

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

by
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for
The Herald of Hope Australia

Section 1

The Seven Dispensations

of Time



*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH”*

Introduction

The Bible must be interpreted literally in every sense of the word. From Genesis chapter 1 to Revelation chapter 22, it should be approached as the words of God, infallibly inspired and preserved by the Holy Spirit. God said what He meant, and meant what He said.

To understand God's prophetic Word it is necessary to -

- i) Adopt sound principles of Biblical interpretation.
- ii) Distinguish between the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church.
- iii) Recognize the seven dispensations of time.

Where symbols are used in the Word of God, these are to be understood within their context and the meaning becomes evident as Scripture is compared with Scripture under the Holy Spirit's leading.

There are no myths and legends in the Bible. It is historical and factual. The characters of the Bible were real people moving across the stage of time, and the places were real places. Miracles were not the norm but the exception, and occurred through Divine intervention in the affairs of men. They defy human explanation and must be accepted in a factual sense.

Similarly, prophecy must be interpreted in its literal sense. Israel, the nations, and the Church, must not be confused. What was promised to Israel as a nation will be fulfilled and cannot be applied to the Church. To fail to distinguish between the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church, will only lead to confusion.

Finally, God's administration can be seen in seven distinct dispensations of time, each beginning with a new opportunity and ending in utter failure and deserved judgment. We live in the latter days of the sixth dispensation and observe a world about to experience the Great Tribulation judgments.

When the last dispensation is completed at the end of Christ's millennial kingdom, time will be no more, and the saved of all ages will enter the eternal blessedness of the new heaven and new earth, when

"all things shall be subdued unto him...that God may be all in all"
(1 Cor.15:28).

Principles of Biblical Interpretation

The importance of adopting sound principles of Biblical interpretation cannot be overstated. The Bible is not a "lucky dip" from which isolated verses can be taken and interpreted out of

context. Peter tells us that

"no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet.1:20).

Every Scripture must be understood in its historical and textual context. It must agree with other Scriptures bearing on the same subject. It cannot have an isolated meaning, for God has confirmed every truth in His Word with multiple witness.

The Bible is the oldest book in the world, it being over 3,500 years since Moses wrote the first five books, and Moses incorporated even more ancient records, including the *"Book of the Generations of Adam"* (Gen.5:1). To be able to find a reliable, continuous genealogy from Adam to Christ, spanning 4,000 years, is no mean feat. There is no equal in the records of antiquity.

The explanation for such a phenomenon can only be found in its source, for the Bible claims to be the words of God given by Divine inspiration (God breathed) as holy men of God were moved (borne along) by the Holy Spirit. For this reason the Bible can rightly claim to be the words of the Holy Ghost (Acts1:16; Acts 28:25), using the mouths of the prophets. As a consequence the Bible is infallible, inerrant, and complete.

Proofs of the inerrancy of the Bible are legion. However, nowhere can its incredible Divine origins be better demonstrated than in its prophetic pronouncements. Foreknowledge is a unique attribute of God, who says,

"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa.46:9-10).

Many prophecies of the Bible have already been fulfilled in remarkable fashion. At least 33 prophecies were fulfilled in one day - the day Christ died!

The mighty empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, all rose and fell as foretold by the Bible. The cities of Tyre, Nineveh, Sodom, Babylon, and Jerusalem, were all destroyed in precisely the manner foretold by the Bible!

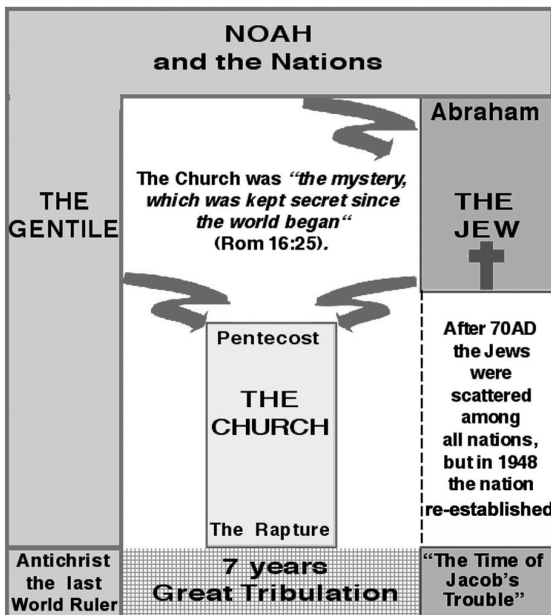
The fact that so many prophecies have already been fulfilled, leads us to believe that those which are yet future will just as assuredly be fulfilled.

The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church

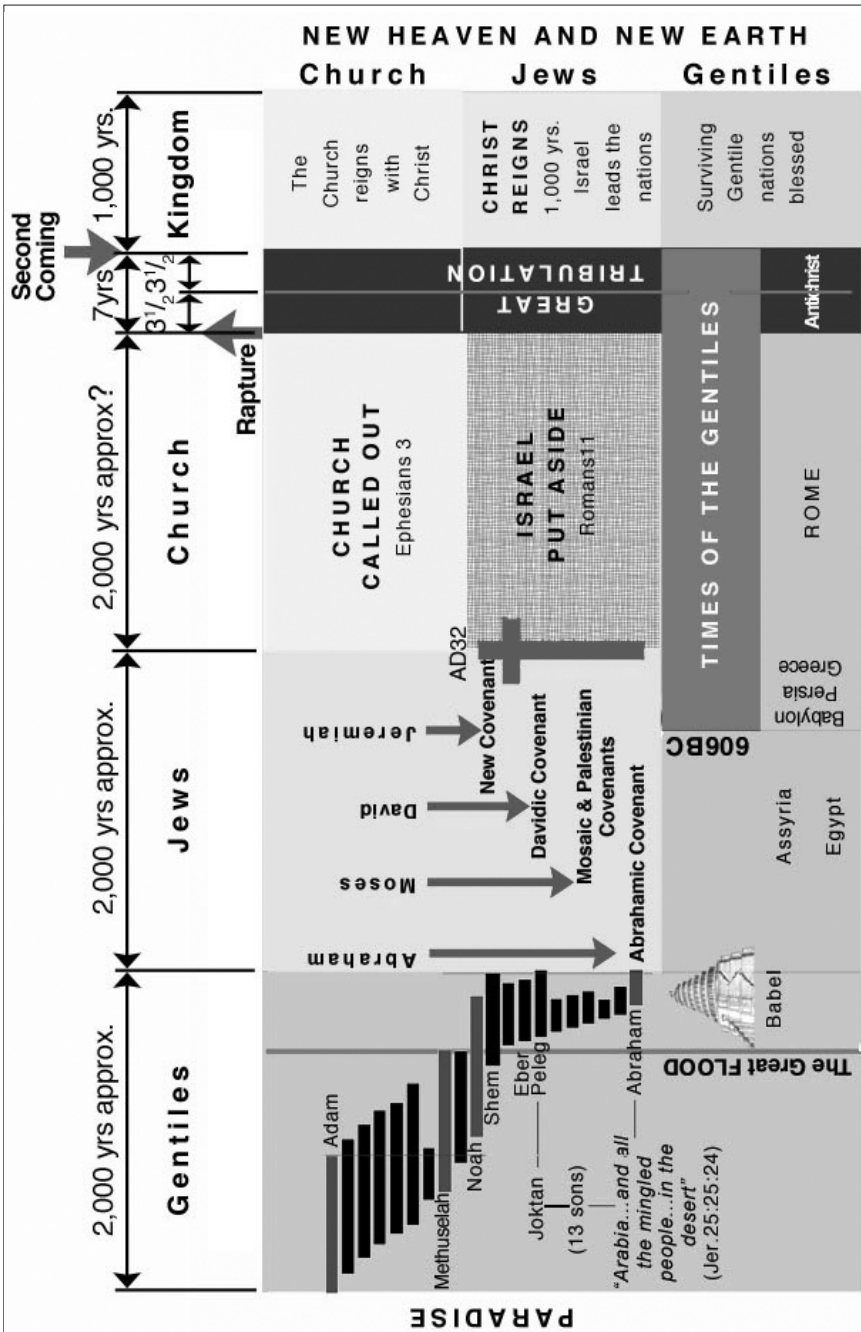
There are three divisions in the human race in relation to God's dealings with mankind. They are clearly stated by the Apostle Paul.

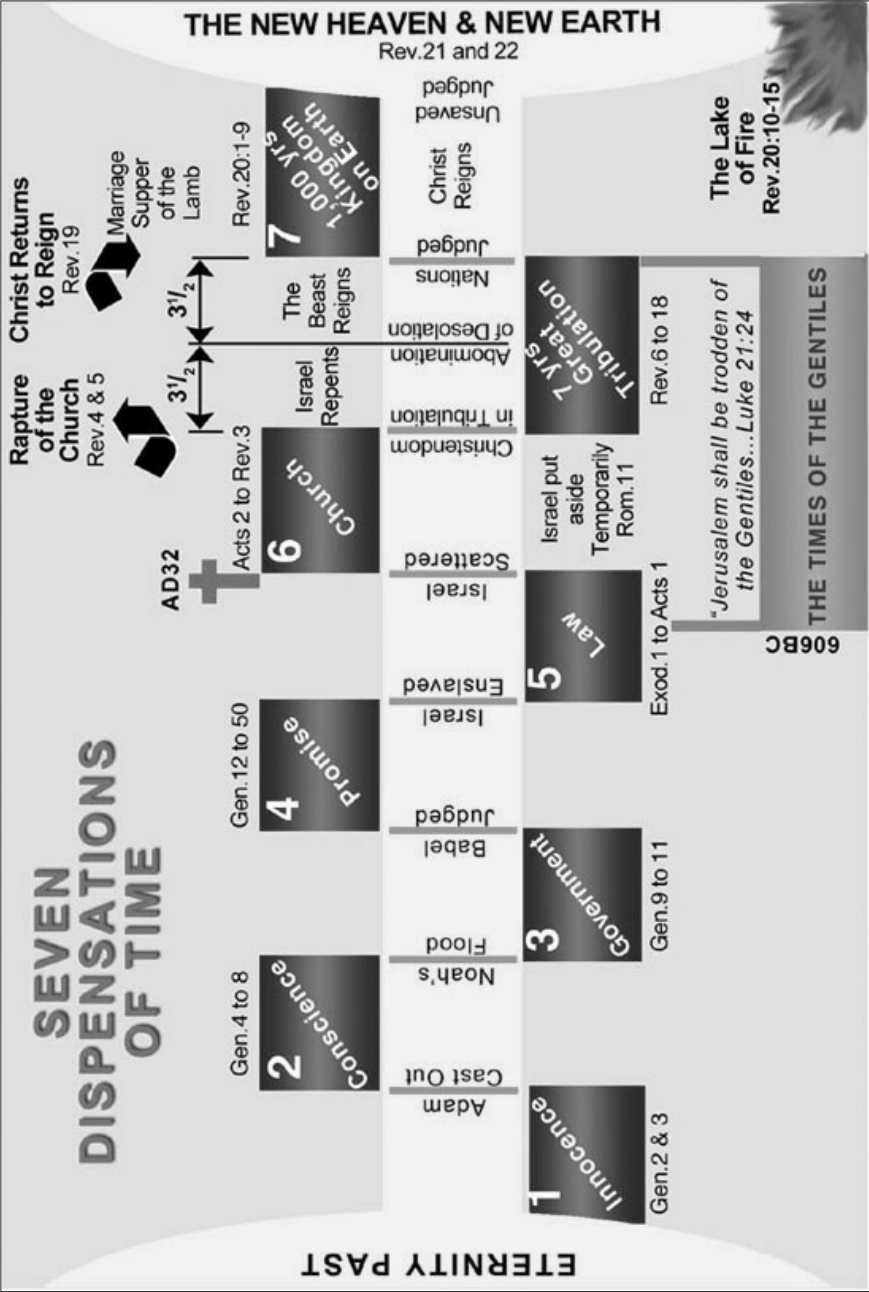
"Give none offence, neither to the JEWS, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD" (1 Cor.10:32).

Failure to delineate between these peoples renders accurate interpretation of prophetic Scriptures impossible. Since the days of Abraham there have been JEWS and GENTILES, but since the day of Pentecost to our present time a third category has been introduced by God; it is the CHURCH.



Special attention will be given to God's program for the Jew in Section 2 - *"The 70 Weeks of Jerusalem and Israel,"* and to the Gentiles in Section 3 - *"The Times of the Gentiles."* The Church will feature in Section 6 - *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ,"* as we see its history outlined in the letters to the seven Churches of Asia. This study of the seven dispensations provides an overview of all three groups, and the following diagrams show their place in history.





The Seven Dispensations of Time

There are seven clearly defined periods of history from Adam to the end of time, and these are known as the “SEVEN DISPENSATIONS.”

A “dispensation” may be defined as, “an age, or **a period of time**, in which God worked with and through a particular person or people for the blessing of mankind”. In the Old Testament such periods of time are frequently described as “*generations*” (Ps.100:5), and in the New Testament as “*ages*” or “*the world*” (Heb.9:26; Gal.1:4).

We must recognize that God’s administration of the human race has varied over its 6,000 years of history. There have been, and will be, different dispensations of time. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read of “*the ages to come*,” “*other ages*,” and “*all ages*” (Eph.2:7; 3:5,21). The Epistle to the Colossians speaks of “*ages and generations*”(Col.1:26). The disciples asked Jesus, “*What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*”(literally *age*) (Matt.24:3).

The history of the world, is the story of man. Amazingly, the Bible gives a grand panoramic view of history as seen from God’s perspective. History is punctuated with times of Divine intervention when the human race has come under specific judgments. After each judgment God adjusted His administration over human affairs, but under every type of administration man has utterly failed.

To rightly divide the Word of Truth it is therefore essential to recognize the different ways that God has administered His Truth in His revelation to man. The seven dispensations of time are as follows:

- 1) **The Age of Innocence** -Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
- 2) **The Age of Conscience** - From Eden to Noah’s Flood.
- 3) **The Age of Human Government** - From the Flood to the Tower of Babel.
- 4) **The Age of Promise** (Covenants) -From Abram to the Exodus.
- 5) **The Age of Law** - From the Exodus to Christ.
- 6) **The Church Age** - From Pentecost to the Rapture.
- 7) **The Kingdom Age** - From the Second Coming of Christ to the New Heaven and New Earth.

1st Dispensation - The Age of Innocence Gen. 1 to 3

When God created Adam and Eve He placed them in the Garden of Eden. Daily, God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in unbroken fellowship.

We are told very little about life in the Garden of Eden, but it is clear that fellowship with God was unbroken and the whole of the creation, ie flora and fauna, was in harmony with its Creator. Sickness and death were unknown, and man was given *“dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing... upon the earth”* (Gen.1:28).

Full provision was made for man and the animals. God said to Adam, *“Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed...and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food”* (Gen.1:29).

Adam was not idle. God planted a garden and appointed Adam *“to dress it and to keep it”* (Gen.2:15). Adam was the first gardener, and he enjoyed every fruit that grew in the garden with one exception - the tree of *“knowledge of good and evil”*.

Through Satan’s deception Eve, and then Adam, disobeyed the Divine command and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. At that moment sin entered the human race and fellowship with God was broken. Mankind experienced guilt and became conscious of good and evil.

Furthermore, the whole of creation came under the curse of sin *“for thy (Adam’s) sake”* (Gen.3:17). The earth brought forth *“thorns and thistles”* and Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, but not before God slew animals to make *“coats of skins, and clothed them”* (Gen.3:21). Cherubims and a flaming sword guarded the way to the tree of life.

The coats of skins involved the death of animals, signifying that the wages of sin is death and that only a substitutionary death could avert judgment for sin. Adam’s sinful nature has been passed on to all men,

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be made righteous” (Rom.5:19).

Jesus Christ *“became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,”* so that we might be clothed, not in coats of skins, but in the righteousness of the Lamb of God!

Thus the Age of Innocence begins with blessing, ends in judgment, and displays the grace of God in providing an atonement (a covering) for sin.

2nd Dispensation - The Age of Conscience Gen 4 to 8

Outside the Garden of Eden, provision was made for fellowship with God but this involved the death of a substitute. A lamb was prescribed, and soon we read of Cain and Abel bringing offerings to God.

Cain steadfastly refused to shed the blood of a lamb and thus was rejected by God. After refusing to shed the blood of a lamb as a sin offering (Gen.4:7) he slew his brother, and thereafter violence characterized the Age of Conscience, till we read,

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen 6:11).

The civilisation before the Flood was cultured and skilled in the manufacture of musical instruments and implements of iron, brass and gold. We read of the sons of Lamech in the line of Cain, that his son Jubal *"was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ"* (Gen 4:21), and Jubal's brother Tubal-cain *"was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron"* (Gen4:22). Such skills indicate an advanced cultural and industrial society.

In 1922 Sir Leonard Woolley led an archeological dig for the British Museum at Ur, where Abram had lived. He found beneath an 8-foot thick layer of clay a golden helmet or wig of the most exquisite design, together with many other artifacts. These items from ancient graves predated the Flood and testify to the amazing skills of the antediluvian civilisation.

Sir Leonard observed:

"In no single grave has there been any figure of a god, any symbol or ornament that strikes one as being of a religious nature."

The antediluvian civilisation was apparently materialistic and sensual, and this is entirely consistent with everything Scripture has to say about it. Jesus said of the days before the Flood,

"...they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" (Matt.24:38-39).

Genesis chapter 6 paints the grim picture as follows:

"Men began to multiply on the face of the earth...they took them wives of all which they chose...every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually...The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen.6:1-2,5,11).



Helmet of Gold from Ur

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In the midst of such wickedness there was one man, Noah, who *"found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* (Gen 6:8), and when the universal flood covered the earth he, and those who entered the ark with him, was saved from the wrath of God.

Thus the second dispensation shows that the knowledge of right and wrong does not save, and concludes in Divine judgment. Only by the grace (undeserved favour) of God, through faith, can anyone be saved.

3rd Dispensation - The Age of Government Gen.4 to 11.

Before the Flood there is no mention of kings or kingdoms. The Bible simply speaks of *"mighty men which were of old, men of renown"* (Gen.6:4). However after the Flood we have the first mention of a kingdom. Nimrod, the son of Cush, is described as *"a mighty one in the earth"* and *"a mighty hunter before the LORD"* (Gen.10:8,11).

We are also told,

"The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Gen10:10).

In addition, another man, Asshur,

"buildd Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city" (Gen.10:11-12).

The names given in the 10th chapter of Genesis are familiar to students of ancient history, because secular history acknowledges that the earliest traces of civilization are to be found in the "fertile crescent" which stretched from the Persian Gulf up the Euphrates valley and then south along the coast of Israel (Canaan) into Egypt. This area is referred to as the "cradle of civilization." We know that the ancient Akkadian and Sumerian kingdoms flourished in the land of Shinar, between the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and the Egyptian Pharaohs ruled over the Nile.



When we remember that the Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat at the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris, we would expect that some of the descendants of Noah would travel down the Euphrates valley to the fertile plain of Shinar, while others would move south to the lush well-watered Nile Delta. The fact that Nimrod built

the city of Accad gives us a connection with the Akkadian kingdom. Cities such as Babel, Ur, Erech, and Nineveh, and the land of Shinar, appear frequently in text books on ancient history. Even the date attributed to the first Akkadian king, Sargon, agrees with Bible chronology.

Prof J H Breasted, in his book *Ancient Times*, states:

"About 2,500 BC there arose in Akkad a Semite chieftain named Sargon...the first great Semitic leader in history" (Page 159).

After the Flood a number of changes occurred. First, mankind's dominion over the entire animal kingdom was reaffirmed. We read, *"The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth...fowl...and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered"*(Gen. 9:2).

Next, all animals were given to mankind for food, but eating of blood was forbidden. In Gen 9:4 we read,

"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

Then authority was given to the new civil powers to execute judgment on evil doers.

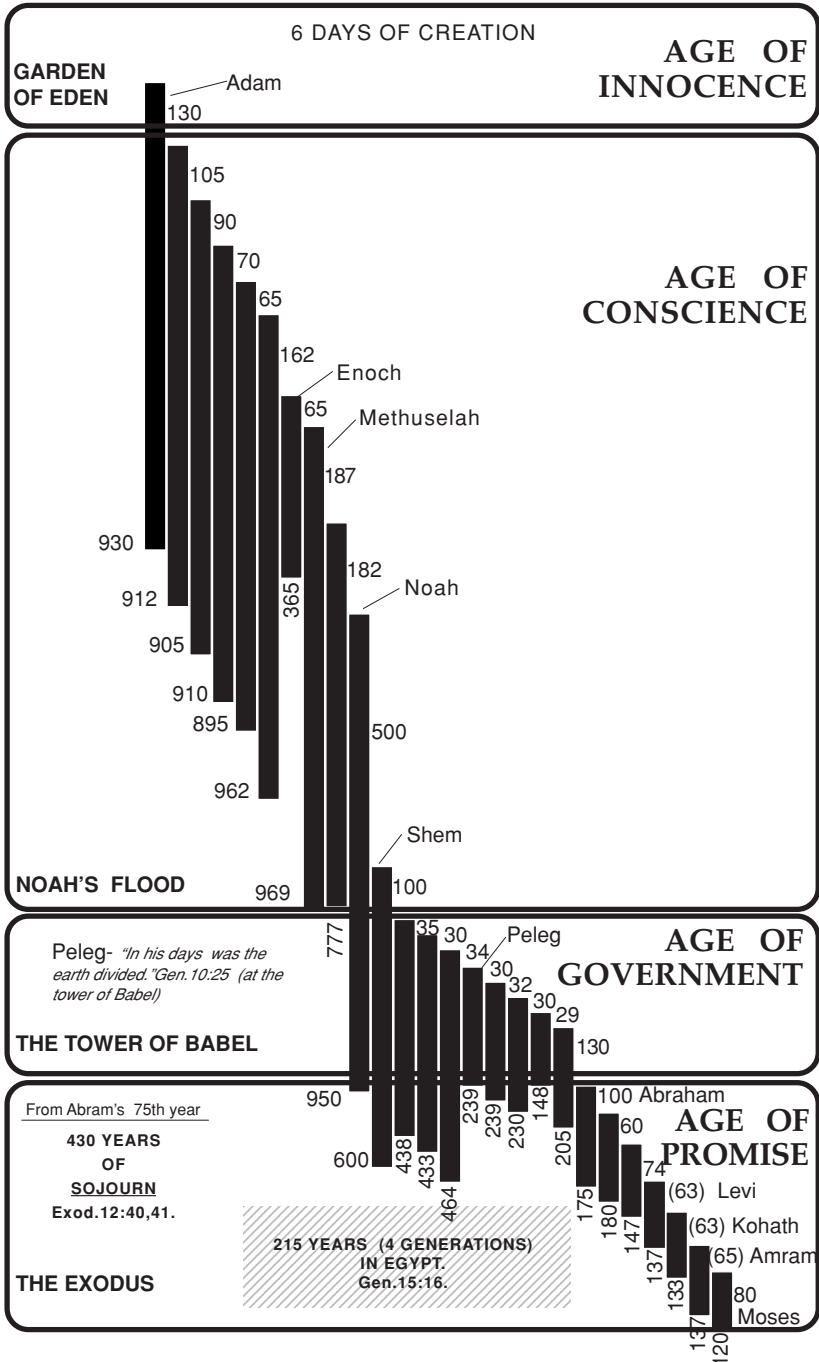
*"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, **by man** shall his blood be shed"* (Gen.9:6).

This command stands in contrast to the Divine command that Cain, the first murderer, was **not to be slain** by human hand. God said, *"Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold"* (Gen.4:15).

Finally, God established His covenant with Noah, **and his descendants after him**, that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. The rainbow was given as the token, or evidence of the covenant.

Sadly, the new power bestowed on man was abused, and idolatrous practices were used to control the people. The centre of this idolatry was the Tower of Babel, *"whose top was unto heaven"* (Gen 11:4), ie the worship of the sun, moon and stars. It was the beginning of astrology, the superstition of the "Signs of the Zodiac."

The Bible tells us that Terah, the father of Abram, *"served other gods"* (Josh 24:2,14), and Jewish tradition recorded in the Talmud states that Abram had to flee to Shem because Nimrod had ordered his death for destroying Terah's idols. Ancient tradition also says that Nimrod was finally put to death by Shem for his idolatry, and thereafter a priestly system was set up by his wife, Semiramis, who produced an illegitimate child and instituted the worship of "the mother and child." This has come down to us in the idolatrous worship of Mary and the baby Jesus!



It is only to be expected that such idolatry would bring Divine judgment. The construction of the Tower of Babel was intended to unite all people, "*lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth!*" (Gen.11:4); so God confounded their language and "*from thence did the Lord scatter them upon the face of all the earth*" (Gen.11:8-9). Thus the earth was divided in the days of Peleg and construction on the Tower of Babel ceased (Gen.10:25).

The Age of Government began with a Covenant and ended in confusion. The time had come for God to work through a new channel.

4th Dispensation - The Age of Promise Gen.12 to 50

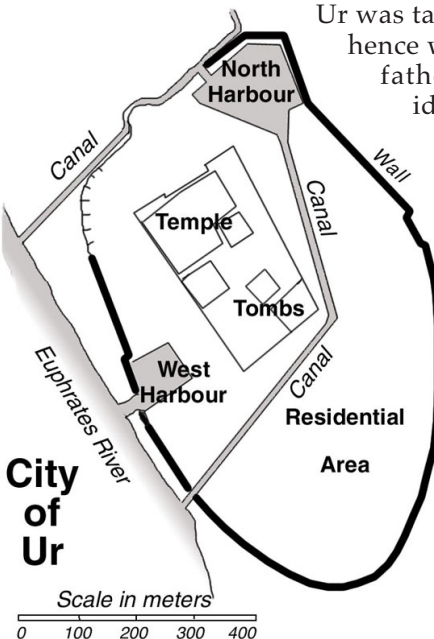
Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldees, which was, according to history text books, the leading city in the Plain of Shinar for many years. Ur was situated on the Euphrates River and had harbours for ships, as shown in the following map. Prof. J H Breasted writes:

"The period of the kings of Sumer and Akkad (beginning about 2,300 BC) may be summed up as more than a century of prosperity under the leadership of Ur, followed by two centuries of decline under the successors of Ur...The power and splendour of Ur in this age were never forgotten" (*Ancient Times* pages 163 & 166).

Ur was therefore the royal city and, as the map shows, had royal tombs. Much of the city of Ur was taken up with a pagan temple and hence we can understand how Abram's father, Terah, became involved in idolatry as stated in Joshua 24:2.

The Jewish Talmud, quoting Jewish tradition, even says that Terah was Nimrod's right-hand man.

According to the Talmud, Abram became disillusioned with the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. Since he could not pray to the sun at night time or the stars during the day, he judged that they were useless to him as his gods. Consequently he broke down the idols of his father, Terah, and fled to Shem the son of Noah for protection.



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Abram's departure from Ur was in response to a command from the LORD. The Biblical record simply states:

*"The LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee **out of thy country**, and from thy kindred, and **from thy father's house**, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen.12:1-3).

The Age of Promise is also the age of the patriarchs. It began with Abram and traces the sojourning of Abram, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and the 12 patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, whose families became the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. During this age the promised land was not possessed, as Heb.11:9 -16 indicates,

*"These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*

At this time God made promises (covenants) to Abraham and confirmed them to Isaac (Gen.26 1-5) and Jacob (Gen.27:28-29; 28:4,13-15; 35:9-12). These promises, known as the **Abrahamic Covenant**, stated:

- i) God would bless Abraham and make *"a great nation"* of him (Gen.12:1-3; 22:15-18).
- ii) All who blessed Abraham and his seed would be blessed, and all who cursed his seed would be cursed (Gen.12:3).
- iii) God would give to Abraham, and to his seed after him, all the land *"from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates,"* for an **everlasting possession** (Gen.13:14 -18; 15:18 -19 ; 17:8).
- vi) In Abraham's seed (Christ), all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 22:18, *"and to thy seed, which is Christ"* Gal 3:16).
- v) Abraham would become the *"father of many nations"*(Gen.17:5).

Sadly, the Dispensation of Promise ends in failure. Joseph is sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers, and 22 years later the 12 families follow, ultimately to become Pharaoh's slaves themselves.

We should remember that God knew what would happen and had informed Abraham in advance. In Gen.15:13-16 God said to Abram, *"Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in **a land that is not theirs**, and shall serve them; and they shall **afflict them four hundred years**...But in the **fourth generation** they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."*

A case of Fulfilled Prophecy

The **sojourning** of the seed of Abraham was 430 years, from the day of Abram's departure from Haran to enter the land of Canaan

(Exod.12:40-41) to the day of the escape of Israel under the leadership of Moses at the Exodus.

Of the 430 years, there were **400 years of affliction** at the hands of the Egyptians who controlled all of Canaan. Only for 30 years, while Joseph was in favour with Pharaoh, was there any respite. When *“there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph,”* persecution resumed (Exod.1:8).

The final part of the prophecy indicated that the seed of Abram would be a stranger in a land which was not theirs (Egypt), but in **the fourth generation** they would **return to the land of Canaan** (Gen.15:16). An examination of the chronological chart on page12 will indicate that Abram’s descendants were 215 years in the land of Egypt, and that the four generations in Egypt were Levi, Kohath, Amram and Moses (Exod.6:16-20).

While the Israelites were slaves in Egypt through their own folly, it was also true that they could not possess the land given to Abraham until 400 years of affliction were completed because *“the iniquity of the Amorites* (who possessed the land of Canaan) was *“not yet full”* (Gen.15:16). Here we see the patience and longsuffering of God, who could not permit the Amorites to be judged **until** they had sealed their doom by the hardening of their hearts. Once the cup of their iniquity was filled Divine justice could allow judgment to be executed. This God did by the sword of Joshua; which brings us to the Age of Law.

Like all of the dispensations, the Age of Promise began with a new administration and new opportunities, but ended in abject failure and slavery. No matter how God chooses to administer the affairs of this world, man will always prove a failure. The wonder is that God persists; but then He is *“the God of all grace!”* (1 Pet.5:10).

5th Dispensation - The Age of Law Exod 1 to Acts 1

The period from Moses to Christ constitutes the fifth Divine administration under which mankind has lived. It begins with a fresh revelation of God and great manifestations of His power in the land of Egypt. In their bondage, Israel cried out to God. Their cry was heard and Moses was sent to deliver them from the power of Pharaoh. Ten plagues were sent on Egypt, and finally Pharaoh allowed Israel to leave. Many signs and wonders occurred. The pillar of cloud and fire went before them day and night, the Red Sea opened to allow the people to cross dryshod, water was provided in the desert, bread (manna) was sent daily and God manifested His presence on Mt Sinai. The Jordan

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ceased to flow at a time when it was in flood allowing Israel to cross into the promised land, and finally the walls of Jericho collapsed as the priests of the LORD sounded the trumpets.

At the beginning of the Age of Law God gave Israel the Ten Commandments, sanitary, food, and moral laws, a new calendar, and a tabernacle with sacrifices and offerings, all to be administered by the priests and the Levites, who were in effect a spiritual civil service supported by the taxes (tithes) of God's people.

