 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.502
- B. The Catholic Church teaches that the Pope has personal jurisdiction over purgatory.
- C. 1Jn.2:2 - "He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."
- D. 1Thess. 5:9-10 - "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him."

#### V. INDULGENCES

- A. An indulgence is a period of release from punishment [1 day, 10 days, 30 days, etc.] which the person would have to suffer in purgatory. ... it affords release from a part or the whole of the punishment due because of sin."
- B. "A remission of that temporal punishment which even after the sin is forgiven, has yet to be suffered either here or in purgatory."
- C. Only the Pope can grant a plenary indulgence, canceling out all suffering. Bishops can grant up to forty days, and parish priests shorter periods.
- D. Technically, indulgences must not be sold by the church - but that has not been the practice.
  - 1. "When pope Leo X [1513-1521] needed money to complete the great cathedral of St. Peter's in Rome he offered plenary indulgences for sale and sent his special emissaries to every nation, promising forgiveness of sins to the living and release from the flames of purgatory for the dead. ... It was for this purpose that the Friar Tetzl came through the region around Wittenburg, Germany, making the claim: 'A soul is released from purgatory and carried to heaven as soon as the money tinkles in the box.' It was this corrupt practice of taking money from the people that revolted Martin Luther against the whole system of indulgences and led to his posting the 95 theses on the cathedral door in Wittenburg, Oct. 31, on the eve of All Saints Day, 1517. That act marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation." 'Roman Catholicism pg.265

#### VI. PENANCE

- A. "Penance is the sacrament by which sins committed after baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest." Baltimore Catechism, pg.300
- B. "Through them [penances], the Church gives her penitents a fresh start. And the Church has a tremendous spiritual capital, gained through centuries of penance, persecution, and martyrdom; many of her children prayed, suffered, and merited more than they needed for their own individual salvation. The Church took these superabundant merits and put them into the spiritual treasury, out of which repentant sinners can draw in times of spiritual depression"
  - 1. 'Peace of Soul', by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. pg.208
- C. Lk. 18:26-27 - "Those who heard this asked, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with men is possible with God.'"
- D. Eph.2:8-9 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast."
- E. Tit.3:5-6 -"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy spirit, Whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior."
- F. Acts 15:5-11 - "Then some ... stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.' The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who know the heart showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.'"

- G. Gal.5:4-6 - "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."
- H. Ps.103:12 - "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

## VII. THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES

- A. "The practice of placing sacred images in the churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be firmly maintained." [from Vatican II]
1. 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.285
- B. Ex.20:4 - "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below."

## VIII. THE MASS

- A. The Council of Trent
1. "The sacrifice [in the Mass] is identical with the sacrifice of the Cross, inasmuch as Jesus Christ is a priest and victim both. The only difference lies in the manner of offering, which is bloody upon the cross and bloodless on our altars."
  2. The Creed of pope Pius IV - "I profess that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice [that is, a sacrifice which satisfies the justice of God and so offsets the penalty for sin] for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation"
- B. The New York Catechism reads
1. "Jesus Christ gave us the sacrifice of the Mass to leave to His Church a visible sacrifice which continues His sacrifice on the cross until the end of time. The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross. Holy Communion is the receiving of the body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine."
- C. The Basic Teachings document of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops declares
1. "...This sacrifice (of the Mass) is not merely a ritual which commemorates a past sacrifice. In it, through the ministry of priests, Christ perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross in an unbloody manner."   
'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.198
- D. "The celebration of the Eucharist which takes place at Mass is the action not only of Christ, but also of the Church. For in it Christ perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering himself to the Father for the world's salvation through the ministry of priests."   
1.'VATICAN COUNCIL II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents', Austin Flannery, O.P. Gen. Editor, Liturgical Press, 1980, pg.103
- E. Heb.9:12,24-28; 10:10-14
- "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" ... "For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him." ... "...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time He waits for His enemies to be made His footstool, because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

## IX. THE ROMAN CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD'S WORD

- A. The Bible was first officially forbidden to the people by the Church of Rome and placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Council of Valencia in the year 1229, with the following decree:
1. "We prohibit also the permitting of the laity to have the books of the Old and New Testament, unless any one could wish, from a feeling of devotion, to have a psalter or breviary for divine service, or the hours of the blessed Mary. But we strictly forbid them to have the above mentioned books in the vulgar tongue."
- B. The Council of Trent reaffirmed prohibiting the use of the Scriptures by any member of the church unless he obtained permission
1. "In as much as it is manifest, from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to everyone, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it; it is, on this point, referred to the judgment of the bishops, or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety, they apprehend, will be augmented, and not injured by it; and this permission they must have in writing."
    - a) "The Council of Trent, the most authoritative of all Roman councils and the one of greatest historical importance, in the year 1546, declared that the Word of God is contained both in the Bible and in tradition, that the two are of equal authority, and that it is the duty of every Christian to accord them equal veneration and respect."
- D. "In a special sense, there is but one source of revealed truth and this source is divine Tradition. By this is meant the body of revealed truth handed down from the Apostles through the ages and contained in the doctrine, teaching, and practice of the Catholic Church. As defined by the Council of Trent, this includes both the Scriptures and the unwritten or oral traditions. It is the Church in her living magisterium, "the holder of Tradition," which gives life to Scripture."
1. 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.581
- E. DOGMATIC FACT: "Certain truths which, while not revealed by God, are proclaimed by the teaching authority of the Church. By infallible authority the Church judges and proposes these facts for belief. These facts come to us through revelation, which is progressive through the Church and the unfolding of tradition."
1. 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.171
- F. Gal.1:8-9 - "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"
1. cf. Jer.23:30-40
- G. Ps. 138:2 - "I will bow down toward Your holy temple and will praise Your Name for Your love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your Name and Your Word."

## IX. THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

- C. "To this [the message of Jesus Christ] must be added those refinements of teachings that the Church has taught and continues to teach through the unfolding tradition that is hers from apostolic times and which she teaches infallibly as the one Church founded by Christ." ... "It is through Christ's Catholic Church alone which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained."
1. 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', Robert C. Broderick, © 1976, pg.170

## THE GOOD NEWS! JESUS HAS SET US FREE !

*John 8:33-34, 36 - "To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' ... "So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

*Col. 2:16-17 - "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."*

*Gal 5:1 - "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."*

# REPENTANCE & GODLY SORROW

## I. REPENTANCE IS 'THE FIRST WORD OF THE GOSPEL'

A. JOHN THE BAPTIST - Matt.3:1-2 - "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"

B. JESUS - Matt.4:17 - "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"

C. THE TWELVE - Mk. 6:7,12 - "Calling the Twelve to Him, He sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits." ... "They went out and preached that people should repent."

D. THE TWO - 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:45-47)

E. AT PENTECOST - Acts 2:38 - "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy spirit." Acts 3:19 - "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,"

## II. WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

A. MANY PEOPLE THINK REPENTANCE IS "FEELING SORRY FOR MY SINS". But according to Paul, in 2Cor. 7:8-11, Repentance and Sorrow are two different things. Godly sorrow accompanies repentance, but sorrow alone is not in itself Repentance. Why?

1. Because there is also a Worldly Sorrow that only brings death. Worldly Sorrow is feeling sorry for ourself, or sorry for our circumstances - sorry for the consequences of our sin - but not sorry for the sin itself.

B. GODLY VS. WORLDLY SORROW - 2Cor.7:10 - "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

1. Worldly Sorrow - Cain

a) Gen. 4:13-14 - "Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment [for sin] is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.'"

## 2. Godly Sorrow - David

a) 2 Sam. 12:13 - "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'"

b) Psalm 51:1-4 - "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when You judge."

## 3. Judas vs. Peter

### C. REPENTANCE IS "TO CHANGE ONE'S MIND AND DEMONSTRATE THE REALITY OF THAT CHANGE OF MIND BY A CHANGE IN ACTIONS."

1. "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." (Matthew 3:8 - [JtheB])

2. Acts 26:20 - "First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds."

3. cf. Parable of the Two Sons

### D. WHAT IS THE RESPONSE TO REPENTANCE? JOY!

1. cf. parable of lost coin

2. cf. prodigal son's father - Luke 16:11-31

## III. HOW IS REPENTANCE DEMONSTRATED?

### A. CONFESSING SIN

1. Pharisee and Tax-Collector - "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' (Luke 18:13).

### B. RENOUNCING SIN

1. Proverbs 28:13 - "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

### C. TURNING TO GOD

1.1 Thessalonians 1:9 - "for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,"

2. This is important because turning to God is an act of faith - Repentance must include faith in Jesus or it will only be an attempt at self-reformation.

a) Hebrews 11:6 - "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

### D. THE RESULTS?

1. Acts 3:19 - "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,"

# BE READY – THE TEN VIRGINS

*"1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."*

*Matthew 25:1-13*

## INTRODUCTION:

Jesus exhorted the Church at Sardis to Wake Up! If they did not, He would come as a thief and they would not recognize the time of His coming. In order to take His warning seriously, we must understand the message of the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

## INTERPRETATIONS:

1. Because this was directed to the Jews it has no application for us
2. All are Christians - the Wise are Spiritual and the Foolish are Carnal
3. They Appear Similar but Wise were Born Again while Foolish weren't.
4. Note: The basic application is the same - must have sufficient supply of oil.

## I. THE WISE

A. THEIR PREPARATION - They "took oil in jars along with their lamps."

1. WITHOUT GOD'S SUPPLY OF OIL - NONE OF US ARE READY

2. WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

a) WE MUST HAVE THE "ENGAGEMENT RING" OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(1) Eph.1:13-14 - "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of His Glory."

(2) He, Himself is our greatest inheritance - cf. Gen.15:1

(a) "After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward'."

3. WE MUST HAVE A SUPPLY OF HEAVENLY OIL - cf. the widow's jar of oil

B. THEIR ENTRANCE - They "went in with Him to the wedding banquet."

1. IT WAS IMMEDIATE - Those "...who were ready went in..."

2. IT WAS INTIMATE - They "...went in with Him..."

a) Jesus prayed for this in Jn.17:24 - "Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world."

b) Jesus died for this - 1Thess.5:10 - "He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him."

c) He says to every believer - "I have chosen you to be Mine forever."

(2) Jesus, Himself, will escort us into the Wedding Banquet

d) Don't go anywhere without Him [MASTERcard]

(1) cf. Moses in Ex.33:15-16 - "Then Moses said to Him, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with Your people unless You go with us? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?'"

3. IT WAS JOYOUS - They "...went in... to the wedding banquet."
  - a) NOTE: THE SPECIAL JOY OF A WEDDING
    - (1) Even today, there's a special joy at the wedding of a loving couple.
  - b) WE WILL BE ENTERING IN AS THE BRIDE!
    - (1) The Appearance of Christ will be the Glory of His people
      - (a) cf. Rom. 8:18-19 "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."
      - (b) Col.3:3-4 - "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."
  - c) THIS IS HEAVENLY JOY - the continual celebration of our marriage
  - d) THIS IS A CLUE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS
    - (1) Continually celebrate your engagement to Him!

#### ARE YOU READY?

1. Heaven is being filled with people who have believed in Jesus, and Hell is being filled with people who meant to believe in Jesus

## II. THE FOOLISH

- A. THEIR LACK OF PREPARATION - They "did not take any oil with them."
  1. THEY WERE NOT PREPARED
    - a) Their commitment was short-term and conditional [rocky soil - no roots]
    - b) it was a natural, religious commitment - not a true spiritual conversion
      - (1) Their lamps held only the oil of human effort
        - (a) sentimental emotional experiences - positive thinking & willpower
        - (b) personal philosophy - faithless morality
  2. THEY WERE PRETENDERS
    - a) They had the name and appearance of virgins - lamps like the others
    - b) They acted like the others
      - (1) went forth to wait for the Bridegroom - fell asleep - woke up
    - c) The difference clear at midnight, when they began to trim their lamps
      - (1) Only the Bridegroom knew before then
    - d) They appeared to be genuine, but did not have the Oil of Eternal Life.
      - (1) like many in today's liberal denominations
        - (a) cf. Finney's Revivals/My background [Baptist missionary] / false charismatic experiences [priest who didn't believe in the resurrection]
  3. THEY WERE NOT BORN AGAIN!
- B. THEIR EXCLUSION
  1. IT WAS FINAL - No 'second chances' - "DOOR WAS SHUT"
  2. IT WAS JUST - They had all evening to prepare
    - a) "The bridegroom was a long time in coming..."
    - b) The very delay that caused them all to fall asleep was for the foolish
      - (1) He was giving them time to 'wise-up'. - cf. Preacher' Offer to Pay Debts
    - c) Today is the Day of Salvation - the Door is open - there's still time

## III. THE QUESTION - ARE YOU READY?

- A. DOES THE THOUGHT OF HIS COMING FILL YOU WITH JOY OR WITH FEAR?
  1. cf. My Earthquake Experience - In my heart I knew I wasn't ready!
    - a) Would I have gone?
      - (1) Probably. But only like Lot being dragged out of Sin City
      - (2) Not the abundant entrance of the wise virgins and faithful servants.
- B. ARE YOU A PROFESSOR OR A POSSESSOR?

### C. TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION

1. cf. THE DAYS OF NOAH - Matt.24:37-39 "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."
2. DO NOT DESPISE THE DAY OF THE OPEN DOOR - SOON IT WILL BE CLOSED
  - a) Picture a busy, crowded city. In the midst of it there is a simple church building. Everyone knows it offers invitations to the Wedding Banquet of the coming Bridegroom. But there are so many other things happening in the city. So many bright lights, attractive sights, magnetic sounds... The unspoken attitude is that "God's program isn't the only game in town. Who wants to sit around and wait for a Bridegroom that no one's seen." But what if the lights went out all over the city, the sounds stopped, the sights disappeared? The only light left in the entire city is found coming through the windows of that simple little church. The only sounds heard are songs of praise, the only sight is the glowing faces of the wise who entered in before it was too late. The faceless multitudes scramble to find the invitations they had set aside. They find them, yet, curiously, they are all stamped NULL & VOID. They grab them anyway and run back to the church and bang on the doors. But outside, in the darkness, they hear one final message - "I tell you the truth, I don't know you." Finally, there is found only the gnashing of teeth, the piercing silent screams of unutterable despair. Waves of lost souls slip into a relentless sea of purposeless evil and are slowly swallowed up in the raw, pit of spiritless sewage that ferments forever.

WHERE IS HELL? ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF HEAVEN (see journal entry 'Separation From God' below).

*"THEREFORE KEEP WATCH, BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR."*

SEPARATION FROM GOD (Journal Notes): *I got to thinking about a different approach to communicating what Hell is about. One that might better help people accept it or understand it or receive enough to take it more to heart. To talk about eternal suffering in everlasting fire is truth, but unfortunately, our minds and hearts are conditioned to turn off and fail to really hear. We often talk of Hell as eternal separation from God, but, on the surface, that seems to be too weak. However, if we take time to reflect on what is actually implied in being separated from God, we may be able to grasp the horror of Hell after all. Consider this: Being immutably separated from God means being irretrievably and completely separated from all that flows from Who He is and what constitutes His Character. In other words, if Hell is being separated from God, then Hell is a place where there is No Grace, No Forgiveness, No Light, No Love, No Comfort, No Truth, No Mercy, No Compassion, No Kindness, No Courtesy, No Purpose, No Significance, No Honor, No Recognition, No Happiness or contentment, No Satisfaction, No Enjoyment, No Fellowship, No Friendship, ... NO HOPE ... No Way!*

*It may be that one of the reasons people miss the seriousness of Hell or the blessings of Heaven, is that they do not understand 'Common Grace'. Common Grace is the term that refers to the truth that God extends a certain measure of grace to everyone on Earth. He provides the Sun, Rain, Soil, Crops and Animals to sustain us all and for us all to enjoy. He also extends a measure of grace to all in the sense of a remnant of His Image within our nature and our conscience which reflects and reinforces a degree of 'goodness' within us by convicting us concerning what's right and what's wrong (Rom. 2). But what the world fails to realize is that when the Lord takes us to be with Him and when the final separation occurs - it will include a separation from all that is good.*

*Picture a great Banquet on a table where believers are feasting freely and where many scraps are falling off the table and being enjoyed by the unbelievers who live beneath the table. Those who are living beneath the table are satisfied with the scraps, so they continually reject the invitations given them to come up and sit at the table. They are unwilling to humble themselves in order to be lifted up. The tragic fact is that they think the scraps will always be there - but they won't. When the Lord calls His church home and the final judgment comes, all of the 'scraps' of God's 'Common Grace' will disappear as they are completely, irretrievably and immutably separated from God.*

# THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH

*“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test **those who dwell on the earth.***

Rev. 3:10

**This is a term used in Revelation to designate the masses of unregenerate people who will be on the earth at that time**

Rev. 3:10 “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test **those who dwell on the earth.**

Rev. 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on **those who dwell on the earth?**”

Rev. 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to **the inhabitants of the earth**, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

Rev. 11:10 And **those who dwell on the earth** will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented **those who dwell on the earth.**

Rev. 12:12 “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to **the inhabitants of the earth** and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Rev. 13:8 **All who dwell on the earth** will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Rev. 13:12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes **the earth and those who dwell in it** to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Rev. 13:14 And he deceives **those who dwell on the earth** by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling **those who dwell on the earth** to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Rev. 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to **those who dwell on the earth**--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--

Rev. 17:2 “with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and **the inhabitants of the earth** were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

Rev. 17:8 “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And **those who dwell on the earth** will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

κατοικεω katoikeo *kat-oy-keh'-o*; to house permanently, i.e. reside (literally or figuratively):-- dwell(-er), inhabitant(-ter).

# THE BOOK OF LIFE

## I. THE BOOK OF LIFE

*A. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. (Revelation 3:5)*

## II. SCRIPTURES

A. Ex. 32:32 - "But now, please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book You have written."

B. Ps. 69:18, 27-28 - "Come near and rescue me; redeem me because of my foes. ... Charge them with crime upon crime; do not let them share in Your salvation. May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous."

C. Lk. 10:20 - "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

D. Eph. 1:4, Matt. 25:34 - "For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." ... "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

E. Phil. 4:3 - "Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."

F. Rev. 3:5 - "He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

G. Rev. 13:8 - "All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast - all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

H. Rev. 17:8 - "The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast because he once was, now is not, and yet will come."

I. Rev. 20:12, 15 - "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ... If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

J. Rev. 21:27 - "Nothing impure will ever enter it [New Jerusalem], nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

## III. COMMENTS

A. John F. Walvoord ["Commentary on Revelation" pg. 82] - "The book of life is a list of those for whom Christ died - everyone. When they die having rejected Christ, their name is blotted out. When they are born again - their name is confirmed for all eternity."

B. Henry Morris ["The Revelation Record" pg. 69] - "The book of life, as its very name implies, probably contains the names of all those for whom Christ died - in other words, all who have ever been conceived in the womb, and who thus have received God's created spirit of life. Since Christ died for the sin inherent in every person conceived, a child who dies before becoming a deliberate and conscious sinner does not need to be "saved" from sin, since he has never sinned, and since Christ has made propitiation for his innate sin. When a child does become a conscious sinner, however, he thenceforth is lost and needs to be saved; he needs to be "born again". His name is still inscribed in the book of life, because he is still living and may, before he dies, trust Christ to save him and give him everlasting life. If he continues in his sin and his unrepentant, unforgiven state until death, however, then his name will finally and irrevocably be blotted out of the book of life, and he will experience a second death (Rev. 20:14) as well as physical death."

C. Warren Wiersbe ["Be Victorious" pg. 40] - "As unbelievers die, their names are removed from the book; thus, at the final judgment, the book contains only the names of believers (Rev. 20:12-15). It then becomes "the Lamb's book of life" (21:27), because only those saved by the Lord Jesus Christ have their names in it. All the others have been blotted out, something God would never do for any true child of God (see Ex. 32:32, Rom. 9:3). It is a book of Life, and lost sinners are dead! (Eph. 2:1)."

D. Chuck Smith - "What does Jesus mean about blotting names out of the Book of Life? He means just that. Don't think I'm going to take away from this book. For in the final chapter it says that if any man shall take away from this book, his name will be taken out of the Book of Life (Rev. 22:19). I don't want mine blotted out! You say, "What did He mean by that?" I don't know but I won't try to explain it away."

## IV. CONCLUSION

A. There is clearly not enough information given in Scripture for us to be overly dogmatic regarding the full significance of the Book of Life. We cannot profess to give a precise description of the process which it goes through. What we can know is that it is finally a record of all who have received eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. It is, above all, The Lamb's Book of Life.

# The Rapture!

by Chuck Smith

Death to the Christian is so different than to the non-Christian that it's incorrect even to use the same term. For the Christian death is really a transition. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain... I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better". [Philippians 1:21-23] Paul said that we who are in this body do groan, earnestly desiring to be delivered; not that we would be unclothed but that we might be clothed with that body which is from heaven. [2Corinthians 5:2]

Speaking to the Thessalonians concerning their loved ones who had already died in Christ, Paul said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words". [1Thessalonians 4:13-18]

Some people would ridicule the idea or concept of the Rapture of the Church. They declare that the word "rapture" isn't even found in the Bible. It all depends on which Bible you're reading. The phrase "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the Greek word *harpazo*, which actually means "to be snatched away violently." The Latin equivalent of *harpazo* is the verb *rapio*, "to take away by force." In the Latin Vulgate, one of the oldest Bibles in existence, the appropriate tense of *rapio* appears in verse 17. *Raptus* is the past participle of *rapio*. Our English words "rapt" and "rapture" stem from this past participle. Although "rapture" isn't in the King James Bible, the basic word does appear in the Latin Vulgate.

## What is meant by RAPTURE?

The Rapture refers to that event where Jesus Christ snatches His Church out of this world. It shall happen suddenly without any notice. The Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are completely different. At the Rapture, Jesus is coming for His saints.

In 1Corinthians 15:51-52 Paul said, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed [metamorphosis - a change of body], in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ..." You won't even realize it's happened until it's all over. Suddenly, you're in the presence of the Lord with all the Church!

We the Church will be changed. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious image". [Philippians 3:20-21] Concerning the metamorphosis Paul wrote to Corinth, "For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." [1Corinthians 15:53]

At the Second Coming we will return with Jesus Christ. Jude 14 tells us, "... Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

## When will the Rapture take place?

Jesus said, "No man knows the day or hour," and for us to presume to declare some date or some hour would be an unscriptural presumption. If we say we know the hour, we're boasting of knowledge superior to Christ's when He was upon the earth. Although we do not know the exact time of the Rapture, in Thessalonians 5 Paul said, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord is coming as a thief in the night. For when they will say, Peace and safety; then comes sudden destruction... But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." The Bible is saying that the Rapture shouldn't come to you as a surprise.

## Why should "that day" not overtake us as a thief?

God has given to us the warnings that would precede the coming of Jesus Christ. One of the greatest signs to the world today is the reestablishment of the nation Israel. For years Bible scholars had looked forward to the regathering of the nation Israel based on many Scriptures (including Matthew 24:32) and applying expositional constancy (fig tree or figs in parables symbolize the nation Israel). Skeptics ridiculed this prophecy. Never in history had a nation been born out of the past, but a miracle has taken place and a nation has been reborn. God has reestablished Israel among the family of nations on the earth. God has fulfilled His promise even as He said would.

Psalm 102:16 declares, "When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Because the Lord is building up Zion, the orthodox Jew today is looking for his Messiah. We are too! We're looking forward to this fulfillment of God's promise - the coming again of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

### **What "generation"?**

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh... even know that it [My coming] is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." [Matthew 24:32-34]

Not the generation Christ was talking to, because they've passed - but the generation that saw the fig tree budding forth. The coming of Jesus Christ is "even at the doors." The rebirth of Israel should be a sign to every child of God!

Jesus said throughout the rest of Matthew 24, "watch... be ye also ready." That was the constant warning to the Church: watch and be ready. In #Luke 21:28 | when Jesus was speaking of these same things, using again the parable of the fig tree, He said, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

### **Will the Rapture precede the Great Tribulation?**

There are arguments and Scriptures that people can present for pre-, mid-, and post-Tribulation theories. My personal opinion is that Jesus will come before the Great Tribulation to rapture His Church. I don't believe that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation period.

In 1Thessalonians 5:9 Paul wrote, "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul said the same in Romans 5:9 - we've not been appointed unto wrath. Jesus in the whole context of the Tribulation, said, "Pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man". [Luke 21:36] My prayer is that I will be accounted worthy to escape all of these things that are going to come to pass upon the earth.

The Lord divided the Book of Revelation into three sections: [1] "Write the things which thou hast seen," [2] "and the things which are," [3] "and the things which shall be after these things [ meta tauta ]." [Revelation 1:19]

John, in obedience to the commandment, wrote in chapter 1 the vision of Christ that he saw on then island of Patmos. In Chapters 2 and 3 he wrote of the Church and the message of Jesus to the seven churches. Let's look at two of these messages where Jesus made reference to His coming again.

1. The church of Thyatira had introduced the worship of idols within the church. Jesus said, "I have this against thee because thou sufferest that woman, Jezebel... to seduce my servants to commit fornication... I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds". [Revelation 2:20-22]

The unrepentant church of Thyatira, which had gone into spiritual "fornication" (idolatry and saint-worship), was to be cast into the Great Tribulation unless, the Lord said, she repented.

2. To the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 Jesus said, "Because you have kept word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation Which is coming to try them who dwell upon the earth." The rapture can happen at any moment - and it's exciting to realize that as a Christian you may never finish reading this article!

After the close of the messages to the churches, Revelation 4:1 begins and ends with the Greek phrase meta tauta. "After these things," John said, "behold a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was a trumpet saying unto me, Come up hither, and I will show you things which must be after these things [meta tauta]."

### **After what "things"?**

Jesus spoke of Church things in chapters 2 and 3. These must be the things that will take place after the Church is taken out of the earth. I believe that 4:1 of the Book of Revelation is the place of the Rapture of the Church. That "voice" in heaven and "trumpet" are the same as in [1Thessalonians 4:16] With the trump of God and the archangel saying, "Come up hither," we the Church will be gathered together with the Lord in the heavens.

### **What happens after Revelation 4:1?**

John describes the heavenly scene in chapter 4. In chapter 5 he saw the scroll with seven seals in the right hand of Him who is sitting upon the throne. An angel proclaimed with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose its seals?" John began to sob convulsively, because no one in heaven or earth nor

under the earth was found worthy to even look upon the scroll. [Revelation 5:2-4]

Then one of the elders said, "Weep not, behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seen seals." John turned and saw Jesus as a Lamb that had been slain, "and He came forth and He took the scroll out of the right hand of Him Who sat upon the throne." "Immediately, they brought forth the "vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation; and made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign [with Him] upon the earth" [Revelation 5:5-10]

Notice the song that is being sung.

### **Who can sing that song?**

It's not the song of Israel and the covenant relationship with God. People from all families of the earth, not just one family of Abraham, are singing. It's a people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Only the Church can sing that song.

In Revelation 5:11 after Jesus takes the scroll, John said that innumerable multitudes, "ten thousand times ten thousands" worship the Lamb, declaring His worthiness to receive the honor, and the authority, and the glory. In Revelation 6, Jesus proceeds to loose the seals of the scrolls. With the very first seal there comes forth the white horse rider, going "forth conquering, and to conquer." This, I believe, is the entrance of the Antichrist, because he's followed by wars, death, famine, and desolation. Certainly, the Second Coming of Christ isn't going to be followed by such events, but by the glorious establishment of the Kingdom.

### **Now, where's the Church?**

Before the Tribulation ever begins, the Church is in heaven singing and praising the Lord for His worthiness to take the scroll and loose the seals. The Tribulation doesn't start until the seven seals begin to be broken.

### **Then why all the confusion concerning the pre-Trib, mid-Trib, and post-Trib Rapture?**

In 13:7 of the Book of Revelation reference is made to the beast making "war with the saints," and he is given power "to overcome them" during the middle of the Tribulation period. Jesus in Matthew 24:29-31 said about His Second Coming, "Immediately after the

tribulation of those days... they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Then shall He "gather together His elect from the four winds." By defining "the saints" and "His elect" as being the Church, you would have the Church in the Tribulation period. I believe "His elect" is a reference to the nation Israel, if you read it in context.

Christ said, "Pray that your flight be not in winter, or on the sabbath day" when fleeing out of Jerusalem. [Matthew 24:16-20]

How many in the Church expect to be in Jerusalem fleeing when the Antichrist sets up his image within the temple? How many of you would be praying, "O God, don't let it be on the sabbath day"? The Church doesn't keep the sabbath day; that's God's covenant relationship with Israel. The fact is that Israel is "His elect." He's going to gather them back into their land for the Kingdom Age at His return.

As Paul said in Roman's 11:25-26, "...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "The saints" of Revelation 13:7 are also the same. They are God's nation Israel which He as now established again in a priority basis upon the earth during this last seven-year Tribulation period.

The mistake and the confusion regarding the Church's place in the last times arise out of a misunderstanding of God's full prophecies concerning the nation Israel. Israel will be going through the Great Tribulation. This will be the time of Jacob's troubles spoken of in Scripture. [Jeremiah 30:7] This will be the time when, as even Jesus said, "You will not see the Me henceforth, until you shall say, Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. [Matthew 23:29]

After the Great Tribulation period Israel will be saying, "O, blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Jesus shall return again with His Church at the Second Coming of Christ.

Zechariah the prophet said, "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in your hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends". [Zechariah 13:6]

Thus, the glorious first recognition of Jesus as Israel's Messiah when He comes the second time with the Church to establish His reign upon the Earth.

### **In the light of the fact that the Lord might come even today, what should I do as a Christian?**

First, let me tell you what you shouldn't do. Don't quit your job, sell your house, or see how much money you can borrow figuring you won't have to pay it

back. Jesus said, "Occupy until I come". [Luke 19:13] He intends for us to go right on in our work.

Jesus said, "**Watch**". [Matthew 24:42] You should be watching. In Hebrews it says, "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time". [Hebrews 9:28]

You should **be ready**. Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man cometh". [Matthew 24:44] Amos cried out, "Prepare to meet thy God" [Amos 4:12] You need to prepare. That preparation is in giving your heart and life to Jesus Christ, receiving His forgiveness and the blotting out of your sins and transgressions.

And then **wait**. James said, "Be patient therefore, brethren, to the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman is waiting... be also patient, establish your hearts". [James 5:7-8] 2Peter 3:3-9 tells us that in the last days there would be scoffers that would come and say, "Where's the promise of His coming? But "God is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but He is faithful to us".

### **The question at this point is, "Are you ready?"**

Consider the Lord proclaiming today, "This is the end for the Church! You have finished your witness. Come home!" Would you be gathered with the Church to meet the Lord in the air, or would you be down here scratching your head wondering what's going on?

How much better to go with the Church than to be left behind to face the Tribulation and all the horror coming upon the earth. Why make it tough for yourself when the Lord wants to make it easy on you? Why not just open your heart and life to Jesus Christ now? Why not just receive Him as your Lord and Savior and, as He said, be ready. What do you need to be ready? Jesus Christ dwelling in your heart and in your life.

### **What about those who miss?**

At times there may be a hesitancy in our hearts concerning the coming of Jesus Christ because of what will happen to our unsaved family members when He returns.

Once we've been caught up. Many of our loved ones, who have been hassled by our witness and upset with our testimony, will realize they've actually missed the opportunity of being raptured with the Church. As a result, they'll become dead serious with God and will choose to be martyred during the Great Tribulation period by refusing to take the mark of the beast. They will choose death in preference to the mark and, thus, will be saved. [Revelation 20:4]

In Revelation 7:9-14, John saw in heaven "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds... clothed with white robes," singing of salvation. The elder said to John, "These are they which came up out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In #Revelation 6:9 | under the fifth seal, these souls martyred during the Tribulation period are waiting for their opportunity to enter the heavenly scene. They are told to wait a little longer until the total number be slain as they were slain.

Being a Tribulation saint is a hard way to come. As Jesus said, "For them will be great tribulation," such as the world never has seen before or ever will see again. [Matthew 24:21]

Why wait? Why slough off your chances of being in the glorious excitement of being with the Lord when He catches up the Church? God Bless you!

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## 7 REASONS FOR PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE (SUMMARY)

*"16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

1 Thess 4:16-17

### ONE: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN JESUS COMING FOR vs COMING WITH THE CHURCH

There is a distinct difference between Jesus coming for His church and Jesus coming with His church. He will be coming for His church at the Rapture. But at the Second Coming of Jesus, He'll be coming with His church.

#### RAPTURE - COMING FOR THE CHURCH - SECRETLY AS A THIEF

*Matthew 24:36-44, NKJV "39 " ... so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming." [He comes for the church as a thief]*

1 Thess 5:2 - *"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night."*

#### SECOND COMING - COMING OPENLY WITH THE CHURCH

He comes again *with* His church to establish His Kingdom upon the earth.

*Rev 1:7 - "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, ..."*

*Jude 1:14 - "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied ... "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,"*

*Revelation 19:7-14 - "7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." ... 11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."*

Also Note: Jesus comes with His wife, who has made herself ready. When and How? During Her time of bliss with her BrideGroom - not Husband.

*John 3:29 - "He who has the bride [3565 - numphe - 'betrothed woman, bride'] is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled."*

*Revelation 19:7-8 - "7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [1135 - gune - 'woman, wife'] has made herself ready."*

## **TWO: IMMINENCE**

JESUS COMMANDED US TO BE WATCHING FOR HIS RETURN.

*Mt 24:42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

Note: Imminent - 'about to occur at any moment'

THE EARLY CHURCH BELIEVED JESUS COULD SET UP THE KINGDOM AT ANY TIME.

*(vs. 'New Darbyism')*

PAUL EXHORTED BELIEVERS TO BE EXPECTING THE LORD'S RETURN AT ANY MOMENT.

*Titus 2:11-13 - "11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,"*

HOW DOES THIS EFFECT ISSUE OF PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE? ...

- If the Rapture takes place at the end of the Tribulation, then the Church could not be genuinely expecting the Lord's return at any moment.
- Why? Because we have many specific prophecies which must be fulfilled first. Some which would practically allow us to count the days to the Lord's return, if we were on earth during the Tribulation.
- For instance, Daniel 9:27 tells us that the Anti-Christ will 'confirm a covenant' (make a treaty) with Israel for 7 years. That will mark the beginning of the Tribulation. Also, there is another, unmistakable sign - abomination of desolation - which will take place in the middle of the 7 years - 3 1/2 years before the return of Christ.
- In the 45 days between the 1,290th and 1,335th day, Jesus will judge all the nations of the earth. Those who are spared until the 1,335th day will be allowed to enter into the glorious Kingdom Age with Jesus.
- If there were no Pre-Trib Rapture, then there could be no reason to expect the Lord to come for us at any moment.

## **THREE: BELIEVERS ARE NOT APPOINTED FOR WRATH**

*1 Thess 5:9 - "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*

THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS THE OUTPOURING OF GOD'S WRATH UPON AN UNREGENERATE WORLD

*Revelation 6:14-17 - "14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne **and from the wrath** of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

GOD WILL NOT DESTROY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED

It simply isn't consistent with the nature of God.

cf. Abraham's conversation with the LORD - *"Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" - Gen 18...*

**cf. Angels' need for Lot and family to be out before they could judge Sodom** - <sup>15</sup> When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, ... <sup>16</sup> And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city." ... <sup>22</sup> "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar." Genesis 19:15-16, 22

## FOUR: THE CHURCH MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE THE ANTI-CHRIST CAN BE REVEALED

2 Thess 2:1-2 - "1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come."

2 Thess 2:3-4 - "3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

- "the falling away" is 'apostasia' - which most often refers to 'apostasy' or a falling away from belief. However, when traced to it's roots, it could also be used to refer to a 'snatching away' or 'rapture' of the Church.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-8 - "5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."

- There is some force that is restraining this "son of perdition". He will not be revealed until "He who now restrains" is taken out of the way.
- "He who now restrains" must be the church or, more specifically, the Holy Spirit's influence through the church. Note: The reference cannot be to the Holy Spirit alone, because the Holy Spirit is Omnipresent - present everywhere (see below).
- This restraining force is the presence of the Holy Spirit in His people. When the church is "taken out of the way", the anti-christ will be revealed.
- "taken out of the way" comes from three Greek words:
  - "ek" (1537 - "out of", "from", "by", "away from")
  - "mesos" (3319) - "middle", "in the midst of"
  - "ginomai" (1096) - "to become", "to arise", 'to come to pass'
  - Thus, the church will "become or arise, out of or away from, the middle" and "then the lawless one will be revealed".
- So, no matter how verse three is interpreted (the falling away) verses seven and eight make it clear that the anti-christ will not be revealed until the church is removed.
- Satan has been at work since the Garden of Eden. But he is being restrained. As powerless as we feel sometimes, can you imagine how wicked this world will be when the church is removed?

### **Are you saying that the Holy Spirit will be removed from the Earth after the Rapture? No!**

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent (present everywhere). Therefore He cannot be 'removed' from the Earth.

David said, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there" (Psalm 139:7-8).

However, in the Old Testament there are instances of God's Spirit being removed from a person. Samson "did not know that the Lord had departed from him" (Judges 16:20). Ezekiel watched as God's glory departed from the temple (Ezekiel 10:18). But, nowhere do we read that the presence of God ever departed from the whole earth.

Also Note: During the Tribulation, there are many who will come to faith in Jesus Christ. It is impossible to be saved apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not be removed. Omnipresent, He will still be here on Earth during the tribulation.

However, with the Church removed, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit in the world will be effectively neutralized - according to God's Plan.

## **FIVE: JEWISH WEDDING CUSTOMS AT THE TIME OF CHRIST**

*John 14:1-3 - "1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

**INTRO:** Christ is the bridegroom. The Church is the Bride of Christ

When we look God's End-Times Scenario in the light of Wedding Customs at the time of Christ we get a vivid picture of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church.

### **THE GROOM'S PROMISE: THE GROOM WOULD ...**

**Make a covenant** or contract promise **and seal it with a cup of wine.**

**Pay a price** to show he is serious.

**Give a speech of promise** to his bride that he would come to claim her soon.

Jesus drank cup of New Covenant. *Matthew 26:27-28 - "27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*

Jesus paid the price for us on the cross. *1 Cor 6:20 - "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

Jesus promised to come and take His bride, the church, away to be with Him. *John 14:3 - "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

**Groom Prepares a Place for His Bride:** A bridal chamber where they will stay for seven days.

*John 14:2 - " ... I go to prepare a place for you."*

**The Bride Waits:** While the groom builds the new home, the bride waits **and wears a veil.**

This shows she belongs only to the groom. She had to be ready because he could come any time - usually at night.

The Church is Waiting for Jesus - *Mr 13:33 - "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."*

The Church is Veiled. The world doesn't recognize who the church is.

*1 John 3:1 - "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."*

Jesus tells us that He will come like a thief in the night.

*1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 - "1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night."*

### **THE BRIDEGROOM COMES:**

**The groomsmen would run ahead of the groom and shout that he was coming.**

John the Baptist was the 'bestman' - the 'friend of the Bridegroom'.

*John 3:28-29 - "28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled."*

**The Bridesmaids: Unmarried friends who attend the bride and provide light for the groom who comes at night.** cf. The Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids - Matthew 25:1-13

**While the father's head was turned, the groom would 'steal' the bride. Then they went back to the groom's house to celebrate the wedding.**

Jesus will come to snatch away His Bride. When we arrive in Heaven, we'll celebrate.

*1 Thess 4:16-17 - "16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

**The Bridal Chamber:** The bride and groom enter the bridal chamber where the marriage is consummated. The party waits outside until the groom tells the best man that it is consummated. Then, the guests rejoice for 7 days.

The 7 days in the bridal chamber are a picture of the 7 year tribulation period which we will spend, not in agony on earth, but in bliss in heaven.

**After 7 days, the Bridegroom emerges with his Bride to present her to all the assembled guests - glorious and with great joy!**

After the 7 years (Joy for us, but Tribulation for the world), we return with Jesus to Earth as His Glorious Wife.