The Age of Law was also a time when God chose, out of all the nations, **one nation** to be the channel of revelation. The Old Testament Scriptures were written during this period, and its prophecies reach down to the end of time.

The history of Israel throughout the Age of Law may be studied in the chart on page 18. There Israel may be seen over a period of 1,500 years, during which it passes through the wilderness, conquers the land of Canaan, and is ruled over by judges, kings and Gentiles. When the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 606 BC the time of Gentile occupation, known as the "*times of the Gentiles*," began. This will conclude when the Son of David, Jesus Christ, comes again to sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem, establishing His millennial kingdom (Luke 21:24).

God's choice of the nation of Israel was the fulfilment of His promises to Abraham. It was the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, and therefore entitled to claim all the blessings bound up in the Abrahamic Covenant.

No nation on the face of the earth has ever experienced what Israel has seen. Moses made this clear in Deut.4:32-39.

"Ask now of the days that are past...since the day that God created man upon the earth...did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt...? Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee...thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire."

The Abrahamic Covenant is God's contract with Israel which He will always keep, but whether Israel **enjoys the blessings** of the Covenant depends on her obedience to God's law. This principle is clearly stated in the Palestinian Covenant recorded in Deut 28 to 30, and God will

never break His Covenant (Lev.26:44). It may be summarized under 3 points -

1) If Israel obeyed the LORD, then God would bless them in accordance with the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

"If thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments...all these blessings shall come on thee...and he shall bless thee IN THE LAND...The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself....and all people of the earth...shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods...IN THE LAND which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee" (Deut.28:1-14).

2) If Israel disobeyed the LORD, they would come under the chastening hand of God and be driven out of the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed for ever.

"If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD...all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

*a) The LORD shall bring thee, **and thy king** which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known.*

*b) The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from **the end of the earth**...whose tongue thou shalt not understand...he shall besiege thee...and the LORD shall **scatter thee among all people**, from the one end of the earth even unto the other...and among these nations shalt thou find no ease..."* (Deut.28:15-68; 29:1-29).

3) If, after Israel was scattered, they turned back to God, then God would keep His promise and bestow upon the nation all of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

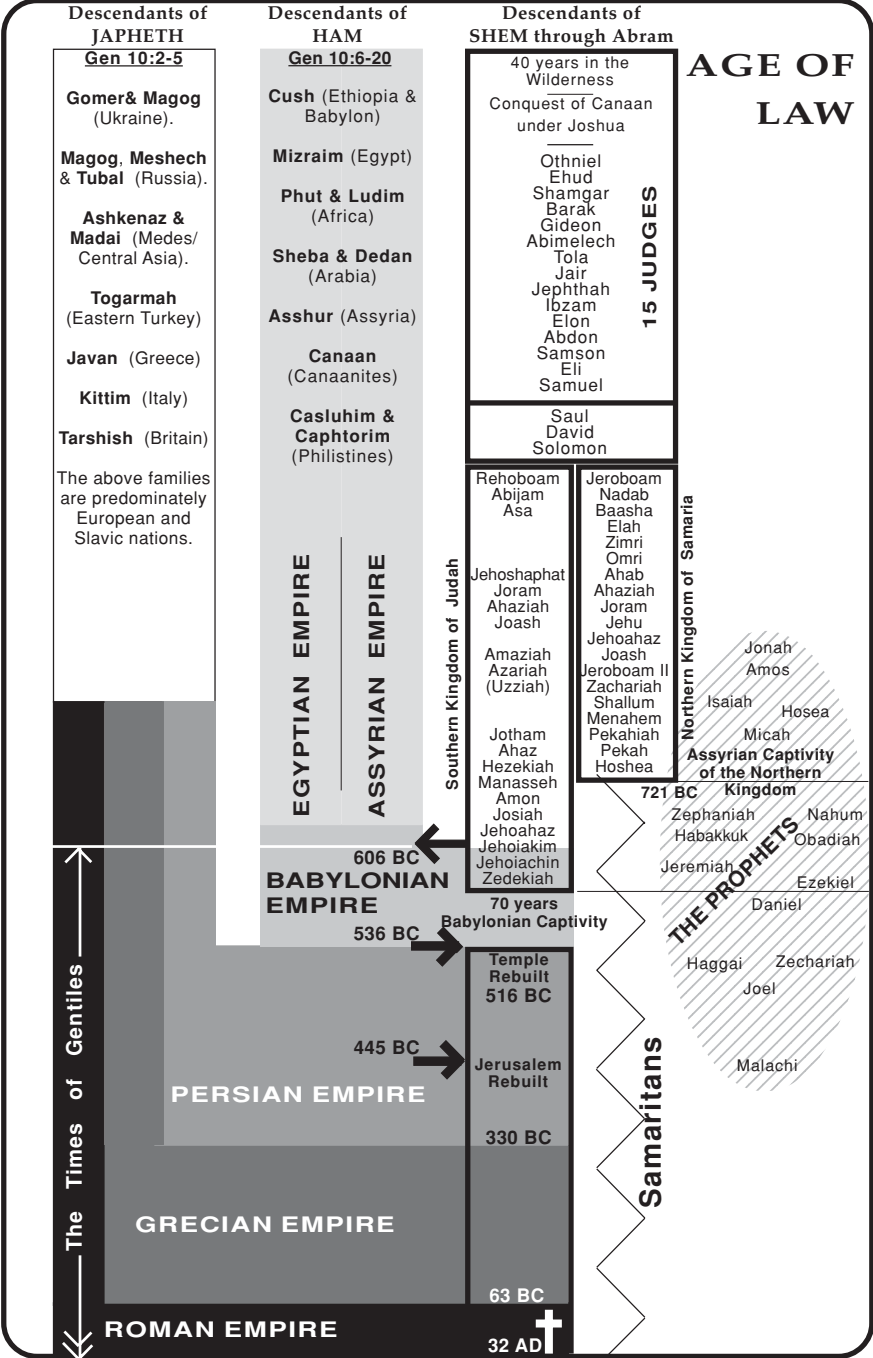
*"When all these things are come upon thee...and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, and shall return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice...the LORD thy God will...have compassion upon thee, and will return and **gather thee from all the nations**...and the LORD thy God shall bless thee IN THE LAND...which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them"* (Deut.30:1-20).

These are the three elements of the Palestinian Covenant which is the basis for God's dealings with Israel throughout the Age of Law. Simply stated, it is:

1) **Obey**, and they will be blessed IN THE LAND.

2) **Disobey**, and they will be driven OUT OF THE LAND.

3) **Repent**, and God will bring them BACK TO THE LAND.



It is interesting to note that two scatterings of Israel are described. The first would be at a time when they had a king. This occurred when the Babylonians took **Jehoiachin captive to Babylon** in 597 BC. The second scattering would be after an awful siege at Jerusalem and would disperse the Jews among **all people**, from the one end of the earth to the other. This undoubtedly occurred in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans, and for nearly 2,000 years the Jews have been scattered around the globe in every nation exactly as described in Deut 28 & 29 ! However other Scriptures indicate that after the Rapture of the Church Israel will return to the Lord and **again become God's witness on earth**.

The Age of Law began with a marvellous deliverance out of Egypt but ended with the nation so far from God that it rejected Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and crucified Him on a Roman cross. In 2004 there were 5.3 million Jews back in the land, but still blind as to who their Messiah is.

When the Jews crucified their King the nation was put aside and God chose a new administration, a new channel to communicate His Truth to the world - the Church. We will now study the Church Age.

6th Dispensation - The Church Age Acts 2 to Rev. 4

The Church Age began at Pentecost and will be complete at the Rapture. In this age all who turn from their sin to Christ and trust in His redeeming blood for pardon are instantly baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, and are made members of the Church of Jesus Christ, where

*"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are **all one in Christ Jesus**" (Gal 3:28).*

Just before Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives the disciples asked, *"Lord, wilt thou **at this time** restore again the kingdom to Israel?"*

The Lord replied,

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons...but...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

Evidently the disciples knew nothing about the Church and fully expected the promised Kingdom Age would come as prophesied by the Old Testament prophets. Jesus indicated that the earthly kingdom would be deferred, and that a new dispensation, which included the Gentiles, was about to begin.

We need to be reminded that the Old Testament Scriptures have nothing to say about the Church. Everything we know about the Church is

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recorded in the New Testament and Paul tells us that it was a “mystery,” “kept secret since the world began,” “hidden in God,” and “not made known unto the sons of men” (Eph 3:1-9; Rom 16:25).

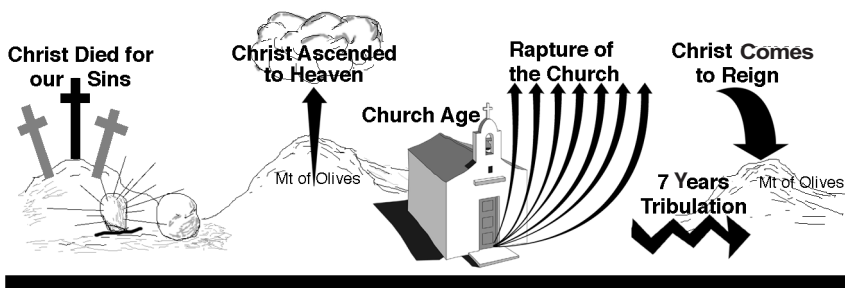
During the long Age of Law, Israel was God’s witness to the world and Jehovah God was the “God of Israel” (Exod 5:1). When a Gentile was converted he turned from his own nation’s gods to the God of Israel and identified with Jehovah’s people.

Paul describes the relationship between Israel and the Church during the Church Age, in Romans chapter 11. He likens Israel to the “natural branch” of the olive tree, and the Gentiles to a “wild olive branch”. The “natural olive branch” is broken off and the “wild olive branch” is grafted in. Thus he indicates that because of their rejection of the Messiah, Israel has been put aside and the Gentiles have taken their place as God’s witness in the world. However, if Israel repents of their rejection of Christ, they will be grafted in again.

*“For God is able to graft them in **again**” (Rom.11:23). “For...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 Sion the Deliverer...when I shall take away their (Israel’s) sins” (Rom.11:25-27).*

When will the “fulness of the Gentiles” come in? The answer is obvious; at the Rapture. When the Gentile bride of Christ is complete the heavenly Bridegroom will snatch her away, and then will commence the 70th week of Israel’s history (Dan 9:24-27), the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:7), otherwise known as the “great tribulation” (Matt.24:21,29).

In the first half of the 7-year Tribulation Israel will be invaded by an army led by Russia from the north. This northern led army will include Iran (Persia), Libya, Ethiopia (incl. Sudan) and Turkey. It will be at this point in time that Israel will be caused to trust in the Lord and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Messiah (Ezek.39:22). See Section 4.



At the beginning of the Great Tribulation Antichrist will arise and confirm a treaty with Israel for 7 years (Dan 9:27), but halfway through the 7 years he will break his treaty, and “*cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*” in the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem. He will exalt himself and sit in the Temple “*showing himself that he is God*” (2 Thess.2:4). See Study No 2.

Immediately after the Great Tribulation, Christ will come in glorious power to smite the Antichrist and all the armies of the nations which will be gathered against Jerusalem (Matt 24:29; Rev 19:11-21; Zech 14:1-9). The surviving nations will go alive into Christ’s millennial kingdom, which is the 7th Dispensation, or the Kingdom Age.

7th Dispensation - The Millennial Kingdom - Rev. 20

The seventh dispensation of time begins with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, immediately after the Great Tribulation, as King of kings and Lord of lords. It continues for 1,000 years.

Six times, in Rev 20:1-7, we read of a 1,000 -year period during which Satan will be bound and unable to deceive the nations. We are also told that the Tribulation martyrs, who refused the mark of the beast, will reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

Matthew chapter 25 indicates that the **saved living nations** that survive the Tribulation will enter Christ’s earthly kingdom. We read:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matt 25:31-32).

To His sheep, Jesus will say,

*“Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matt 25:34).

The saved of all nations, who survive the terrors and slaughter of the Great Tribulation, will therefore go alive into the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; but the unsaved, who received the mark of the beast and worshipped the Antichrist during the Tribulation, will be cast into everlasting fire. Jesus will say to them,

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41).

The 1,000-year reign of Christ will begin among the debris of Armageddon, and the Psalmist graphically described the scene in Psalm 46:6-10.

“The heathen (nations) raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his

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voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us (repentant Israel); the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (think on that!).

*Come, behold the works of the LORD, **what desolations he hath made in the earth.** He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth."*

At long last the Lord's Prayer will be answered; *"Thy kingdom come!"* Great changes will take place under the rule of the King of kings. Some of these are listed below.

1) The Lord will be King over all the earth and will *"rule all nations with a rod of iron"* (Zech.14:9 ; Rev.12:5).

2) There will be universal peace. *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks"* (Isa.2:4).

3) A new millennial Temple of great proportions will be built at Jerusalem, where the glory of God will continually lighten the city (Ezek.40 to 48 ; Isa 60:19 - 20).

4) The nation of Israel will be the *"priests of the LORD"* to administer God's law from Jerusalem (Isa.61:6 ; Isa.2:1-5).

5) Gentile nations will bring their wealth to Jerusalem and assist in its reconstruction (Isa.60:5-11).

6) Gentile nations will serve Israel, and those who refuse will perish (Isa.60:12-24).

7) Each year the Gentile nations will go up to Jerusalem to *"worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles"* (Zech.14:16).

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech.14:17).

8) The land of Israel will experience abundance of rain, and *"there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land..."* (Ezek.34:26 -27; Isa.41:18).

9) The name of Jerusalem will be changed.

*"And the name of the city from that day shall be, Jehovah-Shammah", meaning, **"The LORD is there!"*** (Ezek.48:35).

While the 1,000-year reign of Christ will begin with only saved Jews and Gentiles to inhabit the earth, their offspring, like every son of

Adam before them, will have sinful natures, and unless they personally repent of sin and place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will grow up as unregenerate sinners. Their obedience to Christ's rule will be by compulsion and not out of loving submission. During this time Satan will be bound, so their hardness can only be attributed to the deceitfulness of their own sinful heart (Heb.3:13).

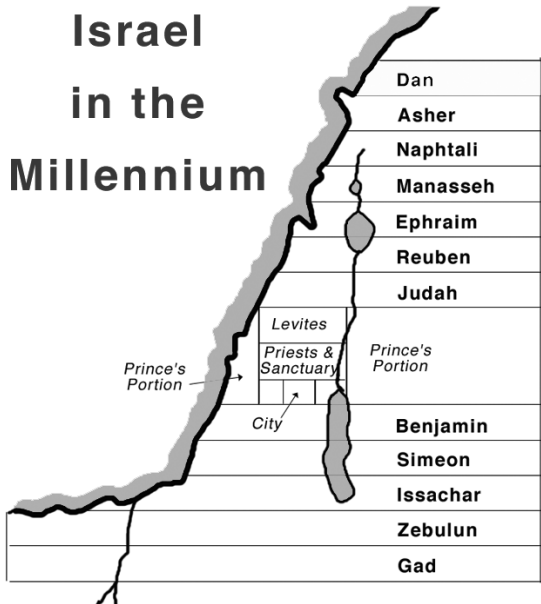
At the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, Satan will be allowed out of his prison to test the genuineness of the obedience of earth's inhabitants. The result will be that those who have not experienced real conversion will be deceived and will join in revolt against the Lord Jesus.

"When the 1,000 years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations...and they went up...and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city (Jerusalem); and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev.20:7-9).

At the conclusion of the millennial kingdom the **second resurrection** will take place. This is the resurrection of all of **the unsaved of all ages**, from Adam to the end of time. The **first resurrection** is the resurrection of the saved, and the second resurrection is the resurrection of the unsaved. The Bible does not teach one general resurrection.

The second resurrection brings before the great white throne the souls of the unsaved from hades (hell), in resurrection bodies, to receive judgment for the deeds done in the body. Their eternal destiny, however, is never in doubt, because in their lifetime they had rejected God's gracious entreaty and their names were blotted out of the Lamb's book of life.

When the Church is raptured in Rev.4:3 the rainbow of mercy is seen "round about the throne," but at the second resurrection there is NO RAINBOW!



The first resurrection of the saved is illustrated by the several stages of a harvest.

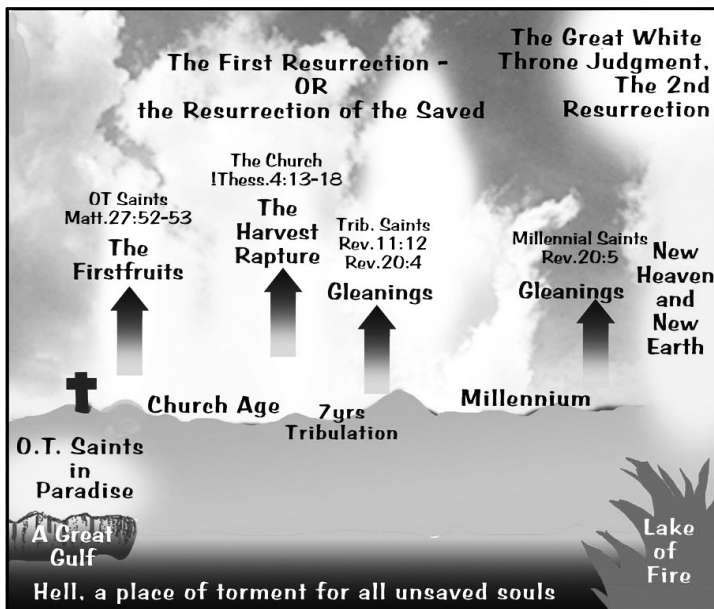
i) The **firstfruits** included the Old Testament saints who rose with Christ when He took paradise into heaven after His resurrection (Matt.27:52-53). In 1Cor.15:20-23 we read of *“Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”*

ii) The **main harvest** will occur at the Rapture (1 Thess.4:13-18).

iii) The **gleanings** include the Tribulation saints who died during the reign of Antichrist (Rev.20:4-6), and all of the saved at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Finally, there will be a new heaven and new earth, *“for the first heaven and first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”* John sees the *“new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband”* (Rev .21:1,2).

The bride of the Lamb, the Church, will dwell in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9), *“and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it”* (Rev. 21:24). Time will have passed forever and we will stand as the objects of redeeming grace on the shores of an eternal day where there is no more sin, death, or sorrow, and GOD IS ALL IN ALL!



Section 2

Israel and Jerusalem's 70 "Weeks"

of History



"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory"
(Psalm 102:16)

Israel's Amazing "70 Weeks" Prophecy

The most amazing prophecy of God's plan for the nation of Israel is given in just four verses of Daniel chapter 9. It is called "The 70 Weeks Prophecy".

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of **the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

*And after (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of **the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (desolator)" (Dan.9:24-27).*

The prophecy begins with the words,

*"Seventy weeks (sevens) are determined upon **thy people**, and upon **thy holy city**",* ie 70×7 , or 490 years, are determined upon the Jews and Jerusalem...to do **six things** for them.

The word "*week*" is literally "*sevens*" in the Hebrew language and does not refer to a "*week*" of days. In Dan.10:2 the expression "*three full weeks*," ie 21 days, is literally "*three sevens of days*" in the Hebrew text. In Dan 9:24-27 it is simply "*sevens*", and we know that they refer to "*sevens of years*" because much of the prophecy is already fulfilled.

Therefore $70 \times 7 = 490$ years are determined on Daniel's people (the Jews) and on Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem) in order to achieve the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) "to finish the transgression | 4) to bring in everlasting righteousness |
| 2) to make an end of sins | 5) to seal up the vision and prophecy |
| 3) to make reconciliation for iniquity | 6) to anoint the most Holy" (place). |

Please notice that these six things only relate to **the Jews** and **Jerusalem**, and obviously have **not yet** been fulfilled for the 490 years conclude with "*everlasting righteousness*" experienced by Israel in Christ's millennial kingdom!

Background to the Prophecy

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem three times, first in 606BC during the reign of Jehoiakim, then in 597BC during the short reign of young King Jehoiachin, and finally in 586BC during the reign of Zedekiah. The city and the Temple were destroyed in 586BC.

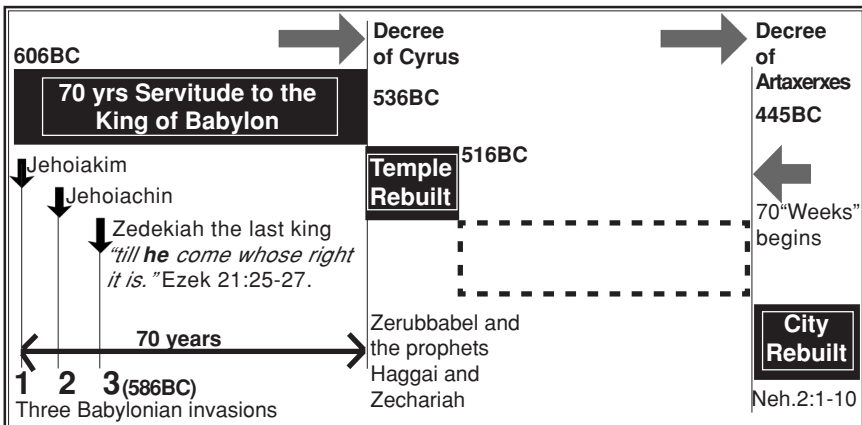
Daniel was taken to Babylon during the first invasion, and Ezekiel during the second. Jeremiah remained in the land and prophesied against the people because of their idolatry and wickedness. He prophesied that Israel would *"serve the king of Babylon seventy years"* (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan 9:2 ; Ezra 1:1).

The 70 years of servitude to the king of Babylon began in 606BC, and concluded in 536BC after Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians; Cyrus wrote a decree allowing the Temple to be rebuilt.

The Decree of Cyrus

Isaiah had foretold more than 170 years beforehand that Cyrus, the Persian king, would decree the rebuilding of the Temple. This prophecy even gave Cyrus' name before he was born!

*"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, **I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee**, though thou hast not known me (Isa 45:1-4).*



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*"...That saith of **Cyrus**, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa.44:28).*

The Book of Ezra, chapters 1-6, records details of the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the Temple. Although Cyrus **said** that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, his **decree** only permitted the reconstruction of the **Temple**. The work was completed 20 years later in 516BC amidst opposition from the Samaritans (Ezra 6:15). This, however, is not the start of the "70 weeks," which relates to the reconstruction of the **city** of Jerusalem.

Start Date for the 70 Weeks - The Decree of Artaxerxes 445BC

The **start date** for the 490-year period is precisely given as *"the going forth of the commandment to restore and build **Jerusalem**"* (Dan.9:25).

Just as the decree of Cyrus focused on the **rebuilding of the Temple**, the start of the "70 weeks" focuses on a decree to **rebuild Jerusalem**.

This event is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-11 and occurred in the month Nisan, of the 20th year of Artaxerxes the Persian king, which we know was 445 BC.

Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes' cupbearer, and was sad in the King's presence. When asked to explain his sadness, he replied,

"Why should not my countenance be sad, when the CITY, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" (Neh.2:1-3).

Artaxerxes immediately gave letters to Nehemiah authorizing him to rebuild the CITY of Jerusalem (Neh.2:8). This decree fixes the start date for Israel's 490 years which conclude at the second coming of Christ! It began in the month Nisan (first month of the Jewish year), in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which was 445BC.

Some have confused the decree of Cyrus with the decree of Artaxerxes, however, it is clear that the city of Jerusalem was not rebuilt in the days of Zerubbabel under the decree of Cyrus. After Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem more than 90 years later, we are told that he inspected the ruins of the city which had not been cleared, so that he said, *"...there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass"* (Neh.2:14).

Only the Temple had been built, and after a concentrated effort of 52 days the wall was joined to provide some protection from their enemies while the city was built. Nehemiah wrote:

"The city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded" (Neh 7:4).

Three Divisions in the Seventy Weeks

The 70 x 7 years are divided into 3 periods in the following order -

- | | | | |
|----|--------|---|----------------|
| 1) | 7 x 7 | = | 49 years |
| 2) | 62 x 7 | = | 434 years |
| 3) | 1 x 7 | = | <u>7 years</u> |

Total 490 Years

During the first 49 years the city would be rebuilt "*in troublous times*", and this happened, as the Samaritans opposed the reconstruction of Jerusalem.

Then would follow 434 years which would conclude with the presentation to the nation of "*Messiah the Prince*" as Israel's **King**.

Following the 69th "week" Messiah would be "*cut off*", but not for any wrong which He had done.

Finally, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed before the last seven years, the 70th "week", began.

The summation of the **first two** periods is 49 + 434 or 483 years, which Sir Robert Anderson QC, in his book *The Coming Prince*, has shown was fulfilled on the **very day** Jesus Christ presented Himself to the nation of Israel on Palm Sunday as Messiah and King .

At no time prior to Palm Sunday did Jesus present Himself to the nation as King. It was then that He rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, and the crowds cried, "*Blessed be **the King** that cometh in the name of the Lord*"(Luke 19:38), in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

*"Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass**" (Zech. 9:9).*

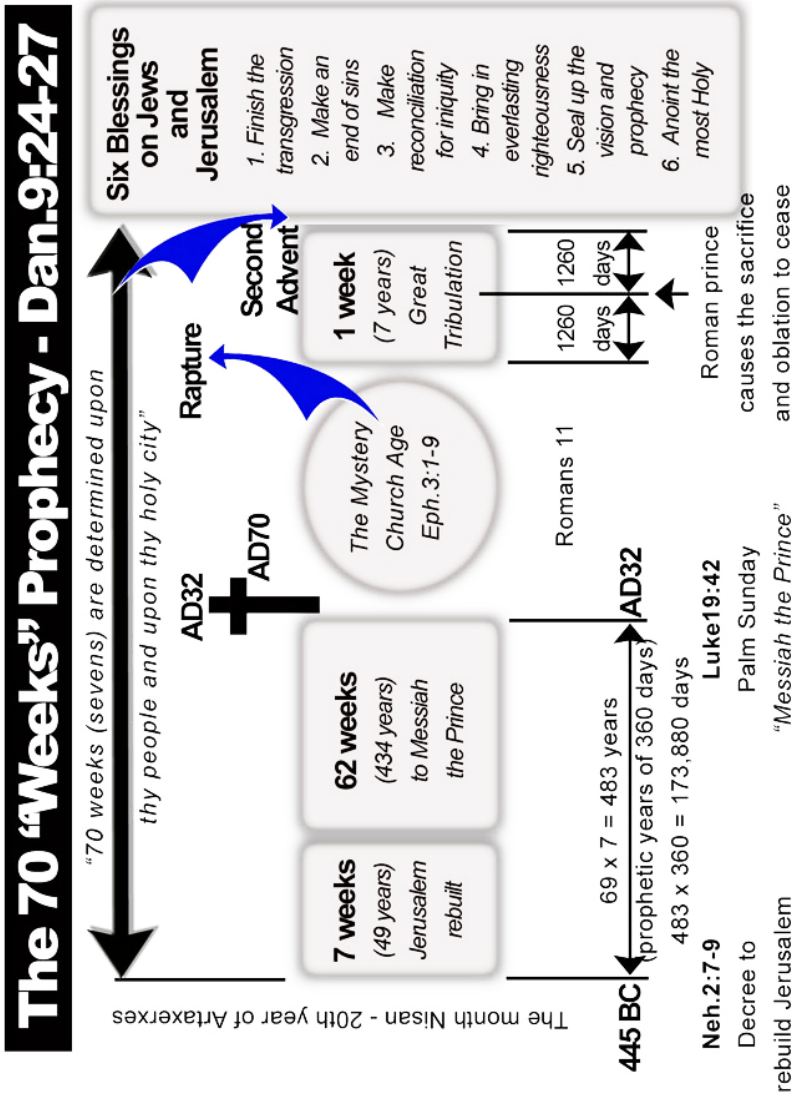
The multitude identified Jesus as the son of David, thus making Him eligible to sit upon David's throne. They cried:

"Hosanna to the son of David: BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD" (Matt 21:9,15; Luke 19:38).

Calculating using prophetic years of 360 days and converting back to the Gregorian calendar, Sir Robert Anderson QC has shown that this remarkable prophecy was fulfilled to the very day, 173,880 days from **the 1st of Nisan 445BC to the 6th April AD32**. (Prophecy always uses 360-day years).

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that day, He said to Jerusalem:

*"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in **THIS THY DAY**, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*



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For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:42-44).

The consequence for Israel of failing to understand the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9, was that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the Jews scattered among the nations. Jesus said:

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24).

Daniel, also, indicated that **after** Messiah was "cut off" Jerusalem would be destroyed, as it was in AD70!

*"And the people of the prince that shall come **shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined"(Dan.9:26).*

Josephus, the Jewish historian, witnessed the siege of Jerusalem and recorded the details in his book *The Jewish Wars*. The story of the five-month siege makes grim reading indeed, for while Titus the Roman general was attacking the city there were three factions within the city engaged in a ruthless civil war. On some days the Romans crucified 500 Jews in view of the city, and within the city starvation drove women to eat their own children.

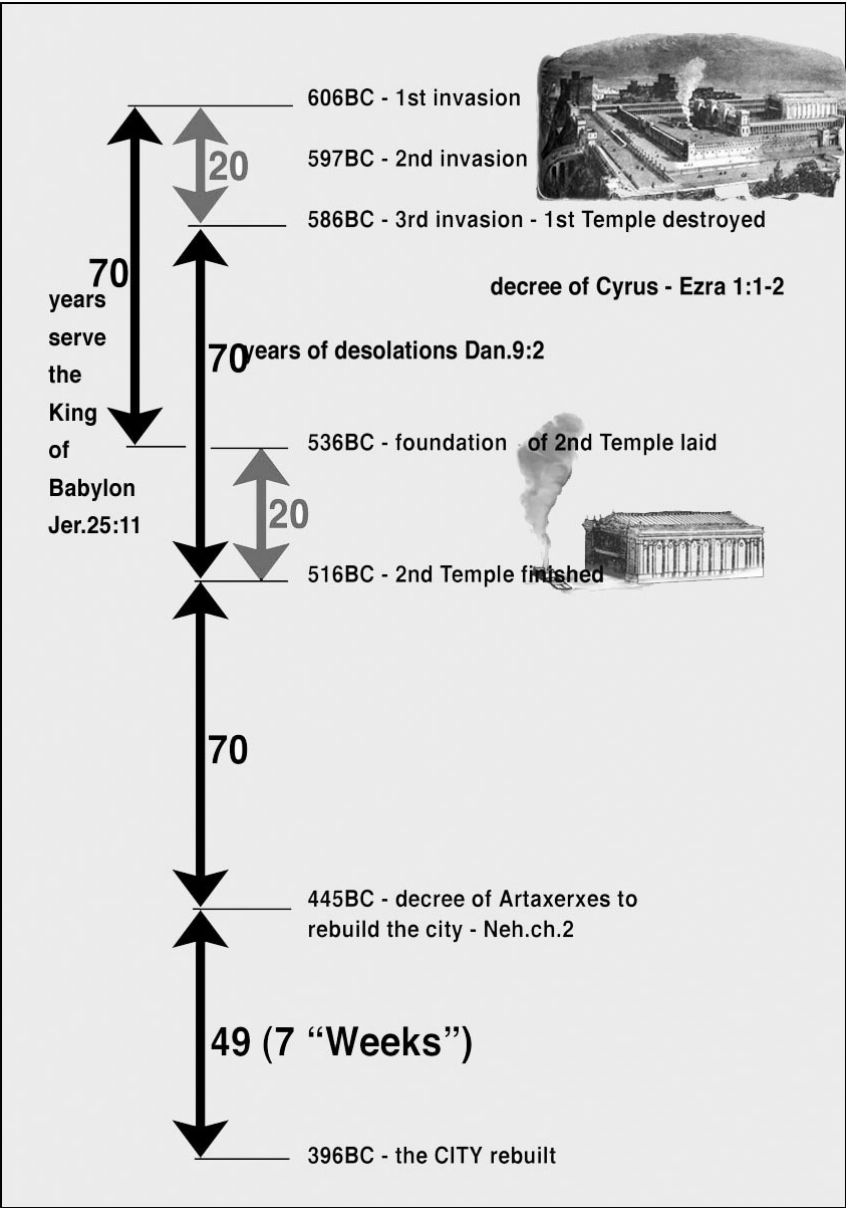
The destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation by the Romans was foretold in the Palestinian Covenant. Indeed two captivities are described, firstly to Babylon (Deut.28:36), and then, at the hands of the Romans,

"among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut.28: 64).

*"The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, **as swift as the eagle flieth**; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young"(Deut.28:49-50).*

Josephus records that large numbers of the Jewish prisoners were sent to Egypt to work as slaves in mines, just as Moses warned:

*"And the LORD **shall bring thee into Egypt** again with ships, by the*



way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you" (Deut.28:68).

Daniel's Seventieth Week (last seven years)

Since the prophecy in question has been so accurately fulfilled up to the end of the 69th week, the question arises, When will the last seven years of Jerusalem's history run its course?

It is obvious that the 70th week has not yet been completed, for if it had, Jerusalem would now be enjoying everlasting righteousness, the most holy place in the rebuilt Temple would have been anointed for service, and the nation of Israel would have been reconciled to God.

The 70th week obviously did not commence immediately after the 69th week, when Christ presented Himself as King to the nation. In fact the prophecy itself indicates that the 70th week (7 years) would **NOT** occur immediately after Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, because two **other events** had to follow. They were -

- 1) Messiah would be cut off (four days later) AND
- 2) Jerusalem and the Temple ("*the city and the sanctuary*") would be destroyed! (thirty eight years later).

One could hardly say that the six blessings which will mark the conclusion of the 70 weeks (490 years) had become a reality when the nation actually slew its Messiah, and then was scattered by the Romans throughout the Roman Empire! Scripture foretold that such a dispersion would be the result of the nation's **disobedience** (Deut.28:36-37, 63-67).

Josephus' account of the siege of Jerusalem and other events in his time indicated that Jerusalem was anything but righteous or reconciled, and the Temple was not the place of godly worship. The behaviour of the combatants was so vile that even the Romans were shocked.

A Gap Between the 69th and 70th Weeks

In view of these facts we conclude that there is a gap in time, a parenthesis, between the 69th and 70th weeks. Someone may ask, How long is the gap? and, Why should there be a gap when there was no interruption to the first 483 years?

The concept of a gap in the 70 "weeks" prophecy is not an isolated occurrence, for other Scriptures indicate gaps in Israel's history.

James' Gap

James, in his address to the other apostles and the elders at Jerusalem, stated:

*"God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name...as it is written, **After this I will return**, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and **I will set it up**" (Acts 15:14 -16).*

First a Gentile Church would be gathered in, and AFTER THIS the Lord will return AND REBUILD THE THRONE OF DAVID! So the final re-establishment of the throne of David awaits the gathering in of the *"fulness of the Gentiles"*. Not only does James indicate a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, but he tells us what the gap was for: *"to visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."* Obviously this is the Church Age, and the people called out are those that make up the Gentile bride of Christ.

Ezekiel's Gap

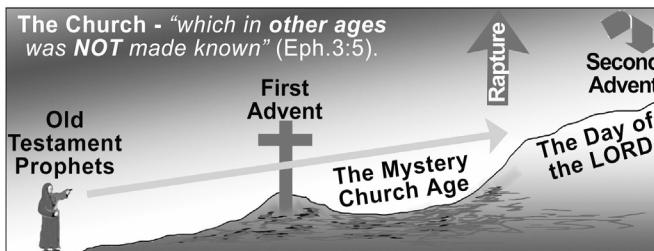
Ezekiel prophesied that King Zedekiah would be the last to wear a crown on the throne of David - *"UNTIL he come whose right it is"* (Ezek.21:25-27). In other words, from 586BC till the second coming of Christ there would be a long period when the throne of David would be unoccupied. The final blessing of Israel therefore awaits the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of David as the angel Gabriel foretold:

*"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And **he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever**; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke1:32-33).*

Hosea's Gap

Hosea also spoke of a gap in Israel's history, after which the nation would turn to the Lord. He wrote,

*"For the children of Israel shall abide **many days without a king**, and*



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*without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without terephim: **Afterward** shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness **in the latter days**" (Hos.3:4-5).*

Hosea prophesied to the **northern kingdom** known as Ephraim or Israel, which was carried away captive by the Assyrians in 721BC. We learn from this Scripture that Israel, as well as Judah, will be restored to the land and to the Lord after a long period of "*many days*" without a king or sacrifices. That restoration of the nation to God's favour will come in **the latter days**!

Ezekiel also foretold the reuniting of the two kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah after a long period of separation. His prophecy of the two sticks looks forward to a time when God will make them "*one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all*" (Ezek.37:22); while Zechariah plainly states:

*"And I will strengthen the **house of Judah**, and I will save the **house of Joseph**, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be **as though I had not cast them off** (Zech.10:6).*

Hosea makes it clear that the restoration of the northern kingdom and its reunion with Judah will only occur after a long gap in time. This gap will conclude at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy.

Paul's Gap

Paul, in Chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Romans, also tells how Israel, the "natural olive branch," had been broken off (Rom.11:17), and the Gentiles, "the wild olive branch," had been grafted into their place. He goes on to say that the blindness of Israel would continue "*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom.11:25).

This gap in Israel's prophetic history will continue **UNTIL** the Church is complete, and then, Paul says,

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom.11:25-27).

Now that sounds very much like the blessings which will fall on Israel at the conclusion of the 70th week! What a difference! In Paul's day, AD60, the Jews were "*ignorant of God's righteousness*" (Rom.10:3), and he writes: "*As concerning the gospel, they are **enemies** for your sakes*" (Rom.11:28). However, he tells the Corinthians:

"Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil

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*untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless **when it** (Israel)**shall turn to the Lord**, the veil shall be taken away (2Cor.3:14-16).*

The change for Israel can only take place after the FULNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN! And that blessed event is known as the RAPTURE of the Church!

The last 7 years of Israel's history must therefore be **preceded** by the removal of the Church, and be **followed** by the second coming of Christ as King of kings. At the beginning of that last 7-year period there will be 144,000 Jews converted. These will preach the Gospel of the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ and multitudes will be saved. The nation of Israel as a whole, however, will need the Great Tribulation judgments to bring it to repentance (Rev.7:1-17; Rom.11:26; Ezek.39:22).

The period between the 69th and 70th weeks has continued for nearly 2,000 years, while Israel has been dispersed among the nations, persecuted, and slaughtered. However, Israel is now partially back in the land in fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek.36), and once the Church is raptured, the 70th week will run its course.

The Church Age a Mystery

We might ask the question, Why wasn't the Church Age mentioned in Dan 9? The answer is given in Ephesians chapter 3, where we read that God ceased to deal with Israel in the same manner as He did in the Old Testament, and had begun to deal with a new body, the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles who became "*fellowheirs and of the same body.*" This new body was **not revealed** in the Old Testament. It was a "*mystery.*" Paul says it was

*"not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now revealed** unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph.3:5-6).*

On the day of Pentecost the Apostles spoke in Gentile languages "*the wonderful works of God*" (Acts 2:11). Isaiah had prophesied that there would be a period when God would speak to Israel "*with stammering lips and another tongue...yet they would not hear*" (Isa.28:11-12), and Paul quotes Isaiah's prophecy in 1 Cor.14:21, saying in verse 22 that the Gentile languages would be "*a sign*" to Israel.

By speaking in Gentile languages the Apostles were indicating that God was about to act in judgment on Israel and turn to the Gentiles.

Yet Peter reminded them that if they repented God would
*"send Jesus Christ...whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).*

The casting away of Israel is only until the nation repents, and then God will send Jesus Christ with times of refreshing for the nation. The duration of the gap is linked to the period of Israel's unbelief.

The Future Roman Prince and the Last 7 Years

At the beginning of the 70th week of Israel's prophetic history there will arise a Roman prince who will confirm a treaty, or covenant, with Israel for 7 years.

We know he is a **future Roman** prince because Scripture states it was **his people** who would destroy the city and the sanctuary in AD70. Nobody would question that this was the Romans.

*"And the people of **the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan 9:26).*

Therefore during the last 7 years of Israel's prophetic history this future Roman prince will confirm the covenant for one week (7 years), but in the middle of the 7 years (after 3 1/2 years) he will turn against Israel and *"cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate"*(Dan.9:27).

This period is also described as *"1260 days," "42 months,"*and *"a time and times and the dividing of time"*, in the following places: Rev.11:2-4; 12:6,14; 13:5; Dan.7:25.

The Roman prince is without doubt the coming Antichrist who will arise out of the revived Roman Empire. He will stop the Jewish sacrifices in the **rebuilt Temple** at Jerusalem for *"the overspreading of abominations"*(Dan.9:27).



Some interpret the *"prince that shall come"* as a further mention of *Messiah the Prince*, saying that the reference to causing *"the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"* speaks of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary, which fulfilled the Old Testament types and replaced animal sacrifices.

However Dan.9:27 gives **the reason** for causing the sacrifice to cease; it is

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"FOR THE OVERSPREADING OF ABOMINATIONS," which of course refers to the **abomination of idolatry**. This future prince therefore can't be Messiah, but must be Antichrist who will replace the Jewish sacrifices during the 70th week with his own idol image. It would be blasphemous to suggest that Christ's sacrifice at Calvary had as its purpose *"the overspreading of abominations!"*

Paul tells us about this terrible event in 2 Thess.2:3-4, when the *"man of sin...the son of perdition"* would exalt himself *"above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he **as God** sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*

Zechariah speaks of two shepherds in Israel. The Divine shepherd would be rejected by the nation and sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech.11:10-13), but the foolish (impious) shepherd, the *"idol shepherd,"* would turn on the nation and tear it as a wild beast would tear the flock. This foolish idol shepherd is the one to whom Jesus referred:

*"I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if **another shall come in his own name**, him you will receive"*(John 5:43).

The idolatrous character of Antichrist's reign is described vividly in Rev 13:14 -15 and Dan.11:35-39. Daniel says,

*"...he shall exalt himself... above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods...Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers...nor regard any god: for he **shall magnify himself above all**. But in his estate shall he honour **the God of forces**: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.*

*Thus shall he do...**with a strange god**, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall **divide the land for gain**."*

That will be the *"overspreading of abominations"* which will desolate the renewed Temple worship. The word *"overspreading"* carries the thought of "wings" and some have translated it thus. Perhaps it may indicate the nature of Antichrist's image, like the Roman eagle.

In this regard Antichrist will fulfill the "type" of Antiochus Epiphanes, who erected his **idol image** on the altar of God in the Temple and placed other idols in every village in Israel. In 167BC Antiochus Epiphanes consecrated the Temple of the Lord to the Greek god Jupiter Olympus (1st Book of Maccabees 1:47-56 ; 2nd Book of Maccabees 6:1; Dan.8:11-14).

At the conclusion of the 70th week Christ will return and the Antichrist will be taken with his false prophet, and both will

"be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev.19:20).

Daniel states that the Roman prince that shall come will reign until the end of the 70th week, but *"that determined"*, God's wrath, *"shall be poured upon the desolate"* (desolator). The word translated *"desolate"* may also be translated *"desolator"*. The Roman *"prince that shall come"* will be the desolator who will set up his idol in the Temple, and this blasphemous act will result in wrath being poured out upon him.

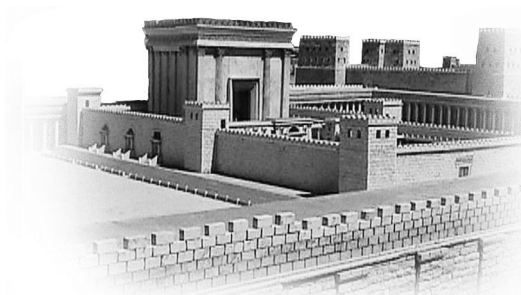
Implications of the Prophecy - A Rebuilt Temple!

Today we are fast approaching the end of the Church Age. The Rapture could take place at any moment, and Israel's last 7 years will begin. Already Israel is aligning herself with the revived Roman Empire (EU) and is an Associate Member of the EU. She is also a member of the European region of UN. The Temple will be built early in the 7 years as Israel turns back to the Lord, and sacrifices will again be offered.

There are yet **two Temples** to be built at Jerusalem. They are -

- 1) The **Tribulation Temple** described in Rev.11:1-4, and
- 2) The **Millennial Temple** described in Ezek.40 to 46.

The Tribulation Temple will be constructed with the approval of the Roman Antichrist and the encouragement of two prophets who are likened to Haggai and Zechariah. These were the two Old Testament prophets who urged Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, to rebuild the Temple after the Babylonian captivity, under a decree issued by a pagan Persian emperor (Zech.4: 1-14).



In the same manner the two Tribulation prophets will urge the reconstruction of the Temple in the first half of the Tribulation. Notice that they are described as *"the two olive trees"* supplying the oil to keep the seven lamps of testimony burning (Rev.11:4 ; Zech.4:3).

It is interesting that Zechariah was murdered *"between the porch and the altar"* of the rebuilt Temple (Matt 23:35), and the two Tribulation prophets will be slain by Antichrist in Jerusalem (Rev.11:7-12)! History will repeat itself.

The Jews' Tribulation Temple will not occupy all of the Temple Mount, for John is told **not** to measure the courtyard surrounding the Temple, *"for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot 42 months"* (Rev.11:2).

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According to Luke 21:24, "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"

After an initial period of peace under the protection of Antichrist there will be a sudden change, and Israel will suffer as never before. This last 3 ¹/₂ years before Christ returns will be the most intense part of the Great Tribulation. Matthew records, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days...shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven*" (Matt.24:29-30).

The nations that survive the Tribulation will be judged by Christ (Matt.25:31-46), and Israel will be finally brought back to the land following the scattering which will occur during the Tribulation. They will come by plane and ship (Matt.24:31; Isa.60:8-9).

The nations that followed Antichrist will be cast into hell (Matt.25:41), but those who believed and stood with God's people Israel during the Tribulation will enter the millennial kingdom of Christ (Matt.25:34-40; Zech.14:16; Isa. 60:3,10-16).

In that day Israel will sing the song recorded in Isa 26, and will be a righteous nation, "*the Priests of the LORD*" (Isa. 61:6).

The Tribulation Temple will be removed, possibly by a great earthquake (Rev.16:18; Zech.14:4-11), and a new glorious Temple will be constructed and operate according to the specifications laid down in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 46.

Finally, the Glory of God will return and will shine forth continuously from Jerusalem, which will have its name changed to "*Jehovah Shammah*," meaning "*THE LORD IS THERE!*" (Ezek.48:35).

Seven Characteristics of the Antichrist

There are seven things we need to note about the latter-days Roman prince, the Antichrist.

- i) He will arise peaceably and confirm a 7-year treaty with Israel (Dan.9:27).
- ii) He will broker a deal in which Israel will be able to rebuild the Temple while allowing the Gentiles to occupy the courtyard of the Temple Mount, ie the Mosque of Omar (Rev.11:2).
- iii) He will "*divide the land (of Israel) for gain*" (Dan.11:39 ; Joel 3:2), ie the Arab/Israeli division of the land will be settled.
- iv) After 3 ¹/₂ years he will kill the two prophets of God in Jerusalem, but God will catch them away in resurrection bodies in the sight of all men (Rev.11:7-12).

v) He will stop the Temple sacrifices by the then-converted nation of Israel halfway through the 7-year Tribulation, and will persecute Israel (Dan.9:27). (Israel's conversion will be earlier in the first half of the Tribulation at the time of the Russian/Muslim invasion described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Note especially Ezek.39:22.)

vi) He will sit in the Temple claiming to be God! (2 Thess.2:3-4).

vii) He will set up his idol image in the Temple and throughout the world, demanding universal worship! (Rev.13:12).

This future Roman prince will thus continue for the last 42 months until the Lord Jesus Christ returns with the armies of heaven and casts both the beast and his false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev.19:11-21).

How Close Are We to the 70th Week of Israel's History?

There are many aspects of this prophecy which indicate that we are drawing near to the time when Israel will begin its last seven years before Jesus Christ comes to reign.

Israel has been recognized as a sovereign state since May 1948, and its Jewish population in the land has grown from 565,000 in 1945 to 5,200,000 in 2001. Arab population in Israel was about 1,000,000 excluding the West Bank.

The Temple Mount is occupied by a Muslim mosque, but many Jews are looking for Messiah to return to rebuild the Temple. Some want to build it before Messiah appears, and many instruments for use in Temple worship have already been made and can be inspected at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem.

In April 1997 an advertisement in the *Jerusalem Post* announced that the **"Restore the Half-Shekel Fund"** had been established in accordance with Moses' instruction in Exod.30:11-16, and as practiced in 2 Chron. 24:1-14. The Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem will be selling specially minted coins, and each year these will be returned to Jerusalem, consecrated as Hekdesh (temple treasure), and stored in a vault under the Bank of Israel **until Messiah comes!** The silver holy half-shekel was for the maintenance of the Tabernacle and Temple buildings, and will provide funds for construction and maintenance of the Temple.

The first holy half-shekel was issued on the 50th anniversary of the nation, and the illustration on page 42 is to commemorate the 55th year of Israel's re-establishment.

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Jewish funding, manufacture of instruments, and identification of the priestly family (the sons of Aaron), indicate that preparations are well advanced for the recommencement of Temple worship.



A report in *Israel Today* magazine October 2003 showed photos of a full-scale model of a temple erected in a Jewish community at *Mitzpe Yericho*, near the Dead Sea, which is functioning as a training centre to prepare priests (*kohanim*) for service in the Third Temple.

There is little doubt that the foundations of the Second Temple have been located by Professor Kaufman about 100 metres north of the Dome of the Rock in the northern courtyard of the Temple Mount.

Asher Kaufman, a Scottish Jew, migrated to Israel in 1960. In Israel he became a professor at the Hebrew University, researching fusion and the spectroscopy of ionized gases. He was a man given to detail and very precise.

Kaufman studied early Jewish writings to verify the measurements of the Temple, and found that it had been sited in an east/west orientation with the entrance facing the eastern gate of the wall surrounding the court of the Temple. If the eastern gate could be located, then it was only a matter of drawing a line due west to fix the position of the Temple.

In addition, he found that the red heifer had been sacrificed on the Mount of Olives at an elevated location where the Temple could be sighted above the walls of Jerusalem, and by standing on this high point it was only a matter of looking beyond the eastern gate (or Golden Gate) to fix the position of the Temple.

Underground drains used to carry blood to the Kidron Valley from beside the altar which stood in front of the Temple had already been located by a British surveyor, Captain Warren, in the 19th century, and his findings had been reported in the *Biblical Archaeological Review*.

Gershom Gorenberg, senior reporter with *Jerusalem Report*, wrote:

“He (Kaufman) studied the charts, drawn by the nineteenth-century explorers of the ancient cisterns on the north side of the Mount; they line up just outside where he says the walls were.”

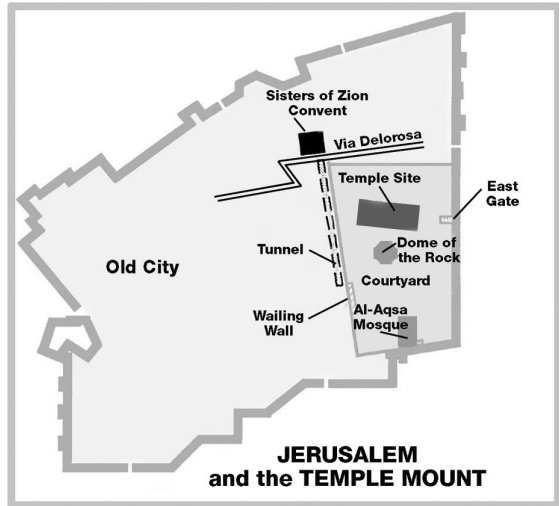
By 28 December 1974 Kaufman had enough evidence to assert that he had found the site of the Second Temple, **one hundred metres north**

of the Dome of the Rock! The Third Temple could be built without demolishing the Dome of the Rock.

The revival of the Roman Empire under the banner of the European Union (EU) and Israel's Associate Membership with the EU, prepare the way for Antichrist's involvement in Israel's affairs.

The "Oslo Accord" and other peace plans which seek to solve the Arab/Jewish conflict by dividing the land and making Jerusalem an international city, lay the groundwork for negotiations for the Temple Mount.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which began in 1979 at the time the Shah of Persia was overthrown, is most significant. It is clear from Scripture that God will use the hatred of the Muslims to cause the nation of Israel to seek the Lord. Israel has defeated her Arab neighbours so decisively on the battlefield that she now feels secure, especially



with military support from the United States. However, the wider circle of Islamic nations: Iran (Persia), Turkey (Togarmah), Libya, and Ethiopia (Sudan), represent a more formidable threat, and when Turkey falls to the Islamists Israel will have no adequate military answer. **Russia's relationship with Islamic nations is an ominous sign.**

The Rapture of the Church takes place **before the 70th "week"** begins, when the Temple will be reconstructed, so although we must refrain from fixing any time for the Second Advent, it is evident that we are drawing near to the end of the age.

The Day of the Lord

Throughout Scripture the Day of the Lord is seen as the time of awful judgment which precedes the second coming of Christ. Events which are foretold in the Day of the Lord are the same as those which will occur in the period which Jesus called the "great tribulation", and we may safely say that they both refer to the same period.

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Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, wrote:

*"...the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night...when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day** should overtake you as a thief...For God hath **not appointed us to wrath** (of the day of the Lord), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ...that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1Thess.5:2-10).*

These verses leave us in absolutely no doubt that the Rapture will occur BEFORE the Day of the Lord, the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. The 70th week is Israel's prophetic history and cannot apply to the Church. It is the "*time of Jacob's trouble*" (Jer.30:7), and the Church must be removed **before** that day comes. As Noah and Lot were removed to safety before judgment fell, so the Church will be removed before the Day of the Lord.

Summary

The seventy "weeks" were 70 x 7, or 490 years, until **Israel and Jerusalem** would be brought into **everlasting righteousness**.

The prophetic time **begins** on the first day of the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, which was 445BC. It is divided into three periods. During the first 49 years the city was rebuilt.

At the end of the 69th week (7+ 62 = 69 weeks or 483 years) **Messiah** presented Himself as King to Israel. Christ did this on the first Palm Sunday.

Then four days later **Messiah was cut off** on the cross, and finally Jerusalem was destroyed as predicted, 38 years later in AD70 . These events had to occur **between the 69th and 70th "weeks"** of the prophecy. The 70th week does not therefore immediately follow the 69th week. There is an obvious **time gap** between the 69th and 70th "week", known as the mystery Church Age, not made known in ages past (Eph.3:1-9).

When the Church is raptured, the Church Age will finish and Israel's 70th week will begin with a 7-year **peace treaty** confirmed by a **Roman prince (EU)**. This Roman prince will facilitate the final agreement to **divide the land** of Israel (Dan.11:39) and permit joint occupation of the Temple Mount by Jews and Gentiles (Rev.11:1-2). The Tribulation Temple will be built. At first Antichrist, the Roman prince, will appear friendly to Israel and will defend her against an Egyptian invasion (Dan.11:40-45), at the same time subduing the Middle East, which provides the pretext for occupation of the "*glorious land*".

Before the Tribulation judgments begin to fall 144,000 Jews will be sealed for protection with the Father's name in their forehead. Their task will be to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom, which must be preached in *"all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"* (Matt.24:14). These ultimately suffer martyrdom and are seen in heaven halfway through the Tribulation (Rev.14:1-3). The conversion of the 144,000 may be triggered by the Rapture.

During the first 3 ¹/₂ years, **all Israel** is brought to repentance through the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish *"servants of God"* at the time of the Russian/Muslim invasion, as described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and Joel chapter 2. The two Jewish prophets described in Revelation chapter 11 may be two of the 144,000; these also are slain after they *"have finished their testimony"* which lasts for 3 ¹/₂ years (Rev.11:3,7).

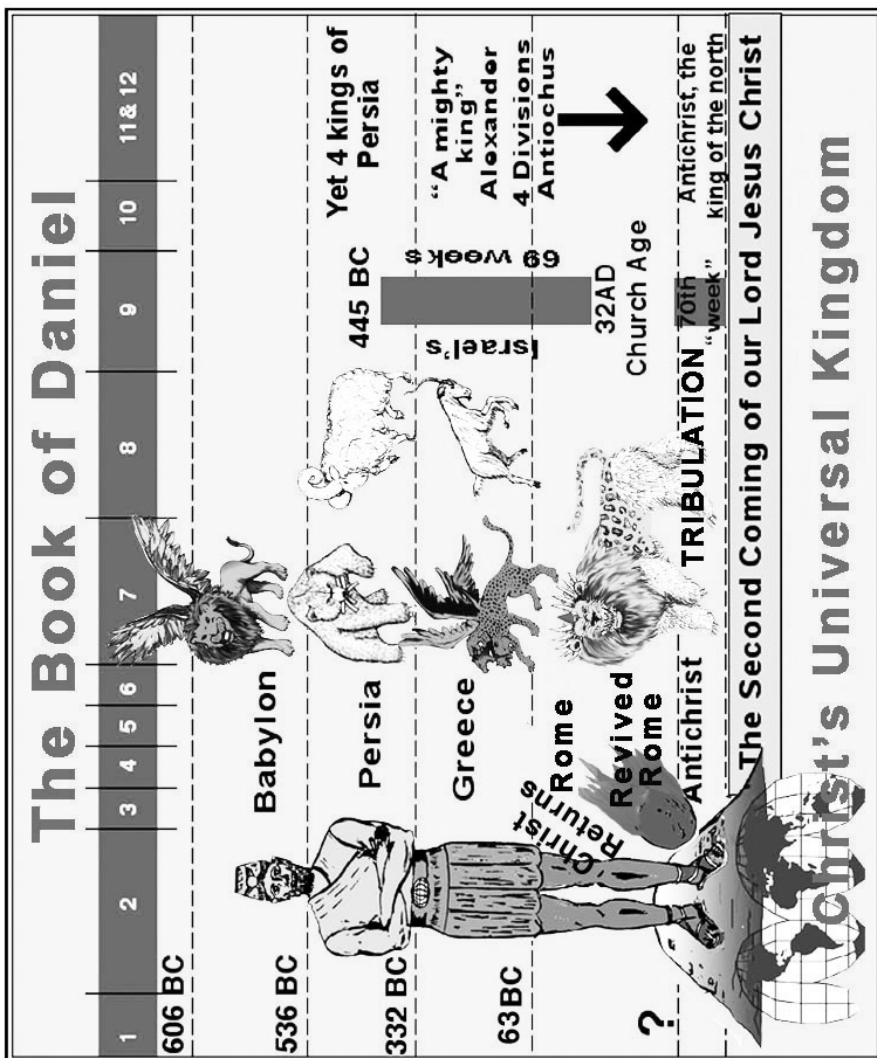
In the first 3 ¹/₂ years the peace treaty will be broken and Antichrist will reveal his true character. He will then try to wipe out Israel but one third of the people will be preserved to the coming of the Lord, when Antichrist and his false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Israel will be protected by God in a wilderness location during the second half of the Tribulation, and will welcome Christ when He returns to reign as King of kings.

Divine testimony during the second half of the Tribulation will be administered by an angel who will proclaim the everlasting Gospel (Rev.14:6). The everlasting Gospel warns the world:

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come : and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev.14:7).

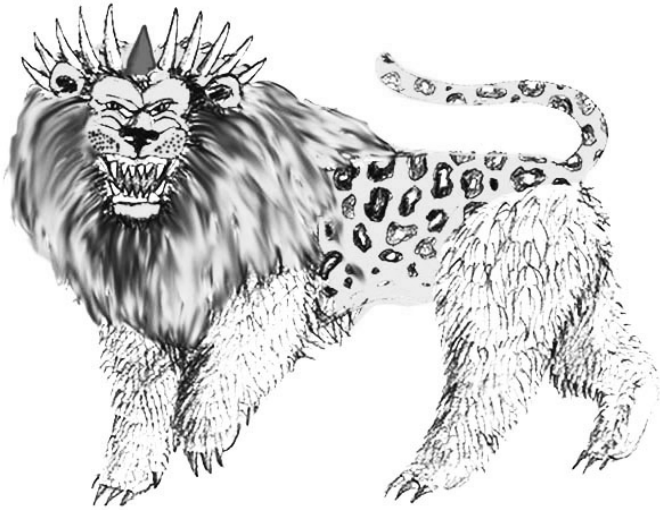
The first half of the Tribulation sees the Russian/Muslim armies invade Israel and Israel turn to the Lord, while in the second half of the 7-year Tribulation the judgment of the Gentiles culminates with the battle of Armageddon when *"all nations"* are gathered to Jerusalem.

Christ's kingdom will finally be established on earth, and only then will the six blessings determined upon Israel and Jerusalem become a reality. The **490 prophetic years** will have run their course.



Section 3

The Times of the Gentiles



*“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles,
UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”
(Luke 21:24).*

The Times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2 & 7)

Two complete outlines of the Times of the Gentiles are given in chapters 2 and 7 of the Book of Daniel. Both of these visions cover the same period of history, from the time of the Babylonian Empire to the second coming of Christ.

The thing that makes this prophecy so interesting is that it is history told in advance of the events. Much of this prophecy has already been fulfilled, and today we live near the end of the Times of the Gentiles. We can look back at what was originally prophecy and see it fulfilled in the pages of history.

The first vision was given to a pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar, and the second to saintly Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar, as an ungodly man of the world, would see the mighty empires of history, with their ruthless military conquests, amazing civil administrations, grand building programs, idolatrous religious systems and humanistic cultures, as something to be admired. It is most significant that Nebuchadnezzar saw the procession of empires through history as a glorious image made from the precious metals of the earth, whereas Daniel saw them as four vicious beasts.

The dreams show that there would be four kingdoms on earth before God sets up His kingdom over the whole earth. No doubt Nebuchadnezzar would have liked to think his kingdom would endure forever, after all, prior to Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom there had never been one kingdom that ruled over the world. Instead there had been the **Assyrian and the Egyptian Empires** that contended for supremacy. Hence Daniel addressed Nebuchadnezzar as **the first world monarch**, and said,

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all"
(Dan 2:37-38).