Remember: Jesus comes for His Bride - He returns with His Wife

*John 3:29 - "He who has the bride [3565 - numphe - 'betrothed woman, bride'] is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled."*

*Revelation 19:7-8 - "7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [1135 - gune - 'woman, wife'] has made herself ready."*

**What Should we be Doing While we're Waiting? INVITING OTHERS TO JOIN US**

*"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."*

*Revelation 22:17*

## SIX: TYPES USED - 'DAYS OF NOAH' AND 'LOT' INSTEAD OF EXODUS

- If the Church was going to go through the Tribulation, you would expect the Lord to refer to the Exodus deliverance from Egypt (which was the greatest, single defining event in Israel's history) as the analogy for the church's relation to the Tribulation.

### Consider extensive refs to the Exodus

*Ps 81:10 - "I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."*

*Judges 2:12 - "They forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; ..."*

*2 Sam 7:23 "And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name--and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land--before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?"*

*Jer 16:14 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that it shall no more be said, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'"*

### To have used the Exodus as a type would have been consistent with a Post-Tribulational view

*Exodus 9:4-6 "4 And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel." ... 6 So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died."*

### Instead, Jesus used the analogies of the 'Days of Noah' and 'Lot' - Luke 17:26-29

#### AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

*Lk. 17: 26-27 - "26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all."*

- Note: God closed the door on Noah and family in the safety of the Ark 7 days before the Flood came Gen 7:1-4

#### AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LOT

*Lk. 17: 28-29 - "28 It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all."*

- Lot and family had to be removed before Sodom could be destroyed.

*Genesis 19:16, 22 - "16 And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ... 22 "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar."*

- That God would come and deliver someone before judgement is not a new idea in scripture. Enoch was raptured out from the ancient world before God caused it to be destroyed with water. In that way, he is a type of the church.

*Genesis 5:21-24 - "21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."*

*Revelation 3:10 [to Philadelphia] - "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."*

## SEVEN: THE BOOK OF REVELATION

NOTE: PREEMINENCE OF 'REVELATION' OVER OTHER PASSAGES.

Consider the analogy of stacking 'gels' in different order. The ones on top will determine how the ones below should fit together. Revelation is the only book in the bible with the specific purpose of showing the Church what the prophetic plan of Jesus is.

*"1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. ..." (Revelation 1:1)*

### PROMISE TO PHILADELPHIA

The messages to the 7 Churches are to be taken a) Literally b) Generally c) Personally, and d) Prophetically

Philadelphia represents the faithful church of the last days.

*Revelation 3:10 - "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."*

THE OPEN DOOR - 4:1 - *"After this [meta tauta] I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this [meta tauta]."*

It would appear that the rapture of the Church takes place in verse one of Revelation 4.

*"after this"* — After the Church's witness and work upon the earth is completed, the trumpet of God shall sound.

*"Voice... Like a Trumpet"*

John, hearing a trumpet, was caught up into heaven from which he observed the rest of the tribulation period on earth. This sounds like the Rapture.

*"Come up here.."* - A picture of the Rapture

Right after this, John said (4:2) - *"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne."*

John was not on earth during the tribulation. He was watching from heaven!

### THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

After being caught up to Heaven, John describes the Heavenly scene...

*Revelation 5:8-10 - "8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us [them] kings and priests to our God; And we [they] shall reign on the earth."*

Looking at the lyrics, we realize this is the church.

When the Tribulation takes place, the church will be in heaven standing before the Throne singing of the worthiness of the Lamb.

## THE CHURCH IN REVELATION

After John is taken up into Heaven in Chapter 4, the Church isn't seen again until it is seen as the Wife of the Lamb in 19:7

*Revelation 19:7 - "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

The term 'church' or 'churches' is used 20 times in Revelation. All but one of those are in the first 3 chapters.

1:4 - *"John, to the seven **churches** which are in Asia: ..."*

1:11 - *"saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven **churches** which are in Asia:...."*

Rev. 1:20 - *"... The seven stars are the angels of the seven **churches**, and the seven lampstands are the seven **churches**."*

Rev. 2:1 - *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:..."*

Rev. 2:7 - *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ..."*

Rev. 2:8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 29 Rev. 3:1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22

Also: Rev. 2:23 - *"I will kill her children with death, and all the **churches** shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."*

There is only one more usage of church - in last chapter of the Book.

Rev. 22:16 - *"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."*

Also Note: The absence of *"what the Spirit says to the churches"* after chpt. 3

2:7, 11, 12, 17, 29 3:6, 13, 22 - *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

13:9 *"He who has an ear, let him hear."* Note What's Missing!

## HISTORICALLY, GOD DOES NOT DEAL WITH ISRAEL AND CHURCH AT SAME TIME.

It is interesting to note that in chapters 1-3 there are four references to Israel and nineteen references to the church.

Israel - 1:7; 2:9, 14; 3:9

In chapters 4-18 there are over twenty-eight references to Israel as these events unfold on earth and NO references to the church.

Israel - 5:5(2); 7:4-8(13); 11:1; 12:1, 4-6, 13-17(9); 14:1,3; 15:3 [see also 11:8, 19; 13:7]

In chapters 19-22 there is one reference to Israel and six references to the church as Jesus returns with His Bride.

Israel - 21:12 / Church - 19:7-8, 14; 21:9, 14; 22:16-17 [see also 20:6; 22:3]

SO, LIKE THE APOSTLE JOHN, WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING THOSE WORDS "COME UP HERE!" AND THEN, AS JOHN SAYS, "IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT; AND BEHOLD, A THRONE SET IN HEAVEN, AND ONE SAT ON THE THRONE." (Rev 4:1-2)

## THUNDERS IN REVELATION

I.5 *And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Revelation 4:5)*

II.1 *Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." (Revelation 6:1)*

III.5 *Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. (Revelation 8:5)*

IV.3 *and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them." (Revelation 10:3-4)*

V.19 *Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:19)*

VI.2 *And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. (Revelation 14:2)*

VII.18 *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. (Revelation 16:18)*

VIII.6 *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! (Revelation 19:6)*

# CHERUBIM

Gen. 3:24 - "After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life." niv

Rev 4:6-8 - "6 ... And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:6-8)

## I. WHAT ARE THEY?

### A. THEY ARE ANGELIC BEINGS - CHERUBIM/SERAPHIM

1. Eze. 1:1, 4-28 - "1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I was visions of God. " ... "4 I looked, and I was a windstorm coming out of the north - an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, 5 and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, 9 and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. 10 Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body. 12 Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. 13 The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. 14 The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. 15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. 16 This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. 17 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creature faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. 18 Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. 19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.. 21 When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 22 Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. 23 Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. 24 When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. 25 Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking." niv

2. Isa. 6:1-4 - "1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.' 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke." niv

## II. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEM?

### A. THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE THRONE AND PRESENCE OF GOD

1. Ps. 99:1 - *"The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake."* niv

a) Ps. 80:1, Isa. 37:16, 2 Sam. 6:2, 2 Kings 19:15, 1 Chron. 13:6

2. Gen. 3:24 - *"24 After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."* niv

3. Gen. 4:3-4 - *"In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,"* niv

4. Exodus 25:22 - *"And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment ..."*

### B. THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE OF GOD.

1. Ex. 25:17- *"17 Make an atonement cover [mercy seat] of pure gold - two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. 18 And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. 19 Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. 20 The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them, The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. 21 Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all My commands for the Israelites."* niv

a) Ex. 26:1 - *"Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman."* Ex. 37:6-9

b) Ex. 36:8,35

2. 1 Kings 6:23-35 - *"23 In the inner sanctuary [Most Holy Place of Solomon's Temple] he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. 24 One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits long - ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. 25 The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. 26 The height of each cherub was ten cubits. 27 He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28 He overlaid the cherubim with gold."* niv

3. Eze. 41:18-20 - *"17 In the space above the outside of the entrance to the inner sanctuary [Most Holy Place of Ezekiel's Temple] and on the walls at regular intervals all around the inner and outer sanctuary 18 were carved cherubim and palm trees. Palm trees alternated with cherubim. Each cherub had two faces: 19 The face of a man toward the palm tree on one side and the face of a lion toward the palm tree on the other. They were carved all around the whole temple. 20 From the floor to the area above the entrance, cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall of the outer sanctuary."* niv

### C. THEY SOMETIMES FUNCTION AS A 'CHARIOT-THRONE' FOR GOD

1. 11 He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. (2 Samuel 22:11 niv).

2. 1 Chron. 28:18 niv- *"... He [David] also gave him [Solomon] the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the LORD."*

3. Ps. 18:10 niv - *"6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears. 7 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. 8 Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. 9 He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. 10 He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind."*

#### D.THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE JUDGEMENTS AND ACTIONS OF GOD

1.Ps. 18:10 - *"6In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears. 7 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. 8 Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. 9He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. 10He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind."* niv

2.Rev. 6:1-8 - *"1I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, 'Come!' 2I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest." ... etc. for the four living creatures and the four horses.* niv

3.Rev. 15:6-7 - *"6 Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shinning linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. 7 Then on of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever."* niv

#### E.THEY INITIATE AND ARE INVOLVED IN HEAVENLY WORSHIP OF GOD.

1.Rev. 4&5; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4,

#### F.THEY HAVE A "SKELETON IN THE CLOSET" - LUCIFER

1.Eze. 28:12-19 - *You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. - "12 'Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 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. 14 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. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 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. 18By 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. 19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.'" niv*

a)cf. Isa. 14:12-17 - *"12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. 16 Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: 'Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, 17 the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?'"*

### III.WHAT DO THEY REPRESENT?

- *“6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”” Revelation 4:6-8*

#### A.REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD

- 1.i.e. "covered with eyes" = all-seeing

#### B.REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL OF EARTHLY CREATION

#### C.REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS?

- 1.As the Lion - He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, represented as the King of Matthew
- 2.As the Ox - He is the Servant of Jehovah, the faithful One of Mark.
- 3.As Man - He is the human Jesus, presented in Luke
- 4.As the Eagle - He is the divine Son of God presented in John

#### D.REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL ANGELIC CREATION

#### E.REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

- 1.Rabbinical writers declared that the standards under which the four sets of three tribes gathered around the four sides of the tabernacle were:
  - a)Lion = Judah
  - b)Ox = Ephraim
  - c)Man = Reuban
  - d)Dan = Eagle
- 2.See Numbers Chapter 2
  - a)“And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 “Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father’s house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting.” Numbers 2:1-2

# The Scroll of Redemption

## From Chuck Smith Notes

When God created the earth He gave it to man, who was in the Garden of Eden. God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." He placed man in Eden to dress the garden and to keep it. God gave man one restriction: don't eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God said, "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

But one day Satan came, tempted Eve, and she ate. She gave to Adam and he ate. They forfeited their right to the earth to Satan who had deceived and tempted them.

By yielding themselves to the suggestion of Satan (eating of the forbidden fruit), they acted doubly. It was a disobedience to God which took them out of fellowship with God, but it was also an obedience to Satan which brought them into submission to Satan. At that point man forfeited the right to the earth. The title deed of the earth was passed over to Satan, and the world became Satan's.

Jesus came to redeem the world back to God—to buy the "field." "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he hath, and buys that field." [76] The "treasure" in the field is the Church.

Jesus died to purchase the earth. It was God's to begin with. God created it, but He gave it to man. Man, in turn, forfeited it to Satan, and Satan has been the ruler of the world ever since.

When Jesus came, Satan took Him up to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth. Satan said, "All these things will I give you [for they are mine and I can give them to whomever I will], if you will fall down and worship me." [77] Satan claimed as his own the kingdoms of the world and the power to give them over to Jesus Christ—if Jesus would only bow and worship him.

Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim. It was a valid claim. The kingdoms of the world belonged to Satan. Don't blame God for wars and crimes. These have come as the result of man's rebellion against God. You don't see God's order in the world today. You see Satan's order. He's the prince of the world.

Jesus, in referring to Satan, said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Paul called Satan "the god of this world." We see the world under Satan's control. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."

Jesus came to redeem the world back to God. He paid the price of redemption when He died for us upon the cross. We are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold from the former life but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus bought the world, but He has not yet taken possession of it. He has not yet taken the title deed to it and claimed that which He has purchased. He's going to do that very soon.

A very interesting Jewish law is encountered here. If you as a Jew lost your property by forfeit, it remained with the new owner for a period of years. In the appointed year you had the right to purchase your property back as long as you could fulfill the requirements that were written in the scroll which was sealed.

Under Jewish law, if you yourself couldn't redeem your property, a relative or near of kin could step in and redeem it. This way the property remained in the family. If your relative did redeem it, he would be known as the *goel* (in Hebrew) or "kinsman redeemer."

If you could redeem it, you would call for the elders of the city to meet with you before the city gates. You would bring out the scroll that had all the requirements upon it and you would break the seal. You'd open the scroll and show your ability to pay the price, proving that you had the right to redeem it.

This law is significant because man was sold into the slavery of sin about 6000 years ago. The right of redemption will soon be up. Satan has possessed this place for about 6000 years, and we're about to enter the seventh thousand-year era very soon. This will be the millennial reign of Christ as God redeems that which He purchased through the blood of Jesus Christ.

# The 70 'Sevens' of Daniel'

## Daniel 9:20-24

- **INTRODUCTION - APPROACHING A MOST IMPORTANT VISION AND PROPHECY ...**

F. WHEN IT WAS GIVEN - **"20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-- ... 23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, ..."**

G. HOW IT CAME - **21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ... 23 ...an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed.**

1. GABRIEL - 'Champion of God' - the angel who was sent

a) To Daniel [Da 8:16] to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat, and to communicate the prediction of the seventy weeks [Da 9:21-27]

b) He also announced the birth of John the Baptist [Lu 1:11] and of the Messiah [Lu 1:26].

c) He describes himself in the words, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God" [Lu 1:19]

H. WHY IT WAS GIVEN - **22 He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ... (cf. also 23 ... for you are highly esteemed.)"**

I. THE RIGHT RESPONSE - **"23 ...Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:"**

1. This Message is Meant to Be ...

a) Considered - contemplated, investigated, meditated on, studied

b) Understood - grasped, realized, made clear

2. cf. "25 "Know and understand this: ..."

I. THE FOCUS OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS - **"24 "Seventy `sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."**

A. WHAT? - **24 "Seventy `sevens' are decreed..."** ["Seventy weeks are determined" KJV]

1. The Number is Clear - 70 7s

a) 'sevens' is the lit. of 'weeks' - contrast with 10:2-3 where it is lit. 'seven of days' - "2 At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. 3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. (Dan 10:2-3)

2. The Message is Firm - "decreed" ["determined"]

a) "decreed" is in the Heb. perfect tense (i.e. 'have already been decreed') - normally used of a past completed action - in this context it is used to strongly and clearly communicate the fact that the determination of these 70 'sevens' for Israel is an absolutely settled fact before God Himself.

B. WHO? - **"... for your people and your holy city..."**

1. The 70-7s are specifically decreed for The Jews.

2. This is an important point in understanding this and in interpreting prophecy as a whole. ...

C. NOTE: WE MUST 'RIGHTLY DIVIDE' THE WORD - "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2Tim. 2:15)

1. "correctly handles the word of truth" - "rightly dividing the word of truth" (KJV) - "handling accurately the word of truth" (NASB)

2. **rightly dividing**, or "cutting" - The idea is that of carefully cutting in a skilled, consistent and straight way. Thus it can apply to...

a) DIVIDING:

(1) Some think the allusion is to the verses of the Hebrew Bible, which are called "divisions", sections, or cuttings, from the heb. word "to cut" or "divide", being cut or divided one from another;

(2) Those that were employed in the law, and were conversant with the sacred writings, and exercised therein, were called "cutters", or "dividers of the law"

(a) and so is one that is well versed in the Bible, and knows every part of it, and readily uses it, in speaking or writing;

b) DISSECTING: searching [cutting] into it, to find every truth.

c) **DISTRIBUTING**: the metaphor may be taken from those who cut up the food, and distribute it to each, according to their age and appetite. So the Word should be Rightly Divided, Accurately Dissected, and Properly Distributed.

(1) since ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and who, when wise and faithful, give to everyone of the household their portion of meat in due season; the metaphor may be taken from such, and from masters and governors of families, who cut up the food, and distribute it to each, according to their age and appetite; and so the ministers of the Gospel are to distribute the spiritual food of the word to babes in Christ, and to grown Christians, according to their capacities, and suitable to their cases and circumstances, dividing to everyone what is proper for him:

## **II. THE FINAL RESULT OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS [SIX THINGS] - "24... to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."**

A. ALL OF THIS IS THE WORK OF THE MESSIAH and points towards the fulfillment of God's gracious promises: First to Israel - Then to Us ...

1. "to finish transgression and 'put an end to sin' can also be read as 'to restrain transgression' and to 'make an end of sins' - carrying the idea of the forceful limiting of evil at the Coming of the Messiah and the Ushering in of the Messianic Age [Millennium]
2. 'to atone for wickedness' can be applied to the sense in which, at Messiah's coming, Israel will have finished being chastised [atoning] for her sins against the LORD.
3. The rest refer to the blessings of the Messianic Age - Everlasting Righteousness, Fulfilled Promises, Restored Temple Worship

B. WE CAN SEE THIS WORK IN A TWO-FOLD SENSE

1. JESUS CAME TO REDEEM - "to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness," ...
  - a) The Work of the Cross!
  - b) expand on each point ...
2. HE WILL COME AGAIN TO REIGN - "to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."
  - a) The Wonder of His Coming!
  - b) expand on each point ...

## Daniel 9:25

*"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven `sevens', and sixty-two `sevens'. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble."*

• **INTRO:** "Know and understand this:"

**I. WHAT IS THE SUBJECT? THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH** - "...From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven `sevens', and sixty-two `sevens'. - "the Anointed One, the ruler," = "Messiah the Prince [KJV]"

### A. THE HOPE OF MESSIAH

1. When God explained the curse sin would bring to man, He also promised that one day that curse would be removed by the seed of the woman that would bruise satan's heel.
  - a) From that day man began to look for the Messiah.
    - (1) When Eve bore her first son, she thought he was the fulfillment of that promise and she named him Acquired, for she said I have acquired a man from the Lord.
2. Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Ga 3:16\* The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.
3. Ge 22:18 and through your offspring [seed] all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."
4. Ge 49:10 - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."
5. De 18:18 - "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him."
6. Mic 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."
  - a) Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

### B. INSIGHT INTO THE COMING OF MESSIAH

1. With something as important as the Messiah's coming, would the Lord hide it or reveal it?
  - a) Am 3:7 - Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.
2. A diligent looking into the Prophets Reaps Rewards.
  - a) "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life." - Jn 5:39-40

C. Dan 9:25 is a declaration of a specific indication of when the Messiah would appear. The key is to 'know and understand this' - to 'consider the message and understand the vision'.

**II. WHEN WILL HE COME?** - "From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven `sevens', and sixty-two `sevens'. 69 `sevens' from the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

A. WHAT ARE THESE WEEKS? It is almost universally agreed that this refers to sets of seven years, or "weeks of years"

- a) Israel was as familiar with a unit of seven years as of a unit of seven days.
  - (1) The seventy weeks focused upon Daniel's people (the Jews) and his holy city (Jerusalem)
  - (2) The seventy weeks are divided into three parts; seven weeks (49 years, until the city and its walls are rebuilt), sixty-two weeks (483 years from the decree, until Messiah the Prince), and a final 70th week (to complete the picture)

B.WHEN DO THE WEEKS BEGIN? (If there's a Countdown to be made - When does it start?) **"From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem"** - There are a few decrees which might possibly fulfill verse 25;

1. Decrees by Cyrus in 538 BC, recorded by Ezra in 1:1-4 and Ezra 5:13-17; to rebuild the temple,

a)1 *In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 2 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me **to build a temple for him at Jerusalem** in Judah. 3 Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings **for the temple of God** in Jerusalem.'" (Ezra 1:1-4).*

b)13 *"However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree **to rebuild this house of God**. 14 He even removed from the temple of Babylon the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to the temple in Babylon. "Then King Cyrus gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor, 15 and he told him, 'Take these articles and go and **deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem. And rebuild the house of God** on its site.' 16 So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem. From that day to the present it has been under construction but is not yet finished." 17 Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue **a decree to rebuild this house of God** in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter. (Ezra 5:13-17).*

2. And by Darius in 517 BC, recorded in Ezra 6:6-12; another decree to rebuild the temple.

a)6 *Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you, their fellow officials of that province, stay away from there. 7 **Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God**. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site. 8 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the **construction of this house of God**: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. 9 Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail, 10 so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. 11 Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble. 12 May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence. (Ezra 6:6-12)*

3. Artaxerxes' decree in 458 BC (Ezra 7:11-26)

a)11 *This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest and teacher, a man learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD for Israel: 12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings. 13 Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who wish to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. 14 You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to enquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand. 15 Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, 16 together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests **for the temple** of their God in Jerusalem. 17 With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem. 18 You and your brother Jews may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God. 19 Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship **in the temple** of your God. 20 And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you may have occasion to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury. 21 Now I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you-- 22 up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit. 23 Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence **for the temple** of the God of heaven. Why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and of his sons? 24 You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God. 25 And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates--all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. 26 Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment. (Ezra 7:11-26).*

4. But these were not decrees to restore and rebuild Jerusalem

5. The clearest candidate is Artaxerxes' decree in 445 BC which accompanied his permission given to Nehemiah to rebuild the City of Jerusalem (Neh 2:1-8)

a) *4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." ... 8 And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.*

### C. WHERE DOES THAT TAKE US?

1. The Seventy Weeks of Daniel - [Interpreted by Sir Robert Anderson]

a) From the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the King (according to Daniel 9:24-25) will be: 7 + 62 "weeks" = 69 groups of seven years.  $7 \times 69 = 483$  years

b) Based on Revelation 11:2, 13:5 and 11:3, 12:6 which indicates that 42 months [3.5] years equals 1,260 days - A prophetic year is 360 days [Babylonian]

(1)  $483 \times 360 = 173,880$  days

c) Artaxerxes started his reign in 465 B.C. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given on the first day of Nisan, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. In our calendar system (the Julian) that date is March 14, 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1).

d) Jesus started His ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius (see Luke 3:1-2 - 1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar-- ... 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.). Tiberius started his reign in 14 A.D., so Jesus' ministry started in 29 A.D. Jesus celebrated four Passovers during His ministry: one each in 29, 30, 31 and His final Passover in 32.

(1) From 445 B.C. to 32 A.D. is 476 Julian years (not 477, because there is no year 0).

(2)  $476 \times 365 = 173,740$  days

(3) Adjustment: for leap years in the period, add 116 days - 173, 856

(4) The date of ancient Passovers can be calculated by lunar charts, so it is possible to calculate the exact day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as April 6, 32 A.D.

(5) Adjustment: from March 14 to April 6, add 24 days

(6) The total number of days from March 14, 445 B.C. to April 6, 32 A.D.: 173,880 days

(7) Number of days prophesied in Daniel 9:25: 173,880 days

**III. WHAT MAKES THAT DAY SPECIAL? "41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."** (Luke 19:41-42) Jesus did something very uncharacteristic - He openly presented Himself to Israel as the Messiah.

#### A. HE PREVENTED IT UNTIL THAT DAY

1. Mat 12:15b-16 - 15 ... Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, 16 warning them not to tell who he was.

a) 32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. 33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. 36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:32-37)

2. 14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did [feeding multitude], they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (John 6:14-15).

3. 18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." 20 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." 21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. (Luke 9:18-21)

4. Mk 9:9 - As they were coming down the mountain [Transfiguration], Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

#### B. THIS CONFOUNDED EVEN HIS OWN [Unbelieving] BROTHERS

1. 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. 4 No-one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." (John 7:3-4)

C.BUT ON THIS DAY HE PUBLICLY PRESENTS HIMSELF AS MESSIAH IN AN UNMISTAKEABLE WAY

1.Luke 19:28ff .....

2.41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this [your] day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you [time of your visitation]." (Luke 19:41-44).

3.David said of this day in Psalm 118:24: - This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

#### IV.CONCLUSION

A.HE PRESENTED HIMSELF THEN - AND MANY MISSED THE BLESSING

1.Because He didn't fit preconceived expectations.

2.He may not seem like what you'd expect to be the answer to your needs. BUT HE IS!

3.cf. my missed opportunity with Roy Rogers.

B.HE PRESENTS HIMSELF NOW - MANY MISS THE BLESSING - WHAT WILL YOU DO?

1.Note: "**in time of trouble**" - cf. Neh 4:7-18

a)7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ... 16 From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armour. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah 17 who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, 18 and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. (Nehemiah 4:7-18).

# Daniel 9:26

*After the sixty-two `sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed."*

**I. THE SURPRISING TURN OF EVENTS - "After the sixty-two `sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing."**

**A. WHEN? - AFTER THE 69th WEEK [62+7]**

1. Sometime after the coming of the Messiah - something very definite was going to happen to Him.
2. We've already seen that when the prophetic years are converted to days [483 years = 173,880 days] and we count forward from Artaxerxes's decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the wall and city of Jerusalem [March 14 445BC] we come to [April 6th 32AD] - the day of Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem - His 'official' presentation as Messiah.

**B. WHAT? THE MESSIAH WOULD BE 'CUT OFF'**

1. *'cut off'* = 'This word is used of executing the death penalty on a criminal.
  - a) 30 "But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. 31 Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him." (Numbers 15:30-31)
    - (1) I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11)
    - (2) For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. (Psalms 37:9)
2. Thus the prophecy clearly points to the crucifixion of Christ.
3. Just a few short days after His Triumphant Entry, Jesus the Messiah was 'cut off' as prophesied in Daniel.
4. Note: Crucifixion was prophesied in Ps. 22 [read excerpts?]
  - a) Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Psalms 22:16)

**C. WHY? - TWO READINGS - BOTH BENEFICIAL**

1. *'will have nothing'*
  - a) He would 'have nothing' in the sense that Israel rejected Him and He did not receive rightful glory as the King on David's throne.
  - b) John referred to this when he wrote, "He came to that which was His own but His own did not receive Him" (Jn. 1:11).
2. *'but not for Himself'* [KJV]
  - a) Isa 53:8 - By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
    - (1) Whom does God the Father hold responsible for what happened on Calvary? Shall we indict the religious leaders who plotted the Savior's execution? The callous soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross? The fickle multitude who clamored for His blood? All these, to be sure, share the guilt. The great artist Rembrandt captured the truth of Scripture in one of his paintings. It depicts Christ on the cross, with a mob surrounding Him. In the shadows at the edge of that appalling scene stands a man. Who is it? Rembrandt himself! By including himself, the artist confessed that he too was responsible for the Savior's death. Have we acknowledged that Jesus bore our guilt on the cross? Because we all have sinned, we are as responsible for the crucifixion as the soldiers who nailed Him to the Cross.
  - b) But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

**D.THIS WAS A SURPRISE - A SECRET HIDDEN IN THE 'GAP' BETWEEN THE 69th and 70th 'SEVENS' OF DANIEL - THE CHURCH AGE.**

1.4 *In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph 3:4-6)*

2.25 *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-27)*

3.17 *"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. 21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. (Acts 3:17-21)*

a) *"everything promised" = 'to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy'*

**4.PRAISE GOD FOR THIS 'MYSTERY' - IT'S HIS LOVE FOR YOU AND ME!**

a) *4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7).*

**II.THE SAD PROSPECTS FOR JERUSALEM - "The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed."**

**A.WHO'S WHO?**

1.The '*ruler who will come*' is a reference to the Anti-Christ. Who is earlier identified as the ruler of the final World Empire - a revival of the 4th Empire/Beast.

2.The '*people*' of this future ruler would be those of the 4th Empire/Beast in it's first appearance. The fact that it was the Romans who destroyed the Temple absolutely confirms the identity of the 4th Beast as Rome. It also confirms the fact that the final World Government will be in some way a re-emergence of the Roman Empire - or a resurrection of Imperial form of government.

**B.WHAT WILL THEY DO? - "*destroy the city and the sanctuary*"**

1.In 70 AD the Roman General Titus destroyed Jeru and the Temple.

2.Jesus Himself Prophesied of This and added an interesting fact

a)1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1-2)

3.Here is Ray Stedman's description: "When at last the walls were breached Titus tried to preserve the Temple by giving orders to his soldiers not to destroy or burn it. But the anger of the soldiers against the Jews was so intense that, maddened by the resistance they encountered, they disobeyed the order of their general and set fire to the Temple. There were great quantities of gold and silver there which had been placed in the Temple for safe-keeping. This melted and ran down between the rocks and into the cracks of the stones. When the soldiers captured the Temple area, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart the massive stones. Thus, quite literally, not one stone was left standing upon another. The Temple itself was totally destroyed, though the wall supporting the area upon which the Temple was built was left partially intact and a portion of it remains to this day, called the Western Wall."

**C.WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTERWARDS? - *The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.***

**D.THE DAM WILL BREAK - *The end will come like a flood***

1.The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon [rapidly] take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, (Rev. 1:1). "soon" is 'quickly' or 'rapidly'

2.When the End comes, it will come rapidly like a flood.

**E.THERE WILL BE NO PEACE ON EARTH - *War will continue until the end***

1.Mr 13:7 - *When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

2.6 *You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth-pains. (Matthew 24:6-8).*

3.There will be no peace on Earth until the Prince of Peace Returns and Rules!

#### 4. JERUSALEM WILL BE A SAD STUMBLING BLOCK - *desolations have been decreed.*

##### a) Note Desolations of the Temple and City

(1) Antiochus IV [Epiphanes] - 168 BC

(2) Pompei - in 63 BC

(3) Roman General Crassus stole the Temple Treasures in 54 BC

(4) Titus - Aug 10, 70 AD [note: Nebuchadnezzar - Aug. 10, 586 BC]

(5) Bar Kochba Revolt - 132-135 AD

(a) Emperor Hadrian decided to establish a new city on the ruins of Jerusalem. The Old City was plowed up to make way for a new Roman city to be named Colonia Aelia Capitolina.

(b) Hadrian's actions, particularly his attempt to eradicate all traces of a Jewish city named Jerusalem, caused ongoing rebellion among the Jews. In response, there were large scale mass murders of Jews in Caesarea and other communities by the Romans. These murders sparked a larger rebellion led by a man named Simon Bar Kochba (A.D. 132-135). Bar Kochba rallied the people and mass-acted the famous 12th legion of the Roman army. Jerusalem was liberated for three years and Rabbi Akiva proclaimed Bar Kochba as the Messiah who was to deliver the Jewish people.

i) The Jews proceeded to set up an independent government. Coins were struck that commemorated the "First Year of the Deliverance of Israel." One coin showed the facade of the Temple. It is possible that Bar Kochba attempted to rebuild the Temple.

(c) Within three years of Jerusalem's liberation under the Bar Kochba revolt, Rome marched against the rebels and killed Bar Kochba. The Sanhedrin officially labeled him a false Messiah and Jerusalem was again in Roman hands. Jewish Jerusalem was once again blotted out and Aelia Capitolina was built on its site as had been planned. Because the war had cost the lives of Roman heroes, the Jews were thenceforth forbidden to enter Jerusalem upon penalty of death. Hadrian attempted to destroy every connection Jerusalem had with the Jewish people. He erected a Temple to Jupiter on the site. An equestrian statue of Hadrian was also built on the site. The next Emperor, Antonius Pius (A.D. 138-161), added another statue. The Jews were only allowed to enter the city on special occasions to mourn on the Temple Mount.

(6) In A.D. 324 Aelia Capitolina was renamed Jerusalem by Constantine and the title of "Holy City" was restored to her. It was now, however, considered the Holy City of Christianity, not the national capital of the Jews.

(7) In 363 AD

(a) In the last year of his reign in A.D. 363, the Roman Emperor, Flavius Claudius Julianus, issued an edict that the Temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

i) This caused a great deal of excitement among the Jews. From far and wide, Jews came to Jerusalem to help in the rebuilding work. Julian supplied the necessary funds and appointed Alypius of Antioch, the Roman Governor of Great Britain, to carry out the project.

(b) Then sudden tragedy struck. The foundations of the Second Temple were barely uncovered when flames of fire burst forth from under the ground. The flames were accompanied by large explosions. The cause for the flames were probably the result of noxious gas in the subterranean passages catching fire. The workmen fled and the building was stopped, never again to be restarted. Many believed that the explosion and fire were a demonstration of the anger of God.

(8) The pattern of Desolations has continued even until today - cf. Rabbi's Tunnel. Jeru has been repeatedly 'desolated and trodden down by the Gentiles'

(9) 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:23-24).

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. WE HAVE THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

1.19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19)

#### B. GOD HAS A FIXED PURPOSE - To Bring in Everlasting Righteousness!

1. Righteousness - Don't think of it only in 'religious' terms - it means being right in a world where everything is right as it should be.

#### C. GOD HAS A PLAN - TO BRING YOU INTO THE BLESSINGS OF HIS PURPOSE THRU JESUS!

#### D. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

# Daniel 9:27 – The ‘Anti-Christ’

*“He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven’. In the middle of the `seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

## INTRODUCTION: THE ANTI-CHRIST

E. Here we have the final 7 of God’s 70 - 7s decreed for the Jews and Jerusalem. Note: More has been written in prophecy concerning this 7 year period than any other - cf. Rev 6-19

### I.A COVENANT MAKER - *“He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven’.”*

#### A. WHO IS THIS COVENANT MAKER?

1. He is *“the Ruler who will come”* v. 26 - Prophesied earlier in Daniel.

a) Chpt. 7: 7 *“After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast--terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. 8 “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ...19 “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws--the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell--the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ... 24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.”*

2. HE IS THE ‘ANTI-CHRIST’

a) 1 Jn 2:18 - *“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”*

b) Actually there are many ‘titles’ for this man in Scripture: (1) Little Horn (Da. 7:8; 8:9). (2) Stern-faced King (Da. 8:23). (3) Ruler that will Come (Da. 9:26-27). (4). Man of Lawlessness (2 Th. 2:3).

(5) The Beast out of the Sea (Rev. 13)

B. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS COVENANT? Note: ‘confirm’ is more literally ‘enforce’.

1. The seventieth seven will begin when Antichrist makes covenant with Israel for 7-year period.

2. Some see this as A seeming to re-establish Covenant between Israel and Lord - Messianic action.

3. Most believe that this Covenant will include permission for Israel to rebuild a Temple and again begin to offer sacrifices - reinforced by fact that breaking Covenant stops “sacrifice and offering”.

#### C. MESSIAH INTERVIEW

1. **HANDELMAN:** The Lubavitch movement has recently created quite a stir with its renewed emphasis on the coming of Moshiach. What does it really mean to say that “Moshiach will come”?

2. **FRIEDMAN:** The ultimate authority on that is Maimonides. Maimonides says that there will be a Jewish leader who will be a descendant of King David who will bring Jews back to Judaism, and who will fight G-d’s battle. If he does so, we can assume that he is Moshiach. If he then goes on to build the Temple and gather all Jews back to Israel, then we will know for sure that he is Moshiach.

3. **FRIEDMAN:** Maimonides says that once he builds the Temple and gathers Jews back to Israel, then we know for sure he is Moshiach. He doesn’t have to say anything. He will accept the role, but we will give it to him. He won’t take it to himself. And his coming, the moment of his coming, in the literal sense, would mean the moment when the whole world recognizes him as Moshiach.

4. **HANDELMAN:** What specifically does that mean?

5. **FRIEDMAN:** That both Jew and non-Jew recognize that he is responsible for all these wonderful improvements in the world.

6. **HANDELMAN:** What will those wonderful improvements in the world be?

7. **FRIEDMAN:** An end to war, an end to hunger, an end to suffering, a change in attitude. We’re also talking about Moshiach being a change in attitude: instead of people tending towards the evil, we start to tend towards the good. Instead of evil being the primary mover and shaker, good becomes the primary mover and shaker. Now, how is that going to happen? Who’s going to cause that to happen? Somebody is generating a kind of new energy that’s making people think differently and feel differently and see things differently.

## II.A COVENANT BREAKER - "In the middle of the `seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation..."

### A. HE PUTS AN END TO SACRIFICE AND OFFERING

1. Consider what is necessary for this to happen...

- a) The Jews must be re-established in Palestine - cf. Zionist movement
- b) Israel must be re-established as a nation - 1948
- c) Jerusalem and Temple Mt. in Israeli hands - 1967 - Six Day's War
- d) A Temple must be rebuilt and consecrated
- e) Authentic Temple Worship must begin again - with sacrifices and offerings - cf. Temple Mt. Institute. [est. @1980]

### B. HE SETS UP THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION - This is a Key Prophetic Sign-Post!

#### 1. Prophesied by Daniel - here and in Chpt 11&12

a) Chpt. 12 - 8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" 9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. 11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. 13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

(1) In the 45 days between the 1,290th and 1,335th day, Jesus will judge all the nations of the earth. Those who are spared until the 1,335th day will be allowed to enter into the glorious Kingdom Age with Jesus.

(a) 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. (Matthew 25:31-34)

i) The Bible doesn't reveal what will happen during the 30 days between the 1,260th and 1,290th day at the end of the Great Tribulation.

2. Emphasized by Jesus - Mt. 24 - 15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time. (Matthew 24:15-25)

C. "**flee to the mountains**" - Rev 12:13-14, 6 - "13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. ... 6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days."

D. "**place prepared**" - cf. Dan 11:41 - He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. (Petra)

1. Reinforced by Paul - 2Thess 2 - 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

a) An Assurance to Believers - The Tribulation has not taken place!

### III. THE END THAT IS DECREED - "until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

#### A. HE WILL COME TO AN END - PTL! -

1. Dan. 7:26 - " But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 - "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming."
3. He will be cast into the Lake of Fire - Rev. 19:20

B. IT IS DECREED! - Isa 46:9-10 - "9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."

#### C. HIS END IS A GLORIOUS NEW BEGINNING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

1. Dan. 7:27 - "Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."
2. The Blessed Hope / Our Redemption / Redeemer !
3. Rev. 19:5-16
  - a) 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" 6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) 9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." 10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow-servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." 11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no-one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:5-16).

#### 4. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE INVITED TO THE WEDDING SUPPER!

#### 5. YOU ARE INVITED - HAVE YOU RSVPed YET?

# NASA DETAILS EARTHQUAKE EFFECTS ON THE EARTH

Jan. 10, 2005

Gretchen Cook-Anderson/ Dolores Beasley  
Headquarters, Washington  
(Phone: 202/358-0836/1753RELEASE: 05-0011

## NASA DETAILS EARTHQUAKE EFFECTS ON THE EARTH

NASA scientists using data from the Indonesian earthquake calculated it affected Earth's rotation, decreased the length of day, slightly changed the planet's shape, and shifted the North Pole by centimeters. The earthquake that created the huge tsunami also changed the Earth's rotation.

Dr. Benjamin Fong Chao, of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. and Dr. Richard Gross of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. said all earthquakes have some affect on Earth's rotation. It's just they are usually barely noticeable.

"Any worldly event that involves the movement of mass affects the Earth's rotation, from seasonal weather down to driving a car," Chao said.

Chao and Gross have been routinely calculating earthquakes' effects in changing the Earth's rotation in both length-of-day as well as changes in Earth's gravitational field. They also study changes in polar motion that is shifting the North Pole. The "mean North pole" was shifted by about 2.5 centimeters (1 inch) in the direction of 145° East Longitude. This shift east is continuing a long-term seismic trend identified in previous studies.

They also found the earthquake decreased the length of day by 2.68 microseconds. Physically this is like a spinning skater drawing arms closer to the body resulting in a faster spin. The quake also affected the Earth's shape. They found Earth's oblateness (flattening on the top and bulging at the equator) decreased by a small amount. It decreased about one part in 10 billion, continuing the trend of earthquakes making Earth less oblate.

To make a comparison about the mass that was shifted as a result of the earthquake, and how it affected the Earth, Chao compares it to the great Three-Gorge reservoir of China. If filled the gorge would hold 40 cubic kilometers (10 trillion gallons) of water. That shift of mass would increase the length of day by only 0.06 microseconds and make the Earth only very slightly more round in the middle and flat on the top. It would shift the pole position by about two centimeters (0.8 inch).

The researchers concluded the Sumatra earthquake caused a length of day (LOD) change too small to detect, but it can be calculated. It also caused an oblateness change barely detectable, and a pole shift large enough to be possibly identified. They hope to detect the LOD signal and pole shift when Earth rotation data from ground based and space-borne position sensors are reviewed.

The researchers used data from the Harvard University Centroid Moment Tensor database that catalogs large earthquakes. The data is calculated in a set of formulas, and the results are reported and updated on a NASA Web site.