Nebuchadnezzar's image symbolizes not only the Babylonian Empire, but all of the Gentile powers that would dominate the world scene till the time when *"one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven... his dominion is an everlasting dominion"* (Dan 7:13-14). Details of the dream are shown on page 52.

Not only was Nebuchadnezzar the first world ruler, but the beginning of his reign marked the beginning of *"the times of the Gentiles,"* which

slain, before his own eyes were put out (Jer.52:10,11; Ezek.12 :12,13).

Ezekiel describes Zedekiah as a “*profane and wicked prince.*”

*“Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown...I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it (the throne) shall be no more, **UNTIL he come** (Jesus Christ) **whose right it is; and I will give it him**” (Ezek 21:25-27).*

Hosea also prophesied that Israel (the northern kingdom) would be without a king, lose its sovereignty, and come under Gentile control **until the last days.**

*“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice...**Afterward** shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness **in the latter days**” (Hos.3:4-5).*

When Jesus came the Roman Empire was in firm control of the land of Israel. The Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian Empires had come and gone. The fourth empire held sway over the world from England to Babylon and Israel had no king on the throne of David. Furthermore, Jesus indicated that Israel would continue to be oppressed by the Gentiles and that Jerusalem would shortly be destroyed. He said,

*“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the **TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED**” (Luke 21:20-24).*

We know that the words of the Lord Jesus were fulfilled in 70AD when the Romans destroyed the city, the Temple, and the nation. Those who survived were scattered across the Roman Empire and have continued thus for nearly 2,000 years, just as the Palestinian Covenant said would happen! (Deut.28-30).

The Times of the Gentiles has been running for over 2,500 years, and still Jerusalem is trodden down by Gentiles. The question of Jerusalem’s future is the final phase of peace negotiations discussed by Jews, Arabs, and the world, since the Oslo Agreement in 1999. A Muslim mosque is located on the Temple Mount and most nations of the world place their embassy buildings at Tel-Aviv, refusing to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The United Nations considers Jerusalem “an international city”, as does the Vatican, while the Palestinians claim it as their capital city. While Jews pray at the Wailing Wall, the Temple Mount, where God has chosen to place His Name (Deut 12:5,11,14), continues under Gentile control, and will do so until “*he comes whose right it is*” (Ezek.21:27).

Since the birth of the Zionist Movement in 1881, Jews have been returning to the land, and the Jewish population has increased from 565,000 in 1945 to 5.3 million in 2004. Total population in Israel including non-Jews was 6.3 million in 2004, and forecasts predict this to rise to a total of 8 million by 2020AD.

Levites are collecting the “holy” half-shekel for the Temple service in anticipation of the day when the Temple will be rebuilt. However, we shall see in this study that Gentile occupation of Jerusalem will continue until the Lord comes at the end of the Great Tribulation.

A Temple will be built at Jerusalem during the Tribulation (Rev.11:1-2; 2Thess.2:4; Matt.24:15; Dan.9:27), but this will be occupied by the last leader of the fourth kingdom on earth - the Antichrist. When Jesus comes Antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire, and only then will the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

The Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is given in Dan 2:36-49. The four parts of the image represent four kingdoms that would dominate the world scene from Daniel’s day right down to the last days, when God would set up a kingdom that would never be replaced. We read,

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan.2:44).

The First Kingdom-A Head of Gold

The first of these kingdoms was the Babylonian Empire, which covered from Babylon to Assyria in the north, Asia Minor (Turkey as we know it) in the west, and all of Israel and the land of Egypt in the south. At that time Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, and we read concerning him, *“Thou art this head of gold!”*(Dan2:38).

The duration of the Babylonian Empire was to be quite short, for Jeremiah had prophesied that it would last for only 70 years. He wrote, *“And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD”* (Jer.25:12).

Babylon continued from 606BC to 536BC, when it was overthrown by Darius the Mede (Dan 5:30-31).

The Second Kingdom-Shoulders of Silver

A second kingdom was to replace the Babylonian Empire and this was represented by the shoulders of silver. We read:

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee” (Dan 2:39).

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This second kingdom undoubtedly was the Medo-Persian Empire. The two arms of the image indicated the dual nature of the original form of the kingdom, but as time went by it became known as the Persian Empire. It continued from 536 BC to 331 BC when it was overthrown by Alexander the Great; a period of 204 years.

The Persian Empire extended to the border of India in the east, Greece in the west, the Caucasus in the north, and included Egypt in the south.

The Third Kingdom-Belly and Thighs of Brass

The third kingdom, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, was to have even greater territorial influence, for we read of *"another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth"* (Dan 2:39).

It was young Alexander who led inferior numbers of Grecian forces against the massive Persian armies. He was incensed at the way the king of Persia had humiliated the

A Head of Gold

Babylonian Empire
606 to 536BC

Shoulders of Silver

Persian Empire
536 to 332BC

Belly and Thighs of Brass

Grecian Empire
332 to 63BC

Legs of Iron

Imperial Roman Empire
63BC to AD476

Feet of part Iron and Clay

Weakened form of
Roman Empire
AD476 to the present

Ten Toes

Revived Roman Empire-
Antichrist's Kingdom
in the Tribulation

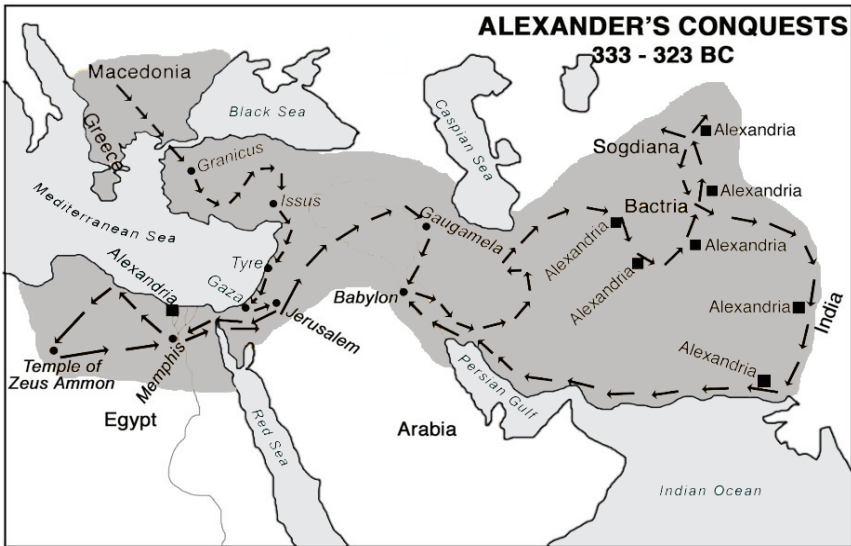
king of Persia had humiliated the Greeks, and although he had only a comparatively small army and virtually no navy, he fought three battles across Asia Minor to break the power of Persia: Granicus 334BC; Issus 333BC; Gaugamela 331BC.

Alexander captured Tyre (332BC) in fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ezek 27), and all the land of Egypt. By capturing all the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean he neutralized the Persian navy which then had no land base. Alexander led his army through Central Asia to India, where he defeated King Porus who had come against him with an army of elephants. He returned to Babylon and died after a drunken feast in June 323BC.



**The
Smiting
Stone**
Christ
at His
Second
Coming

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL KINGDOM



After Alexander's death his family was killed and the kingdom was divided among his four generals, who then ruled the world from India to Europe. The Grecian Empire's control over Jerusalem lasted from 332BC to 63BC, a period of 269 years, after which we find the Roman Empire taking centre stage.

The Fourth Kingdom-Legs of Iron

The greatest attention is given to the fourth kingdom which was to arise in the earth, and it is described as legs of iron, feet part iron and part clay, and its final stage, 10 toes. This kingdom "*breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things*" (Dan.2:40).

In its early stages it would have the strength of the iron, but in its latter stages the feet and toes would be a mixture of strength and weakness, partly iron and partly clay.

In its final stage the fourth kingdom would be divided into 10 parts, and "*in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*" (Dan.2:44).

The last stage of the fourth kingdom will terminate the "*times of the Gentiles.*" Gentile powers will no longer tread down Jerusalem. This will bring in the promised kingdom of God on earth.

Without any doubt the fourth kingdom is the **Roman Empire** which took control of Jerusalem in 63BC. The Imperial stage of the Roman Empire continued from Caesar Augustus (31BC - became emperor

BABYLON overthrew Nineveh 612BC and Egypt about 570BC.

Jerusalem was invaded 606, 597 and 586BC.

Jeremiah foretold Babylon's collapse after 70 years (Jer.25:9-12).

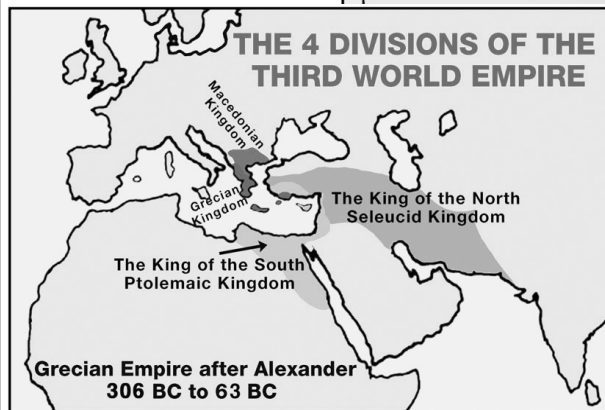
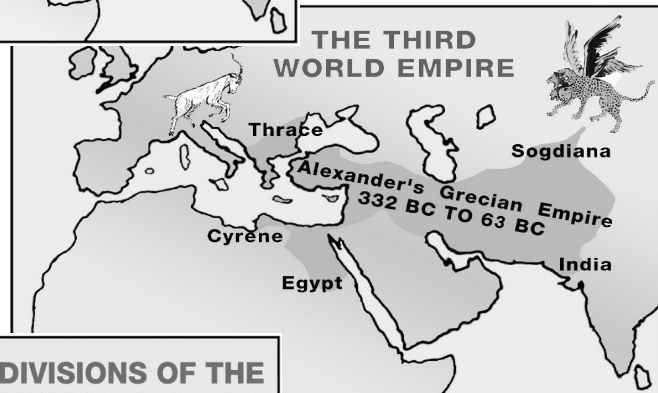


The **MEDES** and **PERSIANS** overthrew Babylon and Cyrus allowed the Jews to rebuild the Temple 536-516BC.

Artaxerxes allowed Nehemiah to build the city of Jerusalem in 445BC.

GREECE-Alexander the Great defeated Darius in three battles: 334, 333, and 331BC.

After his death in 323BC the kingdom divided into four parts by 306BC.



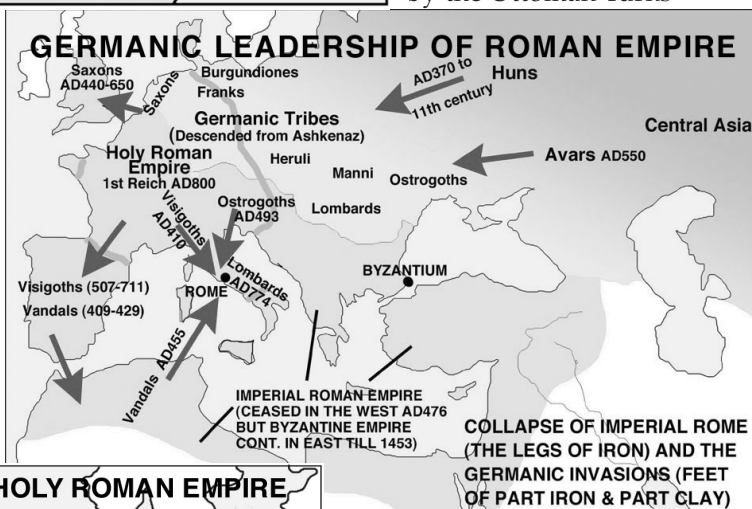
Daniel foretold the line of kings in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163BC). The feast of Dedication remembers the cleansing of the Temple by the Maccabees on 25 December 165BC after Antiochus had polluted it. He stands as a "type" of a future Antichrist (Dan.11:36-45).



ROME - The Roman Republic conquered the world, and in 31BC Caesar Augustus began the Imperial period of government. In 63BC Pompey captured Palestine.

Imperial Rome in the west fell before the Germanic tribes in AD476. The Byzantine eastern Roman Empire continued till 1453 when Constantinople was overrun by the Ottoman Turks

The Germanic tribes were driven west and south by Asiatic peoples known as Huns and Avars. Thereafter the western Roman Empire was dominated by the papacy (AD600) and German influence in the Holy Roman Empire (AD800-1806)



On Christmas Day AD800 Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. As the king of the Franks (Germans) he conquered the Lombards, Avars, and Saxons, Christianizing them and giving parts of Italy back to the pope.

There were 66 emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, 31 of whom were appointed by popes.

The Inquisitions (1232 to 19th c.) and Crusades (1096 to 1271) were only possible because of the union of the church and the state.

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

27BC) till Rome was overrun by the Visigoths in AD410, Vandals in 455AD, and the last western emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed in 476AD. The **Imperial** Roman Empire therefore continued for 506 years, **but this was not the end of the Roman Empire.**

Byzantine Roman Empire

The Roman Empire was partitioned into eastern and western empires in 258AD although reunited for a while under Emperor Constantine. He moved the seat of government to Constantinople in 330AD.

The Byzantine Roman Empire in the east continued from 330AD till Constantinople was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453AD; a period of 1,123 years.

The Papacy and the “Holy Roman Empire”

Meanwhile in Rome we see the Church gaining more and more power. The bishops of Rome, because of their association with the emperors, had assumed a position of authority over other bishops, which ultimately led to the formation of the papacy in the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604AD).

In 800AD Pope Leo III separated from the eastern empire and crowned Charlemagne, the king of Germany, as Emperor of a new empire in the west known as the “Holy Roman Empire.” The emperors of this western empire were frequently appointed by the pope of the day and were usually either the king of Germany or the king of Austria.

It was not until the time of Napoleon (1806) that the last emperor, Francis II, renounced the title of “Emperor” and the “Holy Roman Empire” ceased. It had continued as the secular arm of the papacy for much of 1,006 years.

Napoleon, Kaiser and Hitler

Under Emperor Napoleon there was a bold attempt to unite all of Europe. He was proclaimed **King of Italy** in the cathedral at Milan, captured the Middle East and became master of Egypt. By 1812 he had much of Europe under his control or allied to him, including eastern and central Europe, Spain, Italy and Norway. He even captured Moscow, but failed to hold it. In 1814 Napoleon abdicated as Emperor and was exiled to the Island of Elbe. In 1815 he escaped, reorganized, but was finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo. He died on the Island of St Helena in the South Atlantic in 1821.

The next attempt to reunite Europe was made by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in 1914-18 (World War I). The title “Kaiser” is the same

The Fourth Kingdom - Rome

The Roman Empire

"After this I saw ... a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth... and it had ten horns... and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan 7:7-8).



Monarchy



753BC

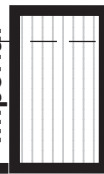
Republic



509 BC

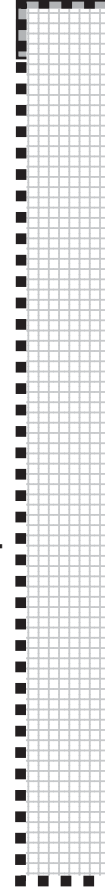
Ten Pagan Persecutions

Imperial



31 BC AD476

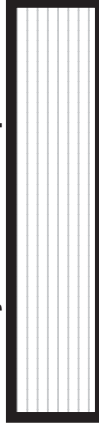
Papal Rome



AD 590

Crusades and Inquisitions

Holy Roman Empire



AD 800

1806

1815

Napoleon

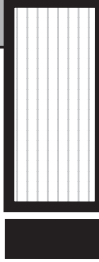
1918

Kaiser

1945

Hitler

EU



1957

Tribulation

Byzantine Eastern Roman Empire

AD330

1453

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

as Caesar, the title given to the emperors of Rome, and was first assumed by the Prussian king, Kaiser Wilhem I, in 1870, following the unification of Germany and the formation of the German Empire. Kaiser Wilhelm II was the grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm I.

The Kaiser's attempt to extend the German Empire to embrace all of Europe failed in 1918 and he was forced to abdicate.

In 1939 another attempt was made to unite all of Europe, this time by Adolf Hitler. With Italy and Spain as partners Hitler's armies rampaged across Europe. Hitler claimed that his "Third Reich" would last for 1,000 years, but in 1945 his army and nation lay in ruins.

European Union (EU)

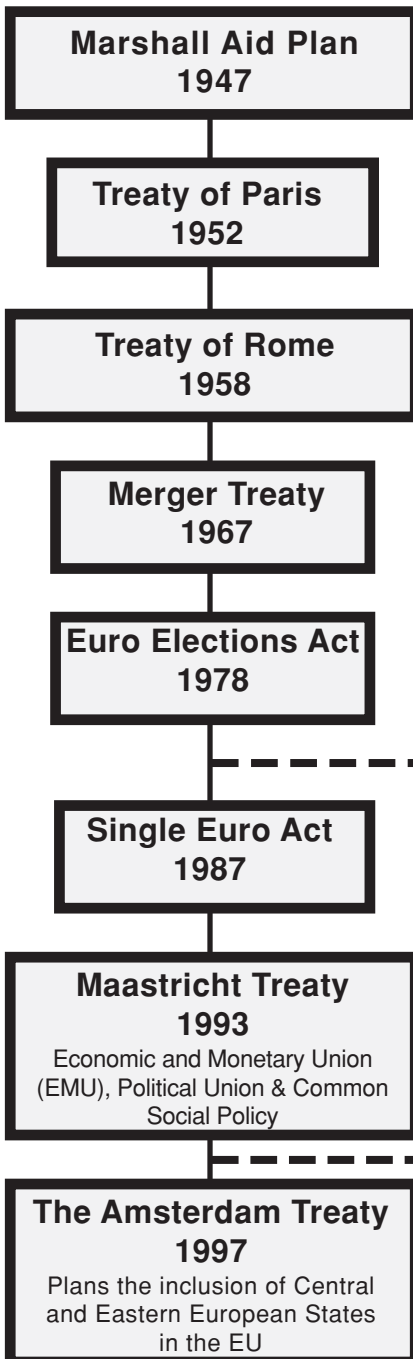
Following the failed attempts of Napoleon, the Kaiser, and Hitler to create a new Roman Empire, it was decided by the nations that the better way to achieve European unity was to work for an economic and political union, and thus prevent future wars.

After WWII America provided \$14billion in what was known as the Marshall Aid Plan for the reconstruction of the countries of Europe. It was important to America to have a united and strong Europe in view of the growing influence of Russian/International Communism.

At first Europe formed up into two separate economic communities known as the "Inner Six" (EEC) and the "Outer Seven" (EFTA). The EEC membership originally included only Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands (Holland), and was bound together by a number of treaties. Perhaps the following are the most important of these treaties:

- 1) The **Treaty of Rome** implemented in 1958 laid the foundation for European Union.
- 2) The **Maastricht Treaty** implemented in 1993 agreed to economic and monetary union on the one hand, and political union on the other.
- 3) The **Amsterdam Treaty** implemented in 1997 extends the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty and provides for the entry of central and eastern European countries which gained independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union in the period 1989 to 1991.

In 1998 there were eleven European nations which signed Partnership Agreements as a first step to joining the fifteen nations which made up what has become known as the European Union (EU).



In May 2004 ten nations were added to the EU bringing its total population to 455 million. Negotiations are continuing with other nations. Its common currency, the Euro, will ultimately dominate world financial markets, and its economic and political influence will be second to none.

Already the EU has a European parliament with a president, and its constitution was being finalized in 2004. The Schengen Agreement established in 1985 is eliminating internal borders and most countries in the EU now do not require border checks.

The EU views the Mediterranean as a European Lake and has begun to establish a Free Trade Zone

Schengen Agreement
1985

Open Borders within the EU

around its shores. It expects to have this in place by the year 2010. This trade initiative will provide a market of 200 million people in the developing countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership -1994

By 2010, to establish a free-trade zone around the Mediterranean

The sphere of influence of the EU will then be similar to that of the old Roman Empire at its zenith.

The Final Stage of the Roman Empire-Ten Toes

The final stage of the Roman Empire will see a division of Europe into 10 states which will agree to give their allegiance to a man who the Bible calls the Antichrist. He is also called "*the beast*", "*the man of sin*", and "*the son of perdition.*" We shall see more of this personality when we consider Daniel's vision as recorded in Daniel chapter 7. This division into 10 states is symbolized by the 10 toes of the image and corresponds to the 10 horns of the beast in Daniel ch. 7, and Revelation chapters 12,13, and 17. In Rev.17:12 we are told,

*"The ten horns which thou sawest **are ten kings**, which...receive power as kings one hour with the beast."*

Thus far we have seen that the fourth kingdom, symbolized by the legs, feet and toes of the image, represents the Roman Empire in its various forms. Under Imperial Rome it had the strength of the iron, but under the "Holy" Roman Empire and papacy it was like iron and clay - partly strong and partly weak. As we approach the end of the twentieth century we see a revival of the old Roman Empire, which shows every promise of becoming the dominant world power ready for the appearance of Antichrist and the 10 horns (kings).

Christ's Second Coming- The Stone from Heaven

Finally, Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream:

"A stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan.2:34-35).

This stone represents the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming. Other Scriptures tell us that the Lord will smite the nations when He comes again. The Scripture records:

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2Thess.1:7-8).

"Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev.19:15).

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech.14:2-3).

"And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa.2:19).

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit" (Isa.24:21-22).

The picture of a stone (meteorite) hurtling from space is terrifying indeed, but nothing to compare with the second coming of the "Rock of Ages."

The period of Gentile world power is terminated by the return of Christ. After this we see Christ's kingdom established as symbolized by the mountain which fills the whole earth.

A mountain is used elsewhere in Scripture to represent nations. Isaiah states:

*"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that **the mountain of the LORD'S house** shall be established in the **top of the mountains**, and shall be exalted **above the hills**; and **all nations shall flow unto it**...And he shall judge among **the nations**, and shall rebuke many people"(Isa.2:1-4).*

In Matthew's Gospel chapters 24 and 25 we read that Christ will return immediately after the Tribulation, and one of the first things to occur will be the judgment of the **living nations** who survive the Tribulation. Those individuals who are saved will go alive into the millennial kingdom, but the unsaved will go away into everlasting punishment. The events will be as follows:

*"**Immediately after the tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened...and **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29-30).*

*"**When** the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, **then** shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **Then** shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom**"(Matt. 25:31-34).*

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

The long-awaited kingdom of God will only be established when the Times of the Gentiles is fulfilled, when the nation of Israel repents of its rejection of Messiah during the Tribulation, and when Christ personally reigns over the earth. The “*ten toes*”, representing the “*ten kings*” who receive power with Antichrist, will be the last stage of the fourth Gentile empire to tread down Jerusalem.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan.2:44).

Daniel’s Dream - Daniel Chapter 7

The **second** outline of the Times of the Gentiles was given in a dream to Daniel. He saw four beasts coming up out of the great sea as the four winds of heaven “*strove on the great sea*” (the Mediterranean). The first beast was a **lion** with eagle’s wings, the second a **bear** with three ribs in its mouth, the third was a **leopard** with four wings and four heads, and the fourth beast was “*dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth.*”

This fourth beast also had **ten horns** out of which came another **little horn**. The **little horn** plucked up three of those former horns. This “*little horn*” assumed human characteristics with “*eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things*”(Dan.7:8).

Finally Daniel sees one like the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, and to Him is given

“dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14).

The interpretation of Daniel’s dream is similar to that which we have seen in Daniel chapter 2. To Nebuchadnezzar it appeared like a glorious image, but to saintly Daniel, as viscious beasts. Our heart condition will always determine how we view the world scene! The ungodly will delight in the world’s glitter and glamour but the believer will see it as “*vanity fair,*” for the world system has no time for God and is passing away.

Four Beasts from the Great Sea- The Mediterranean

Daniel’s dream, like the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, describes the span of time from 606BC when Jerusalem was first trodden down by the Gentiles until the second coming of Jesus Christ, as shown in the

graphic of the four beasts on page 65. The interpretation given in Scripture is concise.

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Dan.7:17-18).

Very briefly we are given the meaning of the entire dream, but then further details are given concerning the fourth beast.

Firstly note that the four great beasts come up from the *"great sea"* after the *"four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea"*.

The *"great sea"* is the Mediterranean Sea. This can be firmly established in the following Scriptures (Num.34:6,7; Deut.1:7; Josh.9:1; 15:12,47; 23:4; Ezek.47:10,15,19,20; and Ezek.48:28).

The *"four winds of heaven"* represent four angelic beings which do God's bidding. They are seen as four chariots with red, black, white, and grised and bay horses in Zech.6:1-3, where we are told:

*"These are the **four spirits** (angelic beings) **of the heavens**, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth" (Zech.6:5).*

It is interesting to note that all four world kingdoms occupied much of the land around the Mediterranean Sea, including Israel and Egypt.

In 1996 the Mediterranean was described as a **European Lake**. We have already pointed out that by the year 2010 the EU expects to have in place Free Trade arrangements with most North African and Middle East countries bordering the Mediterranean. It is called Euro-Med.

Europe needs external markets, and the North African and Middle Eastern developing nations located on her doorstep are a golden opportunity. Large aid packages are planned to encourage participation.

THE REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE



A Lion with Eagle's Wings - The Babylonian Empire

The symbols of the four beasts describe each succeeding empire. The lion with eagle's wings clearly identifies the Babylonian Empire, since sculptures of lions with wings guarded the gates of the royal palaces of the Babylonians. But Daniel saw the wings

"plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it"(Dan 7:4).

The reference to the humanizing of the lion obviously refers to what happened to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4, when the king was struck down for his pride and the angel said,

*"Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a **beast's heart** be given unto him" (Dan 4:16).*

As a consequence, for seven years Nebuchadnezzar

"did eat grass as oxen... till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws"(Dan.4:33).

After seven years Nebuchadnezzar's reason returned and he was restored to his throne. He acknowledged and praised the King of heaven. Hence we read that *"a man's heart was given to it"(Dan 7:4).*

A Bear with Three Ribs in its Mouth - The Persian Empire

The bear with three ribs in its mouth is heard to say, *"Arise, devour much flesh."* These three ribs refer to the 3 nations which made up the great Persian Empire. They were **Media, Babylon and Persia**. The conquests of these three nations which amalgamated to form the Persian Empire are aptly described as devouring much flesh, for Persian armies overran Egypt, Asia Minor, and even Greece! Herodotus, the Greek historian, claimed that when they crossed the Hellespont to enter Greece they brought an army of 2 million men and as many servants. This appears to be exaggerated and was more likely about 180,000 fighting men.

A Leopard with Four Heads and Four Wings - The Grecian Empire

The leopard with 4 heads and 4 wings describes the Grecian Empire which overthrew the vast Persian armies and neutralized their Mediterranean navy. It was led by Alexander the Great who, with lightning speed, in three decisive battles broke the power of Persia.

After Alexander's death at Babylon his family was killed and the kingdom was divided among his four generals, thus fulfilling the symbolism of the four wings and the four heads of the leopard.

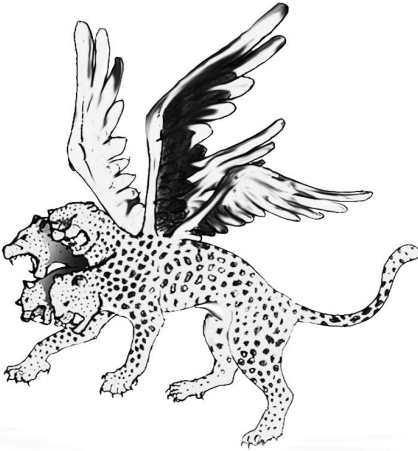
The Four Beasts of Daniel's Dream (Dan 7)



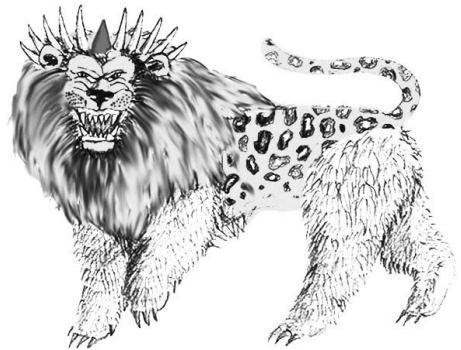
1ST BEAST - A Lion with
Eagle's Wings depicting the
Babylonian Empire
606 BC to 536 BC



2ND BEAST - A Bear with
3 Ribs in its Mouth depicting
the Persian Empire
536 BC to 332 BC



3RD BEAST - A Leopard with
4 Heads & 4 Wings depicting
the Grecian Empire
332 BC to 63 BC



4TH BEAST - Dreadful and Terrible
and Strong Exceedingly depicting
the Roman Empire
63 BC to the Coming of Christ

A Beast with Iron Teeth and Ten Horns - The Roman Empire

More is said about the fourth beast than all others before it. Daniel was deeply impressed by the vision of the fourth beast, and said,

"Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast"(Dan.7:19).

The character of the Roman Empire has changed over the centuries but it has always existed in one form or another. Details are shown in the chart on page 57.

Europe is now coming together under the banner of the EU and has a combined military force (NATO), a European parliament, a president, a police force, and many other associated activities including a space agency. In 1999 Europe introduced a common currency, the Euro, which will assist political union with a common foreign policy, a common social policy, and common security system!

Under the Schengen Agreement it is planned to allow free travel without border checks between member countries. By June 1997 eight out of fifteen countries had signed the Schengen Agreement. Others are following.

Since the release of the eastern European countries in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many more countries are seeking admission to the EU.

The population of the 15 member nations in 1996 was 370 million, and with the admission of 10 countries in May 2004 this grew to 455 million. It could grow to 500 million!

Great efforts have been made to allay Russia's fears of a superpower forming on her western border, and security treaties were signed in May and July 1997 between Russia/NATO and Ukraine/NATO. These treaties permitted eastern European countries to join NATO. During the Kosovo crisis Hungary, Romania, and Poland were hurriedly admitted to NATO so that Russia could not fly supplies and men to the support of Serbia. When Russia requested permission to fly over these countries, permission was refused.

Europe's defence is currently maintained by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), which was originally set up by the United States during the cold war with the USSR to prevent the spread of international communism. Now that the USSR has been dissolved the EU has identified Islamic fundamentalism as its external security threat. It is interesting to observe efforts by Russia to revive the old Soviet Union under the banner of the CIS (Commonwealth of

Independent States), and also Russia's trade and military agreements with the Muslim world, especially Iran and Libya. A Russian trade route through Iran, from the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean, was officially opened in 2002 allowing trade with India and the Far East to reduce travel time by thirteen days

Finally the fourth empire is to have **10 divisions** represented by the **ten toes** of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the **10 horns** of Daniel's dream. The "*little horn*," **Antichrist**, is to arise from among these 10 horns. From other Scriptures, such as Revelation chapters 13 and 17, it is clear that the "*little horn*" of Dan 7 will be the Antichrist, and it will be he who will head up the Roman Empire at the time of Christ's second coming. After this Christ will set up His everlasting kingdom.