The massive earthquake off the west coast of Indonesia on December 26, 2004, registered a magnitude of nine on the new "moment" scale (modified Richter scale) that indicates the size of earthquakes. It was the fourth largest earthquake in one hundred years and largest since the 1964 Prince William Sound, Alaska earthquake.

The devastating mega thrust earthquake occurred as a result of the India and Burma plates coming together. It was caused by the release of stresses that developed as the India plate slid beneath the overriding Burma plate. The fault dislocation, or earthquake, consisted of a downward sliding of one plate relative to the overlying plate. The net effect was a slightly more compact Earth. The India plate began its descent into the mantle at the Sunda trench that lies west of the earthquake's epicenter. For information and images on the Web, visit:

[http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/indonesia\\_quake.html](http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/indonesia_quake.html)

For the details on the Sumatra, Indonesia Earthquake, visit the USGS Internet site:

[http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/bulletin/neic\\_slav\\_ts.html](http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/bulletin/neic_slav_ts.html)

For information about NASA and agency programs Web, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov>

-end-

# FANCIFUL VIEWS OF THE 144,000

## A NEW AGE EXAMPLE:

"The ancient prophecies of Mesamerica pinpoint the return of Quetzalcoatl, Lord of the Dawn to the time that correlates with August 16/17, 1987 in the Gregorian Calendar. Quetzalcoatl represents the force of cosmic intelligence, the spiraling, serpentine pattern that governs the movement of all things in this universe. Quetzalcoatl is the enlightened state, the kundalini energy soaring to the crown chakra. Quetzalcoatl lives as potentiality, a seed within each one of us. **144,000 Human Beings** will emerge to be the sprouting of that seed on the day of Harmonic Convergence, and will grow to flower and seed again towards the awakening of all humanity in the years that follow." (Handout from the International Sacred Sites Festival - 3/15/87)

From 'Interesting Quotes From New Age Sources' at <http://www.carm.org/new-age-interesting-quotes>

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:

### The Lord's Supper and the 144,000 Anointed Class of Jehovah's Witnesses

[http://www.carm.org/lords-supper-and-144000-anointed#footnoteref1\\_suqkchx](http://www.carm.org/lords-supper-and-144000-anointed#footnoteref1_suqkchx)

The Jehovah's Witness organization teaches that not all members of their group can take communion. Only the 144,000 members called the "anointed class" have the right to take Communion and they are the only ones who go to heaven.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the 144,000 "anointed class" within the Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones who are "born again."

"This 'little flock' of 144,000 Kingdom heirs, then, are those ones from among mankind who are 'born again.'"<sup>2</sup>

The Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate the communion supper only once a year.<sup>3</sup> In their annual communion service, the congregations gather in their various kingdom halls. This is done on the 14th of Nissan, the Passover date on the Jewish calendar, which usually falls in March or April of each year in the Gregorian calendar. During the service, the cup is passed from Jehovah's Witness to Jehovah's Witness. None of them partake -- except the very few who are of the 144,000.

In [John 6:53-54](#), Jesus said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. <sup>54</sup> 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day,' (NASB).

I am not here going to discuss the nature of the communion and compare Catholic and Protestant views of the elements; rather, the issue is that Jesus said to the Jews that they must take of the communion, which He later instituted in [Matt. 26:26-28](#), and that if they did not partake, then they had no life in them, 6:53.

According to the Watchtower, the "life" spoken of in 6:53 is everlasting life.

"On that occasion Jesus was not speaking to those circumcised Israelites about "everlasting life" as human creatures on a Paradise earth under his millennial kingdom. Rather, he was speaking about the very same opportunity that he was setting before the apostle Peter and his fellow apostles by means of the "sayings of everlasting life." It was the opportunity to gain inherent life with the Christ in the heavens, "life in yourselves." ([John 6:53](#)) By reigning with him in heaven they could pass on to mankind the life-giving benefits of his sacrifice. [4](#)

According to Jehovah's Witness theology, some Witnesses will be raised to "immortal life" and others to "everlasting life." Immortal life is only for the 144,000 that go to be with the Lord in heaven. They do not have resurrected bodies, but have "spirit bodies." Everlasting life is for those on Paradise earth and consists of a resurrected body that must be maintained through eating, sleeping, etc.

As we see in the quote above, according to the Watchtower, the life that Jesus was speaking of was "everlasting life"; that is, life in heaven for the 144,000. Therefore, the Witnesses teach that the communion supper is instituted only for the 144,000 Jews, not for all Witnesses.

Since Jesus bought the church with His blood ([Acts 20:28](#)), and His blood is the blood of the covenant for the church ([1 Cor. 11:25](#)), then communion is supposed to be for all Christians, not just 144,000 elite Jehovah's Witnesses.

### What does the Bible say?

The Communion supper is for the body of Christ, for the believers. The bread and the wine represent the body and the blood of Christ that was sacrificed for the believer so the believer could have redemption of his sins. Therefore, Communion is only for those people who have trusted in Christ's sacrifice. Communion is not for those who are **not** covered by Christ's sacrifice. This is significant since the great majority of the Witnesses do **not** take communion.

Paul the apostle said that the bread is a sharing in the body of Christ, that there is only one body of Christ (the church) of which we all partake. Within the Christian Church, there is no limitation on the who takes the Lord's supper.

- "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup>Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. <sup>18</sup>Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?" ([1 Cor. 10:16-18, NASB](#)).
- And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight," ([Acts 20:7, NASB](#)).

There is no mention of limiting communion to anyone except that they examine themselves and rightly discern that the elements represent Christ's sacrifice, not a mere meal to satisfy hunger.

- "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly," ([1 Cor. 11:28-29, NASB](#)).

No place in the Bible is communion restricted to only the 144,000, as the Witnesses teach. This is a fabrication of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. The fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses do not take communion is a demonstration that they are not in the body of Christ and do not have a covenant relationship with Christ. The Lord's Supper is meant for the body of believers in the true and living God who have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is not for those who are outside the camp of Christ. Since the great majority of the Jehovah's Witnesses do not take communion, this is a testimony against them.

## GENETIC LINK FOUND AMONG 'KOHANIM'

by Judy Siegel

JERUSALEM (January 3) - Jews of the priestly tribe (kohanim) - both Ashkenazi and Sephardi - have been found to share a variation of the Y chromosome, linking them as descendants of Aaron the High Priest who lived 3,300 years ago.

This was the result of a study conducted by Prof. Karl Skorecki, a senior nephrologist at Rambam Hospital in Haifa and head of molecular medicine at the Technion's medical school, along with colleagues in Haifa, London and Arizona. Their finding was published yesterday in the British science journal Nature.

The researchers took samples of genetic material from unrelated Jewish men in the three countries, and asked them whether they were from the priestly tribe. Tissue was taken by swabbing the inside of their cheeks.

The phenotypes of 188 secular and religious Jews who said they were kohanim were found to be very different from those who said they were not. Skorecki said the researchers did not identify kohanim according to their names (such as Cohen or other names of kohanim such as Rappaport or Shapiro), but by asking them to state if they were kohanim.

Skorecki, who is himself a kohen, said that the idea for the study came to him when he was attending synagogue services and saw another kohen being called up to the Torah for the first aliya.

"I looked at him and noted we didn't look alike, but that nevertheless, according to tradition, we both descended from the priestly tribe. I wanted to know if it were possible to find a genetic connection."

Based on surveys of Jewish gravestones, about 5 percent of the seven million male Jews around the world belong to the priestly tribe. This means 350,000 men, or about 100,000 to 120,000 in Israel alone.

The priesthood performed major Jewish rituals from the time of Aaron (the brother of Moses, who headed the Levite tribe) and received fixed portions of the sacrifices in the First and Second Temples.

Since the destruction of the Temple, the priesthood - handed down from father to son - has bound its members by certain obligations, such as keeping ritually pure at a distance from the dead and not marrying a divorcee.

Skorecki, along with Sara Selig and Shraga Blazer at the Technion and Robert and Neil Bradman, P.J. Waburton, Monica Ismajlowicz and Michael Hammer of [Image] London's University College and the University of Arizona, found a preponderance of the YAP, DYS19B haplotype in kohanim of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi origin (as well as a few Yemenites), but not in the non-kohanim. This served as further evidence that the Jewish priesthood predated the division of world Jewry into these two major ethnic groups over 1,000 years ago.

Any differences in the gene structure would reflect molecular-biological changes due to mutations; these are useful in calibrating the rate of mutations in the genes and observing human molecular evolution, he added.

The Y chromosome, carried only by men, is passed patrilineally; mitochondrial DNA is transmitted by the mother's X chromosomes.

"The Y chromosome is not very important; half of the world's population manages fine without it. But it can provide some anthropological information," Skorecki explained.

He added that it was impressive how the characteristic Y chromosome was passed down to today's kohanim despite periods of assimilation over the millennia. Even secular Jews seem to know if they are of the priestly tribe, says the professor. But he added that if the trends of secularism, assimilation and intermarriage continue in the Diaspora, the number of Jews with this priestly haplotype will probably decline.

## PRIESTS GENES DIFFER FROM THAT OF ORDINARY JEWS'

By Tim Radford

LONDON - Genetics researchers have confirmed something which has been holy writ in Israel for 3,300 years. They have examined the Y-chromosomes of Jewish priests and found that they are, indeed, different from the rest of the Jewish people. According to Jewish tradition, priests - as distinct from rabbis - are descended from Aaron, brother of Moses, through the male line. Priesthood is only by descent, and possibly 5 percent of male Jews are therefore hereditary priests, called the "kohanim," and often carry the surname Cohen. But although by tradition all the 14 million Jews in the world are the children of Abraham, molecular biologists find the biblical connections harder to make. There are two separate populations of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews with different genetic make-ups, and both of these have become increasingly blurred. But Karl Skorecki, of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, and colleagues at University College London, the University of Toronto, Canada, and the University of Arizona at Tucson, report in Nature that certain genes tell a different story. The Y-chromosome is inherited from the father and most of it does not alter, except by random mutation. They identified tell-tale bits of the chromosome - haplotypes - that could be recognized as "markers" and went looking for them in 188 unrelated Jewish male priests in Israel, North America and Britain. They found that in a number of ways priests in different communities differed from their own lay neighbors, and in some respects were much more like each other. The research helps confirm that the Y-chromosome could be calibrated as a kind of father-to-son genetic "clock," to be used alongside an already well-known "mitochondrial DNA" clock passed from mother to daughter.

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# THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF SILENCE

## I. SILENCE THAT ACCOMPANIES INSTRUCTION

A. Dt. 27:9-10 - 9 Then Moses and the priests, who are Levites, said to all Israel, "Be silent, O Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the Lord your God. 10 Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today." niv

## II. SILENCE WHEN CORRECTED

A. Neh 5:7-8 niv - 7 ... So I called together a large meeting to deal with them 8 and said: "As far as possible, we have bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your brothers, only for them to be sold back to us!" They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

1. Lev 10:1-3 - 1 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. 2 So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. 3 Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke of when he said: "'Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.'" Aaron remained silent. niv

## III. SILENCE WHILE SEARCHING OUR HEARTS

A. Ps 4:4 - "In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah" niv

## IV. SILENCE OF RESTING IN GOD'S LOVE

A. Zeph 3:1 niv - The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

## V. SILENCE BECAUSE OF ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD

A. Rom 3:19 niv - Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

## VI. SILENCE BROUGHT ABOUT BY GOD

A. Mk 4:39 - WHEN HE QUIETED THE WINDS & WAVES

1. He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. niv

B. Eze 3:26 - THE LORD SILENCES HIS PROPHETS

1. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, though they are a rebellious house. niv

C. Job 12:20 - THE LORD SILENCES THE LIPS OF TRUSTED ADVISERS

1. He [the LORD] silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. niv

D. Lk 1:18-21 - ZECHARIAH SILENCED FOR DISBELIEVING GABRIEL

1. 18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." 19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time." niv

## VII. THE SILENCE OF THE LAMB OF GOD

A. Isa 53:7 - He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. niv

B. Mt 26:62-64 - 62 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 63 But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." niv

## VIII. SILENCE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. Zeph 1:7 - "Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near..." niv

B. Hab 2:20 - "20... the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." niv

C. This is most likely the kind of silence found in Revelation 8:1 - "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."

1. Members of God's Kingdom - are speechless as their faith is finally and fully confirmed - They knew He is Worthy. Now they experience the final truth - HE IS WORTHY! And they enter the silence of a renewed revelation of the glory of the Lamb

2. Enemies of God - are speechless as their fears are finally and fully confirmed. They had chosen the passing pleasure of the lie instead of the eternal purposes of the truth. And now, the day of reckoning is like a forceful blow, knocking the breath right out of them..

# THE ABYSS

## I. CHUCK SMITH

### A. 'TEACHING TAPE' EXCERPT

1. To the fifth angel was given the key to the abyss - the abusso in Greek - translated bottomless pit. Now the translation "a bottomless pit is a correct translation of this word abusso and it is probably right in the heart of the center of the earth ... We do know that Hades is in the heart of the earth and so this is probably one of the compartments of Hades, this particular compartment is where God incarcerates demonic spirits. It's where the antichrist has been incarcerated. It is where Satan shall be incarcerated for a thousand years. It is where demons are presently incarcerated but are going to be released upon the earth during this period of time. It is a place where the demons later on will be incarcerated.

### B. 'WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO' EXCERPT

1. The abyss is literally a shaft. Somewhere upon the surface of the earth there is a shaft. The entrance to this shaft leads down into the heart of the earth where Hades exists.

2. Hades is often translated "hell" in the Bible. Hell does exist. It's in the center of the earth. When the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him for a sign, He said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; but no sign will be given it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." #Matthew 24:29 Paul tells us, "He who has ascended is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." #Ephesians 4:8-10

3. When anyone from the Old Testament died, they went to Hades. That is why in the Old Testament Hades is referred to as the 'grave' and "hell." It was the abiding place of everyone who died, but it was divided into two sections.

4. The abyss is the place of incarceration for demons or evil spirits. The demons who possessed the maniac of the Gadarenes said to Jesus, "Do not send us to the abyss before our time." #Luke 8:26-31 They pleaded with Him that they might still have liberty on the earth. They realize the time is coming when they'll be consigned to the abyss for a thousand years during the millennial reign of Christ.

5. The Bible tells us that the Antichrist will ascend out of the abyss. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the abyss". #Rev. 17:8

a) The beast was already upon the earth at one time. He is coming back to the earth, ascending out of the abyss where he has been incarcerated. The Bible then tells us that Satan will be bound with a great chain and cast into the abyss at the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. #Rev. 20:1-3

## **Polling data from the 2008 ARIS (American Religious Identification Study):**

The fastest growing religion (in terms of percentage) is [Wicca](#) -- a [Neopagan](#) religion that is sometimes referred to as Witchcraft.

From 1990 to 2001: Numbers of adherents went from 8,000 to 134,000. Their numbers of adherents doubled about every 30 months. 4.5 Wiccans in Australia have a very similar growth pattern, from fewer than 2,000 in 1996 to 9,000 in 2001. 10 In Canada, [Wiccans](#) and other [Neopagans](#) showed the greatest percentage growth of any faith group. They totaled 21,080 members in 1991, an increase of 281% from 1990.

From 2001 to 2008: The ARIS website does not appear to have released any specific numbers. They give numbers only for New Religious Movement "NRM & Other Religions" -- a classification that includes Scientology, New Age, Eckankar, Spiritualist, Unitarian-Universalist, Deist, Wiccan, Pagan, Druid, Indian Religion, Santeria, and Rastafarian. However they state that: "*Adherents of New Religious movements, including Wiccans and self-described pagans, have grown faster this decade than in the 1990s.*" 16 It is curious that they use the term "self-described" to refer to pagans, while they report Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc. without the qualifier.

However, ReligionLink does have data available. They state:

"Specifically, the number of Wiccans more than doubled from 2001 to 2008, from 134,000 to 342,000, and the same held true for neo-pagans, who went from 140,000 in 2001 to 340,000 in 2008."

"Experts say the growth reflects not only increasing numbers of neo-pagans, but also a rise in the social acceptability of paganism. As a result, more respondents would be willing to identify themselves as followers of some pagan tradition.

## **Millions of Americans in Denial About Drug Abuse**

### Overview

From [SAMHSA](#) (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)

The 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse provides an accurate and comprehensive one-year snapshot of the problem of drug abuse in America. The survey indicated that the number of Americans who could benefit from drug treatment was significantly larger than previously understood. It also indicated that too many American drug users—more than 4.6 million—who meet the criteria for needing treatment do not recognize that they have a problem. The survey also included for the first time questions about mental illness.

### **EMPLOYEE THEFT**

- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that 75 percent of all employees steal at least once, and half of these steal repeatedly.
- The Chamber also reports one of every three business failures is the direct result of employee theft.
- According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, employee dishonesty costs American business in excess of \$50 billion annually.
- <http://www.hirepowerassociates.com/pdfs/StepOneSurvey11.pdf>

## Statistics and information on pornography in the USA

\* The U.S. Customs Service estimates that there are more than 100,000 websites offering child pornography (which are illegal) worldwide.

*Red Herring Magazine, 1/18/02*

\* Hollywood currently releases 11,000 adult movies per year – more than 20 times the mainstream movie production.

*LA Times Magazine, 2002.*

\* 39 million homes receive the adult channels in scrambled form, while the number of children with potential exposure to such images is about 29 million

*Morality Continues to Decay.* Barna Research Group, November 3, 2003.

\* One in 4 American adults surveyed in 2002 admitted to seeing an x-rated movie in the last year.

*National Opinion Research Letter*

55%: Percentage of Porn movie rentals vs. non-porn movies in hotels in 2005.

*AVN News, State of the Adult Industry*

\* The average time a porn movie is watched in a hotel room is 12 minutes.

*Time.com, 3-29-05*

\* The average teenager spends three to four hours per day watching television and 83% of the programming most frequently watched by adolescents contains some sexual content.

*Gary Rose, CEO of The Medical Institute, as reported by Focus on the Family 7/8/2005*

\* 1/3 of 13 year old boys in Alberta, Canada admitted to viewing porn.

*From a University of Alberta Study, March 2007, as reported by thegatewayonline.ca.*

\* 42% of songs on ten top-selling CDs in 1999 contained sexual content, 41% of which were "very explicit" or "pretty explicit."

*Family News in Focus, July 2005*

\* "Last year, Comcast, the nation's largest cable company, pulled in \$50 million from adult programming. All the nation's top cable operators, from Time Warner to Cablevision, distribute sexually explicit material to their subscribers. But you won't read about it in their annual reports. Same with satellite providers like

EchoStar and DirecTV, which is owned by Hughes Technology, a subsidiary of General Motors.

How much does DirecTV make off of adult product?

"They don't break the number out. But I would guess they'd probably get a couple hundred million, maybe as much as \$500 million, off of adult entertainment, in a broad sense," says Dennis McAlpine, a partner in McAlpine Associates, who has tracked the entertainment industry for over two decades. "I would think it's probably more than what their overall profit is. The other areas are losing money. That's making money."

Then there are the big hotel chains: Hilton, Marriot, Hyatt, Sheraton and Holiday Inn, which all offer adult films on in-room pay-per-view television systems. And they are purchased by a whopping 50 percent of their guests, accounting for nearly 70 percent of their in-room profits. One hotel owner said, "We have to have it, our guests demand it." *From a CBS News Special Report, November 2003*

\* "The porn industry employs an excess of 12,000 people in California. In California alone the porn industry pays over \$36 million in taxes every year."

*Bill Lyon, a former lobbyist for the defense industry turned lobbyist for porn, as quoted by CBS News November 2003.*

\* In a Kinsey Institute survey, respondents were asked "Why do you use porn?" 72% said they used porn to masturbate/for physical release.

69% - to sexually arouse themselves and/or others.

54% - out of curiosity.

43% - "because I can fantasize about things I would not necessarily want in real life."

38% - to distract myself.

\* "Most girls who enter the porn industry do one video and quit. The experience is so painful, horrifying, embarrassing, humiliating for them that they never do it again."

*Luke Ford, quoted by CBS News*

\* A study of university networks by Palisades Systems found searches for child pornography at 230 colleges nationwide. The research revealed that 42% of all searches on file-to-file sharing systems involved child or adult pornography. The study also found that 73% of movie searches were for pornography, 24% percent of image searches were for child por-

nography, and only 3% of the searches did not involve pornography or copyrighted materials.  
*April 1, 2003 – Des Moines Register*

\* 87% of university students are having sex over webcams, instant messenger or the telephone.  
*Reuters, Ontario Canada, February 16, 2006.*

\* Queen's University in Belfast conducted a survey of 350 businesses in the U.S., U.K. and Australia for the porn-filtering firm SurfControl. 28% of those questioned said they had downloaded sexually explicit content from the Web while on the job. U.S.-based employees were slightly less likely to do so than workers in other countries. The survey also found abuse to be slightly higher in organizations with more than 500 employees. Of the 31 percent of employees who distributed sexually explicit material from work, 36 percent worked at companies larger than 500 employees; 27 percent worked for companies with 20 employees or less.  
*MSNBC 9-6-04*

\* In May 2004 Businessweek printed the results of a ComScore Networks survey where 44% of U.S. workers with an internet connection admitted to accessing an X rated website at work in the month of March 2004, as compared to 40% of home users and 59% of University users.

\* More than 30% of 1,500 surveyed companies have terminated employees for inappropriate use of the Internet, while only 37.5% of companies use filtering software.  
*Websense Incorporated and The Center for Internet Studies, 2000.*

\* 17% of all women struggle with porn addiction  
\* 1 of 3 visitors to all adult websites are women  
\* 9.4 million women access adult websites every month  
*Internet Filter Review*

\* 38 percent of adults believe it is 'morally acceptable' to look at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior  
*Morality Continues to Decay. Barna Research Group, 3 November, 2003.*

\* 59 percent of adults believe it is 'morally acceptable' to have sexual thoughts or fantasies  
*Morality Continues to Decay. Barna Research Group, 3 November, 2003.*

\* 38 percent of adults believe there is nothing wrong with pornography use  
*Morality Continues to Decay. Barna Research Group, 3 November, 2003.*

\* 42 percent of surveyed adults indicated that their partner's use of pornography made them feel insecure.  
*Marriage Related Research, Mark A. Yarhouse, Psy.D. Christian Counseling Today, 2004 Vol. 12 No. 1.*

\* 41 percent of surveyed adults admitted they felt less attractive due to their partner's pornography use.  
*Marriage Related Research, Mark A. Yarhouse, Psy.D. Christian Counseling Today, 2004 Vol. 12 No. 1.*

\* March 20, 2007: At a men's summit in Oregon before 2,000 men, Shelley Lubben of Shelley Lubben ministries challenged those who were struggling with porn addiction to stand. 30% rose to their feet. She immediately challenged them a second time, with the result that some 70% were standing.

\* March, 2007: At a small Christian conference in Austria, 75% of the 25 men in attendance admitted to being involved with porn; 50% within the past 6 months.

\* April 6, 2007: 70% of Christians admitted to struggling with porn in their daily lives. From a non-scientific poll taken by XXXChurch, as reported by CNN.

\* August 7, 2006: 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography. 60% of the women who answered the survey admitted to having significant struggles with lust; 40% admitted to being involved in sexual sin in the past year; and 20% of the church-going female participants struggle with looking at pornography on an ongoing basis.  
*From the results of a ChristiaNet poll reported by Marketwire.com*

\* In December of 2000, the National Coalition to Protect Children and Families surveyed 5 Christian Campuses to see how the next generation of believers was doing with sexual purity:  
48% of males admitted to current porn use  
68% of males said they intentionally viewed a sexually explicit site at the school

\* Roger Charman of Focus on the Family's Pastoral Ministries reports that approximately 20 percent of the calls received on their Pastoral Care Line are for help with issues such as pornography and compulsive sexual behavior.

\* A 1996 Promise Keepers survey at one of their stadium events revealed that over 50% of the men in attendance were involved with pornography within one week of attending the event.

\* In 2000 Christianity Today survey, 33% of clergy admitted to having visited a sexually explicit Web site. Of those who had visited a porn site, 53% had visited such sites "a few times" in the past year, and 18% visit sexually explicit sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week.

\* Out of 81 pastors surveyed (74 males 7 female), 98% had been exposed to porn; 43% intentionally accessed a sexually explicit website

*National Coalition survey of pastors. Seattle. April 2000.*

\* In his book, "Men's Secret Wars", Patrick Means reveals a confidential survey of evangelical pastors and church lay leaders. Sixty-four percent of these Christian leaders confirm that they are struggling with sexual addiction or sexual compulsion including, but not limited to use of pornography, compulsive masturbation, or other secret sexual activity.

\* In his book "The Sexual Man", Dr. Archibald Hart revealed the results of a survey of some 600 Christian men, on the topic of masturbation:

61% of married Christian men masturbate  
82% of these have self sex on an average of once a week; 10% have sex with self 5-10 times per month, 6% more than 15 times per month, and 1% more than 20 times a month.

13% of Christian married men said they felt it was normal.

\* 34 percent of female readers of *Today's Christian Woman's* online newsletter admitted to intentionally accessing Internet porn in a recent poll.

\* In March of 2002 Rick Warren's (author of the Purpose Driven life) Pastors.com website conducted a survey on porn use of 1351 pastors: 54% of the pastors had viewed Internet

pornography within the last year, and 30% of these had visited within the last 30 days.

\* 47% percent of families said pornography is a problem in their home.

*Focus on the Family Poll, October 1, 2003.*

\* In a survey of over 500 Christian men at a men's retreat, over 90% admitted that they were feeling disconnected from God because lust, porn, or fantasy had gained a foothold in their lives.

*As reported in an article on Pastors.com by Kenny Luck.*

In March 2005 Christianity Today published the results of a study called "Christians and Sex" in their Leadership Journal. 680 pastors and 1,972 laypersons were surveyed, with the following results:

\* 44% of churchgoers want to hear more scriptural teaching from their pastors on the subject of sex.

\* 22% of pastors feel they should spend more time on the topic.

\* 85% of pastors say they speak about sexual issues once a year, while 63% of churchgoers say their pastors do so. Among those churchgoers who say they want their pastors to preach more about sexual issues, 47% say their pastor speaks about it once a year, an even bigger difference of opinion. A CTI analyst was quoted saying "Perhaps this desire for more biblical exposition on sexual issues exists because pastors are not speaking forcefully or clearly enough, while exposure to sexual images and messages in today's media is ever more heightened."

\* 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation.

\* Almost 9 in 10 pastors reported counseling a layperson on sexual issues once a year or more.

I had a hard time believing that half the men in the church would really be accessing porn, so early 2004 I asked the church where we attended at the time if they would be willing to take a survey. They agreed, and in the survey we asked the men "when was the last time you looked at pornography?" The church was made up mostly of young families, and the idea that many of the husbands and fathers I sat next to every Sunday were dabbling in porn... I couldn't comprehend it. Surely, I thought, the numbers would be lower. It can't be half, not in my church.

Of those who responded, here's what came back:

25% had viewed porn within the past month  
44% within the past 6 months  
61% within the past year

Pornography is corrupting the church and destroying our nation; without action the problem will only get worse.

The following statistics, from both secular and religious sources reveal that porn is now as American as Apple Pie, and has found a place in every corner of our society, including the church. The statistics on porn use among Christians are near the end.

\* At 13.3 billion, the 2006 revenues of the sex and porn industry in the U.S. are bigger than the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball combined. Worldwide sex industry sales for 2006 are reported to be 97 billion. To put this in perspective, Microsoft, who sells the operating system used on most of the computers in the world (in addition to other software) reported sales of 44.8 billion in 2006.

*Internet Filter Review*

\* US Sex Industry breakdown for 2006:  
Video Sales and Rentals: 3.62 billion  
Internet: 2.84 billion  
Cable/PPV/In-room/Mobile phone sex: 2.19 billion  
Exotic Dance Clubs: 2 billion  
Novelties: 1.73 billion  
Magazines: .95 billion  
Total - 13.3 billion.

2005 Sex Industry sales - 12.62 billion

*Internet Filter Review*

\* 60% of all website visits are sexual in nature  
*MSNBC Survey 2000*

\* The No. 1 search term used at search engine sites is the word "sex". Users searched for "sex" more than other terms such as "games," "travel," "music," "jokes," "cars," "weather," "health" and "jobs" combined. The study also found that "pornography/porno" was the fourth-most searched for subject.

*Alexa Research*

72 million: The approximate number of unique visitors to adult websites in 2006, per month, worldwide.

420 million: Total number of porn pages.

40 million: The number of U.S. adults who regularly visit porn websites.

*Internet Filter Review*

\* A 2000 MSNBC.com survey found that as many as 80 percent of visitors to sex sites were spending so much time tracking down erotica on the computer that they were putting their real-life relationships and/or jobs at risk. "Until they discovered cybersex, most of these people had no problems with sexual addiction", according to the survey's author, Al Cooper, a sex therapist at the San Jose Marital Services and Sexuality Center in San Jose, Calif.

\* 77% of online visitors to adult content sites are male. Their average age is 41 and they have an annual income of \$60,000. 46% are married.

*Forrester Research Report, 2001*

\* In 2001, in a study of 7037 adults, two thirds of those who visit websites with sexual content say their Internet activities haven't affected their level of sexual activity with their partners, though 75% report masturbating while on line.

*Divorcewizards.com*

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Blazing Grace, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

<http://www.blazinggrace.org/cms/bg/pornstats>

# THE MYSTERY OF GOD

*“but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared [evangelized] to His servants the prophets.”*

Revelation 10:7

“1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that **by revelation He made known to me the mystery** (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is **the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” Ephesians 3:1-12

“4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:4-10

The incredible picture revealed by these verses is this: Even though the Heavenly Host (“principalities and powers in the heavenly places” 3:10) knew that God is Gracious, they had no idea just how Gracious He is. The full extent of God’s Grace that would be extended towards sinful humanity - including the Gentiles - was beyond what anyone had ever imagined. The Son of God dying on the cross for the whole world and, through His death and resurrection, redeeming a Bride for Himself from among the Gentiles was a mystery hidden in the heart and mind of God. It was not revealed until the Cross and through the revelation and preaching of the Gospel through Paul and the other Apostles.

I see it like this: When Jesus declared from the Cross, “It is Finished!”, and dismissed His spirit, there was a silence in Heaven followed by a great, whispered “whoa ...” as each member of Heaven thought to themselves: “I knew The Most High was Loving and Gracious. But I had no idea just *how* Loving and Gracious He is.”

# THE IDENTITY OF THE "TWO WITNESSES"

## The "nominees" are...

### I. ELIJAH

A.cf. Jewish children look for Elijah every Passover

1.Mal. 4:5-6 -5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." [cf. Apocrapha - Ecclesiasticus 48:1-11]

B.Similar Power - no rain -

1.James 5:17 - "Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years."

a)1Kg. 17:1 - Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe [ Or Tishbite, of the settlers ] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

C.At Transfiguration [Law & Prophets] - Mt. 17:1-8 - Note: Law & Prophets fulfilled in Jesus

1.1 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

D."Pre-death ascension"

E.John the Baptist - Didn't he fulfill the prophecy about Elijah?

1.Lk. 1:13,17 -13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ... 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

2.Jn. 1:21-23 -21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" [Isaiah 40:3]

3.Mt. 11:13-15 -13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15 He who has ears, let him hear.

4.Mt. 17:10-13 -10 The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" 11 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. 12 But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

## II. ENOCH

### A. A Prophet of End Times

1. Jude 14-15 -14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

### B. "Pre-death ascension" - Heb. 9:27, cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-52

1. Heb. 9:27 - "... man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,"

2. 1 Cor. 15:51-52 -51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

3. "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Genesis 5:24

## III. MOSES

### A. At Transfiguration [Law & Prophets] - Mt. 17:3

### B. Similar Power - water to blood - Ex. 7:20 [and plagues]

1. Ex. 7:20-21 -20 Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. 21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

### C. His body has been "hidden" [in heaven]

1. Dt. 34:6 -He [the LORD] buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.

2. Jude 9 -But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

### D. His chance to finally enter and minister in the Promised Land?

1. cf. Dt. 18:15,17-19 -15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. ... 17 The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.

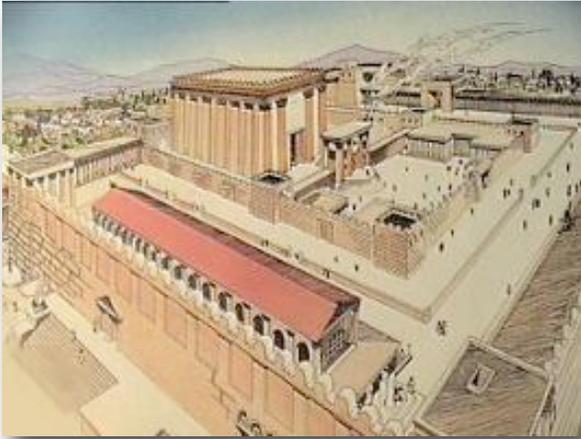
## IV. JOHN

A. John 21:22-23 - 22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

B. "And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."" Revelation 10:11

# The Rebuilt Temple

by Lambert Dolphin ([www.Idolphin.org](http://www.Idolphin.org))



The major Biblical prophecies relevant to the Tribulation indicate that there will be a Temple in Jerusalem, at least by the middle of the seven year tribulation period. In this chapter we will discuss the history of the Temple and consider what would be necessary to rebuild the structure in the near future.

## Background: Jerusalem

When the sons of Noah spread out, Shem, the father of all the Semitic people may well have gone to the area we now call Jerusalem. The earliest mention of the area was when Abraham was returning from a battle with Sodom (Genesis chapter 14). He met Melchizedek, King of Salem. Salem is the oldest name for the city. The root word means "peace." Melchizedek means "king of righteousness." So this is probably a title rather than a proper name. Melchizedek is important also because the dual offices of King and Priest of El Elyon ("God Most High") were resident in this one man.

The priesthood Jesus Christ would later institute for His church is modeled after Melchizedek as the book of Hebrews tells us. During Israel's history the office of king and priest were always separate. But Zechariah the prophet looked forward to a future day when these offices will be combined in Messiah.

It may be demonstrated from the life-spans and genealogies in Genesis that Shem should still have been living at that time. Some scholars believe that Melchizedek was actually Shem.

All of Noah's sons and their wives were believers in the One true God (or they would not have been saved on the Ark). In one or two generations most of their offspring had already "forgotten" about God and gone their own way following a rebellion against the rule of God championed by Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-12).

Remaining a godly, wise follower of Yahweh, Shem lived to the age of 600 years and surely would have been the most revered of the ancient fathers at that time.

Jewish legends claim that God stood on the Foundation Stone of what later would be the Holy of Holies of Jerusalem's temples when He created the world. Eden, these rabbis remind us, was to the East, so Adam was probably formed of the clay of the ground in what is now Eretz Israel. In any case Jerusalem was already a center for the worship of the Lord under the leadership of Melchizedek.

Jerusalem seems to have been chosen by God long before the Jewish people came into existence. It is mentioned by name nearly 800 times in the Bible! In the Psalms God is said to dwell (present tense) in that city, and a number of Psalms highlight the central importance of the "City of Peace" in God's eternal plans for mankind.

*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil. Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart. But those who turn to crooked ways the LORD will banish with the evildoers. Peace be upon Israel. (Psalm 125)*

The city, also called Jebus (Joshua 18:28; Judges 19:10; 1Chronicles 11:4), had become a pagan city by the time of the occupation of the land by the Hebrews under the leadership of Joshua when they returned from Egypt.

There is reason to suspect that source documents existed from before the Flood of Noah--perhaps "Adam's Diary" and the records of his sons in the line of Seth down to Noah. It is possible that these records were preserved on the Ark by Noah and handed down to Noah's son Shem for safekeeping. Perhaps Shem left these ancient documents in the care of Melchizedek? We simply do not know, but the speculation is interesting, because when we first meet Abram in Genesis he is 70 years old and living in Ur of the Chaldees. His father and his family had evidently lapsed into the idolatry of the region and God had to call him back so that he was restored into the godly line of Shem--the promised line of descent which would lead to Messiah.

Did Melchizedek transmit to Abraham ancient written documents or carefully preserved oral legends that eventually were handed by Abraham's descendants on down to Moses? Did Moses write the Pentateuch with the help of some source documents of which we are now unaware? No one knows. We will have to ask Moses when we meet him!

## **The Tabernacle**

The Tabernacle was the precursor of the Temple. Detailed information about the Tabernacle is found in Exodus chapters 25 through 27.

Instruction for the Tabernacle was given to Moses at the same time as the giving of the Ten Commandments. It was a portable place of worship which would serve as the place where God met with his people. It was small but very lavish, with gold and silver work, and elaborate hangings and curtains, some of which were woven with beautiful patterns. It was completely portable, so that it could be broken down on short notice and moved with the nation as they followed the Lord.

All of the articles of the Tabernacle are types or pre-figures of Christ.

### **The Outer Court**

The Brazen Altar is a picture of Christ's sacrifice as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Laver is symbolic of confession and regular spiritual cleansing.

### **The Holy Place**

The Golden Lampstand pictures Jesus as the Light of the World.

The Table of Shewbread is symbolic of Jesus as the Bread of Life.

The Altar of Incense (drawing attention to the importance of prayer), reminds us that Jesus is our intercessor and Great High Priest.

### **The Holy of Holies**

The Ark of The Covenant is a type of Jesus as the presence of God with us.

## **The History of The Temple**

### **Solomon's Temple**

This first temple was built in the 10th century BC. right after Solomon became king. David had wanted to build it, but was not allowed by God because of the bloodshed in his past. Nevertheless, he collected all the materials for the Temple, so that, as soon as his son Solomon became king, he could construct it. It was erected on the property bought by David from Araunah ( 2 Samuel 24). The site had been a threshing floor, a place where grain was winnowed by tossing it up into the air. The wind would carry the chaff away while the heavier grain would fall back down. Eventually there would be a pile of grain in the center and a large section of chaff further away. The chaff

could be raked up and burned, and the grain could be put into baskets. This threshing floor was probably on a higher part of Mount Moriah where the winds were strongest. Here, a thousand years earlier, Abraham had demonstrated his faith by being willing to offer Isaac, though he was not required to carry it out (Genesis 22). This is a beautiful preview of the willingness of our Heavenly Father to sacrifice His own son, Jesus, for the sins of the world

What is especially remarkable is the connection between Mount Moriah and the Temple Mount with the hill of Calvary where Jesus was crucified. When Solomon built the Temple, stones were quarried from the western side of the same mountain, and from underneath the mountain. at the North end The stones quarried to build the temple cut a large gorge, leaving the northernmost portion of the mountain standing alone. In Jesus' day this portion was called Golgotha, "the place of the skull"! Even today if you visit Jerusalem, the visitor can see the high steep cliff where the bedrock of the mountain was cut away. There is a man-made valley between that cliff and Golgotha, about two blocks away. Damascus Street, the old Damascus Road passes through this cut just outside the North wall of the Old City.

Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

### **The Second Temple**

This modest structure was built by Zerubbabel with encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah near the end of the 6th century BC. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah recount the drama of the return of a Jewish remnant from Persia and the rebuilding of the Temple as well as the city of Jerusalem. These are great stories of courage and dedication, but the Temple was smaller and much less beautiful than the original. It is said that some who remembered the original temple wept when they saw it. (Ezra 3:12) This Second Temple was desecrated by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Seleucid ruler who had a pig slaughtered on the altar, and set up an image of a pagan god in the Holy of Holies. This is the event which triggered the rise of the Hasmonean family of the Maccabees. They eventually took Jerusalem and the Temple back and ruled there independently for a few years. The Jewish celebration of Hanukkah comes from this time of restoration and renewal in their national history.

### **Herod's Temple**

The reconstruction of the second temple was begun by Herod the Great about 20 BC. It was an enhancement of the Second Temple. Herod was an ungodly foreigner, an Edomite (Idumean), who had been given the kingship by the Romans. He was the greatest builder in the world during that period of time. Herod built seven palaces and forts, and the work on the

Temple was truly magnificent. The stones (ashlars) used were huge, and every one had a border (embossing) carved around it. The work on the temple and courts continued long after his death until it was finished in 63 AD. It was about twice the size of the Second Temple. Some call it the Third Temple, but Jews do not think of it as other than their Second Temple. It had already been 46 years in the rebuilding process when Jesus ministered there (John 2:19). Neither Herod nor most of the Jewish leaders were at all godly during this period. The Temple was built for show and for political reasons, but a faithful remnant of priests and Jews worshiped Yahweh there nevertheless, in accordance with the teachings of the Torah.