Seventh Day Adventists claim the Roman Empire broke up into ten kingdoms in AD476, but history does not support this view. Scripture says, "*In the days of **these kings** shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*" (Dan.2:44). The ten kings and the Antichrist must be alive when Christ returns.

Preterists claim the "*ten horns*" and "*little horn*" were Roman rulers from Pompey (63BC) to Emperor Vespasian (AD70), and that Christ returned "spiritually" in AD70. They also claim the "*ten horns*" represent the ten Roman provinces, whereas there were actually 54 Roman provinces. When Christ returns, "*every eye shall see him*" (Rev.1:7). This did not happen in AD70.

The Harlot Woman Rides the Beast (Revelation Ch. 17)

From Rev 17 we learn that the fourth beast comes to power under the guidance of a "harlot woman." Also, from Rev13 and 19 we can see that Antichrist has assistance from a "*false prophet*" who has miraculous powers.

The harlot woman can be identified from clues given in Scripture.

1) **She is international and political.** She is involved with the "*kings of the earth*" and sits upon "*many waters*", which we are told are "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (languages)*" (Rev.17:1,2,15).

2) **She is religious and idolatrous** for she is "*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS*" (Rev.17:5). In John's day the "mystery religions" of Rome were well known. Also, idolatry in Scripture is called spiritual whoredom and adultery (Ezek.16:1-36; 23:1-30; Hos.1:2; 4:12-19).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

3) **She is exceedingly rich.** She is “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls”(Rev.17:4).

4) **She holds a golden cup** in her hand, “full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication (idolatry)”(Rev.17:4).

5) **She is a persecutor of Christians** and is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev.17: 6).

6) **She sits on seven mountains** and is “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth”, ie in AD 96 (Rev.17:9,18).

7) **She identifies with the beast** which we know is both the Roman Empire and its final ruler. She obviously has influence over the beast for she holds the reins (Rev.17:3, 11).

When all these clues are combined, we can come to no other conclusion than that the harlot woman is apostate Christendom headed up by the Church of Rome. The Church of Rome is international and political. It is a religious and idolatrous system. Its people are “made drunk with the wine of her fornication”, being stupified by superstitious material items such as medals, crucifixes, and rosary beads etc. The golden cup of the Mass is celebrated as a continual sacrifice, which constitutes a blasphemous, idolatrous act.

Rome is known as the “city of seven hills” and was reigning over the kings of the earth when John wrote the Book of Revelation in AD96 !

In the days of Imperial Rome the Caesars were the head of the pagan mystery religious system, claimed deity, and demanded their subjects offer sacrifices to them on pain of death. Many thousands of Christians died rather than submit to Caesar worship.



This graphic appeared in *Time* magazine 9 Dec.91 in an article about the EU

During the 1,006 years of the “Holy Roman Empire” the papacy appointed emperors, beginning with Charlmagne the king of Germany, and manipulated the secular powers to destroy “heretics”(Christians) and Jews. Today, with the revival of the old Roman Empire, we see it being guided (ridden) by the Church.

It is now a well established historical fact that the Vatican worked with Hitler and provided the “Ratline” escape route for Nazi war criminals after WW2! The Vatican Bank has been used to store Nazi gold, and Europe has been called “Fortress Christendom”.

Last-days Christianity is an ecumenical hotch-potch including idolatrous, liberal, charismatic, and humanistic religions. It has no anchor secured in the Word of God, for it has replaced the authority of a verbally inspired Bible with human reasoning, social programs, experimental religion, and/or church dogma.

It is interesting to note that the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, who is the leader of 250 million people from Orthodox Churches, stated in May 1997, "Preserving the unity of Europe is the foremost duty of all churches today", according to *New Europe* 24/5/97.

Plans were announced in May 1997 to arrange a meeting of Pope John Paul, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Bartholomew I in Austria. This would be the first meeting of Orthodox and Catholic Churches since the Great Schism in 1054. There is no doubt the harlot woman is riding the beast.

When will Antichrist be Revealed?

We read that the 10 horns of the fourth beast are 10 kings which "receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev.17:12), so the Revived Roman Empire must ultimately be divided into ten parts.

In 2005 there are 25 nations in the EU and more will be accepted subject to fulfilling the entry conditions. Once the Schengen Agreement has been fully implemented the internal borders will be of little consequence, and ultimately it will be divided into ten states.

According to Dan.9:27 Antichrist's kingdom will last for seven years. At first he will appear as a man of peace confirming a 7-year treaty with Israel and allowing the Jews to rebuild their Temple (Rev.11:1,2). After 3½ years he will break his treaty with Israel and set himself up as God in the Temple (2 Thess.2 :4). For the second 3½ years he will seek to liquidate Israel who, as a result of a massive Russian/Muslim invasion, will have turned to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah (Ezek.39:22).

Antichrist will not tolerate competition, even from apostate Christendom, and the ten kings will burn the harlot woman with fire (Rev.17:16-17). Obviously, the harlot woman can't be Antichrist as Seventh day Adventists assert.

During the last 3½ years Russian and Muslim power will have been broken (Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39), American power possibly broken (Ezek.39:6), and all remaining nations will be demonically drawn to the battle of Armageddon (Rev.16:12-16).

Scripture teaches that Antichrist will not appear until **AFTER the rapture of the Church**. *"For that day (the Tribulation) shall not come, EXCEPT there come a falling away first, and that man of sin (Antichrist)*

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

be revealed" (2Thess. 2:3,4). The "falling away" is literally in the Greek "***the departure***", and in the context refers to the departure of the Church at the Rapture. Paul repeats the statement:

*"And now ye know what withholdeth that he (Antichrist) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hinders) (the Holy Spirit indwelling the Church) will let (hinder), **UNTIL** he be **taken out** of the way. And **then** shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume...with the brightness of his coming"* (2 Thess.2:6-8).

In the light of these Scriptures, Antichrist cannot appear until the Church is raptured, but apostate Christendom led by the papacy will continue on into the Great Tribulation in fellowship with Antichrist, until the ten kings burn her with fire (Rev.17:16-17).

The Judgment of Antichrist.

When Christ returns the beast will be destroyed.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him...These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev.19:20).

Paul wrote:

"Then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"(2Thess.2:8).

Daniel prophesied of Antichrist (Dan.7:26), the final Roman leader:

"The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (That is, it would "entirely and forever cease" - Barnes page 75).

In Daniel 11:45 we read:

"He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas (Dead and Mediterranean Seas) in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and NONE SHALL HELP HIM".

No longer will the Temple in Jerusalem be occupied by "*the man of sin*". The nation of Israel, then repentant, will welcome its Messiah, and

"shall look upon me (Christ) whom they have pierced (at Calvary)." (Zech.12:10).

The Times of the Gentiles will then be finished, and Christ will establish His kingdom which will begin with the 1,000-year millennial reign and continue into the new heaven and new earth that will never pass away.

Babel and Rome

The question of whether the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt in the last days is a matter of interest to many. Some Christians have thought it would be reconstructed, but Scripture states that once destroyed and left desolate as it has been for centuries, it will never be rebuilt (Jer.50:39).



Mystery Babylon, however, is **identified with Rome** and is described as a harlot woman in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. She is destined to be burned with fire at the end of the Tribulation and unmistakably represents apostate Christendom headed up by the Church of Rome. The fact that she is seen riding the beast with ten horns indicates a close relationship with the revived Roman Empire.

Antichrist and the ten kings (ten horns) who make up the revived Roman Empire will turn on her at the end of the Tribulation as Antichrist demands exclusive, universal worship (Rev.17:16-17; 18:1-24).

The symbolism of a woman riding a beast is now commonly accepted as identification for the EU, and the new parliament building at Strasbourg has been designed to replicate the old paintings of the Tower of Babel.

The intention of the designers of the building has been stated: it was to reproduce an unfinished building signifying that they intended to complete what was unfinished in the original Tower of Babel when God confused the languages. The very thought of doing such a thing



Left: The EU Tower with an unfinished appearance like the Tower of Babel.

Right: Sculpture of a woman riding a beast outside the office of the Council of Europe.



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can only be construed as defiance against Almighty God and a triumph for idolatry and false religion.

There are several paintings of the Tower of Babel which inspired the designers, Architecture Studio Europe, a Paris-based company, as they designed the Strasbourg parliament building. These were produced by Matthieu Merian 1593-1650, Peter Bruegal 1525-1569, and Abel Grimmer (1604), and are shown on the right.

A caption, “many tongues, one voice”, on the EU poster shown in the bottom-right corner, indicates the EU unashamedly identifies with ancient Babel, when men rejected the living God in favour of heathenism.

The EU actually has two parliament houses; one in Brussels and the newer building in Strasbourg. Parliament meets in Strasbourg only one week of each month, except in August when they do not meet at all. The Strasbourg building opened in 1999, has 1,133 offices, and cost \$400 million. It is located on the French side of the German border and was the result of intense lobbying by the French government in 1992.

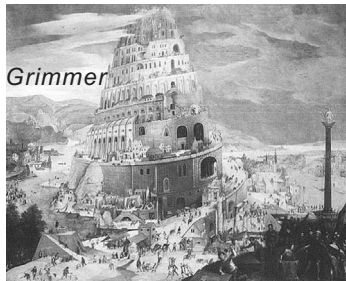
Many examples could be given of how the symbol of a woman riding the beast is becoming identified with the new world superpower emerging in Europe.



The Bible indicates that Gentile world power began with Babylon and will conclude with the fourth world empire, Rome, which will be identified with a harlot woman known as Mystery Babylon. There is no fifth kingdom before Christ returns to reign!



Merian





Pictures above and to the right, of a woman riding a beast, appeared in a *Time* magazine article on the European Union (EU) in December 1991.

Below: Penguin Books have adopted the symbolism of a woman and a beast on the cover of their book, *Companion to the European Union*.



The twelve stars on the EU flag indicate the link with the harlot woman, "Mystery Babylon the Great" (Rev.17), apostate Christendom headed up by Rome.

Below: The "Virgin of Quito" with the twelve stars of Mary, over 200 feet high, towers above the city of Quito, Ecuador.



Above is a cartoon which appeared in the *Guardian Weekly* likening Britain's rush to join the EU to mad cow disease.



Why the Woman Riding the Beast?

Scripture speaks of a harlot woman riding a beast in Rev.17. She is seen sitting “upon many waters”, and the interpretation indicates she and the beast represent apostate Christendom and the Revived Roman Empire during the Great Tribulation. The EU has adopted this symbolism for itself, but why?

The answer may be found in mythology, which teaches that the many gods of the Greeks, called immortals, lived on the top of Mount Olympus.

Among these deities was Zeus, the son of Poseidon, who the pagan Greeks believed was the father of the gods, the supreme god, and god of the weather. The Romans called him Jupiter.

The story goes that Zeus saw **Europa**, the daughter of Agenor king of Tyre, gathering flowers, and was so overcome by her beauty that he transformed himself into a beautiful white bull in order to seduce her.

Having convinced the maiden that he was tame, Zeus encouraged her to sit on his back, whereupon he plunged into the Mediterranean and swam to the island of Crete. Upon arrival he revealed his true identity and Europa became his wife and the Queen of Crete.

Europa had three sons by Zeus: Minos, Sarpedon, and Rhadamanthys.



(The Abduction of Europa by Antonio Carracci 1583-1618)

The myth goes that her brothers were sent by their father to find her but did not return. Cilix searched for her and settled down in Asia Minor; the land was called Cilicia after him. Phoenix searched for his sister and founded Phoenicia.

During the Trojan War about 1200 BC, when the Greeks built the “wooden horse of Troy” in order to gain entry to that city, Zeus was on the side of the Greeks. Hence we see the sketch in *Time* magazine depicting a woman riding a wooden beast.

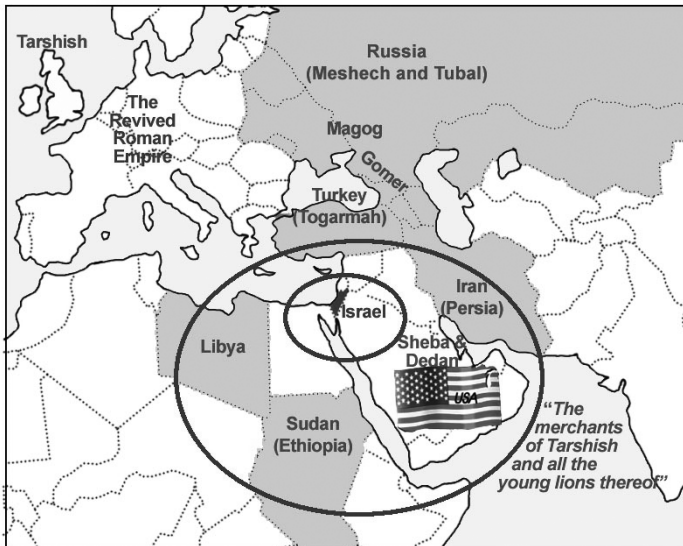
The symbol of a woman riding a beast was therefore well established in pagan religious thought. It is little wonder that the Bible uses the same symbols to describe the most blasphemous of all religions, apostate Christendom, as a harlot woman riding a beast. Mystery Babylon the Great is “the mystery of iniquity” which is working to place Antichrist on the throne of the revived Roman Empire and the whole world (2Thess.2:6-7).

Section 4

The Russian / Muslim

Alliance

and Israel's Repentance



*“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God
from THAT DAY AND FORWARD” Ezek. 39:22*

The Russian/Muslim Alliance

During the coming Tribulation a universal state of war will exist, and to this all the prophecies of the last days bear strong testimony. Usually the Old Testament prophets refer to this time as the “day of the Lord”. Ezekiel, Joel, and Daniel draw attention to a massive northern invasion of Israel early in this period by Muslim nations led by Gog, the ruler of Russia. Because of the terrible persecution of Israel during the Great Tribulation, Jeremiah describes it as the “time of Jacob’s trouble”:

*“For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to **return to the land** that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it... Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even **the time of Jacob’s trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it”*(Jer.30:3,7).

For His
Saints



With His
Saints



Time of Jacob's Trouble
7 years Tribulation

PHASE I

Jo.14:3, 1Cor.15:51-52.
1Thess.4:16-17.

PHASE II

Acts 1:11,
Rev.19:11-16.

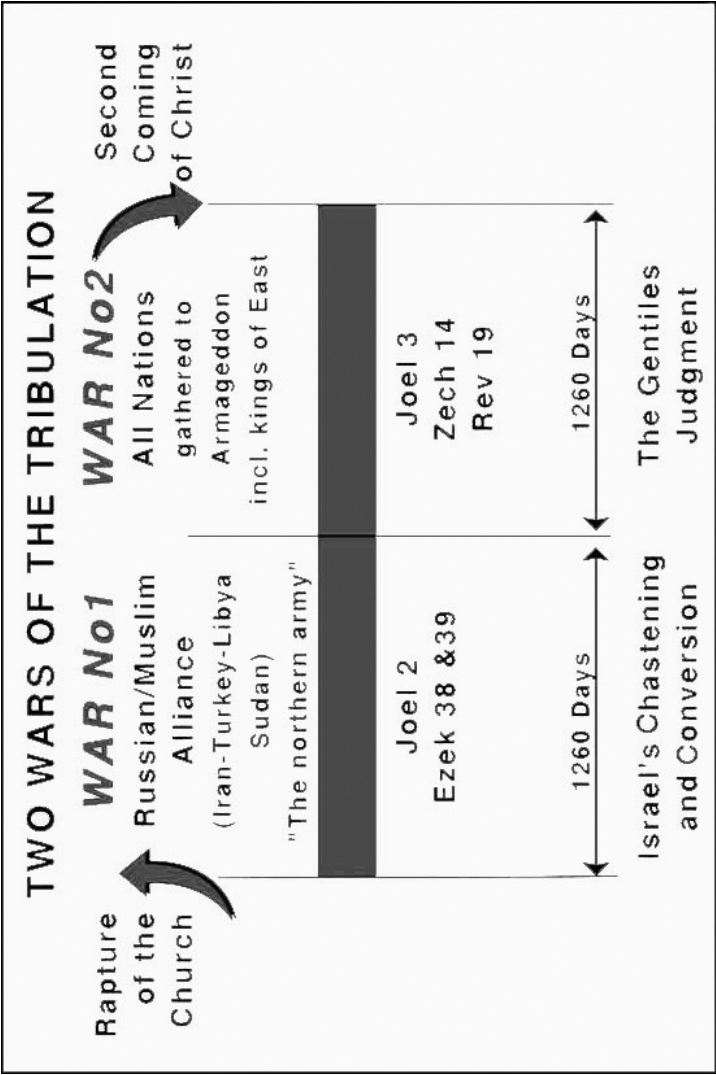
The reason why Ezekiel and Joel have given details of the Russian phase of the universal conflict is because of its bearing on the nation of Israel. It will be this invasion that brings God’s covenant people to repentance, and so both of these prophets make strong appeals for them to repent. Joel also describes the **final phase** of the Day of the Lord when **ALL NATIONS** will converge upon Jerusalem, thus indicating that the northern invasion is separate from, and precedes the battle of Armageddon (Joel 3).

In the foreknowledge of God, the Almighty is able to tell us what the outcome of both the Russian/Muslim invasion **and** the battle of Armageddon will be. The Russian invasion will bring Israel to repentance:

*“The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from **THAT DAY AND FORWARD**”* (Ezek. 39:22).

The battle of Armageddon will rescue Israel, judge Antichrist and the nations(Rev.19:11-21; 20:1-7), and bring in Christ’s millennial kingdom.

“The day of the LORD cometh...For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle...And the LORD shall be king over all the earth...but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (Zech.14:1-11).



The Nations that will Invade Israel

Ezekiel prophesies a massive invasion of Israel and provides much detail as to the combatants and the outcome. A confederacy will be led by “Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.”

The King James Version translates “Rosh” as “chief” (Ezek.38:2-3), which is the correct meaning of the name. We note that all Hebrew names have meanings, and the translators have simply given us the meaning of the name “Rosh” instead of the name itself. The name “Gog” is in all probability a title given to an individual, such as President, King, Prime Minister or Pharaoh. The land which he rules is Magog, Meshech and Tubal.

Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, wrote:

“Gomer founded those whom the Greeks call Galatians (Galls) but were then called Gomerites. **Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who are by the Greeks called Scythians...**from Javan, Ionia and all the Grecians are derived” (*Antiquities*, Book I Ch VI).

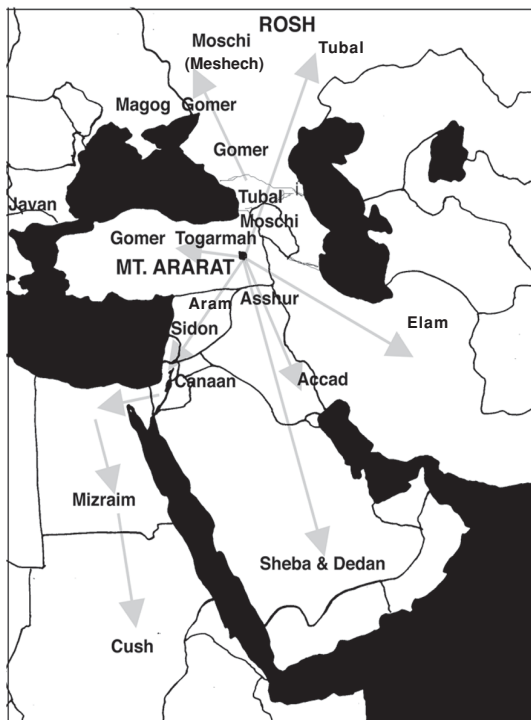
The location of the Scythians is well known in history so we can identify the land of Magog with precision. It is present-day Russia and Ukraine.

J.B.Bury, *History of Greece* (Page 234) states:

“**North of the Danube...**Walachia and Moldovia lived tribes which...the Greeks included under the general name of Scythian”.

Philips’ *World History - People, Dates and Events*, (Page16) records:

“Scythian peoples from **the steppes** begin raiding the Middle East 650BC”.



Halley's Bible Handbook (Page 310) quotes Rawlinson as follows: About 626BC, "Pouring through the passes of **the Caucasus**...horde after horde of the Scythians blackened the rich plains of the south".

The *Oxford Encyclopedia of World History* describes the Scythians as: "A group of Indo-European tribes that briefly occupied part of Asia Minor in the seventh century BC before being driven out by the Medes. They subsequently **established a kingdom in southern Russia...**"

The Scythians were obviously the **descendants of Magog**. In all probability Meshech and Tubal gave their names to Moscow in western Russia and to Tobolsk which is east of the Ural Mountains where the Tobol River flows. Assyrian inscriptions state that the dominion of Sargon king of Assyria reached to "Tabal as far as Muski", and "speaks several times of Mita, king of the Moschians" (*New Biblical Guide* Urquhart Vol II page 416). In any case, Meshech and Tubal are located in the land of Magog, which is fixed by the location of the Scythians north of the Black Sea.

With Gog are listed peoples identified by their ancient family or tribal names.

"Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee" (Ezek.38:5-7).

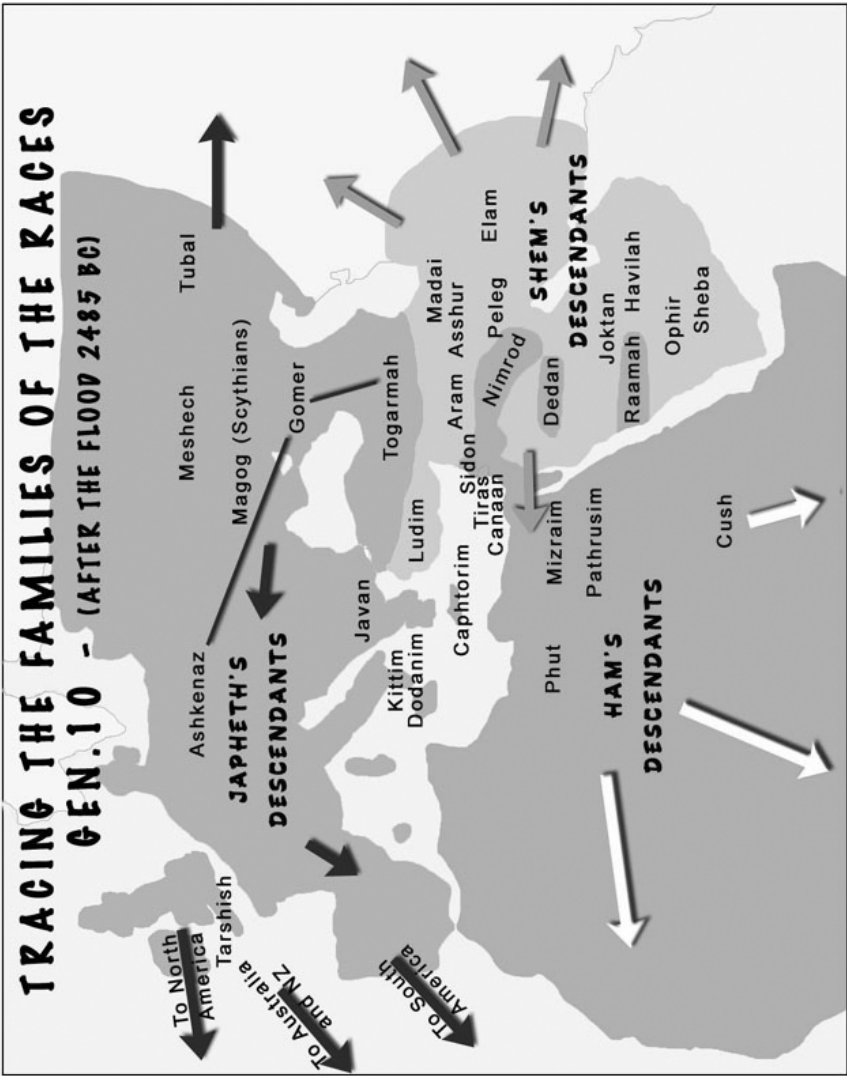
If we go back to the days just after Noah's flood we will find the human race beginning all over again, and the names of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are given in Genesis chapter 10. All the nations can trace their roots back to one of these three families.

Broadly speaking:

- a) The sons of Japheth travelled north and west from Ararat.
- b) The sons of Shem settled in the east. Abraham came from the line of Shem, and his descendants displaced the Canaanites.
- c) The sons of Ham settled in the land of Canaan, Egypt and Africa.

Many of the names occurring in Genesis 10 are preserved on ancient historical records in Assyria, in the writings of Herodotus (died 424BC), Josephus (first century AD), or other ancient histories. From these ancient historical sources it is clear that Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, the House of Togarmah, Sheba and Dedan all settled in areas as shown on the adjoining map, and as time went by no doubt they continued to push further afield.

Gomer is mentioned in Gen 10:2-3 as the first son of Japheth. He had three sons, Ashkenaz, Riphath and **Togarmah**. German Jews have long called themselves "Ashkenazi Jews", and Gomer and Togarmah



are both said to belong to the “north quarters”(Ezek.38:6). **Togarmah settled in Armenia, or eastern Turkey** as we know it today, and has been identified with Phrygia in Asia Minor. Gomer and Togarmah occupied what we know as Turkey and spread around the Black Sea.

At the head of the list of countries joined to Russia is Persia (Iran). Ethiopia was known as Cush in Bible times and represented the black races of Africa south of the Egyptian border, or Sudan as we know it, while Libya represented the North African races who had different ethnic origins from the Arabs, notwithstanding their common Muslim culture. Today they are Muslim nations.

When will Israel be Invaded?

The timing of the prophecies concerning the invasion of Israel is identified and there can be no mistake. There are actually four indications of **when** this invasion will occur:

1. It will be in the “*latter days*”.
2. It will be in the “*day of the Lord*” (the Great Tribulation).
3. It will be when Israel has returned to the land, has developed the waste lands, and achieved a militarily secure position.
4. It will be at a time when the nations of Sheba and Dedan (ie the countries of the Arabian Peninsula) are identified with Tarshish and its young lions (eg. the U.S.A.).

(1) In the “Latter Days”

This invasion of Israel cannot be confused with other invasions from the north which have occurred throughout history, for the Assyrians came long before Ezekiel was born, and the last of the three Babylonian invasions had been completed one year before this prophecy was given.

There have been wars in the land involving Grecian, Roman, Arab, Ottoman Turk, and Crusader armies, but not one of these matches the description of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, nor have they involved the same nations. This invasion described by Ezekiel will occur in the “*latter days*”. He says,

*“In the **latter years** thou shalt come into the land...against the mountains of Israel...and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the **latter days**”* (Ezek.38:8,16).

(2) It will be in the “Day of the LORD”

Joel places the invasion in the Day of the Lord, a term synonymous with the Great Tribulation, which immediately precedes Christ’s return to reign as King of kings. He says,

“The day of the Lord cometh...there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it”(Joel 2:1-2).

(3) *It Will be When Israel has Returned*

When Israel rejected Messiah and crucified Him, the nation brought itself under the chastening hand of God and received the judgments pronounced in the Palestinian Covenant (Deut 28-30). In AD70 the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews throughout the empire.

For nearly 1900 years the Jews had no national home, but in 1948 Israel proclaimed itself a nation in the land and was recognized by the United Nations.

Since 1948 Israel has expanded both its population and its borders. In 2001 the **Jewish** population was 5.2 million and they can boast a defence force that has won four major wars against superior numbers. It has developed a high-tech defence industry which produces military equipment equal to the best in the world. It has 200 nuclear warheads, missiles, its own spy satellite, an aircraft industry and much more. In fact Israel exports its military technology to other nations and is jointly developing the most advanced laser weapons with the United States.

While Israel is under increasing threat, they nevertheless are secure with their own resources and the support of the United States. Scripture indicates that after the Rapture Antichrist will confirm a covenant "*with many*" for seven years, and there is no doubt that this will include Israel, who will then have the added security of EU armies to support her. Ezekiel says of Gog:

*"Thou shalt say...I will go to them that are at rest **that dwell safely**...upon the people that are **gathered out of the nations**, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land" (Ezek.38:11-12).*

*"Say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel **dwelleth safely**, shalt thou not know it?" (Ezek.38:14).*

(4) *It Will be When the Arabian Peninsula is Identified with the United States.*

The advances made by modern industry during the 20 th century have been inextricably linked to the supply of vast quantities of oil. World War I was lost by Germany because she failed to capture the oilfields at Baku on the Caspian Sea.

In WWII Germany again failed to secure her oil supply, and when her synthetic oil plants were bombed the wheels stopped. Japan's war machine ground to a halt as the US submarine fleet sent most of her oil tankers to the bottom of the ocean.

The industrial nations are highly dependent on oil for transport and industry, and 66% of the world's known oil and natural gas resources

are located in the Middle East. Western oil companies have led the field in oil and gas exploration, and as a result a strong link has been forged between the West and six Arab States in the Persian Gulf. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, all have strong ties with the US involving military treaties which guarantee their defence against rogue states such as Iraq and Iran. The 1991 "Desert Storm" was a demonstration of Western resolve to defend their oil and gas interests in the Persian Gulf.

When the Russian/Muslim armies move on Israel, the Bible says they will be challenged by

"Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof".

They will say,

"Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (Ezek 38:13).