The Gospels tell us of a few godly priests and citizens at the Temple during the childhood of Jesus and give us brief glimpses of temple life in that day, and Jesus' involvement there:

*On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."*

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."*

*The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

*There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phannuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.*

*Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:21-38)*

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

*After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house? But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:43-51)*

### **Herod's Temple evidently did not have God's blessing**

Expressing His grave displeasure at the desecrating of the Temple, Jesus cast out the money changers on two occasions--at the beginning of his ministry and again at the start of his final week in the city before his death. On that second occasion Mark tells us He would not allow anything to be carried in or out of the Temple. Thus He also stopped the continual temple sacrifices, in effect declaring them null and void. Within a few days, at Passover, the true Lamb of God would die one death for all, offering himself as the foreordained perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. All the temple sacrifices were but shadows. Indeed, when Jesus died, the veil of the Temple was torn from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51) thus signifying that Jesus had made a way for all men to come into the holiest place of intimate presence with God because of His perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9).

## The Destruction of The Temple

The destruction of the Temple was prophesied by Jesus.

*And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down." (Luke 21:5-6)*

Herod's Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. It was torn down by four Roman legions under the command of Titus. The Jewish people have not been able to practice animal sacrifices since that time, although the Muslims do so every year in Mecca! The Temple was burned, so the gold melted and ran into the cracks in the stones. That is why the destruction was so great. The conquerors literally removed every possible stone in order to find all the gold.

From that time until the present, the Temple Mount and all of Jerusalem has been under the control of various people. The Romans built a temple to a pagan god there. Later a Christian church was built. When the Moslems took control they built a mosque.

## The Temple Mount Today

The 35 acre site is under the control of The Supreme Moslem Council--the Waqf, under the Hussein family of Jordan. Even though Israel took all of Jerusalem in 1967, this concession was made by Moshe Dyan to keep peace.

Jews are not allowed on the Temple Mount by either their laws or by the Moslems.

## Two Moslem Holy Places

### The Dome Of The Rock

This is sometimes called The Mosque of Omar. It isn't really a mosque, but a shrine, built over the rock venerated by the Moslems. The rock under the dome is called *as-Sakhra*. It is where Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven on his "Night Journey". Actually Mohammed was never there, but in the Koran, in the seventeenth Sura a dream or vision is recorded in which he was carried from the temple in Mecca to the one in Jerusalem.

It is possible that this rock is the place where the Holy of Holies was located. As shown below, there are other theories about the location of this most sacred portion of the Temple which held the Ark of the Covenant.

### Al Aqsa Mosque

It's name means "the distant place." It is Islam's third most holy place, after Mecca and Medina. This is the building where the Moslems actually worship.

## The Western Wall

The Western Wall, formerly called "The Wailing Wall" is the one part of the old Temple area that is still standing, and that is only because it is a retaining wall. This wall was not part of the Temple itself, so it is not a violation of the prophecy that these stones still stand. This is considered the holiest place on the earth to Jewish People today. They are allowed to worship there, but are prohibited by their own rabbinical rulings and by the Moslems to go onto the Temple Mount itself.

The Rabbinical Tunnel opened recently to tourism allows one to walk under the city Northward from the Western Wall prayer area (Ha Kotel). In this tunnel, at the walled-off entrance to Cistern 30, devout Jews who believe the Temple stood where the Dome of the Rock now stands, can get somewhat closer to their favorite Temple site. Therefore a small synagogue area has been placed there.

## The Dome of the Tablets / Dome of the Spirit

This neglected portion of the Temple Mount is covered by a simple cupola, without a sign or anything that would indicate its importance, but, as can be seen by the discussion below about the future location of the Temple, it may well be the location of the Holy of Holies! The Arabic name does suggest both the Tablets of Moses which were placed within the Ark, or the Shekinah, or Spirit of God.

## Necessity for a Temple

There are at least two reasons why we expect the Temple to be built again:

### Because of Israel's Desires

Jewish law requires the Temple be rebuilt where it once was. One third of the Torah's 613 commandments involve rituals that require the Temple be rebuilt.

### Because of Bible Prophecy

The Man of Sin will desecrate the Temple at mid-point of The Tribulation. This subject is explored more fully in the section about The Mark of The Beast.

*Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. (Matthew 24:15-18)*

*And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abomina-*

tions will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (Daniel 9:27)

This is part of Daniel's vision about a period of time described as "seventy sevens" (or weeks), which amounts to 490 years. The first 483 years (69 times 7) were fulfilled exactly on the day that Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and offering Himself as king. According to Daniel's vision, there is yet to come a seventieth week, the last seven years, which is separated from the others. The Man of Sin, who is called the "ruler who will come" in Daniel 9:26, will make a treaty with Israel to protect her for seven years, but will break the covenant in the middle of the treaty.

*Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NAS)*

### **New Testament References to the Future Temple**

In addition to Jesus' mentioning the future desecration of a temple in Jerusalem at the end of the age in which we now live (Matthew 24, Luke 21), the Apostle Paul speaks of this same event in his Second letter to the Thessalonian church. Paul calls the desecrator "the man of sin." Thirdly, seeing ahead into the distant future, the aged Apostle John wrote about this same Third Temple which has never yet been built:

*I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. (Revelation 11:1-2)*

As a side note, a very large temple is described in great detail in the closing chapters of the book of Ezekiel. This building and its courts has never yet been built and is too large to fit on the present Temple Mount site. For a description of Ezekiel's temple and a discussion of when and why it will be built see *Messiah's Coming Temple: Ezekiel's Prophetic Vision of the Future Temple* by John W. Schmitt and J. Carl Laney.

### **Location of The Future Temple**

Since the Bible teaches that the Temple will be rebuilt, and it is obvious that it must be in the general area of the Temple Mount, there is much speculation about exactly where the Temple might be situated. There are several possibilities for the place where the Temple will be rebuilt. Here are the main theories, summarized briefly. (Detailed information on all these theories is found on the [Temple Mount web site](#).)

### **Where The Dome Of The Rock stands**

That the First and Second Temples stood where the Dome of the Rock now stands is the traditional, conventional view. Former Jerusalem District Archaeologist Dan Bahat represents this point of view with considerable authority and knowledge. Everyone used to assume that the Dome of The Rock had to be torn down before the Temple could be built, because the rock was thought to be either the place of the Holy of Holies or of the Altar of Sacrifice. However, it is unthinkable to Muslims to have anyone harm or destroy this shrine without bringing the greatest of all jihads, or "holy wars" by all of Israel's Muslim neighbors.

### **North of The Dome of the Rock**

This theory, proposed by Physicist Asher Kauffman, suggests that the new Temple could be built north of the Dome of The Rock without tearing it down. Asher Kaufman is a faculty member in physics at Hebrew University and a devout observant Jew who was born in Scotland. He has explored the Temple Mount more than 100 times since 1974.

This view is based on the known location of the Eastern Gate ("The Golden Gate"), the location of the Dome of the Tablets, and various alignments of ancient stones on the Mount. Due East of the Dome of the Tablets is the Eastern Gate which may have been the very gate Jesus entered when He offered Himself as Messiah and was ultimately rejected by the religious authorities of Jerusalem. It is thought to be the gate of the future coming of Messiah into Jerusalem, so the Turkish Muslims walled it up completely in the hopes of keeping this prophecy from being fulfilled. Verification of the ancient position of the Eastern Gate was made recently with the discovery of an arch from an older gate directly below the existing one. The older gate may even date back to the time of Solomon. The Dome of The Tablets is a cupola, also called *Dome of the Spirits* in Arabic.

Whether or not there are other ancient gates in the East wall is not known because of the depth of the rubble in the area, and a Muslim cemetery conveniently located along the Eastern wall, both to stop excavation there and to deter a holy priest such as Messiah from entering the area from that direction. Muslim, Christian and Jewish cemeteries are found all along the Kidron Valley and up the adjacent Mount of Olives. All three religions have legends about the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment being located there.

Joel Chapter 3 vividly describes that Great Day,

*'In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance,*

*my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land. They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.*

*'Now what have you against me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.*

*'See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.' The LORD has spoken. Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, 'I am strong!'*

*Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD! 'Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow--so great is their wickedness!' Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.*

*The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. 'Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.*

*'In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias. But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood.*

*Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon.' The LORD dwells in Zion! {Joel 3:1-21}*

The newly discovered Western Gate, underneath the present city is also interesting since it is on the same basic line which could be drawn through the temple area.

This theory would place the Dome of The Rock in the outer court, the Court of The Gentiles. Perhaps this is why Revelation 11:1-2 says:

*And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.*

This could be the key to peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Both want Jerusalem for their capitals. Both want control of the Temple area. If an agreement could be made to allow the Palestinians to have a part of Jerusalem, including the portion of the Temple Mount where their holy places stand, and Israel would have the rest of Jerusalem, including the place where they can build the Temple, the peace process might be completed.

### **South of The Dome Of The Rock**

This view is advocated by Tuvia Sagiv in his paper "The Hidden Secrets of The Temple Mount," 1992. This is Chuck Missler's preferred view now for several reasons.

Ancient accounts that the Temple was visible from certain places, not from others, suggest that it was further south at slightly lower altitude.

- Radar discovery of proper "voids" beneath the pavement in the southern part of the Temple Mount.
- Level of ancient aqueducts.
- Aerial infrared pictures of the Dome of The Rock showing a pentagonal structure below the shrine, raising the possibility that this was part of the Antonia Fortress which was north of the Temple. Pentagonal structures were uncommon in Israel, and when found have occultic significance, so the site of the Dome of the Rock may have been a Canaanite High Place and a shrine to Ashtoreth.
- There is reason to believe the caves under the Dome may have been an ancient burial site in which case a holy temple could never have been built there.

One big problem with this view is that it would place the Temple between the Dome of The Rock and the Mosque of Al Aqsa, which would be more awkward than if it were built on the north. Sagiv's historical research suggests that Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem rather thoroughly after excluding the Jews so that the buildings on the Temple Mount may reflect more of Hadrian's work than that of Herod the Great as has been supposed until recently.

## **The Ark Of The Covenant**

There are also several interesting theories about the present location of the Ark of The Covenant. These include:

### **Under the Temple Mount**

Jewish scholars believe that it is quite possible for it to be under the Court of Wood of Solomon's Temple, near the Western Wall ("The Wailing Wall").

### **In Ethiopia**

In an underground Temple beneath the ancient church of Zion in Aksum, northern Ethiopia, it is said that there are seven concentric rings of interior circular walls. The Ark of The Covenant is supposedly in the innermost ring, "The Holy of Holies."

According to Grant Jeffrey, The Ethiopian monarchy is the oldest continual royal dynasty in history. It began with the Queen of Sheba and her son, Menelik I. Menelik I was the offspring of her marriage to King Solomon of Israel. This royal dynasty has lasted for three thousand years. The late Emperor Haile Selassie was part of this dynasty.

Emperor Haile Selassie, in our generation, called himself "The Conquering Lion of Judah." Ethiopian tradition explains that the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Ethiopia by Prince Menelik, who was raised until he was 16 years old in Jerusalem. Solomon had a copy of the Ark made for Menelik, but he supposedly took the original because of Solomon's apostasy. The history of both the Ethiopian Jewish community (the Falashas) and the history of the ancient Christian Coptic community in that country are fascinating and certainly go back two or three thousand years.

### **Mount Nebo**

The apocryphal book of II Maccabees says that Jeremiah the prophet hid the Ark in a cave on Mt. Nebo (Jordan) at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the City when the prophet was kidnapped by his own countrymen and taken to Egypt. This legend has little else to support it.

Jeremiah 3:16 says that when Messiah returns the Ark will be remembered no more. So it is also possible the Ark was destroyed long centuries ago and does not exist now.

### **Preparations For The Temple**

Some people in Israel are convinced that the Temple will be rebuilt soon, and are preparing to help make it a reality. Here are some of the signs of this preparation:

### **Training**

The Seminary of Aterat HaKohanim (Glory of the Priests) is currently training priests and Levites in

priestly rituals and animal sacrifice. Between this seminary and another one, Hal Lindsey says that there are about 200 descendants of Levi in training now.

On March 2, 1998, an ultra-orthodox sect, The Movement To Establish The Temple, issued a call for parents of the Levitical families to place their very young children in a special compound where they can be raised in isolation so that they never come in contact with death. They say that when it is time to begin construction of the new temple, such a person, at least 13 years old, must administer the rites of purification, using the ashes of the Red Heifer.

### **Materials**

By 1994 more than 30 of the necessary vessels for animal sacrifice had been made for resumption of animal sacrifice. At that time about 65 still needed to be made.

Robes have been made for the High Priest and many other priests in the exact way prescribed by the Torah, including hand-spun flax.

### **Ashes of a Red Heifer**

According to Numbers 19:1-9, it is necessary to use the sacrificial ashes of a young red cow which has not yet reproduced for ritual cleansing of the Temple.

Until recently, this was considered a serious hurdle to the establishment of a new Temple. There had been some hopes of finding ancient ashes among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but when that no longer seemed likely, representatives of the Temple Institute started looking throughout Europe for pure red cattle. They found that they do exist. There is a breed called the Red Angus, but they were not sure whether or not the existing specimens would be pure enough to qualify.

An American rancher was known to have a herd of these red cattle, which he hoped could be used.

In May of 1997 a shocking announcement was made that a red heifer had been born unexpectedly in Israel! Examination of the animal revealed that, though it was born to parents which were not red, it's features would qualify it to be used in this way when it is of age. In early 1998 a few white hairs developed on its tail, making it no longer acceptable, but there is optimism that a suitable heifer will become available in the near future.

Another interesting twist in this matter is the successful cloning of sheep recently, opening the way for possible genetic engineering of a red heifer if it is necessary.

## Timing

Using modern building skills, it would not take longer than the 3 1/2 years of the first half of The Tribulation to finish the building. Some Temple advocates have even said the project could be done in less than a year. It is believed that cedar from Lebanon was obtained in the war in 1982 and hidden for future use in building of the Temple.

<http://ldolphin.org/kingdom/ch9.html>

## CHRONOLOGY [from WILLMINGTON]

I.Rapture of the Church

II.The Antichrist rises to power and makes a covenant with Israel which probably includes the building of the Temple

III.Two Witnesses begin their ministry along with the 144,000 anointed Jewish believers. A Great Multitude of people from all over the world are brought to faith in Jesus - they are the Tribulation Saints & Martyrs.

IV.Satan is cast out of Heaven and unleashes his forces on the world.

V.Possibly: The Antichrist experiences a fatal wound and then a resurrection by the False Prophet. This would probably be the point of Satanic Incarnation.

A.Rev 13 - 3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ... 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ... 14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honour of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

VI.The Two Witnesses are slain by the Beast, then resurrected and ascended.

VII.The Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel through "the abomination that causes desolation"

VIII.The 2nd Half of the Tribulation - The Great Tribulation, The Time of Jacob's Trouble - begins.

# The Coming Exile of Israel in Edom

By Lamber Dolphin [from his Web Page] (This is a draft discussion paper under current development. Comments welcome.)

## The Right of the Jews to Live in the Land

The God of Israel does not act whimsically or arbitrarily, but deals with individuals and nations on the basis of great contracts or covenants which He Himself initiates.

Five principle covenants, all still in effect, apply to the nation of Israel. These include the Abrahamic Covenant (later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob), The Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. (For details see The Mainline Covenants of God). Covenants can be conditional or unconditional. As it turns out only one of the covenants applicable to Israel is conditional--the right of the Jews to live in the promised land.

2 Kings, Chapter 17, documents God's reasons for His temporarily removing the ten Northern tribes from the Land, and indicates that the approaching 70 year Babylonian captivity would allow the Land to enjoy its seventh-year Sabbath rests which had been ignored by the Jews since their entry into the land under Joshua.

Small numbers of Jews returned to the Land at the end of the appointed 70 years, a modest Second Temple was constructed and the city walls rebuilt, in answers to Daniel's prayer of intercession (9:1-19). The land from that time until now was under gentile dominion, however. (See The 400 Years Between the Testaments). The second application of the conditional provisions of the Palestinian Covenant occurred when Israel as a nation rejected her rightful Messiah, Yeshua, on Palm Sunday .

As he [Jesus] was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:37-44)

One might have thought that during the 400 years following the close of the Old Testament the nation would have learned its lessons from history and been ready for the coming of the Promised One. But the priesthood had become thoroughly corrupt and the bulk of the populace wanted relief from Roman Oppression not release from inner evil, sin and death. Messiah's rejection as King was followed within a few days by His betrayal and execution. In the ensuing clamor the people asked instead for the release of Barabbas,

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barab'bas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barab'bas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with

Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified." So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:15-25)

The resurrection of Jesus and the sudden and dramatic formation of the church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost did not turn the heart of the nation to their Messiah. It was only a matter of time until the Jewish followers of Jesus, some thousands in number, were forced to flee Jerusalem. Soon the Jews in their continuing revolt against Rome provoked the Romans to remove them from the land. Thus the provisional terms of the Palestinian Covenant were invoked for the second time by the Owner of the Land.

The great Diaspora of the Jews from the Land this time lasted not 70 but 2000 years. The exciting history of the regathering of the Jews from all lands began a hundred years ago--culminating in the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 and the tiny nation's rise to power and a restored place of great power and influence as a modern progressive democracy.

One might ask if the past hundred years of great economic development, prosperity, and overwhelming military victories against enormous odds, has brought the Jews to a place of contrition and repentance and humility as far as their God is concerned--especially since the restoration of the State of Israel was born out of terrible persecution and hardship?

It is quite true that many thousands of Jews have become believers in Yeshua over the past 2000 years, and have been added to the church. And it is true that there is a small remnant of some thousands of believing Jews now resident in the Land of Israel. Yet for the most part Israel is a secular state, not only indifferent to the God of their Fathers, but openly hostile to any notions that the God of the Land is anything more than an interesting mythology now outgrown and to be discarded.

Although God is known for his great patience and longsuffering, it is appropriate to ask how much longer the God of the Covenants will tolerate the present indifference, rebellion and disregard for His Person that typifies the Israel of the past hundred years? We have further indications from the New Testament that tell us that not only will Israel continue in its denial of Yeshua as Messiah, but they will in fact readily embrace a counterfeit,

*You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men. But I know that you have not the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? (John 5:39-44)*

Israel is God's model nation and in spite of the fact that Israel's history of repeated failure is on public display in the Bible for all to read, God has neither abandoned nor rejected His chosen people. When all the final scores are in concerning all the nations and their animosity and hatred of the one true God no one will have any cause for boasting.

One hundred years of God's grace, kindness, mercy and favor have not turned the nation of Israel towards faith in their God. Nor are they any closer to accepting their true Messiah. Will then God banish the Jews from the land again, perhaps this time permanently?

The answer from Scripture is clear. Israel's final testing will occur in the land and involve the destruction of a majority of the populace, a time of trial compared to which the Nazi holocaust will pale in insignificance.

## The Next Major Biblical Event in History: The Rapture of the Church

According to the New Testament, God has been occupied with the calling out of a church from all the nations:

*Peter has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old.' (Acts 15:14-18. The quote is from Amos 9:11-12).*

In his great discourse on Israel's future the Apostle Paul assures us,

Lest you [believing Gentiles] be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in [to the church], and so [or, "then"] all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all. (Romans 11:25-32)

### The 144,000 Called

Revelation Chapter Seven describes the calling out of 144,000 select Jewish evangelists from the nation Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation period, just after the Rapture of the Church. The 144,000 will vigorously evangelize Israel, completing the task begun by the disciples of Jesus, within Israel but also extending their field to all the nations. The result of their bold and fearless evangelism program will be hundreds of thousands of converts to Jesus Christ.

This great company, neither part of the church, nor members of believing Israel as such, are usually known as "the tribulation saints." Persecution by the forces of evil under the beast and false prophet will be so swift and severe most, if not all, of these new converts will be martyred.

After the Rapture the believing remnant of Jews in Israel who place their faith in Yeshua will be reduced temporarily to zero. The calling and conversion of the 144,000 will soon result in new converts to the God of Israel within the nation, (Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17). Judging by recent history, the number of Jews living in Israel who find a personal relationship with Jesus on an annual basis is perhaps only a few dozen, but possibly might reach several hundreds ---as many converts to Yeshua remain secret believers and do not openly and publicly acknowledge their faith.

Suffice it to say that during the first half of the tribulation period we might expect the size of the believing remnant of Jews in Israel to climb to at least several thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands. The seven year period following the parousia (the rapture) and preceding the epiphaneia (the Second Coming in power and glory), is normally divided into two halves. The first three and a half years are characterized by some degree of apparent world peace as the false prophet (i.e. the false Messiah--Revelation 13:11-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10, Matthew 24:15) in Israel negotiates a favorable Middle Eastern peace treaty with the help of the political and religious leaders of Western Europe (Rev 13:1-10).

That peace treaty, described by Isaiah as Israel's "covenant with death," will fail---and terrible war will break out in Israel. The second

half of the tribulation period is usually called "the great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21) or "the Day of the Lord." Jeremiah calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble," (Jeremiah 30-31, Daniel 12:1). See The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

### The Flight of the Remnant from Jerusalem at Mid-Tribulation

The mid-point of the tribulation is to be marked by a great sign in Jerusalem. The false Messiah (Paul's "man of sin", 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12) will enter the Third Temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. That event Jesus had said in the Olivet Discourse, would bring great peril to the residents of Jerusalem. The peril for believers in Yeshua at that time period will include the immediate danger of military invasion of Jerusalem by foreign armies. The believing remnant of Jews in Jerusalem at the time the false messiah enters the Third Temple declaring himself to be God will also be in grave danger of their lives because of the antichrist's vigorous persecution of believers, that is, those few Jews who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Yeshua. As mentioned above, the size of this believing remnant at the mid-tribulation point is open to discussion, but for the sake of argument it would seem to be some thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of believing Jews. The warning to this group by Jesus in Matthew 24 is as follows,

*"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. And as for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days pray that your night may not be in winter or on a sabbath."*

Luke's gospel (Chapter 21) gives a slightly different slant on this crisis,

*"But when you [believing Jews] see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

Ray Stedman remarks on this event,

Who are they who must flee so urgently when the last days begin? Who dare not hesitate long enough even to go back into the house to pick up a wrap, but must immediately head for the hills? There is no need to wonder, for the Lord says plainly, "those who are in Judea" Now Judea is a geographical part of the land of Israel, ancient Palestine. It comprises the hill country surrounding the city of Jerusalem and includes the city as well. It is to the residents of Jerusalem and Judea that this warning is addressed.

Furthermore, the Lord's mention of the Sabbath establishes the fact that these residents of Judea are Jews. He urges them to pray that their flight will not be in the winter, with its distress of cold, or on the Sabbath, with its travel limitations, for Jews are allowed to travel only a short distance on a Sabbath day. Later in this passage these Jews are called "the elect" ("for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened"), and this makes clear they are believing Jews, that is, men and women of faith who know and love Jesus Christ as Lord and are prepared to live or die for him.

They are not Christians in the usual sense of that term, referring to those who are members of the church, for we are told that in the church there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. Jews are not

to be distinguished from Gentiles within the church. These distinctions, we are precisely told by the apostle Paul, have been invalidated in the church. The "middle wall of partition" has been eliminated; there are no distinctions of background, race or religious training that are recognized within the church of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, Christians, we are told, are free from the law and no longer observe special days, special feasts, new moons and Sabbaths. In his letter to the Colossians the apostle Paul clearly speaks of the fact that the Sabbaths were included in those shadows which were done away in Christ. But here the Sabbath distinctly will be a restricting factor in the flight of these people. Here then will be a class of people who cannot be identified with the present day church. They will be Jewish believers in Christ who will be converted after the removal of the church and before the time of the Great Tribulation.

As Ray Stedman has noted, Jesus does not tell the residents of Tel Aviv or Haifa to flee. The greatest danger is in Jerusalem and the peril is so great that the true believers must leave town immediately. The number fleeing will certainly number thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands. They are called to flee to the mountains, and since Jerusalem is already in the mountains of Judea, the flight will evidently be down to Jericho, then across into Jordan. Most Bible scholars believe this godly remnant will find refuge in the ancient rock-hewn cliff city of Petra, or least in the land of Edom (Southern Jordan). They will survive, protected by God, for three and a half years.

The route of escape for the Jewish believing remnant from Antichrist's military pursuit as he seeks to annihilate them, has been made ready by the Lord:

"He (the last king of the North) shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites." (Daniel 11:41)

Isaiah also instructs the believing remnant of Israel to find a safe hiding place during the time of Jacob's trouble when God's judgment will fall on the whole earth,

"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past. For behold, the LORD is coming forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, and will no more cover her slain." (Isaiah 26:20-21)

#### **Not All the Jews Flee to Edom**

The majority of Jews in Israel will remain in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel during the second half of the tribulation, ignoring the warning of Jesus given some 2000 years earlier. The majority of Jews in fact will stay---and will maintain their secular, apostate stance opposing the God of their forefathers. God will continue to warn them---as Jeremiah did at the time of the Babylonian captivity. At that time remnants led by Daniel and Ezekiel had escaped to Babylon where they enjoyed God's protection and blessing. Jeremiah's warnings went unheeded in Jerusalem, yet God did not leave Himself without a witness in the capital.

In the last half of the coming tribulation period, Jerusalem is to come under military siege and be overrun by foreign armies one more time. Zechariah announces that this will happen just prior to Messiah's final return to the city,

"For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:2).

The prophet Joel also describes this final invasion,

*"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land (of Israel) tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations. Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them."*

Joel wrote of the approaching invasion of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar in his own day, and also about the final invasion of foreign armies, especially from the North that would come just prior to Messiah's coming in power and glory. The clue to the end-time application is the phrase "the Day of the LORD" which occurs again at the end of the following section:

*"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale. Like warriors they charge, like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another, each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city (Jerusalem), they run upon the walls; they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his host is exceedingly great; he that executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?"*

God in mercy has previously saved the godly remnant in Israel at the mid-tribulation point and taken them safely to refuge in Petra for the last half of the tribulation period. Still, Yahweh calls to the remaining Jews in Israel to turn to Him, even at the late hour they are now living in.

Joel's words apply well to both the approaching captivity in Babylon---which was on the near horizon in Joel's day---and even more to the situation during the end time period.

*"Yet even now," says the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. Who knows whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare thy people, O LORD, and make not thy heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"*

Joel also foresees the final conversion of Israel at the very last minute, just preceding the final return of Messiah. In mercy and grace God will at that time turn one third of the nation back to himself. This eleventh-hour conversion of great numbers of Jews to Messiah could well amount to more than one million new believers coming into the kingdom just as the Messiah is returning to the land for the final time:

*Then the LORD became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. "I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his front into the eastern sea, and his rear into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great*

things. "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. "Be glad, O sons of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD, your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. "The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit. " [partially fulfilled at Pentecost] And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2)

Joel's apocalyptic warning is but one of many in the Old Testament which has a double fulfillment. Joel warned against the devastating invasions of Nebuchadnezzar that lay just ahead in his own day. But the Spirit of God also had in mind a greater and more complete fulfillment of this passage at the end of the age we now live in.

At the same time Jesus calls his faithful remnant to flee Jerusalem and hide in the desert place, he will place two powerful witnesses in Jerusalem. For a full 3.5 years they will speak to the nation and to the world of impending judgment. In spite of the enormously hostile environment of Jerusalem in that Day, these fearless spokesman for the Lord will be kept safe until their mission is accomplished.

### Two Fearless Witnesses on the Temple Mount

Revelation, Chapter 11, gives us details concerning two special servants God sets before His nation during the final turbulent months just prior to the return of Messiah in power and glory:

*Then I (John the Apostle) was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any one would harm them, fire pours out from their mouth and consumes their foes; if any one would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed. They have power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three days and a half men from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up hither!" And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a*

*cloud. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come. Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, "We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Revelation 11)*

The great earthquake mentioned in this passage is probably the same earthquake that marks the last of the Seven Seals (Rev. 6:5), the last of the Seven Trumpets (Rev. 9:19), the last of the Seven Thunders (Rev. 11:13, above) and the last of the Seven Bowls of wrath (Rev. 16:18-21) which all run in parallel. (See also Ezekiel 38:19-20 and Zechariah 14:4-5). Many Bible scholars hold that all these scriptures are homing in on one or possibly a connected series of great cataclysmic earthquakes that punctuate the end of the age, the open return of Messiah and the dawning of the Millennial age. Not only does the city of Jerusalem suffer great damage from this earthquake, but "the cities of the nations fall," according to Revelation 16:19. See Earthquakes and the Bible.

### A Symbolic Overview of All of Israel's History

The Book of the Revelation, Chapter 12 presents a great vision of the nation of Israel portrayed as a woman. The vantage point is that of eternity.

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

*Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world---he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"*

*And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time (i.e., for 3 1/2 years---the second half of the tribulation period).*

*The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. (Revelation 12)*

Ray Stedman offers the following commentary on this passage, There is no mystery to the dragon's identity, for John will disclose that to us in verse 9: "that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray." In the opening verse of chapter 12, the devil is symbolized as a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads. But he is also "that ancient serpent" the very one who appeared in the Garden of Eden to the first woman, Eve, deceiving her and introducing sin into the human race. Dragons, of course, symbolize satanic worship in many cultures around the world. As John says in verse 9, the career of the devil has been devoted to deceiving the entire human race and leading human beings astray.

The male child who is born to the woman is the next easiest to identify because verse 5 says that He is the one "who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." This is one of four references in Revelation to Psalm 2. In verse 9 of that prophetic, messianic psalm we read, "You will rule them with an iron scepter."

Though the book of Revelation is truly rooted in the entire Old Testament, it would be a valid analogy to compare Revelation to an oak tree that grows and expands out of the acorn of Psalm 2. In this psalm we read that the One enthroned in heaven says, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill," and that this King will rule the nations with an iron scepter. Clearly this is a reference to the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennium, as is pictured for us in the book of Revelation. The reference to an iron scepter (in Psalm 2 and Revelation 12:5) always indicates a millennial scene. The iron scepter speaks of strict justice. The Millennium will be a time of worldwide blessing and prosperity when the curse of sin will be at least partly removed from the natural world. But sin will still manifest itself to some degree--hence the iron scepter of Christ. As we shall see in Revelation 20, righteousness will reign on earth during the Millennium, but it will have to be enforced.

After the Millennium the new heaven and the new earth will appear. At that time Christ will no longer reign with a scepter of iron. Nothing evil can enter into the new heaven and the new earth. When sin is finally extinguished forever, the defining characteristic of Christ will no longer be His iron reign but tender, shepherd-like love as He ministers personally and kindly to His redeemed people.

That brings us to the mystery of the woman. Why is she clothed the sun? Why is the moon under her feet? Why are twelve stars arranged in a crown over her head? There are several theories as to whom or what this symbolic woman represents. Roman Catholic scholars have concluded that she is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Having understood that the child who will rule the nation with an iron scepter is Jesus, it certainly makes sense that the mother that child would be Mary. The problem with this theory, however, is that there is no way you can fit Mary into verse 6 where we read that she "fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days." That never happened to Mary, and never will. The woman in Revelation 12 does not represent a single individual but rather a community of people.

Some Bible scholars say she symbolizes the church. Certainly there is some substantiation for this view, in that the church is pictured at the close of Revelation as a woman, the bride of Christ. But as with the previous theory this view has an insurmountable problem: It is impossible for the woman to represent the church because she is depicted as giving birth to Jesus. The church did not produce Jesus; Jesus produced the church! The church was "born" out of the wounded side of Jesus.

What, then, is the true identity of this woman of mystery? Let us examine the clues one by one and see where they lead. The clues are significant: The woman is clothed with the sun, moon is under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars is on her head. There is only one other place in Scripture where you find all these symbols clustered together in one place: Genesis 37, the story of Joseph the boy-dreamer. He dreamed one night that the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down before him. The sun, moon, and stars represented his father, mother, and eleven brothers, respectively. Eventually this dream would come true---but not until after those eleven brothers sold Joseph into slavery, not until after Joseph overcame trials of false accusation and unjust imprisonment, not until after Joseph became second in command over all of Egypt.

The symbols of the sun, moon, and stars make it clear: The woman represents the people of Israel, all of whom are descendants of Joseph's father Jacob. Joseph himself would be the twelfth star. In Romans 9:5 Paul said of the people of Israel, "from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ." That is why Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, "Salvation is from the Jews." Even the salvation of the Gentiles comes by way of the Jews, because it is the Jewish race that produced Jesus Christ. So here again, in the symbolism of the woman clothed in the sun with the stars at her head and the moon at her feet, we have a picture of Israel coming again into prominence in the last days.

To understand the vivid images and symbols of Revelation 12 we should remember that we are viewing earthly scenes from heaven's point of view. In Revelation 4 we saw that John was caught up into heaven and shown all the things that follow in Revelation 4 through 19. When you look at earthly events from heaven's standpoint, time is never a factor. This vision does not present a sequence or an ordered chronology. It presents occurrences arranged according to their meaning and importance from a heavenly, eternal perspective. Events that may be widely separated in time may be clustered together in eternity's view. From heaven's perspective we are shown what happens, not when it happens. If we approach this chapter---and indeed all of Revelation---with this point of view, symbols that once seemed murky and obscure will pop into focus...

What we have in Revelation 12 is a kind of tableau, like a scene in a wax museum, of three-dimensional figures frozen in place at the climactic moment of a dramatic event. Satan, the great dragon, is crouched with its fangs bared and its eyes smoldering, watching Israel as she prepares to give birth to her long-promised Son. Israel is pregnant and crying out in her labor pains. The dragon's intention is clear: it seek devour Jesus as soon as He emerges from the womb of Israel and make His appearance upon the earth. What is the historical reality represented by this grim and symbol-laden tableau?

This scene takes us back to the historical birth of Jesus, to the time of the Roman Empire and its subjugation of Israel. It takes us back to time of King Herod the Great and the demonic malice and enmity filled his heart when he learned of the birth of Jesus. It is easy to see events of that time in the symbolic tableau of Revelation 12:1-4...The dragon of world power in Jesus' day was the Roman Empire which in the Jewish land of Judea was represented by the person of Rome's puppet king Herod the Great. Though in his early career Herod had been a comparatively progressive and benevolent despot, his notorious cruel streak and murderous paranoia were already in full evidence by the time Christ was born. In a fit of jealous rage Herod murdered his favorite among his eight wives, as well as several of her family members. He later murdered his own firstborn son Antipas. So his attempted to kill the newborn Son of God by slaughtering the infants of Bethlehem was true to form for this brutal and unfeeling man. Like a dragon, he lay in wait for the child to be born---then pounced, beast-like, spilling blood as if it were water. But God intervened, sparing the infant Jesus from the maw of the dragon. Warned by the appearance of an angel in a dream, Joseph Mary took Jesus on a secret journey to Egypt beyond the reach of Herod.

This brings us to verse 5. It is at this point in the symbolic allegory of the dragon, the woman, and the child that we come upon a startling statement. John writes, "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." Completely ignoring any chronology or sequence of historical events, this symbolic scene takes a sudden jump from the birth of Jesus to His ascension some 30 years later, skipping over His life, ministry, death, and resurrection in a single breath. In this image, John is shown only the birth and ascension into heaven of Jesus. This symbol encompasses both the beginning and the ending of His earthly ministry.

But a problem of interpretation arises at this point. The problem is this: The clear implication of Revelation 12:5 is that Jesus was "snatched up to God" in order to deliver Him from harm, from the reach of the dragon. Yet we know from reading the gospels and the book of Acts that Jesus' ascension was by no means an escape from harm. Rather it was a triumphal exit following His victory over death. The resurrected Lord was completely beyond the reach of His enemies, and there was no harm anyone could do to Him. Why, then, does this tableau in Revelation 12 depict Jesus as having been "snatched up to God" as a child is snatched out of the path of an onrushing car?

Here is where the interpretation of Revelation becomes sensitive, because of the non-linear, non-chronological nature of the vision. The interpretation is this: There is an aspect of our Lord Jesus Christ which does find deliverance from danger, from the rage of the red dragon, by being snatched away into heaven. By this I mean the Body of Christ that is on the earth today---that is, the church. Throughout the New Testament, the Lord and His church are regarded as one. When Saul (later the apostle Paul) was confronted by an appearance of Christ on the Damascus Road, Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul had never even met Jesus---but he was persecuting the church. When Jesus spoke to Saul of His church He identified completely with that church. If Saul was persecuting the Lord's church, Saul was persecuting Him, because they were one. Paul later wrote to the Corinthians, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." The church, he said, is a body, and "the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ." The church and the Lord together are the body of Christ. So when we come to Revelation 12 and see that the child, representing Christ, was "snatched up to God and to his throne," it becomes clear that this is a reference to the removal of the church from the world and from the threatening presence of the dragon...

Verse 6 carries us on into the Tribulation period. In leaping immediately from the birth of Christ to the removal of the church and the beginning of the Tribulation, these verses in Revelation 12 completely eclipse all the centuries of the church age in which we now live. In verse 6, the woman (representing the people of Israel) flees into the desert to a place prepared for her by God. There she is taken care of for a period of 1,260 days---a significant time period, as we learned in the previous chapter. In Revelation 11, we saw that the two witnesses will prophesy for a period of 1,260 days---the last 3 1/2 years of the seven-year Tribulation period. So it would be reasonable and consistent to conclude that the desert exile of the believing Jewish people (represented by the woman) would also take place during the same 3 1/2-year period in which the two witnesses prophesy against the Antichrist.

Notice, too, that a subtle shift has taken place in the symbolism represented by the woman. In verses 1 through 4 the woman represented the Jewish nation which was to bring forth Jesus, the Son of God. In verse 5 the child is born and is snatched up to God's throne. In verse 6 the woman flees into the desert to escape the persecution of the Antichrist and the Tribulation. The fleeing woman, then, represents not the Jewish people as a whole---for many Jews will be deceived by the Antichrist--- but the believing remnant of the Jews, those who have trusted in the Messiah and have refused to submit to the rule of the Antichrist.

...This woman, you recall, represents not all Jews of the last days but only the believing remnant. Those Jews who have not believed are suffering under the judgments that are foretold in the Old Testament prophecies. This is "the time of Jacob's trouble," when apostate Jews are cruelly eliminated by the dragon and the faithful remnant is pursued and persecuted. The remnant escapes to the desert, and the swiftness of their flight from danger is symbolized by the eagle's wings.

Many Bible scholars believe the faithful Jews of the last days will flee to the city of Petra, south of the Dead Sea---a strangely beautiful city hewn out of the rock of the earth that is presently an attraction for tourists and archeologists in the Holy Land. Perhaps this is true, but no one can say with certainty. What is important in these verses is that God will care for this believing remnant in a supernatural way. They will be borne out of danger on the metaphorical wings of an eagle. I am sure it is no coincidence that this is the very same metaphor God used when the nation of Israel was led out of Egypt by Moses. "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt," God said to Israel through His servant Moses, "and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." (Exodus 19:4) This is a picture of God's loving protection and care for the people who are His faithful remnant in that day.

The symbolism of the river of water which the serpent spews in an effort to overtake the woman is likely an image of a vast host of soldiers sent by the Antichrist to overtake and destroy the faithful of Israel in the last days. But God will protect His faithful remnant, probably by means of a natural cataclysm---perhaps an earthquake---that causes the destruction of the Antichrist's armies and the frustration of his plans.

The Antichrist will be diverted from attacking the faithful Jews of Israel (symbolized by the woman), and will instead turn his attention to "the rest of her offspring" and make war against them. Who is John describing in this phrase? Most likely "the rest of her offspring" refers to "Christ's commandos," the 144,000 Jews we first met in Revelation 7 and will meet again in Revelation 14. They are the special band of believing Jews who move out into the four corners of the world, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to all the nations. The devil gives his final attention to destroying this group because of their powerful and effective witness to the world. The rage of the devil is increasing as he grows more and more desperate, knowing that his time is short. Like any wild and dangerous beast, the devil becomes more deadly and ferocious as he is backed into a corner.

### **The Return of the Remnant from Edom**

The ancient capital of Edom was the city of Bozrah---the Hebrew bosra means sheepfold. It lies 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in present-day Jordan. The present Jordanian city of Buseirah is not on any modern road but is a remote mountain village of difficult access. Ancient Bozrah at the same location, however, was on the main North West trade route known as the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17). The city was noted for its weaving industry and export of dyed garments.