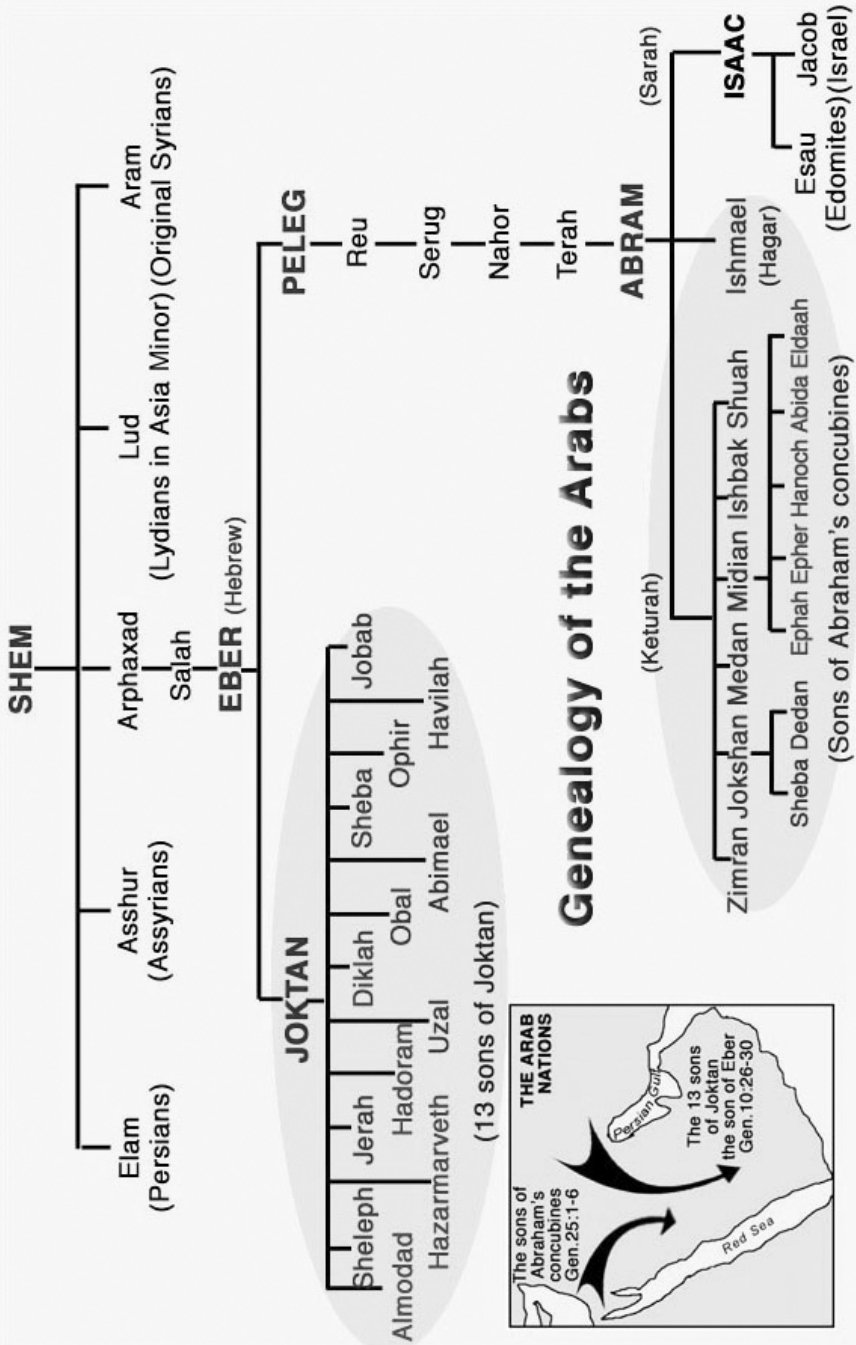
Sheba and Dedan, the Arabian Peninsula

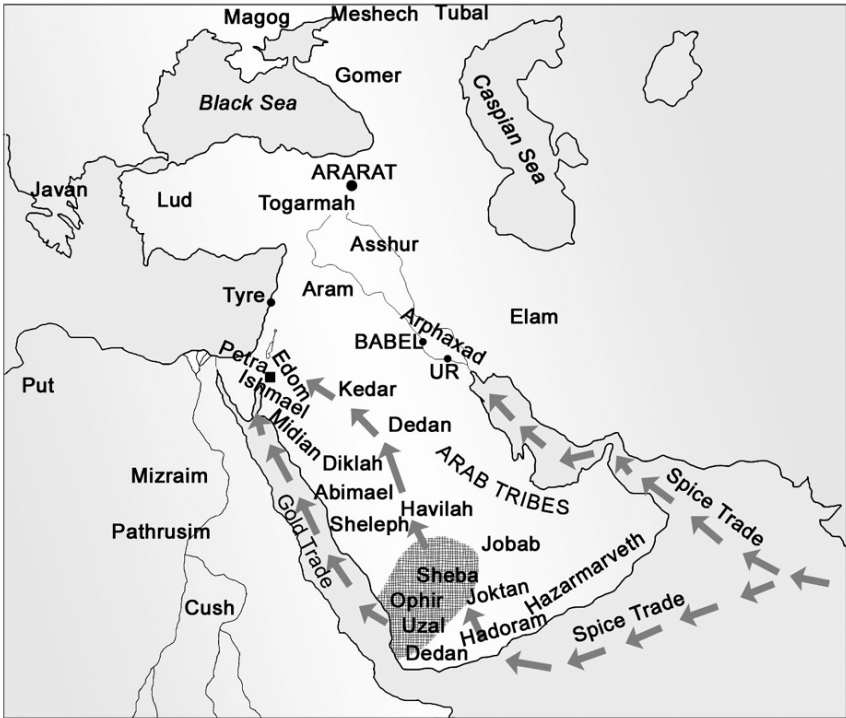
Sheba and Dedan's descendants (Gen.10:7; 25:3) undoubtedly are the people who settled in the Arabian Peninsula.

There are two Sheba and Dedans recorded in Scripture, and both can be traced to the Arabian Peninsula. The descendants of Abraham to Hagar and Keturah were given gifts and sent *"to the east country"* from Beer-sheba before Abraham died, so they would not contend for the land that God had given to Isaac for an everlasting possession. The land east of Beer-sheba is northern Arabia, and we know from other Scriptures that these sons of Abraham to his concubines spread south over the full length of the Arabian Peninsula. These were one line from which the Arab people came.

The Arabs also descended from Eber's son **Joktan**, the brother of **Peleg**. Why did God bother to give us the names of Joktan's thirteen sons when the divine line was to continue through Peleg to Abram, Isaac and Israel? The reason is clear: they were to occupy the Arabian Peninsula and be used of God to bring the nation of Israel to repentance in the last days. They were also to be part of the promises that God would make to Abraham about 250 years later, and would integrate with his seed born to his concubines Hagar and Keturah.

We sometimes forget that the Abrahamic Covenant includes unconditional promises that Abraham would become not only the father of *"a great nation"* (Gen.12:2), Israel, but also that he would be *"a father of many nations"* (Gen.17:5). The Arab nations are the fulfilment of that promise.





When Abraham sent the sons of Hagar and Keturah “away from Isaac his son...eastward, unto the east country” (Gen.25:6), he was sending them to their cousins, the descendants of Eber through Joktan, who had been established in Arabia for more than two centuries.

According to *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, all of the thirteen sons of Joktan became heads of tribes which settled in Arabia. Havilah was one of them, and when Moses wrote the Book of Genesis he mentioned the land of Havilah:

“where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good” (Gen.2:11-12).

He also stated that “bdellium and the onyx stone” were to be found there (Gen.2:12).

Ophir was another of Joktan’s sons, and we know that the goldfields at Ophir were located in southern Arabia, now Yemen. Servants of Solomon and Hiram sent ships to the goldfields at Ophir and brought 450 talents of gold for the Temple (2Chron.8:18).

Sheba was a son of Joktan, and Abraham also had a grandson named Sheba. Archeologists have established that the kingdom of Sheba,

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namely the Sabaeans, who took Job's oxen (Job 1:15), were well established in Arabia. The Queen of Sheba, who was described by the Lord as *"the queen of the south"* (Matt.12:42), came by camel with a great company to witness the wisdom of Solomon. She brought *"spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones"* (2Chron.9:1).

We may safely say that over the past 4,000 years the sons of Abraham to Hagar and Keturah have mingled with the descendants of Joktan and now comprise the Arab people. Jeremiah refers to the *"kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert"* (Jer.25:24).

The secular history of the Arabs, recorded by Josephus in the first century and by Greek and Roman historians, describes the original dwellers of Arabia in the main as nomadic people living in tents and refusing to be involved in agriculture or construction of cities. For this reason they have left few records.

The Rechabites referred to in Jeremiah chapter 35 appear to have been Arabs (Nabataeans), for they were faithful to their father who commanded them:

*"Ye shall **drink no wine**, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall **dwell in tents**; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers"* (Jer.35:6-7).

It seems there were three types of Arabs who made up the Nabatu kingdom and were known as Nabataeans. All were traders. In the south of Arabia there was the kingdom of Sheba (Sabaeans) that engaged in trade as far afield as India and China, and imported spices, frankincense, myrrh, animals, ivory, pearls, cotton, ginger, cinnamon, sugar, medicines, gold and silk (Ezek.27:20-22). The seafaring Nabataeans were well known in the Red Sea as pirates who plundered commercial vessels.

The desert Nabataeans took the imported goods northward by camel train to the western markets of Tyre, where they were transhipped to Greece and Rome (Ezek.27:20-22).

The northern Nabataeans settled in the land of Edom after 586BC when Nebuchadnezzar's armies swept through as foretold by Ezekiel (Ezek.25:12-14). Nabataeans replaced the Edomites and established a city called Rekem or Rekmu, which was renamed by the Romans, Petra. Its narrow entrance extends for over a kilometre and is no more than a few metres wide. This remarkable city carved out of the rock became a trading metropolis, and was so famous that mention of it is found in ancient Chinese writings.

The early families of the Nabataeans were descendants of Shem and had the knowledge of the true God. Moses' father-in-law was a priest of Midian, and records indicate that the Arab tribes were originally ruled over by priest-kings, just as Melchisedek was a priest-king. The Queen of Sheba acknowledged the LORD, for she said to Solomon: *"Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel..."* (1Kings 10:9).

Over the centuries no doubt the truth of God became confused among the Arab races, and when Muhammad presented his false god, Allah, many became ardent Muslims, taking up the sword in jihad to convert the nations.

By AD638 Arab armies had captured Jerusalem and moved on to conquer the Middle East and North Africa. They reached Spain in AD711, but were finally driven out in 1492.

The Islamic culture has changed the Arab people from desert nomads living in tents to city dwellers.

Early in the twentieth century Arabs in Arabia rose up against the Ottoman Turk rulers and began to lay claim to the land of Palestine. After WWI they were given the land east of the Jordan River, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The land west of the Jordan has been partitioned, and in 1948 Israel declared its independence.

It is clear from history that there has never been a Palestinian nation. Arab empires have waxed and waned, ruled from Damascus, Baghdad, Riyadh and Cairo, but never from Jerusalem.

The Queen of Sheba came by camel to prove the wisdom of Solomon and Jesus called her the *"queen of the south"* (Matt.12:42). Archeological evidence has uncovered a stone wall with the names inscribed on it of all who reigned over the kingdom of Sheba, and there are a number of queens among them. The "dig" was found north-east of the capital of Yemen in the south-west of Arabia. The location is known by the Arabs as Mahram Bilquis, meaning "the Queen of Sheba's place" (See *Time* magazine 10 September 2001).

We know that the Midianites dwelt along the north-west coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and these were descendants of Abraham through Keturah.

During the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era Islam conquered all of the Middle East and drove out the previous inhabitants, so that many of the people of Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and those who today call themselves Palestinians, are descendants of Abraham and are ethnically Arabs.

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Dedan is linked with Sheba and also with Teman, the grandson of Esau, who lived in northern Arabia (Jeremiah 49:7-8). Sheba will finally be blessed during Christ's millennial kingdom. Isaiah says:

"All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; they shall show forth the praises of the LORD"(Isa 60:6).

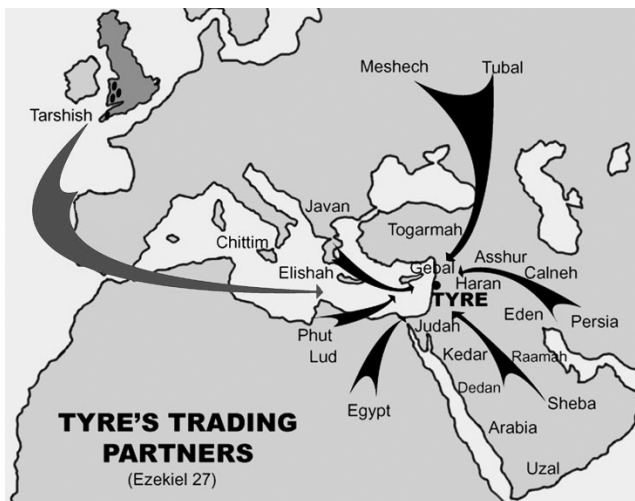
The Merchants of Tarshish and the Young Lions Thereof

The "merchants of Tarshish" and their "young lions" are off-shoots of Britain. Herodotus, the Greek historian, wrote that Tarshish lay **beyond the Pillars of Hercules**, which are the large rocks on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar that leads to the Atlantic Ocean.

In Gen.10:4-5, Tarshish was one of the sons of Javan to whom God gave "the isles of the Gentiles"(Gen.10:4-5). The "*ships of Tarshish*" are referred to at least ten times throughout Scripture (eg. Isa.2:16; 23:1,14; 60:9; Ezek.27:25).

About 2,500 years ago Ezekiel wrote concerning the great trading centre of Tyre that she traded in TIN which was brought from Tarshish:

"Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches; with silver, iron, TIN, and lead, they traded in thy fairs" (Ezek.27:12).



The name Britain is from the Phoenician "Baratanic", meaning "country of tin". Aristotle called it Britannic about 350BC. The *New Twentieth Century Encyclopedia* indicates that Cornwall was the source of tin in ancient times. Speaking about tin, it confirms, "its use was known in the ancient world and the mines in Cornwall were being worked in the Bronze Age" (Page 1036). Silver, lead, and iron were mined nearby in Wales.

The 19 August 1997 edition of the *Independent International* reported: "After a history stretching back at least 2,500 years tin-mining is to end in Cornwall. The last surviving (tin) mine in Britain and Europe announced on Thursday that it will close with the loss of 270 jobs."

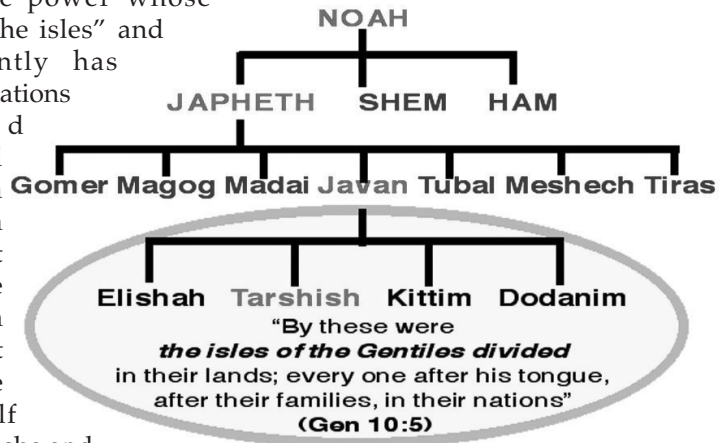
The report also points out that during the nineteenth century Cornwall's major industry employed "30,000 people, spread through 400 mines". The "*merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof*" are identified with the Anglo-Saxon races and include the United States, a "maritime power" whose

land is in "the isles" and who currently has defence obligations

a n d

commercial interests in the Arabian Peninsula. It is

the American fleet that patrols the Persian Gulf protecting Sheba and Dedan!



David's prayer for his son Solomon, who is prophetic of Christ, links Sheba with Tarshish, and indicates that both are blessed in the millennial kingdom.

"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him"(Ps 72:10-11).

Is it a mere coincidence that Saudi Arabia, the ancient kingdom of Sheba, is aligned with America, the **young lions** of ancient Tarshish? Is it surprising that the politics of the Middle East has made the Arabian oil sheikhs dependent on the US for protection from their aggressive neighbours?

What hope would the Arabs from Kuwait and along the Persian Gulf to Saudi Arabia have, if America withdrew her military support?

The common denominator in this equation is oil, but over and above all of the economic and security considerations there is the providence of God. **America needs Arabian oil, and Arabia needs American protection.**

A Northern Invasion

Both Ezekiel and Joel refer to this invasion as coming from the north. Joel says,

*"I will remove far off from you the **northern army**, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate"(Joel 2:20).*

Ezekiel says,

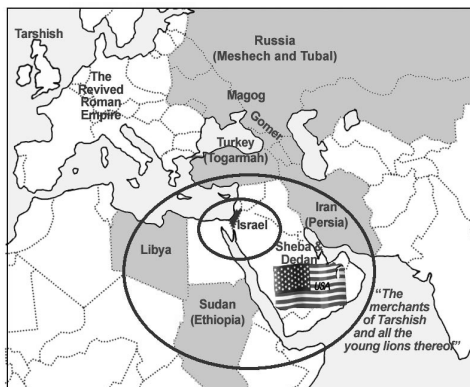
*"Thou shalt come from thy place out of the **north parts**...and I will cause thee to come up from the **north parts**, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel" (Ezek.38:15; 39;2).*

One of the nations that will join with Russia is described as "*the house of Togarmah of the **north quarters***"(Ezek.38:6), which is the ancient name for tribes that migrated into Asia Minor, or Turkey as we know it. The geographic north from Jerusalem runs along longitude 35.13E and crosses the coastline south of the border of Lebanon, passes through the heart of Turkey, across the Black Sea and through Ukraine and Russia to the Arctic Sea. We shall see that both Ukraine and Turkey are identified as members of this confederacy. Actually the original Hebrew of the text is more specific than our English translation and conveys the thought of "*far north*," or "*uttermost north*", which means that the prophecy is not referring to near neighbours Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq, to the immediate north of Israel.

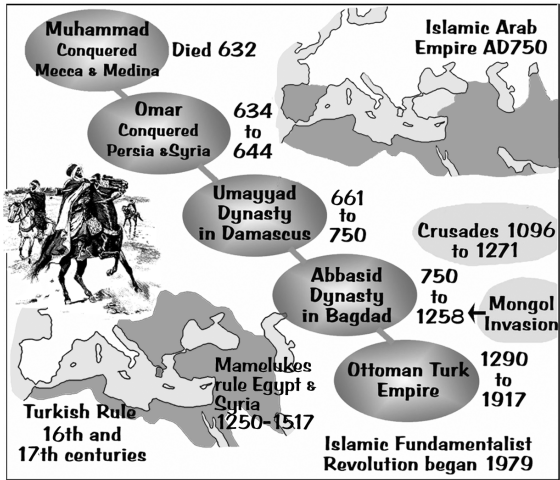


The Encirclement of Israel

Today Israel is in an exceedingly vulnerable position. A glance at a map of the Middle East will indicate that Israel is encircled by two rings of hostile nations. The **inner ring** is comprised of Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, and has a population of 100 million, whereas the **outer ring** consists of Turkey, Iran,



Sudan, and Libya, and has a population of 200 million. If Russia, Ukraine and the states of the Caucasus are added to the outer ring, their total rises to 425 million, against Israel's 5.4 million **Jews** (2004). Turkey's military-backed regime continues to support Israel in 2004, but for how long?



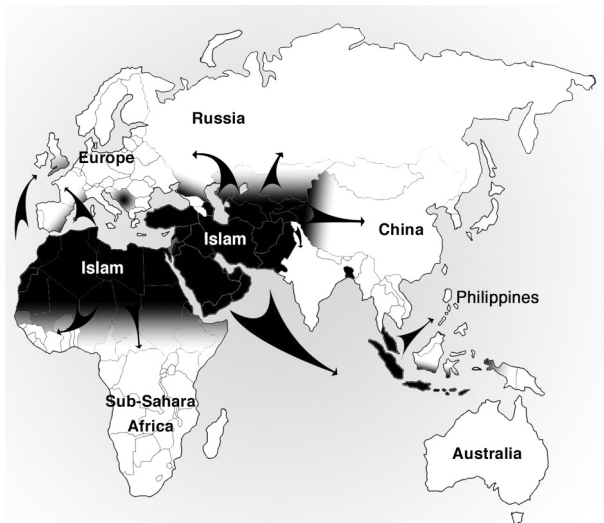
The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism 1979

The preparation for the final invasion of Israel by the Russian / Muslim alliance actually began in 1979 with the fall of the Shah of Persia and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a political force. Under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini a new era of revolution commenced, ironically, just one year after Israel signed a Peace Treaty with Egypt (1978).

Since 1979 the world has seen the growth of violent Islamic fundamentalism as it seeks to fulfil a three-point program:

- 1) The overthrow of moderate Islamic governments.
- 2) The destabilization of Western nations.
- 3) The destruction of the State of Israel.

In 2003 there were more than 1 billion Muslims, one sixth of world population, and their influence extends across North Africa down into Sudan, Chad, Niger and even Nigeria. In the east, Indonesia and Malaysia are Muslim, and of course



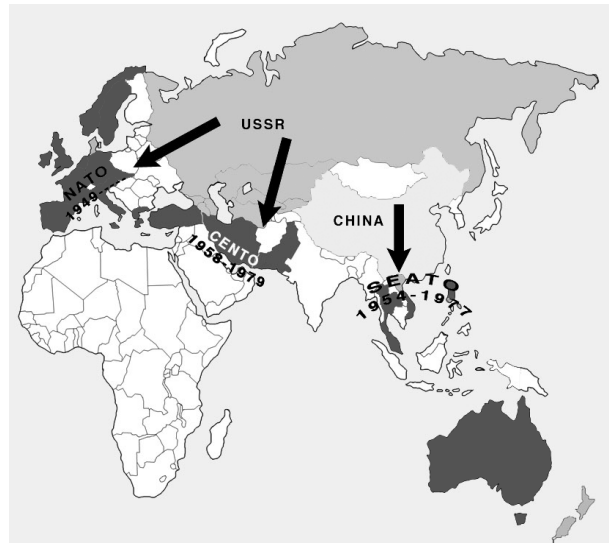
Central Asia and the Middle East. Islam is expanding its influence into the west of China and there are 20 million Muslims in Russia.

The Demise of the Soviet Union 1989

In 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution overthrew Tsar Nicholas II, and for 70 years Communism became the scourge of the Free World. After WWII there began a period of confrontation between International Communism headed up by the Soviet Union (USSR) and the Western Powers. In 1961 the Berlin Wall was erected and the threat of a nuclear holocaust hung over the world.

In 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established to meet the military threat from the USSR, and in 1955 the USSR countered

by forming a military alliance of eastern European countries under the Warsaw Pact. In order to prevent the spread of Communism into the oil-rich Middle East with its warm-water ports, the West established a line of defence along the southern border of the USSR. Under the



Bagdad Pact (1955), and later the Central Asian Treaty Organisation (CENTO 1958), Turkey, Iran and Pakistan were armed by the West, denying the USSR access to the Indian Ocean and Middle East oil.

After the fall of the Shah of Persia and the subsequent rise of militant fundamentalism, the CENTO line of defence along the southern front of the USSR was broken, but by this time the USSR had problems of its own which led nine years later to its disintegration.

The year 1989 saw the most amazing events transpire in eastern Europe. The Warsaw Pact nations one after another broke away from USSR control, in the following sequence of events:

Poland	April 16	The ban on the Solidarity Movement which had opposed the Communist regime was lifted.
	June 5	The Solidarity Movement won an election.
	Aug. 24	A non-Communist Prime Minister was elected.
Hungary	Sept 11	The border with Austria was opened.
	Oct 10	The Hungarian Communist Party was dissolved.
East Germany	Oct 18	The Communist leader resigned.
	Nov 7	The Communist Cabinet resigned.
	Nov 9	The Berlin Wall was torn down.
Bulgaria	Nov 10	The Communist leader resigned and was replaced.
Czechoslovakia	Nov 24	The entire Politburo resigned and the exiled Alexander Dubcek returned.
Romania	Dec 22	The infamous Nicolae Ceausescu was removed, and executed on Christmas Day.

The following two years saw more changes as East and West Germany were reunited in 1990, Boris Yeltsin resigned from the Communist Party, the USSR was dissolved along with the Warsaw Pact military alliance and COMECON, an economic alliance, in 1991. Following the disintegration of the USSR, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed including all of the former Republics with the exception of Georgia.

Why did the USSR Collapse?

Communism is atheistic. To be a Communist one must first renounce any belief in God and adopt an anti-God stance. Such an attitude placed the USSR under the judgment of God. The Bible says:

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God..." (Ps.14:1).

And Psalm 2 says:

"Why do the heathen (nations) rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?...He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision"(Ps. 2:1-4).

If nations want the blessing of God on their economy and industry, they had better seek after the Lord.

By 1990 Russia's economy was in tatters and the nation imploded. Many workers waited months for their pay. But there is another reason for the demise of the USSR. The nation of Israel is returning to the land which God gave to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting

possession and several million Jews were locked behind the “iron curtain”. God says to Israel:

*“I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; **I will say to the north, Give up;** and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far”*(Isa.43:5-6).

In the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union almost one million ex-USSR Jews returned to Israel.

Russia is Hooked!

In Ezekiel 38:4 God says to Gog the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal,



*“I will turn thee back, and put **hooks into thy jaws,** and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army...”*

Like a fish caught with a hook in its jaws and dragged against its will, so God would force Russia into an alliance with Persia (Iran), Ethiopia (Sudan), Libya and Turkey (the house of Togarmah), in order to judge them on the mountains of Israel. Russia is being compelled by force of circumstances to align itself with Iran and the other Muslim nations against Israel.

On Russia’s western border the EU is assembling all the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant nations, soon to become a United States of Europe with 500 million people.

On Russia’s southern border the Muslim nations from Pakistan to Sudan provide a developing market of 400 million, in addition to the 200 million in the eleven CIS countries. Russia’s economic future is geographically tied to Muslim nations that with her share much of the world’s oil and natural gas resources.

With all of the old Warsaw Pact nations now aligned with the EU/ NATO group of nations, Russia finds the door to the West closing and the door to the Muslim world opening. In the Middle East, Israel is supported by America and is now an Associate-Member of the EU, so it is logical that Russia’s foreign policy should be pro-Arab.

Prepare !

The preparation for this final battle between Islam and Israel is the responsibility of Russia by Divine command. God says to Gog:

*“Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and **be thou a guard** unto them”* (Ezek.38:7).

As we look at the capability of the nations involved in the Middle East wars there is no doubt that Israel has the technological edge on

the Muslim nations. Although less than 6 million **Jews** (2004) live in the land, they have nuclear warheads, satellite surveillance, sophisticated laser weapons and guidance systems, and an airforce that is the envy of every other airforce in the world. Their defence industry is manufacturing and selling weapons to the rest of the world in competition with the United States and Europe!

It only stands to reason therefore, that if the Muslim nations plan, as they say they do, to attack Israel, they are going to need modern weapons that match the Israeli arsenal. They know that without outside technical assistance the chance of success over Israel is minuscule, and they have already turned to Russia to prepare them for the coming battle.

The *Guardian Weekly* 24 May 1998 and the *Jerusalem Post* 30 May 1998 both carried reports of plans to instal Russian S-300 missiles with their sophisticated "Tombstone" radar guidance system in Syria. This radar system has a range of 320km radius, and has the capability of monitoring all aircraft and missile movements from Turkey to Egypt. Britain's largest overseas base is at RAF Akrotiri on Cyprus.

The report says:

"Britain and the United States fear Moscow will be able to collect information that is highly valuable to Russia's Middle East allies: Syria, Iraq, and perhaps Iran."

When Russia moves on Israel she will need to have her guidance systems in place if she wants to use modern weaponry.

In addition, Russia assisted Iran to build a nuclear power plant worth \$1 billion, and has worked with Iran in the development of missiles which can reach Israel. Successful tests were carried out in 2004.

Intelligence reports indicate that Russia has struck an agreement to assist Iran in the development of weapons on condition that the Islamic revolution is not taken within her borders. Other reports indicate that Iran has already acquired a number of nuclear warheads from intercontinental ballistic missile sites in Kazakhstan following the break-up of the USSR.

As far back as 1997, Iran engaged in war games involving 200,000 troops which were moved a distance equal to the distance from Iran to Israel. The code name of the exercise was "Road to Jerusalem!"

Within Russia there is a growing nationalistic movement that has a strong anti-Semitic policy. Public statements have been made by its leaders blaming all of Russia's woes on the Jews.

Turkey's Future

One of the nations which join with Russia in the Russian/Muslim alliance against Israel is the *"house of Togarmah of the north quarters"*. Ancient records indicate that the descendants of Togarmah settled in eastern Turkey or Armenia after the Flood and spread across Asia Minor, or Turkey as we know it. Armenia today is only eastern Armenia, since western Armenia has been absorbed into eastern Turkey after the Turks force-marched 1.7 million Armenians to Syria in an act of genocide in 1915-16. A total of 750,000 people died by starvation or Turkish bullets.

Since World War II Turkey has been a member of NATO, and in 2004 had the largest army in the Middle East.

Turkey's population is 95% Muslim and is ruled by a secular government installed by the military. In past elections the Islamist Welfare Party gained power and ruled in coalition until the army declared it illegal. New elections were called and the Virtue Party gained government, but it too was declared illegal. In 2003 the Development Party won power in its own right, and needs only four more seats to gain a two-thirds majority which will empower it to change the constitution.

Turkey's military has a treaty with Israel, and Israel has completed military contracts for Turkey. However Muslim leaders have stated that when they win power all contracts with Israel will be cancelled.

If the Islamists were to win power in Turkey, this would dramatically change the balance of power in the Middle East.

The *Guardian Weekly* 12 July 1998 reported on one attempt by Turkey to join the European Community (EU). The application was again rejected, and Turkey

"described (it) as a disgrace, a slap in the face, prejudice, a blunder, and discriminatory....The real reason why they are being kept out, say the Turks, is that Europe sees itself above all as a 'Christian club' and feels threatened by a possible influx of (Muslim) immigrants from Anatolia."

In Section 3 we pointed out that the EU was a revival of the old Roman Empire and was being ridden to power by the harlot woman (apostate Christendom). Continued rejection of Turkey by the EU on the grounds that she is Muslim will of course play into the hands of the Islamic fundamentalist movement. The Islamists are already saying that when they come to power they will break off any relationship with the EU.

The Destruction of Gog's Army

When faced with such overwhelming odds, and challenged by 144,000 Jewish preachers early in the 7-year Great Tribulation(Rev.7), Israel will at last repent and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord. God will then respond with devastating judgments against the invading armies, which will be destroyed in four ways:

1. Earthquakes

"Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ...the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground" (Ezek.38:19-20).

It is interesting that seismic engineers in 2004 predicted a strong earthquake in Israel that will affect Jerusalem, Haiffa, and Tel-Aviv. Already several shocks around 5 on the Richter scale have occurred, but seismologists believe it is only a matter of time before the big one strikes.

2. Disunity

"And I will call for a sword against him...every man's sword shall be against his brother"(Ezek.38:21).

This is reminiscent of the time when King Jehoshaphat was attacked by a confederacy of the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites. We read that the King

"set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah" (2 Chron.20:3).

The prophet Jahaziel then told Jehoshaphat,

"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord"(2 Chron.20:17).

Judah then went to the battle and began to sing praises to the Lord, and

"when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir... and they were smitten... every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came...behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped" (2 Chron.20:22-24).

Likewise, Israel will heed the words of Joel 2:12-20 and *"sanctify a fast"*. The priests will

"weep between the porch and the altar," and say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?"

God will respond in fearful judgment on the nations that come against

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Israel, and *“every man’s sword shall be against his brother!”* Iranian, Turk, Russian, Sudanese, Libyan, and all the other people with them, will turn on each other as Israel acknowledges Jesus Christ as Messiah and Lord! The result - only one sixth of the invaders survive! (Ezek.39:2).

3. Disease

“And I will plead against him with pestilence”(disease) (Ezek.38:22).

We recall that on another occasion, in the days of King Hezekiah, the Assyrian army had captured all the land of Judah and only Jerusalem remained. Rabshakeh, the *“chief butler”* of Sennacherib, mocked the God of Israel, and when Hezekiah humbled himself before the Lord, God responded and in one night 185,000 Assyrian soldiers perished in their tents (2Kings19:35). How the angel of the Lord did this we are not told, but we do know that in this last-days battle disease will be used by God.

It is interesting that biological warfare (germ warfare) is one of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which Iran and Iraq are preparing for the final conflict!

4. Hailstones

“And I will rain upon him, and upon his bands...an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone”(Ezek.38:22).