Edom as the territory allotted to Jacob's brother Esau is documented in Genesis 36 where a man named Bozrah a descendant of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land "before there were any kings in Israel." The historical record in Deuteronomy includes this parenthetical note:

(The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; like the Anakim they are also known as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them, and settled in their stead; as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.) (Dt. 2:2:10-12)

Edom's long-standing enmity against Israel ultimately brought God's judgment on Edom. Obadiah the prophet devotes his short but potent message to the judgment of Edom, telling us of her pride and arro-

gance and the reasons for God's final judgment on these people. Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, wrote of impending judgment on Edom:

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because he pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever. So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah." (Amos 1:11-12)

Several writers have written fine descriptions of Petra and the history of that region of ancient Edom. The Nabateans displaced the descendants of Esau probably in the 6th Century BC. The Greeks and Romans built extensively there and the area was well populated as late as Roman times. Today the area is desolate and sparsely populated.

South of Bozrah 20 some miles on the King's Highway is Petra, the capital city of the Nabateans. Tourists to this vast mountain-enclosed ancient city in the Wadi Musa generally enter from the east on foot or on horseback through El Siq, an 6000 feet long narrow cleft (width: 12-30 feet) with 100-500 foot high cliff walls. Tombs and houses carved into the bed rock over a vast area at Petra would be suitable for temporarily housing many thousands of people. Mt. Hor is nearby, where Aaron died after Moses passed the high priestly garments of Aaron on to Eliezer in the sight of the congregation (Numbers 20:23-29). An Islamic shrine marks the tomb site.

The deliverance of the godly remnant by Yeshua, "the angel of the presence" from Petra at the close of the tribulation period is alluded to by Moses in his last words to his people before he died.

This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. He said, "The LORD came ["will come"] from Sinai, and dawned ["will dawn"] from Seir upon us; he shone ["will shine"] forth from Mount Paran, [in Edom] he will come with his ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. Yea, he loves his people; all those consecrated to him are in his hand; so they follow in thy steps, receiving direction from thee, (as) when Moses commanded us a law, as a possession for the assembly of Jacob. Thus the LORD will become king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people will be gathered, all the tribes of Israel together. (Deuteronomy 33:1-5)

Earlier we saw that the imagery of the remnant being taken to Petra "on eagles' wings" was reminiscent of God's deliverance of his people under Moses. God will supernaturally protect his remnant in the wilderness of Petra, supernaturally rescue them from the pursuit of Antichrist's armies (Rev. 12:15,16). Yeshua will then lead the remnant to Jerusalem where he will make his public appearance, his epiphaneia.

Moses at his death gave prophetic blessings upon the tribes of Israel, one by one. The fulfillment of these promises will take place after Messiah returns to Jerusalem by way of Seir and Bozrah:

*"Let Reuben live, and not die, nor let his men be few." And this he said of Judah: "Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him in to his people. With thy hands contend for him, and be a help against his adversaries." And of Levi he said, "Give to Levi thy Thummim, and thy Urim to thy godly one, whom thou didst test at Massah, with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and mother, 'I regard them not'; he disowned his brothers, and ignored his children. For they observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy ordinances, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt offering upon thy altar. Bless, O LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; crush the loins of his adversaries, of those that hate him, that they rise not again." Of Benjamin he said, "The beloved of the LORD, he dwells in safety by him; he encompasses him all the day long, and makes his dwelling between his shoulders." And of Joseph he said,*

*"Blessed by the LORD be his land, with the choicest gifts of heaven above, and of the deep that couches beneath, with the choicest fruits of the sun, and the rich yield of the months, with the finest produce of the ancient mountains, and the abundance of the everlasting hills, with the best gifts of the earth and its fulness, and the favor of him that dwelt in the bush. Let these come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that is prince among his brothers. His firstling bull has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall push the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth; such are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and such are the thousands of Manasseh."*

*And of Zebulun he said, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out; and Issachar, in your tents. They shall call peoples to their mountain; there they offer right sacrifices; for they suck the affluence of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand." And of Gad he said, "Blessed be he who enlarges Gad! Gad couches like a lion, he tears the arm, and the crown of the head. He chose the best of the land for himself, for there a commander's portion was reserved; and he came to the heads of the people, with Israel he executed the commands and just decrees of the LORD." And of Dan he said, "Dan is a lion's whelp, that leaps forth from Bashan." And of Naphtali he said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the LORD, possess the lake and the south." And of Asher he said, "Blessed above sons be Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. Your bars shall be iron and bronze; and as your days, so shall your strength be. "There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, and in his majesty through the skies. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you, and said, Destroy. So Israel will dwell in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and wine; yea, his heavens drop down dew. Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you; and you shall tread upon their high places." (Deuteronomy 33)*

An enigmatic prophecy about Enoch (who was translated into heaven prior to the flood of Noah) is recorded in the book of Jude has a double-fulfillment: First, at the time of the Flood of Noah to judge the antediluvian world, destroying probably many billions of earth's inhabitants and delivering eight persons in the Ark. Then, at the end of the age we now live in Jesus will again appear "with his ten thousands of holy ones."

*It was of these (false teachers) also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord will come with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14-15)*

A mystery-filled prophecy in Ezekiel clearly relates in part to the end time:

"As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you (Israel). I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out [largely fulfilled in the last century]; and (then, after that) I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, [Note: The term "wilderness of the peoples" may refer to Edom, according to some Bible scholars], and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number. [the term the wilderness of the peoples, v35, in the Bible often refers to Edom]. {Note: The term "pass under the rod" appears in Leviticus 27 and symbolizes a separation of the consecrated and the unconsecrated animals of the flock.]

I will purge out the rebels [apostates] from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn (Edom?), but they shall not enter (back into?) the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols. "For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord GOD, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings. As a pleasing odor I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all the doings with which you have polluted yourselves [see Zechariah 12:10-14]; and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, says the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 20:33-44)

Isaiah 11 also contains mystery concerning the end time:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious. In that day [at the end of the tribulation] the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the [rest of the] dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall swoop down upon the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them. And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt (the Suez Canal); and will wave his hand over the River [the Euphrates?, Rev. 16:12] with his scorching wind, and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dryshod. And there will be a [new king's] highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt. (Isaiah 11)

But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you

have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Ezekiel says the following about God's mercy, grace and compassion coming on the nation of Israel at the close of the age we live in:

For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. [Then] I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. [This is an announcement, similar to Jeremiah 30, of God's intention to bring the people of Israel into the New Covenant which Jesus put into effect with his 11 disciples at the Last Supper.] You {Jews} shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses; and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. [Here is the national repentance of Zechariah 12:10-14 again.]

Ezekiel then describes Messiah's reign over all the nations, from Jerusalem, and the millennial prosperity He will bring to all mankind, through Israel:

*It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it. "Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their men like a flock. Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 36:21-38)*

### God's Dialogues with the Messiah

The latter chapters of Isaiah contain a remarkable series of dialogues between God the Father and His servant the Messiah, or between the prophet and Messiah. In Chapter 42, Messiah is God's humble servant who will not only save Israel but aid the gentiles and bring world-wide justice:

*"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands [isles, or continents, that is, the gentiles dwelling to the corners of the earth from Israel] wait for his law." (42:1-4)*

In Isaiah 43-44, Messiah is seen as restoring Israel by forgiving them of all their sins and delivering Jacob from all his enemies. In Chapter 44, Cyrus the Mede is designated and called by name (!) many decades before he was born. God chose him to aid in the restoration of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Messiah gives a personal

description of his commission from the Father and contains an intimate discussion between God and His Messiah which reveals much about the content of the prayers of Jesus with His Father during his time on earth which would come 700 years later.

In Isaiah 50, Messiah is the true Israel who fulfills all that the nation had failed to attain because of persistent rebellion and disobedience. In Isaiah 52:13 through 53, Messiah is the suffering servant of the Lord whose death and resurrection are vividly foretold. In Chapter 49, Messiah is Israel's goel, or kinsman-redeemer:

[God]...saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intervene; then his own arm brought him victory, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render requital. So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives. 'And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,' says the LORD. 'And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore.'" (59:15-21).

In Chapter 63 the dialog takes the following form:

ISAIAH: Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments (Heb.: "garments of glowing colors") from Bozrah, he who is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?

MESSIAH, THE WARRIOR KING AND KINSMAN-REDEEMER: "It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save."

ISAIAH: Why is thy apparel red, and thy garments like his that treads in the wine press?

MESSIAH: "I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me. I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

The blood spattering His garments is not the blood of His crucifixion, for that work on the cross was completely finished and ended 2000 years earlier. The blood is that of His enemies, slain in battle, and especially the blood of apostate Jews who have joined the armies of Antichrist to oppose Him. This is clear by the reference to the treading of the wine press. Grapes and vines are a picture of Israel. The harvest of the gentiles is described by the figure of the wheat and the tares. Two separate judgments are involved: a judgment of apostate Jews, and a judgment of the gentile nations. This is clear from Revelation Chapter 14:

"Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes

are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia." (Revelation 14:14-20).

Meanwhile the believing remnant is gathered under the care of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep at Bozrah,

"I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. He who opens the breach will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king will pass on before them, the LORD at their head." (Micah 2:12-13)

The Lord's return (at the parousia) to care for his remnant at Petra and his leading them safely back to Jerusalem by way of Bozrah is then compared by Isaiah with God's care for the Jews through the wilderness in the Days of Moses:

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, Surely they are my people, sons who will not deal falsely; and he became their Savior. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence (compare 1 Cor. 10:3) saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name. Now follows a prayer of the remnant for deliverance: Look down from heaven and see, from thy holy and glorious habitation. Where are thy zeal and thy might? The yearning of thy heart and thy compassion are withheld from me. For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is thy name. O LORD, why dost thou make us err from thy ways and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not? Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy heritage. Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary (the Third Temple) a little while; our adversaries have trodden it down. We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled, like those who are not called by thy name. (Isaiah 63)

### The Hebrew Prophetic Future Verb Tense

Verb tenses are not as clearly specified in the Hebrew language as they are in English. In a number of prophetic passages of the Old Testament the verbs are commonly translated as past tense in our English Bibles. However, the prophetic future tense can equally well be used. (When the Hebrew letter waw is added before a word it means "and." When added as a suffix it means "his." Waw before a verb indicates a change of the tense of the verb from past to future and vice versa (a verb in the past tense with a waw in front of it is to be understood as future tense).

Notice in the passage quoted below how the words of the prophet Habakkuk take on new meaning for the end of the age if one switches the verb tenses from past tense to future.

Habakkuk lived just before Nebuchadnezzar's siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple so he was downhearted and grieved because God was bringing great Israel against the chosen

people through a foreign people of even great wickedness. It was a dark hour for history similar to the hour that Israel faces in our own time, so Habakkuk's words and prayers applied both to his immediate situation and also to the end of the present age:

*A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. O LORD, I have heard the report of thee, and thy work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years renew it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God will come from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran (i.e., from Petra). His glory will cover the heavens, and the earth will be full of his praise. Selah. His brightness is like the light, rays flash from his hand; and there he will veil his power. Before him goes pestilence, and plague follows close behind. He will stand and measure the earth; he will look and shake the nations; then the eternal mountains will be scattered, the everlasting hills sink low. His ways will be as of old. I see the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian tremble. Is your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Is your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you ride upon thy horses, upon your chariot of victory? You will strip the sheath from thy bow, and put the arrows to the string. Selah. You will cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains will see you, and writhe; the raging waters sweep on; the deep gives forth its voice, it lifts its hands on high. The sun and moon stand still in their habitation at the light of your arrows as they speed, at the flash of your glittering spear. You will stride the earth in fury, you will trample the nations in anger. You will go forth for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You will crush the head of the wicked (one), laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah. You will pierce with your shafts the head of his warriors, who come like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You will trample the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters. I hear, and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones, my steps totter beneath me. I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread upon my high places. (Habakkuk 3:1-19)*

### **Jerusalem Surrounded by Armies**

Luke Chapter 21 parallels Matthew 24, a sermon by Jesus to his disciples known as the "Olivet Discourse" ---because Jesus was seated with his disciples on the Mt. of Olives opposite the Second Temple when he gave this sweeping outline of the future. Luke adds what Matthew does not tell us, that Jerusalem will be surrounded by hostile armies at the time of the end.

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For (a) great distress shall be upon the [entire] earth and (b) wrath upon this people [Israel]; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jesus then described the last half of the tribulation period vividly and succinctly:

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the (angelic) powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Compare Heb. 12:26-29) And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption (O Israel) is drawing near." And he told them a parable:

"Look at the fig tree (Israel), and all the trees; (surrounding nations) as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:20-36)

Isaiah Chapters 24 through 27 are often called "The Little Apocalypse" because of the prophet's description of this end-time period, "the time of Jacob's trouble" for Israel (Jer. 30).

"Behold, the LORD will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left. The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. No more do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up so that none can enter. There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has reached its eventide; the gladness of the earth is banished. Desolation is left in the city (Jerusalem), the gates are battered into ruins. For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done..."

### **The Final Conversion of Israel**

Israel's national prayer for their Messiah to come and to forgive them is found in Hosea Chapter 5 beginning at verse 15. Most reputable scholars believe this prayer must be prayed by the nation as a precondition for their national salvation in the coming of Yeshua the Messiah to save them:

*I [the LORD] will return again to my place, until they [Israel] acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me, saying, Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth." (Hosea 5:15-6:3).*

Earlier we traced the escape of a remnant of some thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands of believing Jews from Jerusalem to Petra which will take at the time of the desecration of the Third Temple at the mid-point of the tribulation period.

Yet as the age comes to a full close many passages of Scripture speak of the national conversion of Israel. We have seen that the imagery of the trampling out of the vineyard and the blood like grape juice flowing as high as a horse's bridle up and down the length of Israel will be Jewish blood as God judges the apostate majority of Jews in the land of Israel. In this terrible time for Israel, millions of men from invading Gentile armies fighting World War III in Israel will also meet their violent end. All the while the terrible judgments from God depicted in the Book of the Revelation will devastate the entire

earth. Most of mankind will perish and the great infrastructures of the past thousand of years of civilization will be destroyed. Yet Paul argues in Romans 11 that in spite of all this "all Israel will be saved."

Lest you [Gentiles] be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, [to the church] and then all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel they are [now] enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:25-36)

Paul is careful to make clear that he is not speaking of each and every Jew being converted, but true Israel is limited to those who ultimately believe in Yeshua within the nation. Just how many Jews will be saved at the very end of the age? Zechariah seems to give the clue:

### Two Thirds and One Third of All Israel

In the whole land, says the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:8, 9)

The conversion of one third of the Jews in Israel (if it happened today) would mean well over a million and a half converts to the true and living God. Zechariah says the new converts will be called on to undergo a terrible trial of their faith during the final days (months?) of the great military campaign of Armageddon involving as it will as many as 200 million soldiers from the armies of the nations. While the believing remnant in Edom "passes under the rod" of God's merciful, evaluating judgment, the eleventh-hour converts in Israel must "pass through the fire."

Though our own nation, the United States, contains a professing Christian population that appears to be many tens of millions of believers, it is more realistic to say that the "believing remnant" in America today is perhaps only 5 to 10% of those professing faith in Jesus Christ. Thus the future large-scale conversion of Jews to belief in Yeshua at the close of the age will represent a very great work of grace by the God of Israel. A final conversion of one-third of the populace of Israel will surely be very large in percentage compared to the size of the fractional wheat harvest from among the gentiles. The end result of Yeshua's work in Israel at the end of the age will be a completely righteous nation of believers chosen to be the head of all the nations. Isaiah wrote these words about 700 BC:

On this mountain (Mt. Zion) the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil [of pride and spiritual blindness] that is spread over all nations. (2 Cor. 4:3,4) He will swallow up death for ever (1 Cor. 15:54), and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth (Rev. 21:4); for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." For the

hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain [Jerusalem], and Moab [Jordan] shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit. And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim; but the LORD will lay low his pride together with the skill of his hands. And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust.

*In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in. Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee. Trust in the LORD for ever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust. The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy." The way of the righteous is level; thou dost make smooth the path of the righteous. In the path of thy judgments, O LORD, we wait for thee; thy memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals perversely and does not see the majesty of the LORD. O LORD, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for thy adversaries consume them. O LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works. O LORD our God, other lords besides thee have ruled over us, but thy name alone we acknowledge. They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end thou hast visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them. But thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified; thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land (of Israel). O LORD, in distress they sought thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time, so were we because of thee, O LORD; we were with child, we writhed, we have as it were brought forth wind. We have wrought no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen. Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For thy dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.*

In the midst of Isaiah's description of the terrible judgments during the time of Jacob's trouble, the prophet gives a call for the remnant to hide themselves for a season:

In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. [these creatures symbolize pride, inspired by Satan in the human heart] In that day: "A pleasant vineyard [Israel], sing of it! I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day; I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would set out against them, I would burn them up together. Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me." In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit. Has he smitten them as he smote those who smote them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain? Measure by measure, by exile thou didst contend with them; he removed them with his fierce blast in the day of the east wind. Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing. For the fortified city (Jerusalem?) is [now] solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; there the calf grazes, there he lies down, and strips its branches. When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment (those who remained in Jerusalem after the flight of the remnant?); therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.

*In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come (back) and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. (Isaiah 24-27).*

The post-exilic prophet Zechariah had much to say about the close of the age we live in as well as details about both the identity and character of both the true Messiah and the Antichrist.

An Oracle The word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus says the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: "Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the peoples round about; it will be against Judah also in the siege against Jerusalem. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves.

The term "on that day" is a clue that the passage is referring to the Day of the Lord, i.e. the great tribulation period:

And all the nations of the earth will come together against it [Jerusalem]. On that day, says the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.' "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour to the right and to the left all the peoples round about, while Jerusalem shall still be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem. "And the LORD will give victory to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be exalted over that of Judah. On that day the LORD will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, at their head. And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

### **Israel's National Mourning for Yeshua**

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn, each family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves. "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. "And on that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit. And if any one again appears as a prophet, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil; for the land has been my possession since my youth.' And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'"

### **Yeshua, the Church, and the Remnant from Edom return to Jerusalem**

Behold, a day of the LORD is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward. And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD your God will come, and all the holy ones (saints, i.e., the church, his holy angels, and the believing remnant from Edom) with him. On that day there shall be neither cold nor frost. And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the LORD), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter. And the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one. The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft upon its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall be no more curse; Jerusalem shall dwell in security. And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths. And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will lay hold on the hand of his fellow, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other; even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the asses, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

### **Messiah will Reign from Jerusalem and the Nations will come to Pay Tribute**

Then every one that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem [the sheep of Matthew 25:31-46] shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of booths. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them. And if the family of Egypt do not go up and present themselves, then upon them shall come the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths. This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths. And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD." And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar; and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day. (Zechariah 12-14)

### **The Wine Press of Wrath upon the Jews**

Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe. So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

The first sickle and the references to the reaping of the harvest of the earth indicates the reaping of the wheat and the tares from the nations, Matthew 13. This is a final separation of the believers in the nations other than Israel divided and differentiated from the unbelievers they are co-mingled with.

*And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth (Israel), for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city (Jerusalem), and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia. (Revelation 14:14-20)*

This series of events is also foretold by the prophet Joel. First Joel discusses the judgment of the nations on the basis of their treatment of the God's people the Jews. This is the same judgment we know as the "Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats" from Matthew 25:31-46.

*"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations, and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and have sold a girl for wine, and have drunk it. "What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will requite your deed upon your own head swiftly and speedily. For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, removing them far from their own border. But now I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will requite your deed upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far off; for the LORD has spoken." Joel now announces the assembly of the nations to the Battle of Armageddon: Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you nations round about, gather yourselves there.*

Next, Joel invokes the Lord to come down with his armies of heaven to fight against the nations:

*Bring down thy warriors, O LORD. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the nations round about. [Again, this is the sheep and goat judgment of Matthew 25:31-46. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is most probably the Kidron Valley between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives.] Likewise, Israel is to be judged: Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the wine press is full. The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.*

The Lord makes His open appearance upon the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem in the midst of the battle:

And the LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. "So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy and strangers shall never again pass through it.

The return of the Lord leads at last into the conditions of peace on earth under Messiah's long-expected reign:

*"And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the valley of Shittim. "Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall be inhabited for ever, and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, and I will not clear the guilty, for the LORD dwells in Zion." (Joel 3)*

Although quoted earlier in this chapter, a clear description of this same event---the coming of Messiah to the Mount of Olives in power and glory---is described by the aged Apostle John:

*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to (a) smite the nations, and he will rule [lit. shepherdize] them with a rod of iron; he will (b) tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Revelation 19:11-21)*

Notice that the armies of the world originally gather to battle at Megiddo---to fight one another. In the midst of that battle, ominous portents from outer space---visions and signs of the approach of Yeshua---cause the armies of the world to turn and fight against God and His armies!

#### **Isaiah's Prayer for the Soon-Coming of Messiah:**

O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence---as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil---to make thy name known to thy adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him. Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. Behold, thou wast angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one that calls upon thy name, that bestirs himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast delivered us into the hand of our iniquities. Yet, O LORD, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand. Be not exceedingly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity for ever. Behold, consider, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities have become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our

fathers praised thee, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. Wilt thou restrain thyself at these things, O LORD? Wilt thou keep silent, and afflict us sorely?

#### **Messiah's reply to the prophet:**

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and burning incense upon bricks; who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am set apart from you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay, yea, I will repay into their bosom their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they burned incense upon the mountains and reviled me upon the hills, I will measure into their bosom payment for their former doings." Thus says the LORD: "As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,' so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me. But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in." Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants (the remnant) shall eat, but you (apostates) shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord GOD will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hid from my eyes.

*"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their children with them. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD." Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the LORD. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. "He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a cereal offering, like him who offers swine's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like him who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways,*

*and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose affliction for them, and bring their fears upon them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight." Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: "Your brethren who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy'; but it is they who shall be put to shame. "Hark, an uproar from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, rendering recompense to his enemies! "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her sons. Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? says the LORD; shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb? says your God. "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory." For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall suck, you shall be carried upon her hip, and dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the LORD is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies. "For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD execute judgment, and by his sword, upon all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, says the LORD. "For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isaiah 64-66)*

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# CONQUERING CONDEMNATION

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*

Romans 8:1

· INTRO: Condemnation is an attitude each of us must battle against. Feeling guilty, unworthy, or disqualified can quickly neutralize our spiritual life.

- KEY: RECOGNIZING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND CONVICTION

- 1. CONDEMNATION IS FROM SATAN

- a) It leads to Discouragement / Despair / Defeat

- 2. CONVICTION IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a) It leads to Confession / Repentance / Victory

## I. CONDEMNATION IS FROM SATAN

- 1. Dict. def of 'condemn'

- a) To express strong disapproval of.
    - b) To pronounce judgment against.
    - c) To declare to be unfit for use.

## B. HE IS THE ACCUSER OF BELIEVERS

- 1. Rev. 12:10 - "Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."

- 2. Job. 1:6-11; 2:1-5

- a) Job. 1:6-11 "8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" 9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 "But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

- (1) Job. 2:1-5 "1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." 3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." 4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

## C. ALWAYS REMEMBER - HE IS A LIAR

- 1. Jn. 8:44 -[NASB] "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

## D.HIS GOAL IS DISCOURAGEMENT / DESPAIR / DEFEAT

### 1.DISCOURAGEMENT

- a)def. - 1) "to deprive of courage or confidence" 2) "to hinder by inspiring fear"
- b)The enemy wants to take away our confidence so we'll be less likely to step out in faith .

### 2.DESPAIR

- a)def. - "to lose all hope or confidence; utter loss of hope"
- b)The enemy wants to discourage us to the point of having no hope for victory in this life.

### 3.DEFEAT

- a)def. - "Frustrate, nullify, to win victory over."
- b)The enemy wants our despair to lead us to feel as if we've lost the contest.

## E.NOTE: FOR BELIEVERS THE REAL PROBLEM IS DEFEATISM NOT DEFEAT

- 1.def. - "acceptance of or resignation to defeat."
- 2.The enemy wants to convince us that we're defeated [lies] . As long as he keeps us in defeatism - we are as good as defeated - for this life.

## F.DON'T LISTEN TO THE EMENY. BELIEVERS HAVE VICTORY IN JESUS

- 1.1Jn.3:8 "... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."
- 2.1Jn.4:4 "4 ... He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."
  - a)Mk.3:27 "27 "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house."
  - b)Col. 2:13-17 "13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."
    - (a)Lk.10:17-20 "17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.""
      - i)Isa.61:1 - "..He has sent Me to .. proclaim freedom for the captives.."
        - (1)cf. Ps.68:18
        - (2)Eph.4:7-10
        - (3)1Pet.3:18-20
      - ii)2Cor.3:17 - "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
    - c)Heb.2:14-15 - Jesus freed us by destroying him who holds the power of death - that is the devil.
  - 3.Rom. 8:37 - "... in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

## G.THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN JESUS

## II. CONVICTION IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

1.Dict. def. - 'The act or process of convincing.' 'The state of being convinced.'

### B.IT'S NOT ALWAYS WRONG TO FEEL GUILTY

1.Sometimes we feel guilty because we *are* guilty!

2.Real guilt is crippling and must be cleansed.

a)note: temptation is not sin - yielding to temptation is

3.The Lord loves us and wants us to be free from guilt

a)note: a radical way to not feel guilty - don't *be* guilty

### C.THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOWS US OUR GUILT - CONVICTION

1.The first step towards being free of legitimate guilt is to become aware of it

2.This is the conviction of the Holy Spirit - the Lord's way of telling us that we're guilty and in need of forgiveness and restoration.

### D.HIS GOAL IS CONFESSION / REPENTANCE / FORGIVENESS / FREEDOM

#### 1.CONFESSION

a)Prov. 28:13

#### 2.REPENTANCE

a)PS 32:1-5 - "1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah"

#### 3.FORGIVENESS

a)cf. also Ps. 51

b)2Cor. 7:8-11 "8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

c)1John 1:8-9; 2:1 - "8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ... "1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

(1)Psalm 103 [responsive reading?]

#### 4.FREEDOM

a)John 8:36 - "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

## III. ABIDE IN THE VICTORY WE HAVE IN JESUS - Romans 8:1

# UNDERSTANDING THE VISIONS OF DANIEL 2, 7-8 IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING REVELATION 12-13 & 17-18

## Chapter 2 - Nebuchadnezzar Dreams of An Image

### I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

A.(1) The troubling dream - *1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.*

1. Some commentators say that this happened while Daniel was in his three-year training course; others say that it was soon after he was finished

a)b. The year 602, by Babylonian methods of dating the ascension of a king, could be both the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and after three years of training for the Hebrew youths

2. There was something disturbing about this dream, and Nebuchadnezzar knew that it was unusually significant

B.(2-9) Nebuchadnezzar demands to know the dream and its interpretation from his wise men - *2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." 4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 "However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." 7 They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." 8 The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 "if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."*

1. It is hard to say if Nebuchadnezzar really remembered the dream or not; he may have had a sense of it, but been fuzzy on remembering the details

2. Nebuchadnezzar had no criteria by which to judge the accuracy of their interpretation, but could test their ability to tell what he dreamed

3. It was the business of these wise men to be able to contact the divine and get secrets from the spirit realm

a)"They were like some modern ministers of our own day who spend their time studying philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, social science, political science, and then continue under the pretense of being God's messengers to men." (Strauss)

C. *you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap* The harsh posture of Nebuchadnezzar (as well as the method of execution he describes) is perfectly consistent with an ancient eastern monarch

1. Archer describes one method of dismemberment: the victim was tied to four trees with a rope at each limb. The trees were bent inwards and tied together at the top; the top rope cut and the body was snapped into four pieces

D.(10-11) The wise men explain the impossibility of Nebuchadnezzar's request - *10 The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 "It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."*

1. The strategy of the wise men was to convince the king that he was being unreasonable, not that they were incompetent

2. They confess that true revelation comes from God down to man; it is not the achievement of man

E.(12-13) A furious Nebuchadnezzar sentences all his wise men to death - *12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.*

1. As a new king, Nebuchadnezzar may also have been using the situation to test the suitability of his father's old advisors; they seem to be lacking

## II. GOD REVEALS THE DREAM TO DANIEL

A.(14-16) Daniel reacts to Nebuchadnezzar's decree by asking for a brief extension - *14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. 16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.*

1. Daniel's calmness in the crisis showed what kind of man he really was; crises do not make the man, they reveal the man

2. He asked for time - it takes time to listen to the Lord and Daniel knew this

B.(17-18) Daniel asks his companions for prayer - *17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

1. Daniel was in the type of situation where God truly works: one of human impossibility with the stress on urgency. No doubt, their prayers were extremely earnest, and God listens to earnest prayer.

2. Daniel had confidence that God could do an unprecedented miracle; Joseph had interpreted dreams with God's help, but had not reconstructed the dreams

3. The battle was won when Daniel prayed with his friends; "It is a privilege to have praying friends" (Barnes); "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made." (Strauss) cf. first meeting of Salvation Army

C.(19) God reveals Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to Daniel - *19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

1. This is not religion, but revelation.

2. It came in a "night vision" (a dream? A vision at night?)

D.(20-23) Daniel's praise to God for this revelation - *20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. 23 "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."*

1. God is praised for His Sovereign Greatness and His Gracious response to their prayers

2. Daniel had the certainty of faith to believe that God gave him the answer, even before it was confirmed by Nebuchadnezzar.

## III. THE DREAM OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND ITS INTERPRETATION

A.(24-30) Daniel is ushered into the king's presence, and gives glory to God for revealing the dream - *24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." 25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." 26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29 "As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30 "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.*

1. Arioch may have been trying to glorify himself and Daniel in verse 25 (I have found a *man* ); but Daniel gives all the glory to God.

B.(31-35) The dream is described by Daniel - 31 *"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 "This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*

1. Daniel's description is clear; this is a massive image (statue) made of different materials
2. The image is destroyed by a stone made without hands, and is blown away like worthless chaff, while the stone dominates the whole earth .

C.(36-45) The interpretation of the dream - 36 *"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. 39 "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*

D.45 *"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."*

1. Nebuchadnezzar is clearly said to be the head of gold; after him will come three other kingdoms, then the final kingdom set up by God
2. The empires succeeding Babylon were the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman
3. see Table in Appendix
4. They are inferior not in the sense of size or duration (quite the opposite); but in the sense of centralization of absolute power ii. Babylonia stood for 66 years; Medo-Persia for 208 years; Greece for 185 years, and Rome was so strong it stood for more than 500 years
5. Notice the distinction between the feet and the legs; the feet seem to describe a confederation of kings, during which Jesus will establish His kingdom on earth
6. Since there is no fulfillment of this federation of kings in ancient Roman history; (which seems to number ten, because of the number of toes, and passages like Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12) this prophecy must still be future
7. Therefore, the final superpower is thought to be a "revival" of the Roman Empire, a continuation of the image.
8. The church or the gospel have not, in a single decisive event, shattered the reign of human kingdoms - they still rule over the earth; this will be the work of God, not man
9. This isn't the gradual salvation of the world by the church; "Smashing is not salvation. Crushing is not conversion. Destroying is not delivering nor is pulverizing the same as purification." (Heslop)
10. Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, and Zechariah 3:9 also refer to Jesus as a stone; Jesus is the stone, not the church
11. Some Catholic commentators say that the stone fell from heaven in the fifth or sixth century, at the height of the papacy's power over the nations - this is obviously wrong
12. Analysis: this is a human image, representing man's rule in this earth; that day will end
13. This is an amazing prophecy! God can tell us the future because He controls all of history

14. Remember that Rome was nothing but a little village on the banks of the Tiber when Nebuchadnezzar dreamed his dream

15. Liberal scholars do not believe that the fourth kingdom is Rome, but they say it is Greece, and that the second and third kingdoms are Media and Persia respectively, instead of the Medo-Persian empire as a whole. They interpret this way because they believe that it would have been impossible for Daniel (writing in the Maccabean period, of course) to predict the Roman empire

E.4. (46-49) Nebuchadnezzar reacts by praising Daniel, his God, and by promoting Daniel and his friends - *46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. 47 The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." 48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.*

1. It is fitting that Daniel's friends--who had accomplished much of the victory through their prayers--get to share in Daniel's advancement

#### F. OBSERVATIONS

1. If all you knew about God came from Daniel's statements in this chapter, what would you learn? [Assignment?]

## Chapter 7 - A Survey of Five World Empires

### A. THE FOUR BEASTS

1. (1) Introduction to the vision - *1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed: then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.*
  - a. Chapters 7 through 12 are visions which Daniel had; in chronology, the events of chapters 7 and 8 belong between chapters 4 and 5; what happens in chapter 9 happens about at the same time as chapter 6; and the visions of 10-12 take place after the events of chapter 6
  - b. Daniel tells us that this particular dream and vision came to him in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. Which means that Daniel at this time was probably some where around eighty-four to eighty-five years old still serving the Lord
  - c. The first of the four visions of chapters 7-12 is the most comprehensive; the other three visions deal with aspects of this first vision
  - d. Daniel could have given us more detail; but the Holy Spirit only wanted him to write the main facts - though we might have wanted to know more detail!
2. Origin of the four beasts - 2-3 - *"2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other."*
  - a. The Great Sea is likely the Mediterranean; "To the Hebrews the sea was both dangerous and mysterious, a restless element but not beyond the Lord's power to tame." (Baldwin)
    1. And, the sea is sometimes used as a picture of Gentile nations (Psalm 74:13; 89:9; Isaiah 57:20)
    2. Rev 17:15 "15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."
    3. Every one of the empires that will be mentioned by Daniel bordered on the Mediterranean Sea

4. There have been a few recently, not many, who see in these four beasts or kingdoms that would exist at the end of the world's present era, the end of the gentile era. And, thus they see the first one, the lion, as great Great Britain or the British Empire that had the symbol of a lion. England has the symbol of the lion. And, they see the empire and the wings being plucked and thus the weakened condition of the once great British Empire. In the Bear, of course, the bear has been the symbol of Russia, so they see Russia as the bear. The leopard they see as a federation of Muslim nations that have yet not come to pass, four of the major Muslim nations combining together. Then, of course, the revival of the Roman Empire in the fourth beast. That is a possibility. And, you must always keep your mind open. One thing about prophecy, it is never completely & fully understood until it is completely fulfilled. So, we look at it and we say it appears to be this. I personally believe that the beast are parallel to the nations, the kingdoms that parallel the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. And, we will look at it in that way.
- b. Some see the winds as a picture of the sovereign power of God striving with men (Psalm 35:5; 48:7; 107:25; Isaiah 27:8; 41:16)
    1. Strauss suggests the four winds might be satanic forces, as mentioned by Revelation 7:1
  - c. Four great beasts (large, ferocious animals) emerge; each one is distinct from the other
    1. "The lion devours, the bear crushes, and the leopard springs upon its prey." (Strauss)
3. The first beast: a lion with eagle's wings - *"4 "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it."*
- a. This beast is quite majestic (lions and eagles are "kings" of their realms); but it is both humbled and "humanized"
  - b. In the palaces of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, they had these winged lions that sort of guarded the gates to the palace, and thus Daniel being in the palace would have seen them many times, thus the lion could represent the Babylonian kingdom.
  - c. The man's heart given to the beast is probably symbolic of the conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar, the first world ruler.
4. The second beast: a bear - *"5 And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'"*
- a. The bear is much less majestic; it is slow, ponderous, and crushing. This one is imbalanced in some way; and it has a voracious appetite for conquest
  - b. This is the Medo-Persian Empire, and raising itself up on one side may represent the fact that the Persian Empire overshadowed the Mede.
  - c. The three ribs probably refer to the three kingdoms that comprised the Medo-Persian empire when it assimilated Babylon.
5. The third beast: a leopard - *"6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it."*
- a. A leopard is known for its sudden, unexpected attacks; this one is especially swift (with four wings), and has four heads
  - b. This is the Grecian Empire. The tremendous speed with which Alexander the Great conquered the world is pictured by the swift, conquering Leopard.
  - c. When Alexander died, at a very early age, there was no-one in the kingdom that was powerful enough to assume the rule over the whole Grecian Empire. So it was divided between four of the generals. Actually four powers came out of the Grecian Empire, that of Asia minor, Syria, Egypt and Macedonia. Thus the four heads that come out of it.

6.(7-8) The fourth beast: a dreadful, horned beast, with one conspicuous horn - *"7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8\* "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."*

- a. This beast is indescribable, and uniquely horrific in its power and conquest.
- b. Iron was the symbol of Rome in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and this surely does describe the Roman Empire and how it beat the world into submission.
- c. **it had ten horns** This parallels the ten toes of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and the final ten nations that will federate together in the last days that will be related in some way to the Roman Empire. And, very possibly the European Community will develop into this, the federation of those kingdoms in Europe
  - 1. This may actually be two five-pointed antlers, rather than ten separate horns
- d. The little horn is conspicuous for its dominance, its intelligence, and its boastful talk

- i. ***a mouth speaking pompous words*** Three times in the chapter he speaks of the mouth that speaks great things. So, one of the names of the Antichrist could be big mouth, but he is known by many different names, son of perdition, the beast, the Antichrist, the man of sin, and he is known by many different titles.

7.(9-14) The Ancient of Days is seen, and the conspicuous horn is conquered by the Son of Man - *"9 I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. 11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."*

- a. In this vision of heaven, Daniel sees many thrones but only one Occupant. Is he blind to the 24 elders, representatives of the church, because the church is an unrevealed mystery to him? (Ephesians 3:1-7)
  - 1. The KJV has a bad translation of verse 9 (thrones were cast down); they are instead established
- b. The Ancient of days is a title given to Jesus and to God. The context helps us determine which one is indicated. Rev 1:14-16, 5:11; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 5:27
  - 1. The distinction made in verse 13 between the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man argues best that this is God in the Person of the Father, not the Son
  - 2. "We ought not to imagine God in his essence to be like any appearance to his own Prophet and other holy fathers, but he put on various appearances, according to man's comprehension, to whom he wished to give some signs of his presence." (Calvin)
- c. The fiery flame probably represents the fierce heat of His judgment
  - 1. Isaiah 66:15-16 describes the judgment of God in terms of fire: For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many.
    - a. What are the wheels of God's throne? Many say that eastern thrones were often on wheels; but it is just as likely that they are pictures of the endless activity of God

- d. The multitude observing this judgment are either angels, or saints, or both
  - 1. cf. Rev 5:11-12 "11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!""
- e. *the books were opened.* Which books are opened? The Bible describes several of God's "books": The book of the living (Psalm 69:28), the book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16), and the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19) [see BOOK of LIFE in appendix]
- f. *The court was seated* - This isn't the Great White Throne Judgment; it's the judgment by Jesus of the people who have survived the Great Tribulation.
  - 1. Matthew 25:31-46, 24:29-30
- g. *the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame* - cf. Rev 19:20 "20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone."
- h. The horn speaks *pompous words*; the final human dictator we commonly call the Antichrist will be characterized by his boastful, blasphemous speech (Revelation 13:5-6)
  - 1. [see ANTI-CHRIST in appendix]
- i. The fourth beast is slain; the others may continue, but without dominion of their own. When Jesus sets up His kingdom, the empire of the Antichrist will be completely crushed, yet there will be nations which continue into the Millennium
  - 1. Babylon still exists. Today it is called Iraq. Persia still exists. Today it is called Iran. Greece still exists. So these three kingdoms still exist but with no great power anymore.
- j. *One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!* - The Son of Man (a favorite self-designation of Jesus, used more than 80 times in the gospels), receives all dominion previously held by the beasts
  - 1. Matt 24:29-30 "29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."
- k. The reign of Jesus is permanent. However, Jesus will rule over this earth, before it is remade, with Satan bound, for 1,000 years [see MILLENIUM in appendix]
  - 1. cf. Psalm 2 "1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, `You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."
- l. *all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him* - Phil. 2:9-11 "9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

## B.INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM

- 1.(15-16) Daniel's reaction to the vision and request for understanding - *"15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me the interpretation of these things."*
  - a. Daniel did not really understand all that he saw, and was troubled because of it.
- 2.(17-18) Summary of the vision: four kings are conquered by God, and their kingdoms are given to the people of God - *"17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."*
  - a. This vision covers the same material as Nebuchadnezzar's vision in chapter 2; but from God's perspective, not man's. Nebuchadnezzar saw the present and future world-empires in the form of a stately and noble man; here God shows how He sees them: as ferocious and wild animals.
    1. When man writes his own history, there is much self-congratulation, and we would seem to be on the verge of paradise. When God writes human history, a different vision is presented.
    2. Note: These beasts are so different in character than the representative of Jesus' kingdom: the Lamb (Revelation 5:5-6, 8-10)
    3. The image of Nebuchadnezzar stressed the continuity of the world empires; the vision of the beasts shows their diversity
  - b. The winged lion represents Babylon; the lion and the eagle are both used by Jeremiah as pictures of Nebuchadnezzar (49:19-22), and Babylon's winged lions can be seen the British Museum today
  - c. The bear represents the Medo-Persian empire, which was dominated by the Persians; most think the three ribs are their three great conquests: Babylon, Egypt and Lydia
    1. The slow, crushing armies of the Medo-Persian empire were well known; they simply overwhelmed their opponents with superior size and strength
    2. "The command to arise and devour much flesh [v.5] indicates the extreme cruelties often practiced by the Persians, and the wide extent of their conquests." (Ironside)
    3. Liberal commentators have a vested interest in identifying the bear with only the Median state, and not the Medo-Persian empire. They assign the third beast to the Persian Empire, and the fourth to Alexander's Greek empire, so as to remove (even for a second century author) any element of predictive prophecy. Their analysis doesn't fit.
    4. Reasons why the second kingdom could not be exclusively the Median empire:
      - a. The Median empire did not follow the Babylonian in historical sequence, but was contemporary with it, even rising to strength before the Neo-Babylonian period.
      - b. The Median empire never had a world position that would rank it with the Persian, Grecian or Babylonian empires.
      - c. The motivation for the interpretation is solely to remove any reference to Rome - and predictive prophecy.
  - d. The leopard represents the Greek empire; Alexander the Great's rapid conquest (the entire civilized world by age 28), and the four-way division of the empire after his death are shown
    1. The four heads: Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy; these inherited Alexander's domain in the years after his death
    2. Ironside relates the story of Josephus where Alexander came to Jerusalem, and being shown the book of Daniel by the high priest (whom Alexander had previously seen in a vision), he spared Jerusalem and granted it religious toleration.
  - e. The fourth beast represents the Roman empire; the largest, strongest, most unified and enduring of them all
    1. "There is an unmistakable correspondence between these horns and the ten toes of the dream image (ch. 2), and the mention of iron in the teeth suggests the legs and toes of iron in that image." (Archer)
  - f. Then, the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom - but isn't Rome gone already? What happened?