So great will be this destruction that only one sixth of the armies will escape (Ezek 39:2), and Joel tells us they will be removed

*“far off...into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward **the east sea**, and his hinder part toward the **utmost sea**”*(Joel 2:20).

Perhaps this indicates that the remnants of the great army will retreat to Siberia (Joel 2:20), where Russia has banished its prisoners for decades. The location is “far off”, and the east sea could only be the Pacific Ocean. The utmost sea would have to be the Arctic Sea in the utmost north.

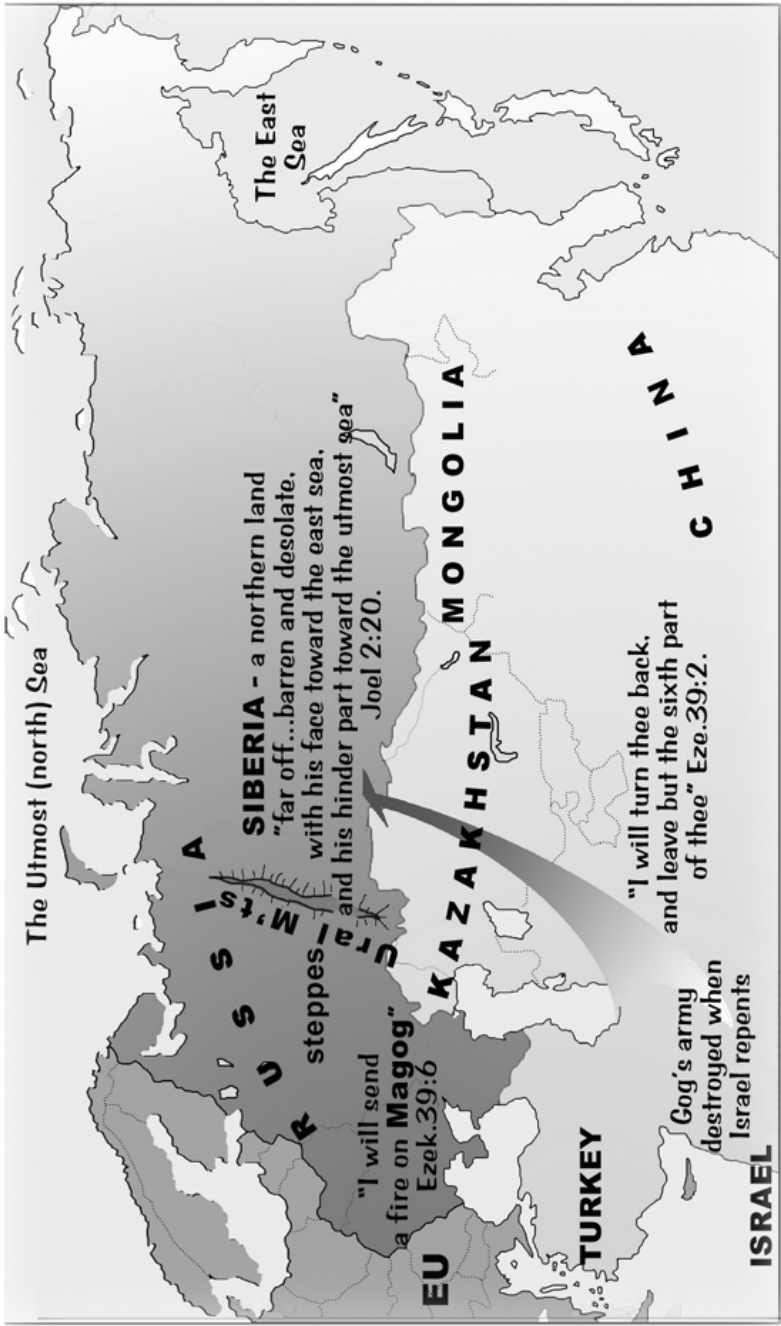
Gog’s Burial

Joel says,

“His stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things”(Joel 2:20).

Ezekiel describes the aftermath of this conflict:

*“In that day, I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers (travellers) **on the east of the sea**: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers...And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land”* (Ezek39:11-12).



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

A valley on the east of the Dead Sea, in the land of Jordan, will be used to bury the hundreds of thousands of corpses. It will be called "*Hamon-gog*", ie *Gog's Multitude* (Ezek39:11), and it will be seven months before the land is cleansed.

A Fire on Magog and the Isles

Not only will the army of Gog receive judgment from the Lord at this time, but we read that **Gog's country, the land of Magog**, will be burned so that the possibility of another attack will be eliminated.

"And I will send a fire on Magog and on them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord"(Ezek.39:6).

The statement, "*them that dwell carelessly in the isles*", suggests that the sons of Javan, to whom were given the "*isles of the sea*", are in view. We have already seen that Tarshish was one of the sons of Javan (Gen10:4), and that it is "*the merchants of Tarshish and all the young lions thereof*" who, together with Sheba and Dedan, challenge the Russian/Muslim invasion.

It may be that America and/or Britain will be incapacitated for any major military role at the same time as Russia is burned with fire. Perhaps a shoot-out between Russia and America, or it could be Divine judgment similar to that experienced by Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jane's
Intelligence Digest has suggested that Islamic terrorists are planning to use weapons of mass destruction on American cities in the event that America assists Israel when Iran finally invades. In September 2004 a report indicated that 15 sensitive targets had already been identified in the US.



Time will tell, but the Christians won't be here to witness these events which will occur during the Great Tribulation. The Church will be raptured before that dreadful day.

God's Purpose for Israel

The outcome of the events described is that the nation of Israel will repent and *"keep the commandments of God, and have **the testimony of Jesus Christ**"* (Rev.12:17). We read,

*"So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God **FROM THAT DAY AND FORWARD**. And the heathen (Gentiles) shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies ... **Neither will I hide my face any more from them:** for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD"* (Ezek.39:22-29).

If the Russian invasion and conversion of Israel happened **before** the Rapture the whole nation would become members of the Body of Christ, the Church, and would be part of the Rapture. They would not then be on earth during the Tribulation to greet their Messiah when He returns to earth. Scripture states that ALL Israel will be saved **after** the fulness of the Gentile Church is come in:

*"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, **UNTIL** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so ALL Israel shall be saved"* (Rom.11:25-26).

In any case, Joel plainly states that this northern invasion will occur in the *"day of the Lord"*. There has to be a saved nation of Israel here to greet their Messiah when He comes to the Mount of Olives.

"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech.12:10-14).

When the sons of Israel stood before Joseph, they admitted they were in great distress because of what they had done in selling him into slavery over 20 years before. They said,

*"We are verily guilty concerning our brother (Joseph), in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, **and we would not hear;** therefore is this distress come upon us"* (Gen.42:21).

Likewise, the day will come when the sons of Israel will acknowledge that they are in great distress because they rejected God's only begotten Son nearly 2,000 years ago, and nailed Him to a cross, refusing to hear Him!

Just as Joseph's brethren were then blessed under the reign of Joseph, so, during the reign of Jesus Christ, Israel will be exalted and become the head of the nations. All of Israel's present efforts to re-establish

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

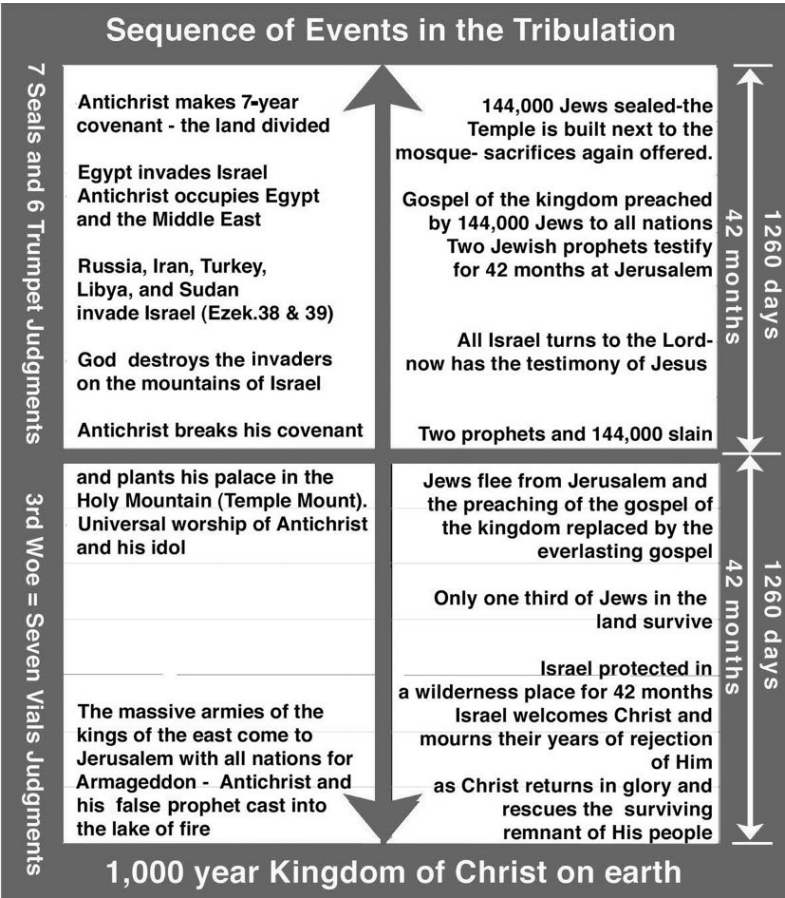
in the land will utterly fail until they bow at Jesus’ pierced feet. Then, as with Joseph,

“the fame thereof was heard in Pharoah’s house, saying, Joseph’s brethren are come!”(Gen.45:16).

The world will only understand the mystery of Israel’s 2,000 years of persecution and dispersion when they see God’s reponse to a truly repentant nation. It will take the Russian/Muslim invasion to bring it to pass! Ezekiel wrote:

“And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword” (Ezek.39:23).

The Russian/Muslim alliance indicates that Christ is coming soon!



Section 5

Signs of the Last Days



Jesus said:

“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25-26).

Why do we need Signs of the Last Days?

Thus far in our series we have considered prophecies relating to the Seven Dispensations, Israel's "70 Weeks", the Revived Roman Empire, and the Russian/Muslim Alliance. In this study we look at a range of predictions which indicate that we are in the last days and fast approaching the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 20th century has brought an explosion of knowledge and travel that has transformed society, yet Daniel, in 536 B C, spoke of "*the time of the end*" when "*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*" (Dan12:4).

Increased knowledge and travel, however, are only two of many signs that can be identified as sure indicators of the latter times. If we could only point to isolated prophecies, then we might have serious doubts about the imminent return of our Lord, but it matters not whether we look at the political, economic, military, social or religious arenas, all cry out with one voice, The coming of the Lord is at hand!

Even ungodly people, who never seriously read the Word of God, are aware that events overtaking the world dictate that sooner rather than later something major has to happen. History is obviously moving toward an inescapable terminus point, and many in society are dropping out as the landmarks of past generations disappear. Unemployment, the widening gap between rich and poor, threats of violence, revolution, and religious fanaticism, create such fear in the minds of the younger generation that many are escaping to the self-destructive oblivion of drugs.

In the midst of such insecurity, the Bible offers a message of hope. God is still in the business of saving souls and changing lives. When a man or a woman comes to the end of the tether and turns to Jesus Christ in true repentance and faith, the miracle of regeneration takes place, and immediately God begins to reveal His perfect plan. Instead of chaos, there comes order and purpose for living. Where guilt haunted the soul, there is the balm of God's forgiveness. The past is blotted out forever, and a new life begins which continues beyond the grave into an eternal blessedness that defies human understanding.

The purpose of this section of this book is to awaken many to the lateness of the hour, and to urge sinners to seek the only possible refuge in a Saviour who died for our sins, rose for our justification, lives in heaven, and who is coming again for those who know and love Him. We commend its message to the reader.

The 20th century has seen more changes than any previous century in the whole 6,000 years of human history. There has been more advance in scientific knowledge, more growth in world population, more warfare, and more travel than could have been imagined in man's wildest dreams just 100 years ago. We will now see that the dramatic changes which have occurred were predicted in the Bible over 2,000 years ago as signs of the last days.

The Sign of a Population Explosion

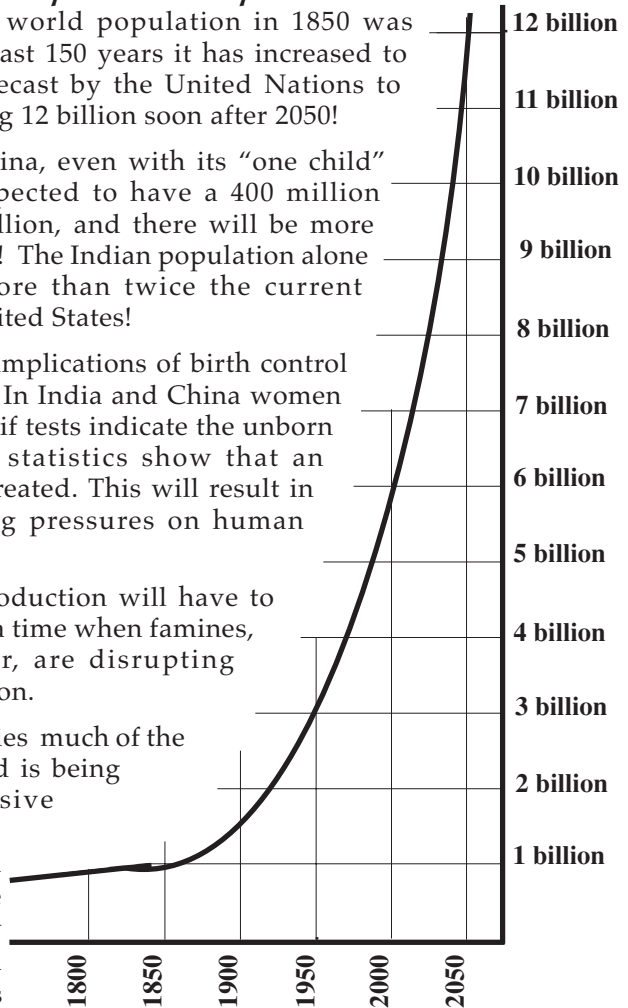
It is estimated that world population in 1850 was 1 billion, yet in the last 150 years it has increased to 6 billion and is forecast by the United Nations to double to a staggering 12 billion soon after 2050!

By the year 2045 China, even with its "one child" family policy, is expected to have a 400 million increase to 1,600 million, and there will be more Indians than Chinese! The Indian population alone will increase by more than twice the current population of the United States!

However, the social implications of birth control policies are horrific. In India and China women are having abortions if tests indicate the unborn babe is a girl, and statistics show that an imbalance is being created. This will result in serious destabilizing pressures on human relationships.

In addition, food production will have to more than double at a time when famines, pestilence, and war, are disrupting agricultural production.

In developing countries much of the best agricultural land is being absorbed by massive urban expansion. Unemployed rural workers flock to the cities and new residential and factory complexes replace vegetable gardens.



Graph of World Population Growth Estimates to 2050 AD

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

In the early 1990s it was estimated that there were 120 million unemployed rural workers in China, and 80 million of these had moved to the cities to seek work in the construction industry. The number of unemployed is expected to continue to rise as China modernizes its industries.

Developing countries face incredible labour problems as their industries modernize. Sooner or later wages will increase, and in order to compete on world markets machines will replace people. This trend is already apparent in Asian countries and is contributing to massive unemployment.

Between 1990 and 2000, ie the last 10 years of the 20th century, Indonesia's population grew by more than the population of Australia - by 20 million! Indonesia's population in the year 2000 was 210 million and still rising.

In countries such as Indonesia, where land is in short supply, the population explosion could lead to expansionist policies similar to what occurred in Timor and West Irian.

The 1995 *CIA World Fact Book* indicated that the world Population Growth Rate in that year was 1.5%, the Birth Rate 24/1,000, Death Rate 9/1,000, Infant Mortality Rate 64 deaths/1,000, Fertility Rate 3.1 children born/woman, and Life Expectancy 62 years. The world population in 1995 was estimated at 5.734 billion.

Based on a percentage growth rate of 1.5% per annum, we can expect to see the following increase in world population:

1995 base population	5.733 billion
2005 increase to.....	6.654 billion
2015 increase to.....	7.722 billion
2025 increase to.....	8.962 billion
2035 increase to.....	10.401 billion
2045 increase to.....	12.070 billion

The Bible says that a population explosion is one of the signs of the last days when Jesus Christ will come again. Jesus said,

*"As it was in **the days of Noah**, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all"*(Luke 17:26-27).

The days of Noah were characterized by a population explosion, and the Book of Genesis records that

*"Men began to **multiply** on the face of the earth... and every imagination*

of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen.6:1-12).

One result of the population explosion is a drift to the cities. The percentage of people moving to the cities has been increasing since the 19th century. Huge building projects are proceeding all over the world and some cities have populations approaching that of Australia! Jesus said,

*"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, **they builded**; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed**" (Luke17:28-30).*

The Sign of the Kings of the East

It is interesting to note that the Bible speaks of an army of 200 million coming from the kings of the east to join the battle of Armageddon in the land of Israel in the last days. Such a huge army would have been impossible 100 years ago, but today it has become a distinct possibility. Add the populations of China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and you have a staggering 3 billion people in 2005!

If average population growth continues at 1.5% per annum there will be an extra billion people on the earth in the next decade, and the largest proportion of these will be in the developing countries, mainly in Asia.

When China suffered defeat in the war against North Vietnam in 1979, it realized that modern weapons were needed and so it opened the door to Western technology. It was stated at that time that China would have to retrain its entire Militia in the use of modern weapons. This would involve everyone over 25 years; **the number quoted was 200 million!**



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

The facts concerning the current population explosion make credible the statements of Scripture about the rise of the kings of the east in the last days. These will play a major role in the battle of Armageddon, which occurs at the time of Christ's second coming.

At the battle of Armageddon all nations will be involved, but specific mention is made of the kings of the east. We read,

*"And the sixth angel poured out his vial (bowl) upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that **the way of the kings of the east** might be prepared.*

And I saw three unclean spirits...of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings... of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...And he gathered them together into a place called Armageddon" (Rev.16:12-16).

In Rev 9:13-21 we have details of the sixth trumpet judgment to fall during the Great Tribulation period. It too refers to the River Euphrates and to the mobilization of an army of 200 million which will destroy one third of mankind. This army is prepared for a specific time:

"for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (Rev. 9:15).

To mobilize such a massive army and to move it across Central Asia to Israel for the battle of Armageddon will be an amazing feat.



The exercise will take considerable time, and no doubt will involve aeroplanes, ships and ground troops. The ground forces will need to cross the River Euphrates, and Scripture says that its waters will be dried up to allow the huge army to cross (Rev.16:12).

It is interesting to note that a great deal of attention is being given by the World Tourist Organization (WTO) to the opening up of the old Silk Road, which was a maize of roads used as the major link between Asia and the Middle East in ancient times. It ran from Xian, in central China, to the Mediterranean, as shown on the adjoining map. Rail connections have already been established, and there are plans to construct a natural gas line from central Asia to China along this corridor. Fast-train technology, coupled with the desire to provide access to land-locked developing countries in central Asia, makes the proposal attractive.

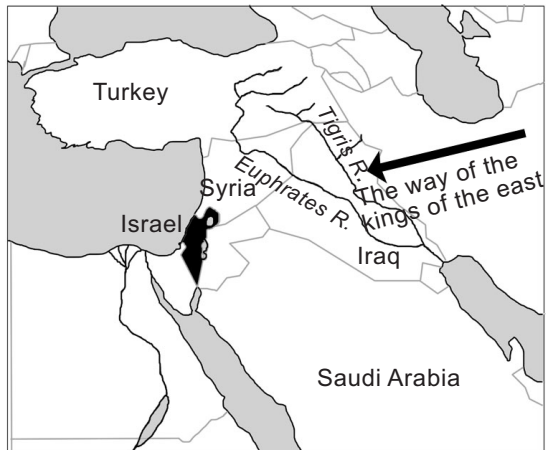
A glance at the map will show that the path to the Middle East along the Silk Road located south of the Caspian Sea **must cross the Euphrates River**, which, the Bible says, will be dried up to allow Asian armies to pass.

The Sign of Euphrates Drying Up

The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers rise in the very high country of eastern Turkey around Ararat and flow to the lowlands of Syria and Iraq, finally pouring into the Persian Gulf.

Already Turkey has harnessed the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris and has used the Euphrates as a political weapon against Syria by stopping the flow for a period of four days. A report by *Intelligence Digest* 3 May 1996, reads as follows:

"Last week we warned that Syria was likely to respond by increasing support for Kurdish anti-Turkish terrorism, and that Turkey in turn would likely respond by using the water weapon. No sooner was the ink dry on the paper than news came in that Turkey had done precisely that- reduced the supply of water flowing down the



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Euphrates to Syria. Turkey announced that it was to cut the flow of water for four days... for technical reasons."

(*Intelligence Digest* is available from The Stoneyhill Centre, Brimpsfield, Gloucester, GL4 8LF, UK.)

However, Turkey has much grander plans for the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris.

In 1996 Turkey announced a US\$32 billion scheme to build dams, hydroelectric power plants, and irrigation schemes along the Euphrates, and on 1 October 1997 the Turkish State Hydraulic Works (DSI) announced details of how this massive scheme would be implemented.

This development demonstrates how Turkey can influence much of the Middle East through the control of water supplies.

Turkey, a nation of 60 million people, has a powerful military force which neither Syria nor Iraq would dare to challenge, so these nations are virtually powerless to retaliate.

The report on Turkey's plans is described in *New Europe* 11 October 1997, and in view of the great significance of this development we print a substantial part of the following newspaper article.

"Turkey is planning a series of water projects stretching from Istanbul to its impoverished south-east in a bid to meet growing water and energy demands, a leading water sector official said last Wednesday (1 October).

"The country's State Hydraulic Works (DSI) unveiled details of a dam project worth US\$1 billion near Turkey's border with Syria and Iraq. Plans for a pipeline to carry water to Istanbul and a project to ship water from Turkey's southern shores to northern Cyprus were also in the offing...The dam is being negotiated by Sulzer, and the Union Bank of Switzerland is financing it."

Negotiations on the scheme to build a dam and a 1200mw (megawatt) hydroelectric power plant in Ilisu were scheduled for the first half of 1998. This dam, will be the largest on the Tigris River and is a part of the US\$32 billion energy and irrigation project centred on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers within south-east Turkey.

The South-East Anatolia Project (GAP) consists of a planned network of 22 dams and 19 power plants, with a capacity of 7,476 mw (megawatts).

The huge project has upset downstream neighbours Iraq and Syria, who fear that Turkey will be able to turn off their water supplies in

times of strife.

"Iraq's ruling Baath Party newspaper *al-Thawra* said, 'The country where these waters rise should not monopolize waters of such international rivers the way it likes'."

Furthermore, Turkey has plans

"for a US\$900 million pipeline to carry water from a stream in north-west Turkey to Istanbul."

In addition, Turkey plans to ship drinking water to Cyprus from Manargat in southern Anatolia. Israel and Libya have also been negotiating purchase of water.

The implications of Turkey's grand water plan are mind-boggling to say the least, and illustrate how easily the Scripture could be fulfilled, which says that the River Euphrates must be dried up during the Great Tribulation, "*that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared*" (Rev 16:12). It's only a matter of turning the tap off!

The Sign of the Nile River Drying Up

Not only does Scripture indicate that the Euphrates River will be dried up in the last days, but it also states that the River Nile, the longest river in the world, will be so dry that men will walk across its bed dry-shod; without removing their shoes.

The Nile rises in the mountainous regions of Ethiopia where the Blue Nile contributes 85% of the water. *Islamic Affairs Analyst* Sept 1996, reported on Ethiopia's plans to build dams for large hydroelectric and irrigation schemes, and to use water as a political weapon against Egypt.

Egypt is already in desperate straits as indicated in the *ABC Lateline* program on 14 October 1997. The Nile is polluted, and the agriculture and fishing industries are drastically reduced as a direct result of the construction of the Aswan Dam.

Islamic Affairs Analyst 2Sept.1996 gave the following report:

"Ethiopia's ruler, Meles Zenawi, has developed a plan for controlling the headwaters of the Nile that will give Ethiopia the same power over Egypt



as Turkey now holds over Syria and Iraq through that country's control of the headwaters of the Euphrates.

First, he wishes to develop Ethiopia's economy to the maximum of its potential. To do this he hopes to build dams and reservoirs on the Nile that will eventually generate 20 million kilowatt/hours of electricity, four times the output of Egypt's Aswan Dam. The same projects will significantly increase Ethiopia's area of cultivatable land and its water storage capabilities.

Zenawi's second motive related to Egypt. Arab sources say that his (Zenawi's) assessment of Egypt's political and economic future is by no means positive. He believes that Egypt will by no means remain a stable regional power enjoying a close relationship with the United States. On the contrary, he considered that within a decade Egypt's serious economic and social problems will destabilize the country to such an extent that it might start to adopt aggressive stances toward its African neighbours, including the upstream Nile states such as Ethiopia.

Egypt currently obtains 55.5 billion cubic metres of water a year from the Nile, 85% of which comes from the Blue Nile which rises in Ethiopia, to meet the total annual water consumption of 58.5 billion cu. meters. So Zenawi believes that Ethiopia can best protect itself from bullying by developing control over a good part of Egypt's water supply."

²(Islamic Affairs Analyst available from Intelligence International Ltd, The Stoneyhill Centre, Brimpsfield, Gloucester, GL4 8LF, UK.)

Isaiah the prophet wrote of the days when God would *"assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"* (Isa 11:12). This, of course, has begun with the return of Jews to the land after nearly 2,000 years of dispersion, and Isaiah goes on to say:

"And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, AND MAKE MEN GO OVER DRYSHOD" (Isa.11:15).

The word *"dryshod"* is literally "in shoes", which indicates that it will not be necessary to remove one's shoes to walk across the dry riverbed!

Could the Nile dry up? Some might argue that sea water would replace the fresh water flowing down the Nile, but we note that the level of the land around the entrance of the Nile has dramatically changed before. For several years now archaeologists have been

excavating below the water-level in Alexandria's harbour for the palace of Cleopatra and the giant lighthouse which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. All of these treasures now rest 20 feet below the surface of the water as the result of an earthquake.

If the land formation has sunk to such an extent in the past, there is no reason why it could not change again - sufficient to prevent the sea flowing inland! The incidence of major earthquakes has been steadily increasing since late last century, and the Bible foretells massive earthquakes in the Middle East in the last days (Zech.14:4-5; Ezek. 38:19-20; Rev.11:13). The current damming of the River Nile is another sign that we must be in the last days!

Global Events

Just two days before Jesus died on the cross, His disciples showed Him the massive stones of Herod's Temple and Jesus told them that all of these would be thrown down. Later, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked, "*When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world (age)?*" Jesus indicated that there would be a number of **universal events** that would characterize the last days immediately preceding His coming again.

First, the Lord said that there would always be "*Wars and rumours of wars*", but they were not to be troubled by them. "*All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Matt.24:6).

However, when a **global situation occurred**, then they were to take note, for all these would be the "*beginning of sorrows*", or "*travail pains*", which would herald the new world order over which Jesus Christ will rule as King of kings.



The travail pains are described: "*nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ...famines, and pestilences (diseases) and earthquakes, in divers places*"(Matt.24:7). This is called the "**Great Tribulation**", when Antichrist will set up his idol image in the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem. Immediately after the Tribulation, Jesus will come to reign.

The Sign of Global Warfare

Patrick Brogan, in his heavily documented 653-page book entitled *"World Conflicts, Why and Where they are Happening"*, lists at least 97 wars between 1945 and 1992, which claimed the lives of somewhere between 15 and 30 million people.

In WWI (1914-18) 10 million died in action, but in WWII (1939-45) the figure was 24 million plus 40 million civilians, according to an *"Almanac of Historical Facts"* by Robert Stewart PhD. Of the 9 million Jews in Europe before WWII, only 3 million survived.

Pol Pot's decimation of Cambodia wiped out about one third of its 8.6 million people (3 million), and achieved total dislocation of the entire population. The Korean War claimed 2,884,000 lives including 2 million civilians, and the subsequent famine in North Korea claimed 2.5 million between 1996-98. Stalin's suppression of Ukraine left 14 million murdered.

The number of refugees, however, far exceeded the number of deaths. In Afghanistan for instance, between 1979 and 1989, the US Government states that out of a population of 15.5 million there were 1 million killed, but the number of refugees was 7.6 million. - 50% of the population!

The Bible says that one of the signs of the last days would be global warfare on an unprecedented scale. It will lead to the Great Tribulation. We read,

*"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...For **then** shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"* (Matt.24:6-21).

The Iran/Iraq War claimed 1 million lives with many more casualties, and what shall we say about the Arab/Israeli wars, the Gulf War, and the Falklands War. We could talk about the India/China War, the India/Pakistan War, the Vietnam War which left 2.5 million dead, and the China/Vietnam War which left 40,000 dead before the Chinese withdrew.

The attempted Communist take-over of Indonesia left 500,000 dead, and the continuing war in Algeria has left nearly 100,000 dead in the last 5 years alone. Four secessionist wars and famines killed up to 2 million in Ethiopia between 1972 and 1991. Bosnia, Hungary, the Kurds, Chechnya, Armenia, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor, Angola, Yemen, Congo, Chad, Sudan, Russia, Tibet, Burma, Laos, China etc have experienced bloody revolution or war.

Between 1945 and 1991 Patrick Brogan lists 97 wars, 253 coups and revolutions, and 199 attempted significant assassinations, of which only 12 failed. He concludes, **"It is fruitless to predict where the next calamities will arise."** **The sign of global warfare is unmistakably clear!**

The Sign of Global Famine

Immediately following the Lord's statement that global warfare would precede His second coming, He said,

"There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"
(Matt.24:7).

In 1974 the United Nations claimed that it would eliminate hunger within 10 years, yet the World Food Summit held at Rome on 13 November 1996 admitted that 800 million people around the world were still classified as undernourished! That means 1 out of 8 persons daily struggles for food.

In Africa 41% are "chronically undernourished",but the largest number of hungry people is in Asia where the population growth is the greatest. The number of undernourished in Asia is estimated at 500 million!

Most of China's grain (70%) is produced in the cold northern areas where the growing season is only 4 months and crops often have to be harvested green. Massive crop failures are always a possibility. The industrialization of China is seeing much of its farming land taken over for factories, and in the year 1996, 120 million rural workers found themselves unemployed. The number is expected to increase to 200 million. Many will move to the huge cities to join the construction workforce where they will contribute to the industrial spread and loss of even more rural land - and food.

The 1996 World Food Summit, attended by delegates from nearly 200 nations, could only achieve a statement affirming

"the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food,"
but,"no new funds will be forthcoming."

Global conflicts disrupt food production, and at the end of 1996 there were 30 wars in progress around the world. The dislocation of millions of people, as they flee the battle zones and end up in refugee camps, is a major factor in producing famine.

The *Guardian Weekly* 2 February 1997, reporting on a meeting of the UN Environmental Agency held in Nairobi, warned:

"Almost 3 billion people would be short of water within 50 years

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...land covering 1.23 billion acres already had severe soil erosion in Africa...oceans were being overfished...and the world could not afford to burn fossil fuels if, as expected, population doubled in the next 50 years."