1. This is what prompts many look for a either a spiritualized interpretation fulfilled in history, or a revival, in some form, of the Roman empire in the last days, one that will literally fulfill the prophecy of the ten horns and the little horn as well
  2. But notice: the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom; it is given to them by God at the return of Jesus. They do not go out and get the dominion over all these earthly kingdoms
3. (19-22) Daniel's specific request to know about the conspicuous horn - *"19 Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 "and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 "until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."*
- g. There is much of interest in all these four creatures; but Daniel is especially interested in the fourth, most terrible beast, and especially about its conspicuous horn
  - h. The beast is of interest to Daniel because of its great destructive power;
  - i. *the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them* - the conspicuous horn is of interest because of its fight against God's people
  - j. If this horn is the Antichrist, and he fights against the saints, does this mean that the church will be here to be a target of the Antichrist during the tribulation? Not necessarily; saints can indicate the church or a Jewish remnant in the tribulation (Rev 12:17; 13:7)
    1. Matt 16:18 - "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."
  - k. *and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom* - Matt 25:34 - "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'"
3. (23-27) The meaning of the conspicuous horn and its defeat - *"23 Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. 26 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'"*
- a. *The ten horns are ten kings* - These ten kings do not have a literal fulfillment in historical Rome; if they are literal, they are still in the future. The only way to say this has been fulfilled is to spiritualize these prophecies
    1. Many, like Calvin, merely spiritualize; he insists that what happens in this chapter was fulfilled in history up unto the time of Jesus' first advent, and supposes that the ten horns merely represent a multiplicity of kings under the Roman emperor, and believes that the conspicuous horn is Julius Caesar, and the other Caesars who succeeded him. And for Calvin, the books were opened (verse 10) refers to the preaching of the gospel!
    2. "We need not be too anxious about the number, as we have already explained it." (as merely denoting multiplicity) (Calvin)
    3. But if there are ten toes (Daniel 2), ten horns (Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17) associated with the rule of this final world ruler, who are we to "spiritualize" what God has said in at least four different places?
    4. The same "spiritualizing" problems apply if one believes that this is fulfilled in the early church and the passing of the Roman Empire (unlike Calvin who saw fulfillment before the first advent of Jesus)

- b. The conspicuous *horn* must be the Antichrist, arising out of a confederation of ten nations which is in some way a revival of the Roman empire
  - c. Perhaps his *pompous, blasphemous words* will be like the Fascist Creed of Italy (cited in Talbot):
    1. "I believe in Rome Eternal, the Mother of my fatherland; and in Italy, her first born; who was born of her virgin womb by the grace of God; who suffered under the barbarian invader, was crucified, slain, and buried; who descended into the sepulcher, and rose from the dead in the nineteenth century; who ascended to heaven in her glory in 1918 and 1922 (by the march on Rome); who is seated at the right hand of Mother Rome; who will come thence to judge the quick and the dead; I believe in the genius of Mussolini; in our Holy Father, Fascism, and in the communion of its martyrs; in the conversion of the Italians; and in the resurrection of the Empire! Amen."
  - d. *persecute* - speaks of cruel and systematic pressure, coming from the word "to wear away" or "to wear out," as friction would wear clothes or shoes
    1. "To wear out the saints means to harass them continually so that life becomes a wretched existence." (Wood)
    2. "Such continual and protracted pressure far more effectively breaks the human spirit than the single moment of crisis that calls for a heroic decision. It is easier to die for the Lord than to live for him under constant harassment and strain" (Archer)
    3. cf. the lesson of Yugoslavia under Communism vs Hungary or Romainia
    4. "The Bible predicts no peace-loving world ruler for the last days. We can expect nothing more than greedy commercialism and political imperialism under the most beastly and barbaric type of warfare." (Strauss)
  - e. *change times and law* - perhaps as at the French Revolution, where radicals wanted to institute a ten-day work week, and declared 1792 (the year of the Revolution) as "year 1"
    1. Note: Seventh-Day Adventists have historically taught that it was the Papacy which "changed the times and law" by moving the Lord's day from Saturday to Sunday
  - f. His power over the saints is limited; it will last for three-and-one-half years, time and times and half a time is a phrase used in Revelation (11:2-3, 12:6 and 13:5) to refer to one half of the last seven year period of man's rule on this earth (the seventieth week of Daniel)
  - g. It is in the day of this persecuting, blasphemous ruler that Christ will establish His kingdom, for His people
    1. Because the fourth kingdom is immediately succeeded by the kingdom of Jesus, no event in the past answers in the smallest degree to this prediction
    2. There are three options in interpreting the kingdom being established here:
      - a. There is no fulfillment; Daniel is in error
      - b. The fulfillment is symbolic in church history
      - c. The fulfillment is literal, and yet future
    3. Certainly, the church did not cause a sudden, catastrophic fall of the Roman Empire
  - h. Again, notice that the kingdom and dominion . . . shall be given to the people, the saints; it is something received, not achieved. The church does not convert the world to Jesus' kingdom and give the kingdom to Jesus; He gives it to them
4. (28) Daniel's troubled reaction to the vision and its interpretation - *"28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."*
- a. Many things might trouble Daniel at this vision - such as the ferocity of the attack that would come against his people from the conspicuous horn
  - b. He was humbled by it. He was troubled by it, but he just pondered it and kept it in his heart, these things that God had revealed unto him.

## Daniel 8 - Antiochus and Antichrist

### A.THE VISION RECOUNTED

1.(1-2) Introduction to the vision - *"1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai."*

- a. This is dated for us as happening in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, which would put it about 553 B.C.
- b. Thus the vision happened while Babylon was securely in power.
- c. **Shushan** - or Su'sa - 'A lily'. Once a magnificent city, it is now an immense mass of ruins. It was originally the capital of Elam (the ancient name for Iran). In the time of Daniel Susa was in the possession of the Babylonians. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus transferred Susa to Persian dominion.

1.Nehemiah resided in Shusan.

- a. Nehemiah 1:1 - *"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel,"*

2.Most of the events recorded in the Book of Esther took place in Shushan.

- a. Esther 1:2 - *"in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel,"*

2.(3-4) Daniel sees a mighty ram with two unequal horns, pushing west, north and south - *"3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great."*

- a. Verse 20 plainly identifies this ram with the Medo-Persians
  - 1.The symbol on coins of the Persian empire was a ram.
  - 2.Ammianus Marcellinus, a fourth century historian, states that the Persian ruler bore the head of a ram as he stood at the head of his army." (Wood)
- b. In their alliance, the larger and stronger horn (Persian) emerged after the smaller horn (Media)
  - 1.The Medes were the first to arise in power, but the Persians later rose to preeminence. The empire is commonly known as the Persian empire.
    - a. The first king in conquering Babylon of the Medes and Persians was Darius (Dan. 9:1), but he died just a couple of years after the capturing of the Babylonian kingdom. Then there arose Cyrus, king of the Persians.
- c. *pushing westward, northward, and southward* - Notice it does not say they went eastward. They didn't conquer eastward of Elam, but they came westward, than northward, and southward. The preciseness and accuracy of the Word of God is always such a thrill. I just can't get over it. The more I study it, the more excited I get over little details that God was careful to note.

d. (5-8) Daniel sees a male goat who challenges and conquers the ram - *"5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven."*

- a. Verses 21 and 22 clearly identify the goat with Greece, and its horns with its rulers.
- b. The symbol on coins of the Grecian empire was a goat.
- c. *a notable horn* would be Alexander the Great
- d. *across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground* - The goat moves with great speed; it seems to fly (without touching the ground). Alexander's rapid conquest of the civilized world was proverbial.

- e. Alexander the Great conquered the world in and of that day in about three years. It was said that he kept asking his generals if there was any place else to conquer and he wept because there was no place else to conquer.
- f. Note: Alexander's determination to spread Greek culture, made koine Greek, the language of the N.T., the common language of the civilized world.
- g. *with furious power* - there was deep animosity between the Persians and Greeks
- h. *when he became strong, the large horn was broken* Alexander the Great was a young man, only 32 years old and in the midst of his strength, when he died. ... According to Ludwig's history, when he was just thirty-two years old, he was at a drunken party. It was raining quite hard, and he came home through the rain drunk as could be. He went to sleep in his wet clothes and, as a result, died of pneumonia. So, when he was yet strong his power was broken.
- i. *in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven* - The kingdom did not go to either of Alexander's two sons, who were quite young. Instead, the kingdom was divided among four of his generals.
- j. In the west, his general Cassander took over Macedonia and Greece. Towards the north, Lysimachus took over Asia minor and Thrace. Syria and Babylonia were taken over by Seleucus. And, Egypt, Arabia and the holy land was taken over by Ptolemy.
- k. None of these generals had the same power as Alexander
- l. v 22 - "As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power."

3.(9-10) A strong little horn comes from the four horns of the male goat; he boasts and opposes sacrifice and truth - *"9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. 10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them."*

- a. a little horn which grew exceedingly great This little horn refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who ruled Syria and Palestine under the Seleucid dynasty
  1. Palestine had been a region of dispute between the dynasties of Seleucid and Ptolemy, but the Seleucids gained power over the region in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes' father, Antiochus III (198 BC)
  2. Antiochus IV took the throne by murdering his brother, the former king Seleucus Philopator. The son of Philopator was the rightful heir to the throne, but Antiochus IV had him held hostage in Rome.
  3. This *"little horn"* opposes and casts down *the host and the stars*; these are symbols used in the Old Testament for angels, kings and leaders, or the people of God at large
  4. Genesis 15:5, - "Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be.""
    - a. Exodus 12:41, KJV "41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."
- b. Antiochus intensely persecuted the Jews, whom he wanted to submit to Greek culture.
  1. His suppression of the Jews came to a head in December of 168 BC, when returning in defeat from Alexandria, he ordered his generals to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath. There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by offering swine on it, and sprinkling the broth in the sanctuary. Sacrifice ceased as a result.
  2. The occasion of Antiochus' first attack was to settle a rivalry for the high priesthood. A pious high priest, Onias III, was removed and replaced by his brother Jason, who had bribed Antiochus. Then, in 172, another brother, Menelaus, gave Antiochus an even bigger bribe and replaced Jason. In 171, Menelaus began selling gold utensils of the temple to pay the bribe. Onias rebuked him, and Menelaus had him murdered.
  3. Meanwhile, Jason marshalled armies and tried to oust Menelaus by force; Antiochus came in 171 to defend Menelaus.

4.(11-12) ***"11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered."***

a. 1 Maccabees 1:41-50, 54-64 give a picture of his actions

1. *"41 Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, 42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. 43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. 44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, 45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days: 46 And pollute the sanctuary and holy people: 47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: 48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: 49 To the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. 50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die."*

2. *"54 Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; 55 And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. 56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. 57 And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death. 58 Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities. 59 Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. 60 At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. 61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them. 62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. 63 Wherefore the rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died. 64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel."*

b. Maccabees includes a very interesting historic account of how the Maccabees stirred up the Jews against this tremendous sacrilege by Antiochus; how they raised an army and, against insurmountable odds, fought with such veracity that they were able to defeat Antiochus' troops. They were able to go ahead and cleanse the temple and renew the sacrifices which began on December 25. This event added another holiday to the Jewish calendar. A holiday they called the Feast of Dedication - the rededication of the temple. This Feast of Dedication is today called Hanukkah.

1.1 Maccabees 4:59 - *"Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness."*

2. the Prince of the host - This is probably the Lord, but could be a reference to the High Priest [Onias]

3. Because of transgression - Because of their sins, the Jews, especially their leaders, invited God's judgment upon themselves.

5.(13-14) The duration of the sanctuary's desecration is described: 2,300 days - ***"13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."***

a. Days is more literally 'mornings and evenings'

1. "Year-day" schemes with this passage have ended in ruin; William Miller (head of a movement which ended up spawning the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses) used 2,300 "year-days" to calculate that Jesus would return in 1844 (2,300 years after Cyrus issued the decree to rebuild the temple)

b. The date when the temple was cleansed is well established (December 25, 165 BC); counting back 2,300 days sets one in the year that persecution from Antiochus began in earnest (171 BC)

c. Interestingly enough, from the time that the high priest Onias was slain, to the time of the cleansing of the temple by the Maccabee brothers was exactly twenty-three hundred days. So, this could very well refer to the time from the killing of the high priest to the cleansing of the temple.

## B. THE VISION IS INTERPRETED

1. (15-19) The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel, to interpret the vision - *"15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end." 18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be."*
    - a. Gabriel's message: this refers to the latter time of the indignation
      1. Note: see 'Chuck Smith on Gabriel' in Appendix
  2. (20) The ram is identified as the Medo-Persian empire - *"20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns--they are the kings of Media and Persia."*
  3. (21-22) The male goat is the Greek empire, first with one ruler, then with four - *"21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. 22 "As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power."*
  4. (23-26) The rise and fall of the strong little horn is described - *"23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes."*
    - a. Note: The Jews called the blasphemous offering of Antiochus "the abomination of desolation,". It served as a type of future abominations set up in the Jerusalem Temple.
      1. Titus - Matthew 24:15-18 - *"15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes."*
        - a. Daniel 9:27 - *"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*
      2. Antichrist - 2 Thess 2:4 - *"who [Antichrist] opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* cf. Rev 13:11-15
3. *24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. 25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means. 26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future."*
    - b. This description reads equally true of both Antiochus and Antichrist - a prophecy with both near and far fulfillments - This is the 'Mountain-peak' aspect of some prophecies.
      1. Antiochus is sometimes called the "antichrist of the Old Testament"; he certainly prefigures the Antichrist of the end times
      2. "From what Antiochus did to Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the Antichrist will do to them in the future." (Wood)
        - a. "Greece with all its refinement, culture and art, produced the Old Testament Anti-Christ while the so called Christian nations produce the New Testament Anti-Christ." (Heslop)
        - b. Some see this Antiochus/ Antichrist connection, and some do not
          - i. Luther: "This chapter in Daniel refers both to Antiochus and Antichrist."
          - ii. Calvin: "Hence Luther, indulging his thoughts too freely, refers this passage to the masks of Antichrist"

- c. Actually, as the description progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the primary person referred to must be the Antichrist.
  - d. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power - empowered by Satan
    - 1.2 Thess 2:9 - "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,"
  - e. Through his cunning - Antiochus was known for his flattery and smooth tongue; Antichrist will be able to strike a covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27) and he will conquer primarily through political means. (Rev. 6:1-2)
  - f. he shall exalt himself in his heart
    - 1. The Antichrist will require people to worship him.
    - 2. The coins of Antiochus actually bore the title 'theos epiphanes', "God manifest".
      - a. But he was nick-named "Epimanes" ('madman')
  - g. rise against the prince of princes - The one he is actually opposed to is Jesus!
  - h. broken without human means - Antiochus died of intestinal disease, not the hand of man. Similarly, no man will defeat the Antichrist, he will be broken by the hand of Jesus
    - 1.2 Thessalonians 2:8 - "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."
      - a. Revelation 19:20 - "Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone."
  - i. Daniel is told to seal up the vision; it refers to a period far distant. For us, the time is near (Revelation 1:3) and the book is unsealed (Revelation 22:10)
    - 1. Rev 22:10 - "And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand."
  - j. Note: There is one other interpretation that is worth considering, and that is that from verse 23 to verse 25 this is a description of the future False Prophet that will rise after the Antichrist empowered with Satanic powers, deceiving the people and causing the world to worship the Antichrist.
5. (27) Daniel's reaction to the vision: physical shock and astonishment - *"27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it."*
- a. 1 Corinthians 13:12, - "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

## **Letter from Iranian Pastor Sentenced to Death for Apostasy**

Thursday, October 28, 2010 (3:10 pm)  
www.worthynews.com

This is a message from brother Youcef Nardkhani, a pastor of an Iranian church who has been sentenced to death. This message was written in June and has been translated from Farsi to English.

Dear brothers and sisters, Salam

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am continuously seeking grace and mercy to you, that you remember me and those who are bearing efforts for his name in your prayers.

Your loyalty to God is the cause of my strength and encouragement.

For I know well that you will be rewarded; as it's stated: blessed is the one who has faith, for what has been said to him by God, will be carried out.

As we believe, heaven and earth will fade but his word will still remain.

Dear beloved ones, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of a few verses, although you might know them, So that in everything, you give more effort than the past, both to prove your election, and for the sake of Gospel that is to be preached to the entire world as well.

I know that not all of us are granted to keep this word, but to those who are granted this power and this revelation, I announce the same as Jude, earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

We are passing by special and sensitive days. They are days that for an alert and awake believer can be days of spiritual growth and

progress. Because for him, more than any other time there is the possibility to compare his faith with the word of God, have God's promises in mind, and survey his faith.

Therefore he (the true believer) does not need to wonder for the fiery trial that has been set on for him as though it were something unusual, but it pleases him to participate in Christ's suffering.

Because the believer knows he will rejoice in his glory.

Dears, the " judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Therefore those who are enduring burdens by the will of God, commit their souls to the faithful Creator. Promises that he has given us, are unique and precious. As we've heard he has said: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"

How can it be possible for a believer to understand these words?

Not only when he is focusing on Jesus Christ with adapting his life according to the life Jesus lived when he was on earth? As it is said " O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Have we not read and heard: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Many attempt to flee from their spiritual tests, and

they have to face those same tests in a more difficult manner, because no one will be victorious by escaping from them, but with patience and humility he will be able to overcome all the tests, and gain victory.

Therefore in the place of Christ's followers, we must not feel desperate, but we have to pray to God in supplication with more passion to help us with any assistance we may need.

According to what Paul has said: In every temptation, God himself will make a way for us to tolerate it.

O beloved ones, difficulties do not weaken mankind, but they reveal the true human nature.

It will be good for us to occasionally face persecutions and abnormalities, since these abnormalities will persuade us to search our hearts, and to survey ourselves.

So as a result, we conclude that troubles are difficult, but usually good and useful to build us.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must be more careful than any other time.

Because in these days, the hearts and thoughts of many are revealed, so that the faith is tested.

May your treasure be where there is no moth and rust.

I would like to remind you of some verses that we nearly discuss everyday, (Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.) but as long as our human will has priority over God's will, his will will not be done.

As we have learned from him in Gethsemane, he surrendered his will to the father, "My Fa-

ther, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

What we are bearing today, is a difficult but not unbearable situation, because neither he has tested us more than our faith and our endurance, nor does he do as such. And as we have known from before, we must beware not to fail, but to advance in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, And consider these bumps and prisons as opportunities to testify to his name. He said: If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

As a small servant, necessarily in prison to carry out what I must do, I say with faith in the word of God that he will come soon."However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Discipline yourself with faith in the word of God. Retain your souls with patience. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.

May you are granted grace and blessings increasingly in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

Yusef Nadarkhani

Lakan Prison in Rasht

2/June/2010

## The Antichrist: Coming Leader of the World

Every decade or so certain currents of fear sweep the western world about the possibility that we are now in the time of the end when a great world ruler, the Antichrist, will come to power. Of course we are nearer that time now than ever before, and it could well be upon us in our generation. The Greek word *antichristos* appears only in the writings of the Apostle John, in fact only in his epistles. He speaks of the the many antichrists who are the forerunners of the antichrist (1 John 2:18, 22; 2 John 7, 1 John 4:3). The word antichrist can mean "instead of Christ," that is a counterfeit messiah, or it can mean "one opposed to Christ, but assuming His role." Probably a combination of the two meanings is correct. In the Bible, the theme of the seed of the serpent opposing the seed of the woman begins in Genesis (3:14-15) and continues throughout the entire Bible. It is a complex and enigmatic subject.

There have been many diabolical and cruel world leaders during the past 2000 years beginning with several of the Caesars (such as Nero) and including men like Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Saddam Hussein. Evil men do not necessarily appear to be evil in their time, but can seem to be saviors and benefactors widely and enthusiastically hailed by the populace, as Hitler was in his early days of power. While such men have indeed come under the full control of Satan, so also have their constituents, else they would not succeed in doing such damage in the affairs of men. The cooperation of the masses is required to give them unquestioning, blind allegiance.

Rather than referring to the final antichrist by that name, both Jesus and Paul spoke of a "man of sin" or a "lawless one" who would dominate much of the world at the close of our present age. Chapter One of 2 Thessalonians speaks of the coming of Christ to earth again in power and splendor, all aspects of his return being clumped together in terse, concise language. Paul next urges the Christians in Thessalonica (Greece), in the first century, not to be unduly alarmed by current events in the Roman Empire, or by rumors to the effect that the Day of the Lord had begun:

*"Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion (apostasia) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the (Third) Temple of God (in Jerusalem), proclaiming himself to be*

*God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this?"*

Bible scholars are divided somewhat regarding the interpretation of this passage. Some think the word *apostasia* should be taken literally. The clearest indication that the time is at hand will be the falling away from the church of many, or even most, professing Christians. Alternately, professing Christendom as a whole will become almost fully apostate, that is, synonymous with the harlot church of Revelation 17.

Another widely held interpretation is that it is the departure or rapture of the true church that allows the antichrist to be revealed, because the restraining power of the Holy Spirit in the present age is exercised primarily through the church. The removal (rapture) of the church at the beginning of the end-time period is known as the pre-tribulation, pre-millennial view of eschatology. It is reasonable to suppose that the Lord will return for his church at a time of intense pressure on believers causing many to abandon their faith and at a time when the church's witness has been rendered mostly ineffectual. Paul's discussion continues,

*"And you know what is restraining him (the man of sin) now so that he may be revealed in his his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains it will do so until he is taken out of the midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing (Epiphanies) and his coming (Prussia). The coming of the lawless one by the activity (energeian) of Satan will be with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and with every deceit of unrighteousness in those who are to perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. On account of this God will send upon them a working of error (or delusion, for example a continuous barrage of propaganda), to make them believe what is false (literally the lie); so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*

According to careful interpretation of this passage, the God the Holy Spirit (present in the world through the Body of Christ, through the minority of true Christians acting as salt and light), is the restraining force in every generation preventing the appearance of the antichrist. The removal of the true church leaves only an apostate church on earth. After the calling out of the bride of Christ, there is no longer any force restraining Antichrist, so he is free to appear---accompanied by a widespread and universal propaganda to the effect that the world is about to enter a great golden age of peace and prosperity. Incredible deception and even great supernatural miracles will accompany the rise to power of this final

incarnation of evil in a human being. When "the full number of the gentiles has come in" to the church (Romans 11:25), Israel will once again become the center of the stage for God's view of history, as she was before "the times of the gentiles" began in the Babylonian Captivity period (~600 BC).

First Thessalonians, Chapter 4, describes the first of two aspects of the second coming of Christ:

*"But we would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those (Christians) who are asleep (have died), that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming (parousia) of the Lord shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command (to wake the dead), with the archangel's call (to deliver and revive the nation Israel), and with the sound of the trumpet of God (to call together the living saints). And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."*

Like the great passage concerning the resurrection of the dead in 1 Corinthians 15, this text says that God will grant all Christians, living and dead, their resurrection bodies at the same time. These new redeemed, glorious, sinless bodies will be like that of Jesus, most likely capable of space and time travel. When a believer dies he leaves earth's one-dimensional time frame and enters eternity. All other believers, regardless of when they die, meet in eternity at the same point, namely the event known as the first resurrection. In the experience of every Christian death is identical to this coming of Christ for his church. This is made clear by the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 5. (See Ray C. Stedman's Authentic Christianity for a discussion of time and eternity).

The return of Christ has two aspects: his silent, unseen return for his church and his coming in glory with his church seven years later. Both aspects of his second advent are combined as one event in 2 Thessalonians 1, and in 2 Peter 3. This difference in the two aspects of Christ's return is reflected in the Greek text of the NT by the use of different words. Parousia is from the word para meaning with or alongside of, and ousia, being, hence being with, "coming and remaining with" someone. (See Matthew 24:3,27,37,39; 1 Thess. 4:15, 5:23; 11 Thess. 2:1; James 5:7,8; 11 Peter 1:16,3:4; 1 Cor. 15:23). Epiphaneia from epi and phaino means a shining forth. (This word is used in 1 Tim. 6:14; 11 Tim. 4:1,8; Matt. 24:27,

11 Thess. 2:8; Titus 2:13). Both words are combined in 11 Thess. 2:8. Jesus will destroy the man of sin by his "appearing" and his "coming."

In the Olivet Discourse, recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, Jesus outlined for his disciples the major events that would precede the second aspect of his second coming, namely his visible unveiling (apokalupsis) to the world as true Messiah and rightful King of Israel. After speaking to them about the future destruction of the Second Temple then standing across from the Mount of Olives where they were seated, the disciples asked,

*"Tell us when will this be, and what will be the sign of your appearing (parousia = presence, that is a period of time when he was back on earth, encompassing seven years) and of the close of the age?"*

Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the messiah,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the sufferings. Then they will deliver you (disciples) up to tribulation, and put you to death, and you (Jews) will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached (once again this time by the 144,000) throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

*"So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the Holy Place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. And alas for those who are with child and those who give suck in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand. So if they say to you, 'Lo he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west so will*

*be the coming (epiphaneia) of the Son of man. Wherever the body is there the vultures will be gathered together.*

*"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man (the shekinah, or cloud of glory) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.*

*"Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming (parousia) of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man. (Luke's gospel adds here mention of the days of Lot). Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two men will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. (Luke adds mention of two men in the same bed, one taken and one not, indicating that this event occurs world-wide when some are awake and working and others asleep at night—Ray Stedman). Watch therefore for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, (Israel my brethren), that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you (Israel) do not expect..."*

Bible scholars refer to the end-time period as "the tribulation period." From the book of Daniel that we know this period encompasses just seven years of history on earth. The mid-point of this period is when the man of sin enters the Holy Place in the new Third Temple in Jerusalem, setting in motion a terrible time of world upheaval known in the Old Testament as the time of Jacob's trouble (see Jeremiah 30). The last half of the 70th week of Daniel is also called in the New Testament "the great tribulation." Ray Stedman notes that during this entire seven year period Jesus will on earth, with his church, but invisible. One example of this secret presence is given in Revelation 14:1 where the Apostle John

sees "the Lamb standing (present tense) on Mount Zion with the 144,000..." This incident occurs during the tribulation period. (The 144,000 are Jewish followers of Jesus during the tribulation period who are charged with communicating the gospel to the world after the departure of the church during the tribulation period). Evidently the majority of the people on earth are unaware of the secret presence of Jesus on earth except for the commotions resulting, "where the body is there the vultures are gathered together." At the close of the last half of the seven year period of terrible world suffering, nuclear holocaust, plague, famine and natural disasters that Jesus unveils himself visibly from the summit of the Mount of Olives as described in Zechariah 14. The same event is described also by John in Revelation 19:11 ff. This is the time of the Lord's coming with his saints.

The problem of the antichrist is more complex than the simple appearance at the close of our age of a world-dictator, because during the end-time period spoken of in the Bible there are not one but two major world rulers who seem to fit the description of the man of sin. Various commentators call one or the other of these individuals the antichrist. No doubt both men on stage will be brilliant, eloquent, charismatic and powerful. The Bible describes them both as "wild beasts." John writes in Revelation 13

*"I saw a beast rising out of the sea (the sea symbolizes the gentile nations in Scripture), with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon (Satan) gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. Men worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?' And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for 42 months (3.5 years); it opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven (the true church). Also it was allowed to make war on the (tribulation) saints (on earth) and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. If any one has an ear, let him hear: If any one is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone slays with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*

*"Then I (John) saw another beast which rose out of the land (Israel); it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven in the sight of men; and by the signs which it is allowed to work in league with the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, bidding them to make an image (eikon) for the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak, and to cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both slave and free, to be marked on the right hand or on the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell (economic controls) unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six."*

The second beast fits well the man predicted by Jesus in John 5:43 who is also the false shepherd of Israel spoken of by the prophet Zechariah (11:15-17). Jesus said of this man, "I have come in my Father's name and you (Jews) would not receive me. Another will come in his own name, him you will receive." This leader is also described as like a lamb, that is a counterfeit to the real Lamb of God. He is to be a religious leader while the first beast is a military leader. This becomes more evident from studying the rest of the Book of Revelation where the first beast is likened to a Roman Caesar leading the western nations centered in Europe. The last and final form of the revived Roman Empire and its rulers is that foreseen in Daniel 2 and 7. In summary, the end-time period is marked by the presence of a great and powerful military leader in the West and an outstanding religious leader in Israel who works in league with him.

*"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." (Revelation 12:7-9)*

In the Old Testament (and during the end time when the church is not the central focus of God's activity in the world), God's way of looking at the world is with Jerusalem as the center of the earth. Israel dominates the world-stage and the goyim or gentile nations are on the periphery. Directions in the OT are referenced to Jerusalem, the great sea is the Mediterranean, the salt sea is the Dead Sea and so on. The last week of years in

Daniel's prophecy of Israel's 70-week history is the seven-year tribulation period just described, the prophet says,

*"And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one (Messiah) shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come (i.e. the Romans), shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (the second temple). Its end shall come with a flood (both in AD 70 and in the end-time), and to the end (when Christ returns) there shall be war; desolations are decreed. And he (the prince that shall come) shall make a strong covenant with many for one week (seven years); and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering (in the Third Temple) to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator" (Daniel 9:26,27).*

From this passage it can be seen that the future great world ruler of the West, the first beast, will succeed in making an international treaty with Israel for seven years guaranteeing some sort of Middle East peace settlement with the Arab nations and the western nations. This will occur after the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the restoration of temple sacrifices which will be interrupted only when the man of sin (the false prophet) steps into the Holy Place and declares to the world that he is God. Israel's participation in a mid-east peace treaty with the antichrist is called her covenant of death in Isaiah 28:15.

The fact that the number of the beast is 666 always arouses much speculation in every generation. Six is the number of man in scripture and three the number of God, so 666 symbolizes man proclaiming himself to be God in contrast to the Son of God who became a man by means of the incarnation. According to scriptures there is no way of anyone identifying the antichrist ahead of time. He can not be revealed until the departure of the church, when the Restrainer allows him to come forth.

Daniel lived and wrote in the Sixth Century B.C. while the prophet was in Babylon with his people during the 70 years' captivity following the destruction of the first temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel (Chapter Two) he interprets a dream of Nebuchadnezzar in which the king saw a great image with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay mixed together. In the dream a great stone cut out without hands smashed the image, the stone then became a great mountain that filled the earth. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold ruling over the first great gentile world empire, Babylon. Next, he said, would come Medo-Persia

followed by Greece, then Rome. The legs represent the two divisions of the old Roman empire represented up to 1917 in our century by the Kaisers of Germany and the Czars of Russia. The feet represent the last period of western civilization. Iron is symbolic of military and industrial might and clay symbolizes the weak form of government by the people (as opposed to a strong central monarchy).

The smiting stone is God's Messiah. He will set up enduring his kingdom breaking down all other kingdoms in the process, in the days of the last ten kings (the ten toes). So caught up in his own sense of power and self-importance was Nebuchadnezzar when Daniel told him the meaning of his dream that he ordered a great statue of himself erected (all of gold) and he ordered all in his nation (including the Jews) to worship the image. This event is very much suggestive of the image of the beast described in Revelation 13 which will be set up in the Third Temple in Jerusalem in the end-time by Antichrist.

Daniel had other visions of world empires that would follow his time, for example the visions recorded in Chapter 7 are very similar to those seen by John and recorded in Revelation. From the description of the fourth terrible beast of Daniel Chapter 7, (symbolizing the Roman empire), we find that a future great Roman leader will arise, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change the times (calenders) and the laws; and the saints shall be given into his hand for a time, and times and the dividing of time" (3.5 years, the last half of the tribulation period).

A very important fulfilled prophecy of Daniel is given in Chapter 8. It concerns a struggle between a ram and a he-goat, symbolic of the overtaking of the Persians by the Greeks. The he-goat had four horns, representing the division of the Greek empire between four generals upon the death of Alexander the Great:

*"The he-goat grew very great and when he was strong, the great horn (Alexander) was broken, and replacing it came four notable horns towards the four winds of heaven. And out of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceedingly great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land (Israel). And it grew great (ascending) even to the host of heaven (the angelic host); and it cast down some of the host of heaven (the angels) and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. He magnified himself even up to the prince of the host; and the continual burnt offering was taken from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering by reason of transgression, and truth was cast down to the ground, and the horn acted and prospered. Then I (Daniel) heard a holy*

*one speaking; and another holy one said of the one that spoke, 'For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?' And he said to him, 'For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be restored to its rightful state.'"*

Historically the details of this prophecy were fulfilled when a cruel Syrian ruler; Antiochus Epiphanes, (his name means the illustrious one), a Selucid, profaned the temple in Jerusalem in 168 B.C. by offering a sow upon the altar and murdering many of the Jews in an attempt to wipe out their religion. Antiochus Epiphanes is called a "type" of antichrist because Daniel was given an explanation of his visions by the angel Gabriel who told him that a "king of fierce countenance," like Antiochus Epiphanes would arise at the end of the days. Gabriel said,

*"Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation; for it pertains to the end of the appointed time of the end. As for the ram which you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the he-goat is the king of Greece; and the great horn between his eyes is the first king. As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his rule, but not with his power. And at the latter end of their rule, when the transgressors have reached their full measure, a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise. His power shall be great, and he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people of the saints. By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes (Jesus); but by no human hand, he shall be broken. The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true; but seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence" (Daniel 8:20-26).*

Some Bible scholars take this man to be the Roman beast, others the last king of the north and still others, the beast out of the land (the false prophet). Since both beasts in Revelation 13 are fully possessed and controlled by Satan it is perhaps not too important which one is labeled the antichrist, though usually commentators regard the last Roman ruler rather than the false prophet (the counterfeit messiah of Israel) as the antichrist. The latter individual is subservient to the former.

The last major passage in Daniel relevant to the antichrist is found in the closing verses of Daniel 11. All the prophecies up to verse 35 of Chapter 11 have been accurately fulfilled in history but not the verses beginning with 36. Thus Bible scholars like to call the entire age of

the church the great parenthesis since this is one of several instances recorded in the Bible where the continuous thread of the history of Israel's redemption can be seen to have been interrupted by a long delay. This interval is also the time between Daniel's 69th and 70th week when the prophetic clock with regard to Israel has been stopped. Chapter 36 of Daniel, in historical context, deals with long wars between the Selucids (kings of the North) and the Ptolemies of Egypt (the kings of the South). These kings succeeded Alexander the Great after his death in Babylon at age 33. Long drawn out wars and conflicts (330-63 BC) were fought to and fro across the holy land by men who were unconcerned about God's ultimate purposes for Israel. Finally the Roman Empire came into being and began to exercise sway over the holy land in time for the first advent of Messiah. There is yet to come one last great king of the north who appears to be a Syrian ruler in league with Russia, and one last king of the south, an Egyptian military ruler. The end-time events associated with the beginning of the last war in the Middle East seem to be described beginning with verse Daniel 11:36:

*"And the king (of Israel, the second beast?) shall do according to his will: he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished, for what is determined shall be done. He shall give no heed to the God of his fathers (Elohim), or to the one beloved by women (Messiah?); he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honor the god of fortresses (the military power of the west), instead of these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He shall deal with the strongest forces by the help of a foreign god (the first beast); those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land (of Israel) for a price (i.e. to obtain peace with the Arabs). At the time of the end the king of the south (Egypt) shall attack him (the king of Israel), but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he (the king of the north) shall come into the countries and shall overflow and pass through. He (the king of the north) shall come into the glorious land (Israel). And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites (Jordan). He (the king of the north) shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train. But tidings from the east and from the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many. And he shall pitch*

*his palatial tents between the sea (Mediterranean) and the glorious holy mountain (Jerusalem); yet he shall come to his end with none to help him."*

That the Syrians/Russians will invade Israel and be destroyed by direct intervention of God, is described in Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39. Whether this occurs at the beginning of the tribulation or in the last half is disputed by some Bible scholars. Some well-qualified scholars believe this invasion will occur in the first half of the tribulation period, however my personal conviction is that this "Gog and Magog" invasion falls in the last half of the tribulation period. Ezekiel says God will rain fire on both Moscow and the coastlands (a term for the Japhethic western world nations, or the continents) at that time—nuclear exchange seems to be the probable scenario.

The events described in the closing verses of Daniel 11 evidently bring an intervention by the western European nations who invade Israel at the time the Russians sweep through into Egypt. An invasion from the east is also described in scripture. These events are the tidings that concern the last king of the north so that he entrenches himself between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean where he meets his final end. The so-called battle of Armageddon is really a series of campaigns in the final war culminating in one last great battle on the plain of Esdraelon inland from the port of Haifa (Revelation 16). During the last attempt by world leaders to self-destruct, Jesus will bring this war to a close before the total destruction of the human race. He will return in open power with the armies of heaven behind him at the time of earth's most desperate hour. ("Unless those days were shortened no human being would be saved, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened"). Many scholars believe the approaching second coming of Christ will cause cosmic disturbances and that the human armies on earth invading Israel will believe this to be an alien invasion from outer space. They will cease fighting one another and all unite to fight against the Lord. This is consistent with the Biblical view that unregenerate men actually hate God more than they do one another. In the view of a secular world, God is man's ultimate enemy.

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse (Jesus) and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his

mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh" (Revelation 19:19-21).

The subject of Antichrist is not exhausted by any means by the above brief discussion. There are a number of types of Antichrist in Scripture. For example A.W. Pink discusses Nimrod as a type of Antichrist in his book Antichrist (Kregel Publications 1988). Nimrod founded Babylon and Ninevah in what is today the nation of Iraq. Nimrod was responsible for introducing the powerful system of religious error which later diffused throughout the world and still greatly affects our modern cultures. The Assyrians of this fertile crescent area are noted throughout history for their violent hatred of Israel. Saddam Hussein (who likens himself to a new Nebuchadnezzar) is also rebuilding ancient Babylon, the city, in our time. In Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 Babylon is not merely a city, but an entire global religious and an economic world view (weltauangshaung) based on the Babylonian Mystery religion of Nimrod. My belief is that "Mystery Babylon the Great" is both a literal city and also a symbol of all false (apostate) religion and false commerce and trade existing at the end of the age.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about the various antichrists down through history is that they are fully instruments of God. God will allow evil to find a full and consummate expression in the final antichrist and his followers as the age closes. The reason for this is the stubborn refusal of men to respond to the truth about God as He really is. When men refuse the truth, God gives them over the lie that they can be their own gods and masters of their own fate. Scripture clearly teaches that man can not set dates for the commencement of these events nor the time of return of Jesus. However the structuring of the stage-sets in the Middle East the last century surely indicates that these events may well unfold in the next few years. Whether soon or many long years away Christians should remember the high calling of Jesus and the rich inheritance offered to them by His gracious love and full provision for their lives now and forever.

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# SUMMARY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE BEAST THE HEAD OF EMPIRE THE ANTI-CHRIST

(adapted)

## KEY VERSES

1. The Great Image - Dan. 2:16-49
2. The Four Beasts - Dan. 7:7-27
3. The Seventy-Sevens - Dan. 9:23-27
4. Eze. 28:1-10
5. Dan. 8:23-25
6. Dan. 11:36-45
7. 2Thess 2:3-10
8. Rev. 13:1-10; 17:8-14

## OBSERVATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

### 4. HIS MANIFESTATION IS BEING HINDERED BY THE RESTRAINER

1. 2Thess 2:6-7 - *And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*

### 5. A "DEPARTURE" WILL PRECEDE HIS MANIFESTATION

1. 2Thess 2:3 - *Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion [departure, snatching away] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*
2. Either a departure from the faith - or - a departure to be with the Lord

### 6. HE IS A POLITICAL LEADER

1. Rev. 17:12 *"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast.*
2. Rev. 13:1 *"And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.*

### 7. HE RISES FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE, SINCE HE IS A RULER OF THE PEOPLE WHO DESTROYED JERUSALEM

1. Dan. 9:26 *After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off, but not for himself. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy*

*the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.*

### 8. HE IS THE HEAD OF THE FINAL GENTILE WORLD EMPIRE WHICH CONTAINS ELEMENTS OF PAST EMPIRES (LIKE A LION, LEOPARD AND BEAR)

1. Rev. 13:1-2 - *1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.*

2. Dan. 7:7-8 - *"7 After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast--terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. 8 While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.*

3. Dan. 7:20 *I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell--the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.*

4. Dan. 7:24 *The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.*

5. Rev. 17:9-11 - *9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.*

### 9. HE MAY BE A GENTILE, SINCE HE ARISES FROM THE SEA = GENTILE NATIONS

1. Rev. 13:1 *And I stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.*

2. Rev. 17:15 *Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.*

## 10. HE RISES THROUGH A PEACE PROGRAM

1. *"2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3*
2. *Dan. 8:25 - "... When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power."*

## 11. HE MAKES A 7 YEAR COVENANT WITH ISRAEL WHICH HE BREAKS AFTER 3 1/2 YEARS

1. *Dan. 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. ..."*

## 12. HE ELIMINATES THREE RULERS IN HIS RISE TO POWER

1. *Dan. 7:24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.*
2. *Dan. 7:8 "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.*
3. *Rev. 17:10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.*

## 13. HE RULES OVER MANY NATIONS BY THEIR OWN CONSENT

1. *Rev. 17:13 - They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.*
2. *Rev. 17:17 - "For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled."*

## 14. HIS INFLUENCE IS WORLD WIDE

1. *Rev. 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.*

## 15. HE RULES WITH ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

1. *Dan. 11:36 "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.*
2. *Dan. 7:25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over*

*to him for a time, times and half a time. [Or for a year, two years and half a year]*

## 13. HIS RISE TO POWER IS AIDED BY THE HARLOT (FALSE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM) WHICH SEEKS DOMINANCE

1. *Rev. 17:3 - Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.*

## 1. LATER, HE DESTROYS THE HARLOT

1. *Rev. 17:16 - "The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire."*

## 14. HE IS A MASTER OF INTRIGUE

1. *Dan. 8:23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.*

## 15. HE IS A BLASPHEMER

1. *Rev. 13:5 -6 - The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.*
2. *Rev. 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.*
3. *Dan. 7:25*

## 16. HE INTRODUCES IDOLATRY AND SETS HIMSELF UP AS GOD

1. *Dan. 11:36-37 - 36 "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. 37 He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.*
2. *2 Thess. 2:4 - He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*
3. *Rev. 13:5 - The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.*
4. *Eze. 28:2 - "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "' In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas." But you are*

*a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.*

**17. HE IS THE SPECIAL ENEMY OF JESUS - THE PRINCE OF PRINCES**

1. *Dan. 8:25 - "... When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power."*

**18. ALL WHO REJECT TRUTH WILL BELIEVE HIS LIE**

1. *2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 - 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

**19. HIS PASSION IS GLORY AND POWER**

1. *Dan. 11:38 Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.*

**20. HE IS EMPOWERED BY SATAN AND DEMONSTRATES SATANIC MIRACLES**

1. *2 Thess. 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,*
2. *Rev. 13:4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"*
3. *Dan. 8:24 "He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. ..."*
4. *Rev. 19:20 - "But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. ..."*

**21. THE SATANIC ACTIVITY APPEARS TO BE CONFINED TO THE LAST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION**

1. *Rev. 13:5 -6 - The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.*
2. *Dan. 7:25; 8:27; 11:36*

**22. HE WILL PREVAIL OVER THE SAINTS DURING THE LAST HALF OF TRIBULATION**

1. *Dan. 7:21 "As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,"*
2. *Dan. 7:25 "... The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time."*

3. *Dan. 8:24 "... He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people."*

4. *Rev. 13:7 "He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. ..."*

**23. IN THE END AN ALLIANCE WILL BE FORMED AGAINST HIM AND GATHER AT ARMAGEDDON. BUT THEY JOIN HIM IN FIGHTING AGAINST THE RETURNING JESUS**

1. *Dan. 11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood."*
2. *Eze. 28:7 - I am going to bring foreigners against you, the most ruthless of nations; they will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom and pierce your shining splendor.*
3. *Rev. 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings--and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."*
4. *Rev. 19:19 - "Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army."*

**24. HIS RULE WILL BE TERMINATED BY A DIRECT JUDGMENT FROM GOD AT THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST**

1. *Dan. 7:22 "until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom."*
2. *Dan. 7:26 "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever."*
3. *Dan. 11:45 "... Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."*
4. *2 Thess. 2:8 - And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

**25. HE WILL BE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE**

1. *Rev. 19:20 - "But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur."*

# IS 'WWW' IN HEBREW EQUAL TO 666?

IS THE WORLD WIDE WEB — 666: THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Is "www" in Hebrew equal to 666?

[http://www.av1611.org/666/www\\_666.html](http://www.av1611.org/666/www_666.html)

## Is "www" in Hebrew equal to 666?

by Terry Watkins

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### Is "www" in Hebrew equal to 666?

We've gotten several emails asking is it true "www" is "666" in the Hebrew language.

**YES... and... NO.**

**NOTE:** "www" is the acronym for world wide web and is normally used as the prefix, or first node of the Internet domain names, such as **www**.av1611.org

**FIRST... The YES.**

#### How to get 666 from www?

The Hebrew and Greek alphabet does not have separate characters or alphabets for numbers and letters. Letters are also used as numbers. So each letter is a numerical value.

The Hebrew equivalent of our "w" is the letter "vav" or "waw". The numerical value of vav is 6. So the English "www" transliterated into Hebrew is "vav vav vav", which numerically is 666.

HEBREW-ENGLISH-NUMBER TABLE									
י	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
Yod	Tet	Chet	Zayin	Vav	He	Dalet	Gimel	Bet	Alef
(Y)	(T)	(Ch)	(Z)	(V/W)	(H)	(D)	(G)	(B/V)	(silent)
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
ע	ס	נ	נ	מ	מ	ל	ך	כ	
Ayin	Samech	Nun	Nun	Mem	Mem	Lamed	Khaf	Kaf	
(silent)	(S)	(N)	(N)	(M)	(M)	(L)	(Kh)	(K/Kh)	
70	60	50	50	40	40	30	20	20	
ת	ש	ר	ק	ץ	צ	ף	פ		
Tav	Shin	Resh	Qof	Tsadeh	Tsadeh	Feh	Peh		
(T)	(Sh/S)	(R)	(Q)	(Ts)	(Ts)	(F)	(P/F)		
400	300	200	100		90		80		

The English equivalent is below the Hebrew letter (in parenthesis).  
 The number value of the Hebrew letter is below the English letter.  
 The "vav" or English "w" or "6" is highlighted in yellow.  
 By the way, Hebrew reads right to left.

## Now . . . the NO.

A little "detail" concerning the Biblical number "666":

Notice how Revelation 13:18 reads:

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding **count the number of the beast**: for it is the number of a man; and his number is **Six hundred threescore and six**. Rev. 13:18

**The number is NOT simply three SIXES or 6-6-6, but 600 + 60 + 6, or the number "Six hundred sixty and six".**

In Revelation 13:18 we're curiously told to "count the number of the beast". How do we "count the number of the beast"? In Revelation 14:11 the mark is referred to "the mark of **his NAME**". In Revelation 13:17, 15:2 it's called "the **number of his NAME**". So the "mark" and "number" refer to his "name". We count the **number of his name**.

In the Greek and Hebrew language there are no "numbers" such as 1, 2, 3, or 666. The Greek and Hebrew letters are also numbers. *Gematria* is the adding up or "counting" (Rev 13:18), the numerical equivalent of each letter in a word or name. This was fairly common in the days before alphabetic numbers. For instance, on the walls of ancient Pompeii, someone wrote, "I love her whose number is 545".

For instance, it's common knowledge, the name of Jesus in Greek equals 888

Grant Jeffrey writes in Prince of Darkness:

The number 666 indicates that the letters in the Greek form of the name of the Antichrist will add up to 666. There is a slim possibility that his name will equal 666 in the Hebrew language since the Antichrist will be Jewish. The numeric system does not work in English or in languages other than Greek or Hebrew, so it is useless to calculate the values of names in these modern languages. (Grant R. Jeffrey, Prince of Darkness, pp. 275, 277)

The "count the number of the beast" is **the total** of adding the letter/numerical value of his name. This "count" equals "Six hundred sixty and six", not simply three 6's or 666.

**So if we apply the clear teaching of Revelation 13:18 to the Hebrew "www", we actually have 6+6+6 or 18 — not 666.**

Another interesting insight. . .

It's also been discovered the Hebrew letter "vav" means "hook, peg or nail". The number "6" also resembles a "hook". **Is the internet "hooking" the world into the 666 system.**

**Before some "simple soul" gets too excited and starts screaming the World Wide Web is "666" and a dozen new books hit the bookshelves declaring "666 Is Here"!, let's briefly read what God says about 666: the mark of the beast:**

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a **MARK** in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the **MARK**, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. Rev. 13:16-18

**The Mark of the Beast is received only after "worship" of the beast or his image.**

"If any man **worship** the beast and his image, and receive his mark. . ." Rev. 14:9

". . . who **worship** the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark. . ." Rev. 14:11

". . . which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which **worshipped** his image." Rev. 16:2

". . . them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that **worshipped** his image. . ." Rev. 19:20

". . . which had not **worshipped** the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark . . ." Rev. 20:4

## Let's compare the World Wide Web and 666: The Mark of the Beast.

### Why the World Wide Web (www) is *NOT* 666: the Mark of the Beast

- 666 is total of the numerical values in the letters of the antichrist's **name**
  - The World Wide Web is not a **name**.
- 666 is **total** of the numerical values of the letters in the antichrist's name
  - The actual **total** of "www" is 18 — not 666.
- 666 is the number of a man, the antichrist, or the beast
  - The World Wide Web is not a man.
- The mark of the beast controls the ability to buy or sell
  - The World Wide Web *currently* does not
- The mark of the beast goes in the right hand or forehead
  - The World Wide Web does not.
- The mark is symbolic of the antichrist or beast
  - The World Wide Web is not
- The mark is received only after worshiping the beast
  - The World Wide Web is not worship

#### Should I be concerned with "www" as "666"?

No.

#### What does all this mean?

Not much. Other than it's interesting and prophetic the number "666" seems to "pop-up" more and more. . .

humhhhh. . .

## Newsweek Depiction of Obama as Lord Shiva Upsets Some Indian-Americans

Published November 21, 2010 | FoxNews.com

Newsweek's depiction of President Obama on its latest cover has irked some Indian Americans who, fresh off Obama's visit to the world's largest democracy, are not happy with the image of the U.S. president as the Hindu deity, Lord Shiva.

The Newsweek cover shows Obama with several arms carrying policy issues while balancing on one leg. The headline reads: "God of All Things" with a subtitle, "Why the Modern Presidency May be too Much for One Person to Handle."

Shiva, who is one of three pre-eminent gods in the Hindu religion along with Brahma and Vishnu, is considered the destroyer of the world, which must end, metaphorically speaking, in order to be reborn as a more universalistic place. However, the god's purpose is not to foretell an apocalyptic ending.

Shiva is often manifested as Lord Nataraja, who has multiple arms and balances on one leg, and is viewed as dancing in a representation of the rhythm and harmony of life.

Rajan Zed, president of the Universal Society of Hinduism in Nevada, told the English-language Sify News in India that Nataraja is highly revered and meant to be worshipped, not indecorously thrown around. Zed, who is known for his work on interfaith dialogue, said it is not OK to use Hindu concepts and symbols for profit or self-serving purposes.

Suhag Shukla, managing director and legal counsel of the Washington-based Hindu-American Foundation, told FoxNews.com that her group doesn't think Newsweek was being malicious or trying to offend Hindus, but "the cover was in line with the media's comfort of utilizing Hindu symbols or deities to symbolize an issue."

"Hinduism's sacred images are too often appropriated in popular culture without understanding their spiritual relevance to Hindus," she said. "For Hindus, the iconography gives insight into the divine realm, and each aspect of representation is replete with profound symbolism that is lost and even debased by such attempts at humor."

Shukla, who noted that Hindu images are frequently used in media as caricatures because of a fundamental lack of understanding about the very complex religion, said it's impossible to retract the image since the magazine reached mailboxes on Friday. However, her organization will contact Newsweek on Monday.

Newsweek, which could not be reached for comment, did not have the image posted on the magazine's website on Sunday.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/11/21/newsweek-depiction-obama-lord-shiva-upsets-indians/#ixzz161ycmCLE>



## **“THE SONG OF MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB”**

Revelation 15:3

There are more than one set of ‘lyrics’ to this song.

### **THE SONG OF DELIVERANCE FOLLOWING THE PARTING OF THE SEA**

Exodus 15:1-21

*“1 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! 2 The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him. 3 The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name. 4 Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. 5 The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. 6 “Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. 7 And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; It consumed them like stubble. 8 And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, My hand shall destroy them.’ 10 You blew with Your wind, The sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. 11 “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12 You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them. 13 You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength To Your holy habitation. 14 “The people will hear and be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. 15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away. 16 Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm They will be as still as a stone, Till Your people pass over, O LORD, Till the people pass over Whom You have purchased. 17 You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, In the place, O LORD, which You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established. 18 “The LORD shall reign forever and ever.” 19 For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. 20 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them: “Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!””*

Exodus 15:1-21

### **THE SONG OF GOD’S PROTECTION**

Psalms 91

*“1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, 6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. 8 Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, 10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; 11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. 14 “Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. 15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. 16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.””*

Psalms 91:1-16

## THE SONG OF GOD'S FAITHFUL LEADING OF ISRAEL

### Deuteronomy 31:30 - 32:43

*"30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended: 1 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass. 3 For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. 5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation. 6 Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you? 7 "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you: 8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. 9 For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. 10 "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. 11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, 12 So the LORD alone led him, And there was no foreign god with him. 13 "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock; 14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes. 15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. 16 They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, To new gods, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. 18 Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, And have forgotten the God who fathered you. 19 "And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them, Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. 20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith. 21 They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. 22 For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23 'I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. 24 They shall be wasted with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust. 25 The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within For the young man and virgin, The nursing child with the man of gray hairs. 26 I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men," 27 Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, Lest their adversaries should misunderstand, Lest they should say, "Our hand is high; And it is not the LORD who has done all this.'" 28 "For they are a nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them. 29 Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would consider their latter end! 30 How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them? 31 For their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves being judges. 32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom And of the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of gall, Their clusters are bitter. 33 Their wine is the poison of serpents, And the cruel venom of cobras. 34 'Is this not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up among My treasures? 35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.' 36 "For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their power is gone, And there is no one remaining, bond or free. 37 He will say: 'Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge? 38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, And be your refuge. 39 'Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. 40 For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, "As I live forever, 41 If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those who hate Me. 42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy.'" 43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.'"*

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:43

## **THE SONG OF THE LAMB**

### **Psalm 91**

*"8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" 14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."*

*Revelation 5:8-14*

# BEGINNING OF BABYLON: THE TOWER OF BABEL

## I. THE BUILDER OF BABYLON: NIMROD

*A. Genesis 10:6-10 - "6 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim [That is, Egypt; also in verse 13], Put, and Canaan. 7 The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. 8 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, ..."*

1. "Nimrod" = "Let us rebel!"

a) Halley's - "Babylonia was long known as the 'Land of Nimrod'. He was afterward deified, his name being identical with 'Merodach'."

b) cf. 'The Two Babylons' by Hyslop

2. "a mighty hunter" - or "mighty tyrant"

3. "mighty hunter before the LORD"

a) The Jerusalem Targum says "he was powerful in hunting and wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, 'Depart from the judgement of the Lord and adhere to the judgement of Nimrod!'. Therefore it is said; 'As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the LORD'."

b) Another view sees this in light of the possibility of many huge and dangerous animals which would not have yet become extinct. Nimrod's hunting skills would make him akin to the "dragon-slaying knights" of legend.

## II. THE TOWER OF BABEL

• *Genesis 11:1-4 - "1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar [That is, Babylonia], and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in [lit. "unto"] the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."*

### A. BABYLON CONSISTENTLY REPRESENTS REBELLION AGAINST GOD.

1. Morris - "There is abundant evidence that all forms of paganism have come originally from the ancient Babylonian religion. The essential identity of the various gods and goddesses of Rome, Greece, India, Egypt, and other nations with the original pantheon of the Babylonians is well established. ... These pagan deities were also identified with the stars and planets - the 'host of heaven' - with sun-worshipping occupying a central place. This system was formalized in the zodiac, with its numerous constellations ... ." [cf. "Two Babylons" by Hyslop]

a) cf. *Revelation 18:2-5 - "2 With a mighty voice he [angel] shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. 3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; 5 for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. "*

B. The tower was apparently the first “ziggurat” - a tower with an ascending spiral staircase leading to a Shrine on top with the signs of the Zodiac around it.

1. ZPE - “The combination of a temple tower with a city is typical for the Mesopotamian landscape. In the great cities of Mesopotamia, the temples were the most impressive building, and the tower that arose from the temple area was its supreme glory and splendor. This tower, called a ‘ziggurat’, was built in terraces, or stories, each of which was smaller than the one below it. ... The sanctuary of Marduk in Babylon was called ‘the house whose head is raised up’, and the lofty tower was called ‘House of the foundation of heaven and earth’. ... Everything considered, the structure was at least 7 stories high, with the dwelling of Marduk erected on the 7th story. The height has been variously estimated up to 300 ft. ... The cities of Nippur, Larsa, and Sippar each called their ziggurats by the name ‘The house of the bond between heaven and earth’. The one at Babylon had inscribed in its foundation, by Nabopolassar, ‘Marduk had me lay its foundation in the heart of the earth and lift its pinnacle in the sky’. ... Jewish and Arab tradition identified the ‘Tower of Babel’ with the great temple of Nebo in the city of Borsippa, now called Birs-Nimrod.”

2. Halley’s - “It is commonly thought that the actual site was in the center of Babylon, identified with the ruins just north of the Marduk Temple. G. Smith found an ancient tablet reading: ‘The building of this illustrious tower offended the gods. In a night they threw down what they had built. They scattered them abroad, and made strange their speech.’ this seems like a tradition of Babel.”

3. *“a name for ourselves”* - Like the “I will” of Satan and the quest for God-likeness of Eve, fallen mankind looks to glorify itself and “make a name for ourselves”.

4. This is the essence of today’s Humanism.

a) The glorifying and exaltation of Man as independent of God.

5. The Humanist Manifesto II (Sept. 2, 1973), includes the following...

a) We believe that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.

b) Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices.

c) No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

- Genesis 11:5-9 - “5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

### C. EFFECTS OF THE CONFUSION

1. This held back man’s united progress.

a) Note continual desire of mankind to unify for Power, Peace, and Progress [apart from God].

2. This was a means by which God might scatter them.

3. *“Babel”* means “Gate of God” and is related to a similar Heb. root which means “to mix, confuse”. Babel, therefore, became a synonym for the confusion caused by the language barriers which God imposed because of the human pride displayed in it’s building.

#### 4. True unity comes by the Spirit of God alone.

##### a)cf. BABEL with PENTECOST

(1) Zeph. 3:9 - *"Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder."*

(2) *"4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Acts 2:4-11)*

#### D. THE PATTERN OF BABYLON'S CORRUPTION

1.cf. Romans 1:20-25 - *"20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is for ever praised. Amen."*

#### E. UNDER THE ANTICHRIST, BABYLON (IN BOTH ITS RELIGIOUS AND COMMERCIAL ASPECTS) WILL HOLD SWAY OVER THE EARTH AS NEVER BEFORE

# Does the Death of 200 Cows in Wisconsin Confirm Biblical Prophecy?



By: [William Lee Adams](#)

Topics: [200 cows](#), [arkansas birds](#), [Bible](#), [Book of Hosea](#), [Bovine Virus Diarrhea](#), [dead birds](#), [dead cows](#), [fish](#), [mass animal deaths](#), [portage county](#), [prophecy](#), [stockton](#), [Wisconsin](#)

Getty

From TIME Magazine Online:

<http://newsfeed.time.com/2011/01/18/does-the-death-of-200-cows-in-wisconsin-confirm-biblical-prophecy/>

When it comes to mass animal death in 2011, birds do it, fish do it, and now even cows do it. For a number of Christian theologians, it's enough to suggest the end of days is near.

The latest in a bizarre series of animal deaths occurred on January 14. The [Wisconsin Rapids Tribune](#) reported that the Portage County Sheriff's Department dispatched police to the town of Stockton after a cattle owner discovered "numerous dead cows" in a field.

The owner, whose name has been withheld by authorities, told deputies that he suspected the animals died of IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis), a respiratory condition, or BVD (bovine virus diarrhea), an illness that can damage a cow's digestive and immune systems, lead to pneumonia and kill unborn calves. Authorities have sent samples from the cow corpses to Madison to determine the exact cause of death.

Regardless of the outcome of those necropsies, plenty of people find the herd's mysterious death somewhat apocalyptic, especially in the wake of events that claimed the lives of thousands of [birds](#) and [fish](#) in Arkansas, and hundreds of birds in [Sweden](#), [Louisiana](#) and [Kentucky](#).

Some Christians, including online theologian [Paul Begley](#) in Indiana, believe the animal deaths were divined from above as a sign the end of days is approaching.

The death of cows, birds and fish in particular seems to follow the prophecy set out by the Bible in the Book of Hosea, and are said to result when man turns his back on God. "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood," the prophecy goes. "Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away."

"There's something biblically going on with the signs of the second coming of Christ," Begley says on his [YouTube channel](#). His message could creep out believers and non-believers alike. But don't expect the second coming any time soon. He adds that "we still need seven years of tribulation" and "the rise of the anti-Christ" for that to happen. (via the [New York Daily News](#).)

# Parliament of the World's Religions



## Chicago Meeting, 1893

There have been several meetings referred to as a Parliament of the World's Religions, most notably the World's Parliament of Religions of 1893, the first attempt to create a global dialogue of faiths. The event was celebrated by another conference on its centenary in 1993. This led to a new series of conferences under the official title "Parliament of the World's Religions".

## 1893 Parliament

In 1893, the city of [Chicago](#) hosted the [World Columbian Exposition](#), an early world's fair. So many people were coming to Chicago from all over the world that many smaller conferences, called Congresses and Parliaments, were scheduled to take advantage of this unprecedented gathering. A number of congresses were held in conjunction with the exposition, including those dealing with anthropology (one of the major themes of Exposition exhibits), labor, medicine, temperance, commerce and finance, literature, history, art, philosophy, and science. One of these was the World's Parliament of Religions. The Parliament of Religions was by far the largest of the congresses held in conjunction with the Exposition.<sup>[1]</sup>

The 1893 Parliament, which ran from September 11 to September 27, had marked the first formal gathering of representatives of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Today it is recognized as the occasion of the birth of formal interreligious dialogue worldwide.

Absent from this event were Native American religious figures, Sikhs and other Indigenous and Earth centered religionists. (It would not be until the 1993 Parliament that these religions and spiritual traditions would be represented.) The conference did include new religious movements of the time, such as [Spiritualism](#) and [Christian Science](#). The latter was represented by its founder [Mary Baker Eddy](#). Rev. Henry Jessup addressing the World Parliament of Religions was the first to mention the [Bahá'í Faith](#) in the United States (it had previously been known in Europe.<sup>[2]</sup>) Since then Bahá'ís have become active participants.<sup>[3]</sup>

In 1893, The Buddhist preacher [Anagarika Dharmapala](#) was invited there as a representative of "Southern Buddhism" - which was the term applied at that time to the [Theravada](#). He was a great success and by his early thirties he was already a global figure, continuing to travel and give lectures and establish viharas around the world during the next forty years. The Jainism preacher [Virchand Gandhi](#) was invited there as representative of 'Jainism'.

## Address by Swami Vivekananda

The eloquence of [Swami Vivekananda](#) and his introduction of eternal values of [India](#) taught to the [United States](#) are particularly remembered. The speech has been identified by many to mark the beginning of western interest on Indian values not as merely an exotic eastern oddity, but as a vital religious and philosophical tradition that might actually have something important to teach the West.<sup>[4][5]</sup> The opening line, "Sisters and Brothers of America...", was greeted by a three minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000.<sup>[6]</sup>

"[Sectarianism](#), [bigotry](#), and its horrible descendant, [fanaticism](#), have long possessed this beautiful Earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to [despair](#). Had it not been for these horrible [demons](#), human society would be far more advanced than it is now."

## 1993 Parliament

[The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions](#) (CPWR), host organization for the Parliaments of the last two decades, officially dates from 1988 when two monks from the Vivekananda [Vedanta Society](#) of Chicago suggested organizing a centennial celebration of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions.

In 1993, the Parliament convened at the Palmer House hotel in Chicago. Over 8,000 people from all over the world, from many diverse religions, gathered to celebrate, discuss and explore how religious traditions can work together on the critical issues which confront the world. [Sant Sri Asaramji Bapu](#) participated from India and spoke beyond time leaving the audience mesmerised. Dr. Gerald Barney of the Millennium Institute gave the keynote address on the state of the environment. This keynote and the introduction of the document, [Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration](#), mainly drafted by [Hans Küng](#), set the tone for the subsequent ten days of discussion. This global ethic was endorsed by many of the attending religious and spiritual leaders who were part of the Parliament Assembly.

Also created for the 1993 Parliament was a book, A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions by the late Joel Beversluis which has become a standard textbook in religion classes. Unlike most textbooks of religion each entry was written by members of the religion in question. The text of the revised Sourcebook is available online at [Sourcebook Common](#)

The keynote address was given by the [Dalai Lama](#) on the closing day of the assembly. Cardinal [Joseph Bernardin](#) also participated.

Along with Virchand Gandhi, there was one more representative of Jainism named Fatehchand Kapoorchand Lalan. He was from Jamnagar- Gujrat.

## 1999 Parliament

More than 7,000 individuals from over 80 countries attended 1999 Parliament in [Cape Town](#), South Africa. The Parliament began with a showing of the International AIDS Quilt to highlight the epidemic of [AIDS](#) in [South Africa](#), and of the role that religious and spiritual traditions play in facing the critical issues that face the world. The event continued

with hundreds of panels, symposia and workshops, offerings of prayer and meditation, plenaries and performances. The programs emphasized issues of religious, spiritual, and cultural identity, approaches to interreligious dialogue, and the role of religion in response to the critical issues facing the world today.

The Parliament Assembly considered a document called A Call to Our Guiding Institutions, addressed to religion, government, business, education, and media inviting these institutions to reflect on and transform their roles at the threshold of the next century.

In addition to the Call, the Parliament staff had created a book Gifts of Service to the World showcasing over 300 projects making a difference in the world. Assembly attendees also deliberated about Gifts of Service which they could offer or could pledge to support among those gathered in the Gifts document.

## 2004 Parliament

It was celebrated in the [Universal Forum of Cultures](#).<sup>[7]</sup> More than 8,900 individuals attended the 2004 Parliament in [Barcelona, Spain](#). Having created the declaration Towards a Global Ethic<sup>[1]</sup> at the 1993 Parliament and attempted to engage guiding institutions at the 1999 Parliament, the 2004 Parliament concentrated on four pressing issues: mitigating religiously motivated violence, access to safe water, the fate of refugees worldwide, and the elimination of external debt in developing countries. Attendees were asked to make a commitment to a "simple and profound act" to work on one of these issues.

Over the next five to six years people around the world will implement their commitments. Then this vibrant embodiment of the international interfaith community will again come together to strive to, in the words of the CPWR mission statement, "cultivate harmony between the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just, and sustainable world".

## 2007 Monterrey Forum of Cultures

[Forum Monterrey 2007](#) was an international event which included Parliament-style events and dialogues.<sup>[8]</sup> It was held as part of the 2007 Universal Forum of Cultures, which featured international congresses, dialogues, exhibitions, and spectacles on the themes of peace, diversity, sustainability and knowledge. Special emphasis was placed on the eight objectives of Millennium Development goals for eradicating abject poverty around the world.

## 2009 Parliament

[Melbourne, Australia](#) hosted the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions.<sup>[2]</sup> The 2009 Parliament took place December 3 through December 9. Based on attendance at previous events, the Melbourne Parliament was expected to bring together 8,000 to 12,000 people. The actual attendance was much lower, at around just over 6,000.<sup>[9]</sup>

The Melbourne Parliament addressed issues of aboriginal reconciliation. The issues of sustainability and global climate change were explored through the lens of indigenous spiritualities. Environmental issues and the spirituality of youth were also be key areas of dialogue.

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions suggested that the Melbourne Parliament would "educate participants for global peace and justice" through exploring religious conflict and globalization, creating community and cross-cultural networks and addressing issues of religious violence. It supported "strengthening religious and spiritual communities" by providing a special focus on indigenous and Aboriginal spiritualities; facilitating cooperation between Pagan, Jewish, Christian, Bahai, Jain, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu communities; crafting new responses to religious extremism; and confronting homegrown terrorism and violence.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Address by Sri Swami Mayatitananda, Mother Maya

[Sri Swami Mayatitananda](#), known widely as Mother Maya, addressed the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#) at the Convocation of Saints from India and on the Divine Feminine Panel where she appeared alongside other great women of faith.<sup>[11]</sup>

Mother Maya eloquently addressed the theme of global reconciliation through the lens of her [Living Ahimsa](#) work:

"By cultivating personal awareness of [ahimsa](#), we can find a common language that needs no words--a communion centered in the heart of oneness. If each one of us makes a commitment to inner harmony, we will surely succeed in achieving the ultimate goal of our human destiny--that of a spiritual freedom that unites us. Ultimately, it is the work of awareness within the individual person that will change the world for the better."<sup>[12]</sup>

## Criticism

The Parliament of World's Religions has been criticised by some [Christians](#) for denying the exclusivity of [Jesus Christ](#). As far back as 1925, [G. K. Chesterton](#) wrote in [The Everlasting Man](#),

"The [Theosophists](#) build a pantheon; but it is only a pantheon for pantheists. They call a Parliament of Religions as a reunion of all the peoples; but it is only a reunion of all the prigs. Yet exactly such a pantheon had been set up two thousand years before by the shores of the Mediterranean; and Christians were invited to set up the image of Jesus side by side with the image of Jupiter, of Mithras, of Osiris, of Atys, or of Ammon. It was the refusal of the Christians that was the turning-point of history. If the Christians had accepted, they and the whole world would have certainly, in a grotesque but exact metaphor, gone to pot. They would all have been boiled down to one lukewarm liquid in that great pot of cosmopolitan corruption in which all the other myths and mysteries were already melting."

In 2009, an organisation called the "Acts 4:12 Committee" formed for the purpose of responding to what it called the "Parliament of the World's Religions Deception".

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament\\_of\\_the\\_World%27s\\_Religions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_World%27s_Religions)

## Saddam's Babylonian Palace



Saddam Hussein's Palace in Babylon

By [Jackie Craven](#), About.com Guide

...

Saddam Hussein's lavish palace in Babylon became an emblem of his power.

~Daniel O'Connell, Gunnery Sergeant USMC

**From the ancient palace of Nebuchadnezzar to a lavish new palace for himself, Saddam Hussein used architecture to awe and intimidate.**

When Saddam Hussein rose to power in Iraq, he conceived a grandiose scheme to rebuild the ancient City of Babylon. Saddam Hussein said that Babylon's great palaces and the legendary hanging gardens of Babylon (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world) would rise from dust. Like the powerful King Nebuchadnezzar II who conquered Jerusalem 2,500 years ago, Saddam Hussein would rule over the world's greatest empire. The vaulting ambition of Saddam Hussein found expression in vaulting, and often pretentious, architecture.

## Nebuchadnezzar's Palace

In 1982, Saddam's workers began reconstructing Babylon's most imposing building, the 600-room palace of King Nebuchadnezzar II. Archaeologists were horrified. Many said that to rebuild on top of ancient artifacts does not preserve history, but disfigures it. The original bricks, which rise two or three feet from the ground, bear ancient inscriptions praising Nebuchadnezzar. Above these, Saddam Hussein's workers laid more than 60-million sand-colored bricks inscribed with the words, "In the era of Saddam Hussein, protector of Iraq, who rebuilt civilization and rebuilt Babylon." The new bricks began to crack after only ten years.

## Saddam's Palace

Adjacent to Nebuchadnezzar's ancient palace and overlooking the Euphrates River, Saddam Hussein built a new palace for himself. Shaped like a ziggurat (stepped pyramid), Saddam's Babylonian palace is a monstrous hill-top fortress surrounded by miniature palm trees and rose gardens. The four-storey palace extends across an area as large as five football fields. Villagers told news media that a thousand people were evacuated to make way for this emblem of Saddam Hussein's power.

The palace Saddam built was not merely large, it was also ostentatious. Containing several hundred thousand square feet of marble, it became a showy confection of angular towers, arched gates, vaulting ceilings, and majestic stairways. Critics charged that Saddam Hussein's lavish new palace expressed exuberant excess in land where many died in poverty.

On the ceilings and walls of Saddam's palace, 360-degree murals depicted scenes from ancient Babylon, Ur, and the Tower of Babel. In the cathedral-like entryway, an enormous chandelier hung from a wooden canopy carved to resemble a palm tree. In the bathrooms, the plumbing fixtures appeared to be gold-plated. Throughout Saddam Hussein's palace, pediments were engraved with the ruler's initials, "SdH."

The role of Saddam Hussein's Babylonian palace was more symbolic than functional. When American troops entered Babylon in April, 2003, they found little evidence that the palace had been occupied or used. Saddam's fall from power brought vandals and looters. The smoked glass windows were shattered, the furnishings removed, and architectural details - from faucets to light switches - had been stripped away.

During the war, Western troops pitched tents in the vast empty rooms at Saddam Hussein's Babylonian palace. For one soldier's view of Babylon, visit our [Iraq Photo Gallery](#)<sup>1</sup>.

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1. <http://architecture.about.com/library/bl-babylon.htm>

Posted: 02/17/09

## U.S. To Help Rebuild City Of Babylon In Iraq



Iraqi soldiers walk past a replica of the Ishtar Gate of Ancient Babylon, 135 km (85 miles) south of Baghdad, January 13, 2009. (Reuters photo)

By [Joel C. Rosenberg](#)

Largely overlooked by the Western news media over the past few weeks was an enormously significant story. The government of Iraq is moving forward with plans to protect the archaeological remains of the ancient City of Babylon, in preparation for building a modern city of Babylon. The project, originally started by the late Saddam Hussein, is aimed eventually at attracting scores of "cultural tourists" from all over the world to see the glories of Mesopotamia's most famous city. What's more, the Obama Administration is contributing \$700,000 towards "The Future of Babylon Project," through the State Department's budget.

"Officials hope Babylon can be revived and made ready for a rich future of tourism, with help from experts at the World Monuments Fund (WMF) and the U.S. embassy," [reports the Reuters news agency](#). "'The Future of Babylon' project launched last month seeks to 'map the current conditions of Babylon and develop a master plan for its conservation, study and tourism,' the WMF says. 'We don't know how long it will take to reopen to tourists,' said Mariam Omran Musa, head of a government inspection team based at the site. 'It depends on funds. I hope that Babylon can be reborn in a better image.'"

In my non-fiction book, [Epicenter 2.0](#), I wrote about the Bible prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation that indicate the ancient city of Babylon in Iraq will, in fact, be rebuilt in the "last days" of history and become the wealthiest and most powerful city on the face of the planet. I also cited my interview with Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Abdul Ameer Allawi who told me in 2006 at the peak of the insurgency,

"Cultural, religious, archaeological, and biblical tourism is a big opportunity for Iraq. I think rebuilding Babylon is a wonderful idea, as long as it is not done at the expense of the antiquities themselves."

For many, I know the rebuilding of Babylon seemed like a far-fetched idea in the Bible. For many more, it seemed like a far-fetched idea in 2006, as well. But skeptics and cynics take note: now that the insurgency is dying down, the Shia-led government of Iraq is actually moving forward with this historic and prophetic project. They say Babylon will be "reborn." And they're right. It will be. Stay tuned.

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Photo by:AP

## Babylon ruins torn between preservation and profit

By [ASSOCIATED PRESS](#)

05/07/2010 21:59

**The site is filled with overgrown hillocks hiding the estimated 95 percent of the city that remains unexcavated.**

**BABYLON, Iraq** — A US-funded program to restore the ruins of [Iraq](#)'s ancient city of Babylon is threatened by a dispute among Iraqi officials over whether the priority should be preserving the site or making money off it.

Local officials want swift work done to restore the crumbling ruins and start building restaurants and gift shops to draw in tourists, while antiquities officials in Baghdad favor a more painstaking approach to avoid the gaudy restoration mistakes of the past.

The ruins of the millennia-old city, famed for its Hanging Gardens and the Tower of Babel, have suffered heavily over the past decades. Deep in Iraq's verdant south, the cluster of excavated temples and palaces were mostly rebuilt by former ruler [Saddam Hussein](#) in the 1980s, using modern yellow brick to erect towering structures that marred the fragile remains of the original mud brick ruins. After Saddam's fall in 2003, a US military base on the site did further damage.

The site is filled with overgrown hillocks hiding the estimated 95 percent of the city that remains unexcavated — which archaeologists hope could eventually be uncovered.

But for that to happen, they argue, the slow and meticulous work needs to be done to train Iraqis in conservation and draw up a preservation plan that can be used to drum up international funds and get the site UNESCO World Heritage status.

A \$700,000, two-year project to do that, funded by the [US State Department](#) and carried out by the New York-based World Monuments Fund, began last year and if it succeeds, the Babylon project could be a model for saving other ancient sites in this country that witnessed the birth of urban civilization.

"I'm optimistic because what is happening in Babylon is the proper and scientific step and, God willing, the work in Babylon will open up new horizons," said Qais Hussein Rashid, head of Iraq's impoverished antiquities department.

Founded in the 3rd millennium B.C., Babylon rose to prominence nearly 4,000 years ago under King Hammurabi, whose famous law tablet resides in Paris' Louvre Museum. In subsequent centuries the city was conquered, razed and rebuilt several times, becoming the largest city in the world with 250,000 inhabitants under King Nebuchadnezzar II in 600 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar built the famed hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the world, for his homesick wife. He also exiled the Jewish people from [Israel](#), gaining Babylon a bad rap in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the name of the city has since become synonymous with sin.

Given the state of the remains, the World Monuments Fund is expanding its project, seeking up \$1 million from the US to restore two monuments in urgent need of rescue: the 2,500 year old Nabu-Sha-Khare temple and the remains of the monumental Ishtar Gate, once the main entrance to Nebuchadnezzar's city.

Of all the battered ruins, the temple has the most potential, with its arched rooms and courtyards holding altars to the gods.

"This had the most original fabric," explained Jeffrey Allen, a project coordinator. "It is a rare example of a fairly intact temple from the new Babylonian period."

But plaster smeared over the mud brick building in the 1980s is flaking away and in some places the weight of the modern materials has pulled down the ancient walls. Termite-infested wooden beams have also collapsed, bringing down parts of the ceiling, and the lower levels of the walls are being eaten away by rising water from nearby agriculture.

The 45-foot-tall (13.7 meters) foundations of the Ishtar Gate remain impressive, built of bricks decorated with exquisite reliefs of dragons and bullocks. Cement flooring laid down in the 1980s, however, has pushed ground water into the gates' walls, disintegrating the bricks and destroying the lower row of carved animals.

Babylon reopened to the public last year and receives a trickle of visitors, almost entirely locals. The site was a US and the Polish military base until 2005, and a UNESCO report in 2009 slammed the military for damaging it with their heavy equipment.

But for Allen and others studying the site, the damage from the Saddam years is far more serious.

Aiming to associate himself with the glorious kings of Iraq's past, Saddam ordered the country's ruins to be rebuilt. Nebuchadnezzar's southern palace now has towering walls of modern yellow bricks, many of them stamped with Saddam's name. The palace and a nearby rebuilt [Greek](#) amphitheater were used to host an annual music festival.

The work "was rushed through with many mistakes," said Ayeed Ghalib al-Taie, the deputy site inspector who has worked in Babylon for the last decade.

Now that the surrounding area is secure, provincial officials are eager to have visitors — with their cash — coming to the site again. The governor of [Babil province](#), is pushing quick restoration and doesn't want to wait for further study.

"We are not satisfied with the pace of the work in the site, which is being totally neglected by the antiquities board," said Mansour al-Manae, a member of the provincial council and head of its archaeology and tourism committee.

Already the province has taken over part of the site, converted some modern buildings into facilities for visitors and has laid claim to the hilltop palace Saddam built overlooking the ruins in the 1990s.

"We are trying our best to attract investments in order to build restaurants and other attractions," said al-Manae, calling the site "a big source of money to the province and to the country."

The governor went so far as to contact UNESCO behind the back of the antiquities department in January and sign a letter of intent to work on Babylon together. But Baghdad pushed him to cancel the letter, said Rashid, the government antiquities chief.

With stability gradually returning to the country after years of strife, tourists interested in Iraq's rich history are trickling back to see sights like the Ziggurat of Ur, birthplace of the biblical Patriarch Abraham, further south.

Mohammed Taher, a tour guide at Babylon for decades, remembers Western tourists in the 1970s and 1980s would come to the ruins of the Tower of Babel at [New Year's](#) to hold ceremonies commemorating its Biblical significance — even though all that's left is a square-shaped grassy knoll.

Allen of the WMF argues that going slow now to draw up careful plans will pay off more later with international donors.

"New excavations can't go forward until we sort out these problems," said Allen. But once that happens "you are going to have a fabulous site someday, it has great potential."

- [JPost.com](#)
- [Middle East](#)

# LESSONS FROM LOT Pt. 1 & 2

## Genesis 19

### PART ONE

**INTRO:** There is much we can learn from the examples found in Scripture.

- Abraham, Noah, Joseph
- Some of those examples are what we'd call 'negative' examples - much can be learned from them
  - cf. TV Production experience
- Lot is one of those 'negative' examples which we would do well to learn from.

- I. **LOT BELIEVED IN THE LORD, BUT HE WALKED BY SIGHT - NOT BY FAITH - Genesis 13:5-13 - "7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. ... 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other."**

A. HE MADE DECISIONS ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE RATHER THAN PRAYER (vs. 10-11)

- 1.- 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan ..."

B. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WALK OF FAITH

1. 2 Cor. 5:7 - "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

2. This means we evaluate things and make decisions based on more than meets the eye.

- a. cf. Heb. 11:1 - "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

1. Heb 11:7, 13 - "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." ... " 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

C. PROBLEM: WE LIVE IN THE FLESH - our bodies only see physically and thus we are exposed to much more natural sensory input - thus it's so easy to simply walk by sight than faith.

1. What do we do? We need to counteract these continual Natural Influences with consistent exposure to Spiritual Influences

1. Galatians 6:7-10 - "7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

2. THE WORD - Rom 10:17 - "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

3. PRAYER - Ps 5:1-3 - "1 Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my meditation. 2 Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. 3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

a. Ministry -

1. John 7:17 - "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."
2. Romans 12:4-6 - "4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;"

4.FELLOWSHIP - Hebrews 10:24-25 - "24 ... let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

## II. LOT WAS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD, BUT HE TRIED TO BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD

1.Friend? - 'One who supports, sympathizes with, or patronizes a group, cause, or movement.'

### B.IT WAS A GRADUAL PROCESS

1.He began by drawing near to Sodom - *Gen 13:12-13* - "12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD."

2.Then he settled in the city itself - *Gen 14:11-12* - "11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."

3.Finally, we find him sitting at the gate of Sodom - *Gen 19:1* - "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground."

a. 19:9 - "...he keeps acting as a judge"

### C.LOT TRIED TO BE A FRIEND TO THE WORLD -

*Gen 19:4-9* - "4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5 And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." 6 So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, 7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!

1.Jas 4:4 - "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

2.Psalms 1:1-3 - "1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

### D.HE ENDED UP BEING COMPROMISED BY THE WORLD

a. *Prov 12:26* - "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."

2.Lot's view of his daughters was corrupted by the society he kept - cf. 8 "See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof."

3.Compromise had effected his spiritual impact on others - *Gen 19:14* - "So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

4.What to do when we've let that happen? An honest apology / confession can have a powerful effect on nonbelievers as they witness the genuineness of your personal faith and see that believers are real people with real faults, who have a Real, Forgiving Savior Who loves us and walks with us.

5.Lot had become apathetic to the things of the Lord - *Gen 19:14-15* -15 When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." 16 And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city."

E. THOUGH HE TRIED TO BE A FRIEND TO THE WORLD - THE WORLD WAS NOT HIS FRIEND - 9 *And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door."*

1. The world is never the true friend of the believer.
  - a. *Jn 15:19 - "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*
  - b. *2 Tim 3:12 - "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."*
2. We must never settle for a 'truce' or a 'cease-fire' with the world

F. WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE?

1. Understand What is Meant by 'The World'
  - a. *cf. 1 John 2:15-17 - "15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*
  - b. The World = What our Flesh Craves, our Eyes Desire, and our Arrogance Loves
2. Be In The World - But Not Of The World
  - a. *John 17:15-18 - "15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*
3. Let Your Light Shine
  - a. *Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

#### 4. Do Good To All People

- a. *Gal 6:9-10 - "9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

#### 5. Love Every Person

- a. *Romans 13:8 - "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."*

### **G. PRAYER**

## LESSONS FROM LOT Pt. 2

Genesis 19:17-21

CCS Sunday 3/7/04

**INTRO:** There is much we can learn from the examples found in Scripture.

- Abraham, Noah, Joseph
- Some of those examples are what we'd call 'negative' examples - much can be learned from them
  - cf. TV Production experience
- Lot is one of those 'negative' examples which we would do well to learn from.

### I. LOT BELIEVED IN THE LORD, BUT HE WALKED BY SIGHT - NOT BY FAITH

### II. LOT WAS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD, BUT HE TRIED TO BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD

### III. LOT WAS PROTECTED BY HIS RELATIONSHIP TO ABRAHAM, YET HIS LIFE WAS DOMINATED BY FEAR

1. note: We are secure because of our relationship with Jesus - yet we're so often sabotaged by fear.

### B. EARTHLY FEARS CAUSED LOT TO RESIST HEAVENLY COUNSEL

1. *Gen. 19:17-21 - "17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." 18 Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 "Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 "See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." 21 And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken."*

#### 2. Fear Causes us to Say

- a. "No, Lord!"
- b. "I Cannot!"
- c. "Some evil will overtake me!"
- d. "I will die!"

*3. Gen. 19:30 - "Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave."*

### C. YOU CANNOT WALK BY FAITH IF YOU'RE BEING LED BY FEAR

#### 1. Fear can be a helpful thing, when it causes us to avoid real danger

- a. *Prov 22:3 - "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished."*

#### 2. However, when Fearful Feelings become our master ...

- a. We make choices that are ultimately worse than whatever we fear.
- b. We miss opportunities to discover and experience the blessings that only come by walking in faith.

### HELPS TO OVERCOMING FEAR:

#### D. Distinguish between Real Present Danger - and Possible Future Calamities

1. Don't 'give way to fear' - (1Pet 3:6)
2. Don't listen to the fears of the world
- a. *Isaiah 8:12-13 - "12 Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. 13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread."*
- b. ...

#### E. Fill your heart and mind with the Word of God

1. Promises of Protection and Exhortations against Fear
- a. *Ps. 91:1-7 - "1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, 6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you."*
- b. *Josh 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

- c. *Isa. 41:10-14 - "10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." 11 "Behold, all those who were incensed against you Shall be ashamed and disgraced; They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish. 12 You shall seek them and not find them-- Those who contended with you. Those who war against you Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing. 13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.' "*
- F. Remember: There are Worse Things than Whatever you Fear
1. If we let fear control us, it will always lead us to a place that is worse than what we were afraid of in the beginning.
- G. Remember Past Victories - cf. David *1Sam 17:37 - "Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." ...*
- H. Note: The Crucified Life is an Unconquerable Life
1. *Gal 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*
    - a. *Mt 10:28 - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*
    2. *Rev 12:11 - "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."*
    3. *Phil 1:20 - "I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."*
  1. See 'Giants' Through the Eyes of Faith
    1. cf. David again - *1 Sam 17:45 - "Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."*
- J. Settle your Convictions in your Heart Before Facing Challenges
1. *Daniel 3:16-26 - "16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."*
2. *23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." 25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."*
  3. *26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire."*
- K. Face Your Fears
1. But I'm not there yet? Perhaps the way to get there is to choose to trust the Lord and face your fears - even though your knees are shaking and your heart is quaking.
    - Esther is a good example of this ...
- IV. Esther 4:10-5:3
- A. *10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a [message] for Mordecai: 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." ...*
  - B. *13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*
  - C. *15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" ...*
  - D. *5: 1 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. 2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. 3 And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you--up to half the kingdom!"*

## V. CLOSING

### A. WE CAN LEARN MUCH FROM THE FAILURES OF OTHERS

1. cf. My best 'advice'

### B. WE CAN ALSO LEARN MUCH FROM OUR OWN FAILURES

#### 1. THE MERCY OF GOD

#### 2. THE WISDOM OF WALKING BY FAITH RATHER THAN SIGHT

#### 3. THE BLESSINGS OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SAVIOR

### C. PRAYER

# Human trafficking

Excerpt from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Human trafficking** is the illegal [trade](#) in human beings for the purposes of commercial [sexual exploitation](#) or [forced labor](#): a modern-day form of [slavery](#).

...

Trafficking is a lucrative industry. It is now the fastest growing criminal industry in the world.<sup>[5]</sup> Globally, it is tied with the illegal arms trade, as the second largest criminal activity, following the drug trade.<sup>[5]</sup> Human trafficking usually affects women and children<sup>[6]<sup>[not in citation given]</sup></sup> The total annual revenue for trafficking in persons is estimated to be between [USD](#)\$5 billion and \$9 billion.<sup>[7]</sup> The [Council of Europe](#) states, "People trafficking has reached epidemic proportions over the past decade, with a global annual market of about \$42.5 billion."<sup>[8]<sup>[9]</sup></sup> The [United Nations](#) estimates nearly 2.5 million people from 127 different countries are being trafficked around the world.<sup>[10]</sup>

...

## Global extent, awareness and response

Due to the illegal nature of trafficking and differences in methods, the exact extent and growth of the industry is unknown. According to [United States State Department](#) data, an "estimated 600,000 to 820,000 men, women, and children [are] trafficked across international borders each year, approximately 80% are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors. The data also illustrates that the majority of transnational victims are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation."<sup>[34]</sup> However, they go on to say that "the alarming enslavement of people for purposes of labor exploitation, often in their own countries, is a form of human trafficking that can be hard to track from afar."

Of the 45,000 to 50,000 that are brought to the U.S., 30,000 come from Asia, 10,000 from Latin America and 5,000 from other regions e.g., the former Soviet Union. The primary Asian source countries to the U.S. are China, Thailand and Vietnam. Although trafficking into the U.S. and Europe has gained a lot of attention in recent years, anti-trafficking advocates in Asia have been addressing these issues on the continent for decades.<sup>[35]</sup>

Reporters have witnessed a rapid increase in prostitution in [Cambodia](#), [Bosnia](#), and [Kosovo](#) after [UN](#) and, in the case of the latter two, [NATO peacekeeping](#) forces moved in. Peacekeeping forces have been linked to trafficking and forced prostitution. Proponents of peacekeeping argue that the actions of a few should not incriminate the many participants in the mission, yet NATO and the UN have come under criticism for not taking the issue of forced prostitution linked to peacekeeping missions seriously enough.<sup>[36]<sup>[37]</sup><sup>[38]</sup><sup>[39]</sup></sup>

Human trafficking across international borders requires cooperation and collaboration between states if it is to be tackled effectively. The [OSCE](#) (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), an ad hoc [intergovernmental organization](#) under the [United Nations Charter](#), is one of the leading agencies fighting the problem of human trafficking, with an area of operation that includes North America, Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. [Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#) was signed by 41 [Council of Europe](#) member states and ratified by 26.

A common misconception is that trafficking only occurs in poor countries. But every country in the world is involved in the underground, lucrative system. A "source country" is a country from which people are trafficked. Usually, these countries are destitute and may have been further weakened by war, corruption, natural disasters or climate. Some source countries are Nepal, Guatemala, the former Soviet territories, and Nigeria, but there are many more. A "transit country", like Mexico or Israel, is a temporary stop on trafficked victims' journey to the country where they will be enslaved. A "destination country" is where trafficked persons end up. These countries are generally affluent, since they must have citizens with enough disposable income to "buy" the traffickers' "products". Japan, India, much of Western Europe, and the United States are all destination countries.<sup>[40]</sup>

The most common destinations for victims of human trafficking are [Thailand](#), [Japan](#), [Israel](#), [Belgium](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Turkey](#) and the [US](#), according to a report by the UNODC ([United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)).<sup>[41]</sup>

The major sources of trafficked persons include [Thailand](#), [China](#), [Nigeria](#), [Albania](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Belarus](#), [Moldova](#), and [Ukraine](#).<sup>[41]</sup>

In some areas, like [Russia](#),<sup>[42]</sup> [Eastern Europe](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Japan](#), and [Colombia](#), trafficking is controlled by large criminal organizations.<sup>[43]</sup> However, the majority of trafficking is done by networks of smaller groups that each specialize in a certain area, like recruitment, transportation, advertising, or retail. This is very profitable because little start-up capital is needed, and prosecution is relatively rare.

In a 2006 report the Future Group, a Canadian [humanitarian](#) organization dedicated to combating human trafficking and the child sex trade, ranked eight industrialized nations. In the report, titled "Falling Short of the Mark: An International Study on the Treatment of Human Trafficking Victims", Canada received an F rating, the United Kingdom received a D, while the [United States](#) received a B+ and [Australia](#), [Norway](#), [Sweden](#), [Germany](#) and [Italy](#) all received grades of B or B-.<sup>[44]</sup>

Almost every human trafficking prevention organization works to spread public awareness of trafficking. Several methods have been used to achieve public awareness, and while some produce little results, others have succeeded in persuading governments to pass laws and regulations on human trafficking. By pushing the issue of human trafficking

into the public eye through the [media](#), organizations work to educate the general public about the dangers of being trafficked and practices of preventing individuals from being trafficked. [Television](#), [magazines](#), [newspapers](#), and [radio](#) are all used to warn and educate the public by providing statistics, scenarios, and general information on the subject.

It should be noted that there is widespread disagreement about the term trafficking, with social researchers, academics, activists and journalists critiquing its overuse. The problem is that campaigners against trafficking often include all undocumented migrants, or all female migrants who work as prostitutes. They point out that statistics on numbers of victims of trafficking cannot be known since they are by definition not registered as legal migrants or workers in legal industries. The conflation between prostitution and trafficking is discussed in the work of [Laura María Agustín](#).

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These sites were recommended by my sister, Becca Cowan Johnson, who travels internationally training those whose ministry is rescuing women and girls from sex-slave / prostitution. She also directs a 'safe house' ministry for rescued girls - in America!

Here's some good sites/info -  
FBI website:

[http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/human\\_trafficking](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/human_trafficking)  
[www.NotForSaleCampaign.org](http://www.NotForSaleCampaign.org)  
[www.SharedHope.org](http://www.SharedHope.org)  
[www.humantrafficking.com](http://www.humantrafficking.com)

## **Iran Court Postpones 'Execution Trial' Of Evangelical Christians**

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By Worthy News Middle East Service

TEHRAN, IRAN ([Worthy News](#))-- An Iranian court has told arrested evangelical Christians who may face execution on charges of apostasy that they "should be punished", but that their trial "has been postpone for April," a senior church official said Thursday, February 17.

"The judge claimed that he had no time to examine the cases, but spoke about the superiority of Islam," explained Firouz Khanjani, a council member of the Church of Iran movement to Worthy News. "He said that Christians are targeting ignorant people and they should be punished for that."

Advocacy group Middle East Concern (MEC) said it has learned that the Christians, identified as Behrouz Sadegh-Khandjani, Mehdi Furutan, Mohammad Beliad, Parviz Khalaj and Nazly Beliad, were released on bail, but there was no immediate independent confirmation.

Christians have linked the months-long detentions of the believers to their activities within underground house churches linked to the Church of Iran movement.

### **MORE CHARGES**

But prosecutors told the first chamber of the Revolutionary Tribunal of the southwestern city of Shiraz, earlier this month that the believers were held on charges such as "actions against the [state] system", "political meetings" and "contact with opposition groups," according to trial observers.

On Sunday, February 13, they were also to answer in the "120th chamber of a normal tribunal", the charges of 'apostasy', or abandoning Islam, which carries the death penalty in the strict Islamic nation, as well as 'crimes against the Islamic order' Khanjani added.

With the trial being postponed, the believers are expected to face these additional charges in April. Dozens of other Christians remain detained across the country, as part of a government crackdown on Christianity amid reports that many Muslims embrace Christianity and house churches are growing, according rights investigators.

"More than 30 Christians, most from a Muslim background, are understood to still be detained in a number of different cities, including Tehran, Mashhad, Karaj, Shiraz, Ahvaz, Rasht, Hamedan and Arak," MEC told Worthy News.

### **IRANIAN CHURCH LEADERS**

Elam Ministries, a group set-up by Iranian church leaders to encourage Iranian Christians, said among those held in prisons is Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani who has been sentenced to death for apostasy.

Others include Christians "Vahik and Sonia Abrahamian, and Arash and Arezoo Kermanjani" who Elam Ministries said have been in prison in Hamadan for nearly four months. "There has been intense anxiety over Sonia's health, exacerbated by prison conditions," the group said in a statement. "There is also equal concern over, Mojtaba Keshavarz and Shahin Rostami, held in Arak over three months, "especially as Shahin is diabetic."

Relative few Christians have been released of those detained in recent weeks, including four women held in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison on January 29 and one woman and two men from the prison in Isfahan three days earlier, Iranian Christians said.

They spent over a month in prison, most of them in solitary confinement, "solely for being Christians" after they were detained after Christmas 2010 along with over 30 others, according to Elam Ministries.

### **CONTROVERSIAL BAIL**

The group expressed concerns that families of Christians have been told they must pay \$180,000 bail to secure their temporary release.

"The experience of prison and interrogation can be very traumatic and some Christians who endure this ordeal then decide to seek asylum in another country. Their families then not only lose their loved ones to exile, but also suffer the dire financial consequences as the state swallows up the bail money."

Elam Ministries said the family of one of recently released women, Sara Akhavan, "had to surrender their trade license, which means that if the authorities deem the bail is broken, the family's livelihood will be destroyed."

Her sister, Leila Akhavan, was still believed to be detained in Evin prison Thursday, February 17.

### **OPPOSITION PROTESTS**

News of the detentions come amid reports of protests against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his regime, inspired by uprisings that toppled the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt.

Ahmadinejad has denied wrongdoing and his government has defended harsh sentences, including executions of political opponents and Christians as part of defending the Islamic state.

Hardline Iranian lawmakers also urged the judiciary this week to impose death sentences on two major opposition figures, Mirhossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi who they held responsible for "fomenting unrest" in which two people died, state television said. (*With reporting by Worthy News' Stefan J. Bos*).

# THE MILLENNIUM

*The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.*

Isaiah 65:25

## INTRO:

1. The early church until Augustine almost universally believed in an earthly, historical reign of Jesus, initiated by His return
2. Tyconius (late 300's) was the first to influentially champion a spiritualized interpretation, saying that this Millennium is now (Amillennialism)
  - a) His view was adopted by Augustine, the Catholic Church and Reformed theologians
3. Postmillennialism is an outgrowth of Amillennialism, saying the Millennium will happen in this age, before Jesus' return; however, the church will bring it to pass
4. The earthly reign of Christ and His people on this earth is plainly taught in the Old and New Testaments
  - a) Old Testament: Psalm 72; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:4-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6 (and much, much more)
  - b) New Testament: Luke 1:32-33; Matthew 5:18; Luke 19:12-27
  - c) During this period, Israel is renewed in Christ, and assumes a leadership role in the world under Jesus; for the other nations, it is a time of joy, peace and blessing - all in strict obedience to Christ
5. Is it a literal 1,000 years? We should take a number literally unless there is clear reason or evidence to do otherwise

## I. WHAT THE MILLENNIUM IS - Revelation 20:1-5

A. "1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

## II. WHO WILL BE THERE

### A. SURVIVORS - FOLLOWING 'SHEEP - GOAT' JUDGEMENT

1.31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (Matthew 25:31-46)

2.45 Days?

a) "11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days." Daniel 12:11-12

### B. RESURRECTED TRIBULATION MARTYRS [see Rev 20 above]

1. Rev 20:4 - "Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

## C.WHAT ABOUT US? TWO GENERAL VIEWS

### 1.The Example of Jesus After Resurrection

a)"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."" John 20:19

b)"15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him." ... "30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight." Luke 24:15-16, 30-31

### 2.The New Jerusalem

a)"2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:2-3

b)"22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect," Hebrews 12:22-23

### 3.Both May Be Correct

## III.WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE

### A.SATAN WILL BE BOUND

### B.JESUS WILL REIGN!

1. *Isa 2:4 - He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*

### a)Isaiah 4:2-6

(1) *2 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. 3 Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. 5 Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. 6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding-place from the storm and rain.*

2. *Isa 11:10 - In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. [Jesus will be the Ruler, 'Platform' and 'Party']*

3.*Isa 49:7 - This is what the LORD says--the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."*

## C.JERUSALEM THE CENTER OF GOVERNMENT & WORSHIP

### 1.Government

a) *Jer 3:17 - At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honour the name of the LORD. ...*

### 2.Worship

a)*Isa. 2:3 - "Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."*

b)*Zechariah 14:16-20 - 16 Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of*

Tabernacles. 17 *If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain.*

c) Ps 86:9 *All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.*

### 3. Millennial Temple [graphics?]

a) Ezekiel 40-43

## D. CREATION WILL BE LIBERATED

1.19 *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:19-21).*

### 2. NO MORE CURSE

a) To Adam he said, ... *"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. (Genesis 3:17-18).*

b) Isa 55:13 - *Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."*

### 3. NATURE RESTORED

a) Isa 11:6-7 - *6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. [cf. dog, raccoon, & bear - until they grew up]*

### 4. PHYSICAL CHANGES

a) Zechariah 14:10 - *"All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses."*

b) Isaiah 2:2 - *"In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it."*

c) Zec 14:8 - *On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.*

(1) cf. Ezekiel 47:7-12 - *"7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 "It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 "But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 "Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.""*

## IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM

A. PEACE Isa 2:4 - *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*

B. PROSPERITY Isa 66:12 - *For this is what the LORD says: "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees.*

C.SECURITY Micah 4:4 - *Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, and no-one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.*

D.COMFORT Isa 49:10 - *They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.*

1.Isa 66:13 - *As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."*

E.HEALING Isa 29:18 - *In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.*

F.LONGEVITY - *"Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed." (Isaiah 65:20)*

G.JUSTICE There will be Swift Sentences and Certain Justice

1.4 *He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples...." (Isaiah 2:4)*

2.3 ... *He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. (Isaiah 11:3-4)*

a)Isaiah 40:9-11 ?

(1) 9 *You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. 11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

3. Isa 29:20 *The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down-- 21 those who with a word make a man out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice."*

H.JOY

1.Isaiah 25:9 - *"In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."*

2.Isa 29:19 - *Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

## V.PURPOSES FOR THE MILLENNIUM

### A.FULFILL GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL

1.Isaiah 9:6-7

a) 6 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

### B.BRINGING ALL THINGS UNDER JESUS

1.*From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD. (Isaiah 66:23) - cf. Phil 2 - every knee will bow*

2.1Cor. 15:24-26 - *24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

a)27 *For he "has put everything under his feet". Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).*

C.REVEAL THE DEPTHS OF MAN'S DEPRAVITY

- 1.Does man desire God's righteous rule?  
Is he an innocent, corrupted only by a bad environment? These questions will be answered before the great judgment (20:11-15)
- 2."It will be proved once more that man, whatever his advantages and environment, apart from the grace of God and new birth, remains at heart only evil and at enmity with God" (Hoste)

D.DISPLAY THE UNREPENTANT REBELLION OF SATAN

VI.WHAT SHOULD OUR PERSPECTIVE BE?

A.Isaiah 45:22-23 - 22 *"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. 23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.*

B.Heb 12:28 - *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,*

# 7 JUDGEMENTS

## 1. The Judgement of Sin on The Cross

<sup>4</sup> Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... <sup>8</sup> ... For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ... <sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand." Isaiah 53:1-10

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Hebrews 2:9

<sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." ... <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit," 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>33</sup> And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, <sup>34</sup> they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. <sup>35</sup> Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." <sup>36</sup> Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. <sup>37</sup> And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Matthew 27:33-37

## 2. The Self-Judgement of Believers

<sup>31</sup> For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:31-32

<sup>5</sup> This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1 John 1:5-10

## 3. The Judgement Seat of Christ

"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

<sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." Revelation 22:12

#### **4. Sheep-Goat Judgement of Living Nations at End of Tribulation**

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' <sup>41</sup> Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' <sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" Matthew 25:31-46

#### **5. Judgement of Fallen Angels**

"Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" 1 Corinthians 6:3

"For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;" 2 Peter 2:4

"And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;" Jude 1:6

#### **6. Judgement of Israel**

<sup>33</sup> As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. <sup>34</sup> I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. <sup>35</sup> And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. <sup>36</sup> Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD. <sup>37</sup> "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; <sup>38</sup> I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. <sup>39</sup> As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD: "Go, serve every one of you his idols--and hereafter--if you will not obey me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. <sup>40</sup> For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. <sup>41</sup> I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. <sup>42</sup> Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. <sup>43</sup> And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. <sup>44</sup> Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD.'" Ezekiel 20:33-44

"21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes. 22 Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, And there be none to deliver;" Psalms 50:21-22

## 7. Great White Throne Judgement

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:11-15

### Note: There Are Degrees Of Punishment For Unbelievers, According To Their Works

<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup> Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you."

<sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

<sup>24</sup> But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Matthew 11:20-24 niv

# 6 Questions on Hell

by [Mark Driscoll](#)

Mark Driscoll offers answers to the most common questions about eternal punishment.

Every once in a while, someone of note questions or denies the classic Christian belief of a literal hell with eternal, conscious suffering. Then a debate rages and becomes personal between representatives of various perspectives on the issue.

Meanwhile, the average person's questions about hell can remain unanswered. So rather than attacking any individual, I thought it might be helpful to address the issues by answering some of the most common questions about hell. Ministry leaders, including myself, are often asked these questions, and I asked these questions myself as a non-Christian and then as a new Christian in college. Rather than selling you, I will seek to simply be honest and say what the Bible says and allow you to make up your mind for yourself. I will be pulling from a few sections of a [book](#) I wrote with a friend who is the former president of the Evangelical Theological Society.

## 1. What happens when we die?

God created humans as thinking, feeling, moral persons made up of spirit and body tightly joined together. Death is not normal or natural, but an enemy, the consequence of sin. Death is the tearing apart of these two intertwined parts, the end of relationship with loved ones, and the cessation of life on this earth. The body goes to the grave, and the spirit goes into an afterlife to face judgment. The Bible is clear that there will one day be a bodily resurrection for everyone to either eternal life with God or eternal condemnation apart from him in hell.

Christianity differs from all religions in that Christians believe our eternal status depends on our relationship with Jesus. We really believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." It may not be politically correct, but our lives are shaped by the reality that "whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

"Jesus talks about hell more than does anyone else in all of Scripture."

Upon death, a believer's spirit immediately goes to heaven to be with Jesus. Jesus gives us a picture in Luke 16:19–31 of existence after death. Lazarus, the godly beggar, goes to be with Abraham, while the self-indulgent rich man is in a place of torment.

Jesus, who has come back from death and is thus the expert on what awaits us on the other side, was emphatically clear that a day of judgment is coming when everyone will rise from their graves and stand before him for eternal sentencing to either worship in his kingdom or suffer in his hell. At the final judgment, all—even you—will stand before Jesus. Jesus' followers whose names are written in the Book of Life will be with him forever. The Bible could not be clearer: "if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

## 2. What judgment awaits non-Christians at the end of this life?

A day is coming when God will judge the living and the dead through the Son. When the Son of Man comes to sit on his throne, all will stand before him for judgment. From the beginning of creation to the end, the Bible makes it clear that the basis of God's judgment is our deeds.

Jesus made this very clear, saying in John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." Jesus' death propitiated God's wrath against sin. Those who refuse this gift have the double penalty of wrath for their sins and for rejecting God's Son. Jesus himself taught this in John 3:18, saying, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." Unlike Jesus' words to the sheep, to the goats on his left he will say, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

However, this does not mean that the relatively nice sinner suffers equally with Satan or his most committed human servants. There are degrees of punishment in hell like there are degrees of reward in heaven. Both in life and in hell some sins receive more severe punishment, because that is just.

## 3. What does Scripture teach about hell?

Jesus talks about hell more than does anyone else in all of Scripture. Jesus' words come in the context of the rest of Scripture, which says that God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Furthermore, he "is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

Despite God's love for and patience with sinners, it is a horrid mistake to dismiss the Bible's clear teachings on hell. Richard Niebuhr characterized the ongoing attempt of liberal Christians to deny hell as "a God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." Jesus said more about hell than about any other topic. Amazingly, 13 percent of his sayings are about hell and judgment; more than half of his parables relate to the eternal judgment of sinners.

"Christianity differs from all religions in that Christians believe our eternal status depends on our relationship with Jesus."

The Bible does not give us a detailed exposition of hell, but there are many descriptions of the fate of its inhabitants in that place of eternal punishment. They include:

1. fire
2. darkness
3. punishment
4. exclusion from God's presence
5. restlessness
6. second death
7. weeping and gnashing of teeth

Satan will not reign there. Hell is a place of punishment that God prepared for the Devil and his angels. It is where the beast and the false prophet and those who worship them will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night.

At the end of the age, the Devil will be "thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." Hell will be ruled by Jesus, and human and demon alike, including Satan, will be tormented there continually.

"People who reject Jesus in this life will not rejoice in him after this life."

Hell is real and terrible. It is eternal. There is no possibility of amnesty or reprieve. Daniel says that some of the dead will be resurrected "to shame and everlasting contempt." Jesus says, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal

fire prepared for the devil and his angels...And these will go away into eternal punishment." Paul tells us:

God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

Perhaps the clearest and most gripping depiction of hell in all of Scripture is the frequent mention of hell as "Gehenna." The name refers to an area outside of the city of Jerusalem where idolatry and horrendous sin, including child sacrifice, were practiced. Gehenna was a place so despised and cursed by God's people that they turned it into the city dump where feces, refuse, and the dead bodies of criminals were stacked. Jesus spoke of Gehenna as the hellish final home of the wicked. Since Gehenna is described as a fiery abyss, clearly it is also the lake of fire to which all the godless will ultimately be eternally sentenced, together with Satan, demons, and unrepentant sinners. So when the Bible speaks of hell as a place where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die, the original hearers would easily have remembered Gehenna, where this reality was ever present outside of their city.

#### **4. What are some of the major objections to the doctrine of hell?**

A loving God would not send billions of people to a horrible hell.

In a very important sense, God doesn't send anyone to hell. The only ones there are those who have rejected his revelation, choosing to suppress the truth he made plain to them. God made people in his image, after his likeness, with the power to say no and to reject the universal revelation of himself. Subsequently, sinners have no one to blame but themselves if they are damned.

To get to hell, someone must reject the God who shows them his goodness and out of love for all "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything," reject the Spirit who "convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment," and reject the crucified Son who said, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." Obviously, God has been exceedingly gracious to sinners.

People who reject Jesus in this life will not rejoice in him after this life. Hell is only for those who persistently reject the real God in favor of false gods. So in the end, people

get to be with the god they love. To paraphrase C. S. Lewis, either people will say to God, “Thy will be done,” or God will say to them, “Thy will be done.” Not only is God loving, but he is also just. Heaven and hell are the result of his love and justice.

A loving God would be more tolerant.

People who judge God need to really consider if they would be more pleased if God were tolerant of everyone, including rapists, pimps, pedophiles, and even those who have sinned against them most heinously. The idea is completely absurd and unjust. Not everyone in hell is a rapist, of course, but everyone there chose sin over God throughout his or her entire life.

A loving God protects his children from sin and evil by separating them. In this way, God is a father who is tolerant of all who obey him and are safe for his children. But he is intolerant of those who sin against him and do evil to his children. Subsequently, God is intolerant in a way that is like our own cultural intolerances of those who drink and drive, steal, rape, and murder; we, too, demonstrate our intolerance by separating such people from society. To call such actions on God’s part intolerant is shameful, because tolerance would denote both approval and support of evil.

Hell is mean.

To understand what love is, look at what Jesus did at the cross. He suffered and died for the ungodly, for sinners, for his enemies. Or, to say it another way, Jesus suffered and died for mean people. A God who will suffer and die for mean people is not mean. In fact, such a God alone is altogether loving; to be condemned by a God of perfect love shows how damnable our sin truly is.

Eternal torment in hell is an unjust punishment for people who sin for a few decades.

Some argue that the punishment of sinners is annihilation. This means that after someone dies apart from faith, they suffer for a fitting period of time and then simply cease to exist so that hell is not eternal in duration. In question is the nature and length of the punishment.

Annihilationism is simply not what the Bible teaches. Daniel 12:2 says, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Jesus teaches the same thing and speaks of those who “will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Grammatically, there is no difference here between the length of time mentioned for life and that for punishment; rather, there is simply eternal life and eternal death.

“Satan will not reign there. Hell is a place of punishment that God prepared for the Devil and his angels.”

The Bible tells us that “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image” and “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” The word forever (Greek *aion*) means unending.

This is why the Bible speaks of hell as conscious, eternal punishment. One summary of the Bible’s teaching on the pain of hell says:

- 1 Those in hell suffer intense and excruciating pain. This pain is likely both emotional/spiritual and physical (John 5:28–29).
- 2 Hell is a fate worse than being drowned in the sea (Mark 9:42).
- 3 It is worse than any earthly suffering—even being maimed (Matthew 5:29–30; Mark 9:43).
- 4 The suffering never ends (Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:48).
- 5 The wicked will be “burned with unquenchable fire.” (Matthew 3:12)
- 6 Those in hell will be thrown into the fiery furnace and will experience unimaginable sorrow, regret, remorse, and pain. The fire produces the pain described as “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30)
- 7 The intensity of the suffering seems to be according to the wickedness of the person’s behavior (Romans 2:5–8).
- 8 Hell is utterly fearful and dreadful (Hebrews 10:27–31).
- 9 This punishment is depicted as “coming misery,” “eating flesh with fire,” and the “day of slaughter.” (James 5:1–5)
- 10 Those in hell will feel the full force of God’s fury and wrath (Revelations 14:10).
- 11 They will be “tormented” with fire (14:10–11).
- 12 This suffering is best understood as endless since the “smoke of their torment rises forever and ever” (14:11)
- 13 This suffering is constant because it is said that those in hell “will have no rest day or night” (14:11) and
- 14 “will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (20:10)

In summary, annihilationism is not biblical. For this reason, it was condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople (AD 553) and the Fifth Lateran Council (1513).

Today, though, it is becoming popular to hope that sinners will eventually repent, and everyone will end up in heaven. This is universal reconciliation, the ancient view of Origen.

However, there is not a shred of evidence for post-mortem repentance. The continual teaching of the Bible is that we die once and are then judged, without any second chance at salvation. As one clear example, Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."

### **5. Do people who have never heard about Jesus go to hell?**

Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me." Peter preached, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." The conclusion is simple: there is only one way to the Father and that is through Jesus Christ. All other religious roads lead to false gods and a real hell.

But there are many ways to Jesus. While the norm is responding to the preached Word of God, there are biblical examples as well as life experiences where God gives special revelation of the Messiah to unsaved people in other forms, including direct speech, dreams, and visions. God called Abraham directly. He gave Pharaoh dreams. He spoke to the treacherous prophet Balaam in a vision so that he prophesied about the Messiah. He appeared to Cornelius in a vision, which resulted in him being saved.

"Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me."

There are many such stories. The reality is that anyone who is searching and willing to respond to the goodness of God as Cornelius did will receive special revelation. God is perfectly able to bypass the "normal" channels to accomplish his purposes.

No one who comes to the Lord will be cast out. As Paul says:

For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Therefore, while there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ, there is also no reason to overlook the creativity of God to get the gospel out. His creativity includes using us to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth as pioneering missionaries to unreached people groups and generous givers to ministries that translate the Bible into new languages.

### **6. Am I going to hell?**

The closing verses of the Bible say, "Come!" as an invitation for all who desire to receive God's saving grace as a gift. Jesus died and rose and is exalted in heaven. If you repent of sin, change your mind about who or what is lord of your life, and believe, trusting that you can stake your life and eternity on the truth of what God says, then you will receive full forgiveness of all sin, new life in and by the Holy Spirit, membership in the church of Jesus Christ, a meaningful part in his rescue mission in the world, and citizenship in his kingdom. You will be with Jesus and his people now and forever.

I want this for you.

Have you confessed your sins to Jesus Christ, seeking forgiveness and salvation through his sinless life that is your righteousness, death that is your payment, and resurrection that is your salvation?

*Adapted from [Doctrine](#) by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears*

*[\[http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/149648-149648-m-ark-driscoll-to-hell-with-hell\\_part2-html.html\]](http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/149648-149648-m-ark-driscoll-to-hell-with-hell_part2-html.html)*

## JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST

*"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."*

*Revelation 21:7*

### THE ART COLLECTOR [an Illustration]

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate. The widowed elder man looked on with satisfaction as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed, the young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic. Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer.

On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed, old man. As he walked to the door, the master-pieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hands. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you." As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I am an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this." As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son.

Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier, promising to hang the picture above the fireplace. A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars worth of art. His task completed, the old man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been

given. During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease his grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation, that with the collector's passing, and his only son dead, those paintings would be sold at auction. According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received the greatest gift.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many would hope to claim, "I have the greatest collection." The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?," he asked. Minutes passed, and no one spoke. From the back of the room came a voice, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son." "Let's forget about it and move on to the good stuff," more voices echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a neighbor of the old man spoke. "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it." "I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice, gone." The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on the real treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced that the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean, it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. What about all of these paintings? There are millions of dollars worth of art here! I demand that you explain what is going on!" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."