Changing weather patterns and global warming have been forecast. If this eventuates sea levels are likely to rise, and much of the low-lying coastal farmland will be inundated causing further loss in food production.

When all of the factors contributing to global famine are taken into consideration, what hope will the world have to feed an extra 6 billion mouths when world population doubles in 50 years time? History has a famine terminus, and we must be in the last days!

The Sign of Global Epidemics (Pestilences)

Global epidemics are also causing alarm. *The European* 27 March 1996 quotes the World Health Organization (WHO) as saying:

"Two years after WHO called a global warning on TB, the disease shows no sign of abating...40% of South Africa's population may be carrying the TB bacillus, and the air-borne disease is also on the rise in Europe, with increases in Denmark, Russia, Norway and Italy."

The Guardian Weekly 31 March 1996 reports:

"Tuberculosis is spreading rapidly throughout the world and is killing more people than at any time in history...the disease could kill 30 million people over the next 10 years."

Incurable diseases such as AIDS will also take their toll as moral standards drop and drug-taking increases. *The Guardian Weekly* 8 Dec.1996 carried an article by Dr Peter Piot, employed by the organization UN Aids. He stated,

"90% of the 22.5 million people living with HIV / Aids today (1996) are in developing countries...many with no access to aspirin, much less anti-retrovirals."

The UN Aids organization has published a report entitled, *HIV/Aids: The Global Epidemic*, in which data has been provided showing that "the disease is spreading fast, entering entirely new regions, and strengthening its grip on areas already hit...skyrocketing in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union".

According to the report, the worst feature is that during 1996, 400,000 children contracted HIV/Aids, largely by mother to child transmission.

The *Independent International* 12 May 1998 reported grave fears of an Aids epidemic in India:

"India can fairly be described as the Aids capital of the world...While the Aids watchdog, the National Aids Committee (NASCO), estimated that there were 70,000 HIV cases in the country and 6,000 Aids cases, the independent Indian Health Organisation (IHO) based in Bombay put the HIV number at 7 million and the full-blown Aids sufferers at 500,000. The head of IHO, India's most prominent campaigner for Aids awareness, Dr IS Gilada, predicted that by 2001, in the most optimistic estimate, there will be 20 million HIV cases in the country and 2 million cases of Aids."

Also, a definite link has been established between "mad cow" disease and CJD, a fatal brain disease in humans, which turns brain tissue into jelly, and we now know that other animal diseases are being transmitted to humans. The *International Independent* 11 August 1998 states that a livestock parasite, Old World Screw-worm, has infested two thirds of Iraq and poses a threat to Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

The report stated:

"The infestation which causes foul-smelling discharges after attacking wounds, scars and cuts, has already led to 40 deaths ... George Pumphrey, a biological warfare specialist based in Germany, said: Iraq is the latest victim in what appears to be a deliberate introduction of the screw-worm as a biological weapon. In Libya, where an outbreak occurred in 1989, 2,000 animals were killed. It was exemplarily combated, yet by the following year it covered 35,000 sq kilometres and killed 12,000 head of stock."

The infestation is caused by the larvae of the fly *cochliomyia hominivorax*. The female fly lays about four batches of 400 eggs on the edge of a wound, cut, tick bite, castration wound, or new-born's navel, of warm-blooded animals including human beings.

The report goes on to say,

"In just 12 hours the larvae hatch and enter the body for feeding. THEY CAN CONSUME A WHOLE COW IN FIVE TO SEVEN DAYS!"

Pestilence is one of the signs of the end of the age, and in Zechariah 14:12-15 we are told of the plague wherewith God will smite the nations who come against Jerusalem. It will affect humans and animals. We read,

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall

consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away ...And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague" (Zech.14:12-15).

The 20th century has seen the development of viruses in laboratories for eradication of pests. Man is engaging in genetic engineering and, while there may be beneficial uses of this knowledge, the danger is that the viruses may not be contained in the laboratory. Viruses have been released to eradicate rabbits, but a number of nations now see the potential for the use of biological weapons for the eradication of humans. These weapons are now termed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Once pestilence begins to spread, it is hard to stop, and there is often a long lead-time required for the production of antidotes. History tells us about the Black Death Plague which struck Europe in 1347-1349. According to *The Almanac of Historical Facts* by Robert Stewart Ph.D.,

"...somewhere between one-quarter and one-third of Europe's people were carried off in just two years...victims succumbed within two or three days of being infected...(it was) almost always fatal."

The December 2004 issue of *Time* magazine carried a serious warning about the possibility of a flu epidemic which could infect 25-30% of the world's population. The warning was given by Dr Shigera Omi, regional director for the Western Pacific for the World Health Organization (WHO).

The virus known as "bird flu" strikes down people of all walks of life, and in the event of a pandemic would incapacitate one-third of the doctors, nurses, police, and volunteer relief workers. Dr Omi estimates up to 100 million could die.

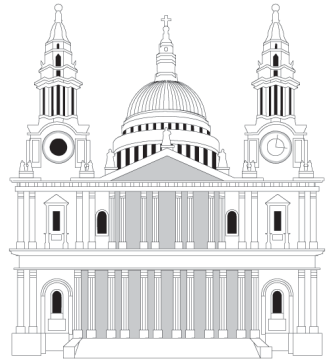
New techniques used to develop suitable vaccines to counter bird flu have been developed, but several months are required for clinical trials before they can be released.

To add to the problem, many of the countries where bird flu is likely to have a major impact are too poor to afford the vaccine and doctors will be able to do little more than watch their patients die; that is if they themselves survive. Whether Dr Omi's prediction is true, remains to be seen.

The Sign of Global Apostasy within Christendom

The Bible indicates that the last days will be characterized by a massive departure from the *"faith which was once delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3).

The New Testament Church was built upon the foundation of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets (Eph.2:20-22). The closing verses of the Bible warn that *"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book"* (Rev.22:18-19), yet history has shown that there has been departure (apostasy) from the doctrines taught by the apostles as recorded inerrantly by Divine inspiration of the Scriptures.



The Roman Catholic Church has for many centuries forbidden the reading of the Bible by the people, and its use of Latin until recent times made much of church liturgy unintelligible to the masses.

The doctrines of Rome have both added to, and taken from the Word of God. Doctrines such as purgatory, infant baptism, the confessional, prayers for the dead, salvation by good works, the continual sacrifice of the Mass, celibacy of the priests, prayers to the saints etc are pagan, and cannot be found in Scripture.

However, it was not until December 1854 that Pope Pius IX declared "the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary" to be a necessary dogma of the (Catholic) faith. Since then the veneration of Mary has grown, and today it is claimed she ascended to heaven and intercedes for those who pray to her. Some in the Catholic Church are even proposing that Mary be proclaimed **co-Redemptrix with the Lord Jesus Christ!**

The Protestant Reformation (1517) stood against the teachings of Rome and made the Bible available to the people. Many were liberated from the apostate system, but as the centuries have passed the Protestant denominations have embraced modernistic theology, denying the verbal inspiration of the Word of God, and many essential doctrines of the person of Christ and His substitutionary, sacrificial work on our behalf.

The Lambeth Conference (1998), which brought together 735 bishops of the Anglican Church worldwide, demonstrated how apostate mainstream Protestantism has become, when it debated whether the

Church should bless same-sex marriages and ordain homosexuals to the priesthood! The proposal was defeated as only 520 bishops registered their vote for orthodox morality.

Some orthodox bishops threatened to walk out of the Conference in protest, and the Rt Rev Alexander Malik, Bishop of Lahore, Pakistan, is reported in the *Guardian Weekly* 16 August to have voiced the horror of many bishops at the idea of same-sex unions and the ordination of active homosexuals. He said,

“It is not gay-bashing to uphold the authority of Scripture. It is a matter of faith and dogma. What will we do at the next Lambeth Conference when people ask for blessings for union with their pet animals?”

The Times on Line 22 November 2004 reports that contrary to the decision of the Lambeth Conference some Anglican clergy are conducting private marriage ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples. It appears that some bishops have found a way around the decision of the Lambeth Conference and are conducting a “blessing” for homosexual couples. The report states:

“The Church of England is yielding to increasing pressure to conduct gay ‘weddings’ as the Civil Partnerships Act recognizing same-sex unions comes into force next year (2005).

Ceremonies by Anglican priests blessing lesbian and gay partnerships increased by 10 percent last year to 300 in England alone.

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) is increasing its print run of same-sex liturgy in anticipation of a thousand blessings a year when the law changes. Nine out of ten such ceremonies are conducted by heterosexual priests.

Despite efforts of conservatives in the world-wide Anglican hierarchy to maintain a strictly Biblical line, the Western Church is heading inexorably down the liberal road.

Bishops are turning a blind eye to gay ceremonies...Officially, churches will refuse to accept civil partnership ceremonies on their premises, but there are plans to offer ‘**gay Christians**’ (emphasis ours) an unauthorized Anglican ‘pink wedding’ afterwards.”

No doubt there will be strong opposition from evangelical elements in the Anglican Church, and this could result in many members leaving and forming independent congregations.

Another form of apostasy manifests itself in emotional displays accompanied by extraordinary claims of miracles, healings, “holy

laughter", tongues gibberish, "slaying in the spirit", exorcism and prophecies. It is generally referred to as the "Toronto Blessing" because of its connection with the Vineyard Churches at Toronto, Canada.

The Toronto Blessing and associated movements have become very large and have spread worldwide, infiltrating many mainstream Churches. Some of these groups practice what is called the "End-Time Deliverance Ministry". Basically, they believe that every sin is really a demon, and that we can be perfectly sinless by having our sins (demons) cast out. This is undoubtedly a "*doctrine of demons*".

Their theory is that a company of people will by this means be made sinlessly perfect in the last days, and this group will constitute the bride of Christ. They teach that only perfect Christians will participate in the Rapture!

The Bible expressly warns us of this form of apostasy in the last days:
"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim.4:1).

Jesus warned us that the last days would be characterized by false prophets who would deceive many. When asked what would be the sign of His coming, He said,
"Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt.24:11).

Jesus also warned,
"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"(Matt.7:22-23).

When we see Ecumenical Christendom with its idolatrous system, its humanistic belief, its emotional substitution for spiritual reality, and its tolerance of homosexuality, it is clear that we are in the last days!

The Sign of the Nation of Israel

Of all the signs that indicate we are approaching the Lord's "*coming, and of the end of the world (age)*"(Matt.24:3), none is so clear as the sign of the nation of Israel.

God made a covenant with Abraham about 2,000 BC and promised him, and his seed after him, the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (Gen 17:1-8). He confirmed the promises to Isaac and to Jacob, whose name He changed to Israel (Gen.26:1-5; 27:26-29).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Under the Mosaic Covenant, about 1,500BC, the children of Israel became a nation, and God established the Levitical priesthood to *"be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations"*(Exod.40:15).

At the conclusion of the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, as they prepared to possess the land which God had given to them, God clarified the terms under which the land could be occupied in what is known as the Palestinian Covenant (Deut.28-30). God said three things to Israel:

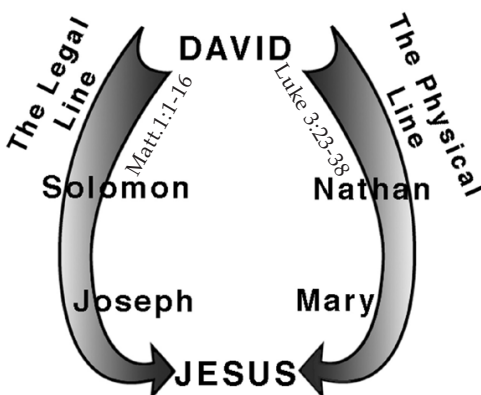
- 1) If you obey Me, you will be blessed **in the land** (Deut.28:1-14).
- 2) If you disobey Me, you will be besieged, **driven out of the land**, and become *"a proverb and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee"*(Deut.28:37).
- 3) If, after all these things have come upon Israel, they return to the Lord, then God will have compassion and **gather them back to the land** *"from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered"* them (Deut.30:1-3), in order to fulfil His promises made to Abraham (Deut.30:20).

About 1,000 BC, God made a covenant with David that his seed would always have someone to reign over Israel (2 Sam.7:11-29). God said, *"Thy throne shall be established for ever!"*(2 Sam.7:16), and history records how the descendants of David continued to the time that Israel was judged by God for its sin and taken to Babylon. The last king of Judah was Zedekiah, but he was rejected as the *"profane wicked prince of Israel"*(Ezek.21:25-27), and all of his sons were slain by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.52:10-11). Zedekiah was the brother of the former king, Jehoiakim, not his son. Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, had already been carried away captive to Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion, and it was his descendants who maintained the line,

providing heirs to the everlasting throne promised to David.

The line of David is traced to Jesus Christ, the son of David, through Joseph His foster father (Matt.1:1-17), and to Mary His mother(Luke 3:23-38).

Jesus Christ is heir to David's throne, as the angel declared:
"Thou...shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and



the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”(Luke 1:31-33).

When Christ presented Himself to the nation as “*Messiah the Prince*” (Dan.9:25), and King of Israel, the leaders rejected Him and had Him crucified on a Roman cross. Then 38 years later (70AD), in fulfilment of Dan9:26, the Romans under Titus destroyed the city and the sanctuary and the Jews were scattered throughout the world, where they have continued until the 20th century.

This scattering out of the land was exactly as foretold in the Palestinian Covenant (Deut.28:15 to 29:29). The reason, was the rejection of Messiah!

Many Scriptures have foretold the return of Israel in the last days. Israel is at the heart of God's plan for the ultimate blessing of this world, and without a godly nation of Israel the kingdom of God cannot be established on earth. God said to Abraham,

“I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen.12:2-3).

Ezekiel prophesied of a day when Israel would return to the land in the “*latter years*” (Ezek 38:8,16) but they **would come back still in unbelief** (Ezek.36:24-27; 38:22-29). AFTER they returned to the land they would pass through awful tribulation called “*the time of Jacob's trouble*”(Jer.30:7), which God will use to finally bring them to repentance and to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Messiah. When Jesus Christ comes at the end of that Great Tribulation the remnant of Israel will be a saved nation, and the Lord says,

“They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech.12:10).

It is a miracle that the people of Israel have maintained their identity during nearly 2,000 years of dispersion among all nations, and then reassembled in their own land as an independent nation among the nations of the world. No other nation in the history of the world has done such a thing.

On 14 May 1948, at 4.00pm, David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence, and at 6.10pm on the same day America recognized the State of Israel. Massive immigration followed, as refugees poured in from all over the world. The first census in 1948 showed a total population of 713,000 Jews and 69,000 Arabs.

According to CIA World Fact Book 1 January 2004, the population of Israel was 6,199,008, which includes 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, about 20,000 in the Golan Heights, more than 5,000 in the Gaza Strip and about 177,000 in East Jerusalem. Broadly speaking, in 2004 there were about 5.2 million Jews and 1 million Arabs in the land.

Israel can boast of victories over enormous numerical odds in major conflicts with its Arab neighbours. In 1948-9 the War of Independence was won. The Suez Crisis followed on 29 October 1956, then the Six-Day War on 5 June 1967, and later the Yom Kippur War on 6 October 1973.

Israel is recognized as one of the most advanced nations of the world and leads the world in many fields of technology. With a Jewish population about the size of Sydney, Australia, it has its own spy satellites, 200 nuclear warheads, an air force that is the envy of the world, a defence industry which competes on world markets for the supply of sophisticated state-of-the-art weaponry, and its own missiles which match the best produced in USA or Russia!

All of this is fulfilment of Bible prophecy which foretold that Israel would become a military power in the last days:

"And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem..."(Zech.14:14), and *"the land of Judah shall be a terror unto the land of Egypt..."*(Isa.19:17). *"In that day I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about....and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place"*(Zech.12:6).



The Temple at Jerusalem to be Rebuilt

Jerusalem is the place where God has chosen to put His name, and is the only place where Israel was permitted to offer their "*burnt offerings...tithes...heave offerings...vows...freewill offerings, and the firstlings of ...herds and...flocks*" (Deut.12:5-6). There Solomon built the first Temple, which was later destroyed by Nebucadnezzar in 586BC. After the 70-year Babylonian captivity Zerubbabel rebuilt it in 517BC, but King Herod reconstructed it commencing 20 BC. It took 46 years to build as recorded in John 2:20. The finishing touches were still being applied at that time.

In 70AD the Temple was destroyed by the Romans and the collection of the holy half shekel, which was the atonement money paid by each male Jew over 20 years for the maintenance of the Tabernacle (Exod.30:11-16), was discontinued.

The Bible says that the Temple must be in existence during the Great Tribulation, which lasts for seven years before Jesus Christ comes to reign. This is referred to in Matt.24:15; 2 Thess.2:4; and Rev.11:1-2. The Gentiles will be permitted to occupy the court of the Temple (Rev.11:1-2), but after Israel repents in the first half of the Tribulation the Roman prince, Antichrist, will turn on Israel, occupy the Temple, and install his idol image. This is what is called the "*abomination of desolation*" (Matt.24:15; Dan 9:27).

Another grander Temple will be constructed at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ, as described in Ezekiel 40 to 48. Priestly service will be recommenced and burnt offerings offered by the priests.

Any moves by the Jews toward construction of the Tribulation Temple must therefore be of immense significance, and indicate that the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, is at hand. The Rapture of the true Church, which precedes the Day of the Lord (1Thess 5:1-9; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 3:10), must be even closer.

During 1997 it was announced in *Jerusalem Post* that minting and collection of the holy half shekel, as prescribed by Moses in Exodus 30:11-16, would begin. Advertisements state that it is "a special fund for the upkeep of Jerusalem"

One headline reads,

If you are a Levite age 25-50 you are hereby called to
לויים לדוכנם ACTIVE DUTY לויים לדוכנם

Why is this Passover different from the last 1928 Seders?

THE EXILE HAS ENDED

We will not be so brazen as to say that the next stage of Redemption has begun, nonetheless, we can say without ambiguity, the Exile has ended.

When we lost sovereignty over the Land of Israel, and the Temple in Jerusalem, 1928 years ago, in the year 3830 (70 CE), we lost the ability to safeguard Hekdesh. Today we have that ability.

There is Hekdesh once again in Jerusalem!



The Holy Half Shekel

**This year in
Jerusalem,
next year in the
Holy Temple!**

The holy half shekel is sold to Jews around the world, who then donate them once a year to be dedicated or "separated" as "Temple treasure". Before Israel became a Sovereign State property sanctified to the Temple (hekdesch) could not be safeguarded, but now that Israel has its own security system the way is made clear for safe storage of the holy half shekel. At a ceremony in Jerusalem on 26 March 1998, the first of the coins were donated and Reuven Prager, who has worked on the project for 15 years, is reported to have declared:

"With the sound of this coin dropping (into a special casket), THE EXILE OFFICIALLY ENDS."

According to the ancient *trumat ha lishkah* ceremony, *hekdesch* was stored in a special room and used to pay for the daily communal sacrifices and the remainder went to pay for preparing Jerusalem for the three pilgrimage holidays and for building up of the walls of the city.

We know that King Joash, who reigned about 856BC, collected the holy half shekel to repair the Temple building which had fallen into disrepair. Reuven Prager claims to be a Levite, and says,

"We've got a role to fill. Our duty was to create the vessels and maintain them. That's my job. I just create the vessels."

According to *Your Jerusalem* April 1998, Reuven Prager wants:

"To take an active role in trying to rebuild the Temple and bring the Messiah...His version of the rebuilding of the Temple does not concur with ideas espoused by other organizations calling for the same goal. He insists that he would never dream of destroying the mosques which sit on the Temple Mount; rather he believes that a careful reading of the Koran yields the view that Moslems should also favour the rebuilding of the Temple."

This is exactly what the New Testament teaches. During the Great Tribulation John is told to

"Measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship

therein. But the COURT which is WITHOUT THE TEMPLE LEAVE OUT, and measure it not; FOR IT IS GIVEN UNTO THE GENTILES: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months”(Rev11:1-2).

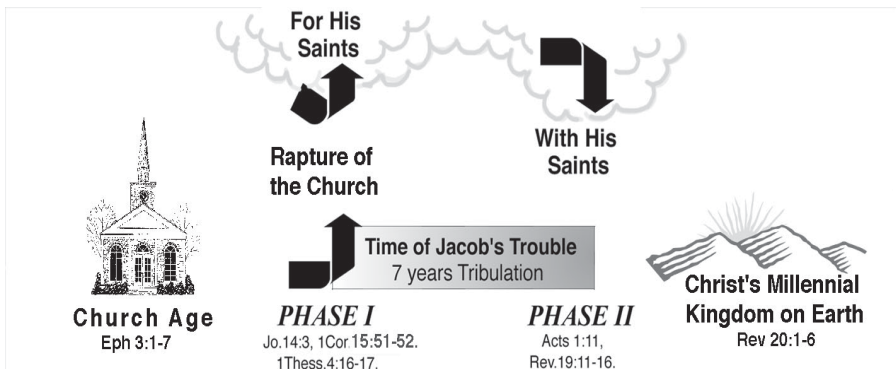
The Oslo Peace Accord

The Oslo Peace Accord is a "land for peace" deal agreed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and signed in Oslo, Sweden, in September 1993. The Declaration of Principles (DOP) calls for two phases. The first phase hands back to the PLO Jericho, Gaza, Hebron and portion of the West Bank. The second phase deals with the question of Arab refugees and the status of Jerusalem. Simply stated, it is dividing the land as foretold in Scripture! Joel says,

"In those days... when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations...to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and PARTED MY LAND!" (Joel 3:1-2).

Daniel tells us that Antichrist will not only plant himself "in the glorious holy mountain", "magnify himself above all", and acknowledge "a strange god", but he will "DIVIDE THE LAND FOR GAIN" (Dan.11:36-45).

As already indicated, Antichrist will come out of Europe, from the Revived Roman Empire which we see forming up under the banner of the EU. Daniel tells us that he will "confirm" or "strengthen" a 7-year covenant with Israel, which he then breaks after 3½ years and causes the Temple sacrifices to cease. The current moves to rebuild the Temple therefore indicate that we must be drawing close to the end of the age! Could the Oslo Accord or a subsequent agreement be the treaty to be confirmed?



A Jewish Sanhedrin and a Monarchy

In October 2004 the Orthodox Jews re-established the Sanhedrin comprised of 71 scholars, and these began meeting on a regular basis to advise the nation on issues affecting its future. Prime Minister Sharon's Disengagement Plan, which would see Jewish settlements removed from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has been condemned, and soldiers and police forbidden to participate in the removal of settlers.

The new Sanhedrin would like to see a monarchical system of government replace the present democratic system. Steps have been taken to identify suitable persons who can trace their lineage back to David, and already many have been able to do this.

Scripture indicates that they will not achieve their objective, since Ezekiel wrote that the throne of David would be overturned and ***"be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him"*** (Ezek.21:27).

The angel Gabriel said Christ would be given *"the throne of his father David"* (Luke 1:32).

However, the Jews will succeed in identifying the *"family of the house of David"*, which will be present when Christ, the Son of David, returns. The genealogy of Jesus Christ is already established in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Zechariah wrote of that time:

"And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart" (Zech.12:12).

Global Terrorism

There are over 1 billion Muslims in the world, and since 1979 when the Islamic fundamentalist revolution began there has been a new kind of security threat confronting the nations of the world. On 11 September 2001, terrorism assumed a new dimension when the twin towers of the World Trade Center were demolished by Islamic fundamentalists who hijacked American passenger jets. This event goes down in history as a turning-point in world affairs.

When the Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah of Persia he effectively began a war that could not be won by conventional military tactics alone. The balance of military might and power is so heavily in favour of Israel and her allies that alternative means had to be pursued in order to achieve his goal of Islamic world supremacy. In backward areas such as the African continent conventional military tactics would prove successful, but against the sophisticated weaponry of the US or EU other less expensive forms of war had to be organized.

The fundamental Islamic goal is to totally destroy Israel and any nation which supports her. This immediately identifies America as a target.

For terrorists to be effective against the US they need to have access to chemical, biological or nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which can be obtained relatively cheaply, and the delivery system needs nothing more than a few thousand suicide fanatics willing to sacrifice their own lives in order to strike fear and confusion into the non-Islamic people of the free world.

All of this is fuelled by an intense hatred for Israel and a burning desire to obliterate every Jew from the face of the earth.

We know from Scripture that there will be a massive Islamic attack on Israel in the first half of the Tribulation, but even with support from Russia this would be futile unless America can be neutralized. In 2001 America spent \$396.1 billion on defence, which constituted nearly 50% of world expenditure. The percentage spent by the Islamic nations identified with the fundamentalist revolution in that same year was only \$83 billion if we include Russian expenditure; \$23 billion (2.8%) if we exclude Russian expenditure (See the table on page 130).

For several years now *Jane's Intelligence Digest* has been warning that Iran is planning a conventional war on Israel and that she intends to neutralize American support for Israel by locating WMD in cities throughout the US. If America comes to Israel's support, then the WMDs would be released creating total chaos and confusion. This is terrorism on a vast scale, and the President of the US is obviously aware of the threat and is taking measures to prevent it happening.

Early in the Tribulation, as the second seal is opened, John sees a red horse and

*"power was given to him that sat thereon to **take peace from the earth**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev.6:4).*

This could indicate a universal state of anarchy, but it could also be closely connected with global terrorism. Terrorism has a total disregard for the rights of innocent people, killing indiscriminately in order to create fear and thus remove any sense of safety. Peace and security is taken away from people by terrorism.

What we might expect is that as we draw nearer to the Tribulation the threat of terrorism will increase, and will reach a climax soon after the Rapture.

World Military Expenditure AD2001

(In billions of dollars)

USA and Allies

US	396 .1
Canada.....	7 .7
Israel.....	9 .0
Australia.....	6 .6
Saudi Arabia.....	27 .2
Taiwan.....	8 .2
Emirates.....	3 .9
Kuwait.....	2 .6
Sth Korea.....	11 .8
Singapore.....	4 .3
Philippines.....	1 .1
<u>Total (11).....</u>	<u>\$478 .5 -58.5%</u>

European Countries

UK.....	34 .0
France.....	25 .3
Germany.....	21 .0
Italy.....	15 .5
Spain.....	6 .9
Netherlands.....	5 .6
Sweden.....	4 .2
Poland.....	3 .7
Greece.....	3 .3
Norway.....	2 .8
Denmark.....	2 .4
Belgium.....	2 .2
Portugal.....	1 .3
Czech Republic.....	1 .1
Luxembourg.....	0 .9
Hungary.....	0 .8
Yugoslavia.....	0 .5
<u>Total.(17).....</u>	<u>131.5 -16.0%</u>

South America

Brazil	17 .9
Argentina.....	3 .1
Colombia	2 .1
Cuba.....	0 .7
<u>Total.(4).....</u>	<u>23 .8 - 2.9%</u>

Russia and Muslims

Russia.....	60 .0
Iran.....	9 .1
Turkey.....	5 .1
Pakistan.....	2 .6
Egypt.....	2 .1
Iraq.....	1 .4
Libya.....	1 .2
Syria.....	0 .8
Sudan.....	0 .7
<u>Total(9).....</u>	<u>83 .0 -10.15%</u>

Kings of the East

China.....	42 .0
Japan.....	40 .4
India.....	15 .6
Vietnam	1 .8
North Korea.....	1 .3
<u>Total(5).....</u>	<u>101 .1 - 12.4%</u>

Grand Total....\$817.9 billion

Source:

Center for Defense Information.

As we look at the table above, we are reminded of Joel's prophecy concerning the last great battle before Christ returns:

*"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; **Prepare war**, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. **Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears:** let the weak say, I am strong..."(Joel 3:9-10).*

Tsunamis

*"Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; **THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING**; men's heart failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21:25-26).*

The above verse is part of the Lord's reply to the disciples' question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)?" It is clear from the Lord's answer that disturbances will occur in the oceans at the end of the age, and that this will cause great anxiety among the nations. The 2004 Boxing Day tsunami off the coast of Sumatra constitutes a fulfilment of the signs of the last days, but according to Scripture much worse is to follow during the Tribulation.

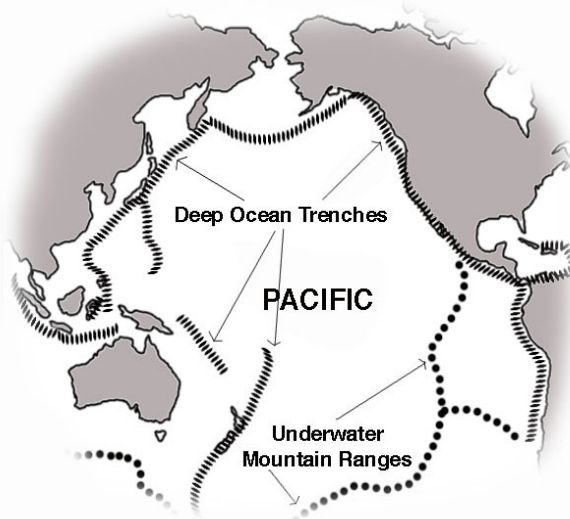
When Paul wrote to the Hebrew believers he urged them not to forsake *"the assembling of ourselves together...but exhorting one another: AND SO MUCH THE MORE, AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING"* (Heb.10:25).

Paul has indicated that **it will be possible** for Christians to "see the day approaching". Someone has said that "coming events always cast a shadow", and as we draw near to the Day of the Lord (the Tribulation) we can expect to see the storm clouds gathering.

It is also clear from Scripture that calamities will **intensify** as we draw near to the end of the age. Jesus referred to the first half of the 7-year Tribulation as the *"beginning of sorrows"*, or *"beginning of travail"*. Travail pains become more frequent and more intense as the moment of birth approaches. It is not unreasonable therefore to expect a growing number of catastrophes at more frequent intervals as the Lord's return draws near.

An examination of the records of past tsunamis indicates that the December 2004 tsunami was caused by the greatest earthquake (9 on the Richter scale), produced the greatest devastation over the largest area, and took the greatest number of lives of any former tsunami. Even the aftershocks recorded 7 on the Richter scale, and that would normally be considered a major earthquake. Twelve days after the initial earthquake an aftershock of 6 on the Richter scale was recorded.

Tsunamis are common in areas where seismic activity is frequently experienced along the earthquake zones which run under the ocean from Alaska past Japan down to Indonesia, past Papua New Guinea



and down to New Zealand. Another deep trench runs from north to south off the west coast of North and South America.

The relatively thin crust of the earth is floating on molten magma and buckles and bends as the moon passes, just as the tides rise and fall. Earthquake zones are also areas of frequent volcanic activity, and eruptions can be the cause of tsunamis.

Krakatoa 1883

A notable case was Krakatoa, an island off the coast of Indonesia, which erupted in 1883 sending a tsunami 120 feet high along the coast of Java and Sumatra that killed 36,000 people. The population of Indonesia was much less in 1883, and tourism was not advanced as it is today.

Krakatoa was an explosion of gigantic proportions. Before the eruption the island rose from 1,000 feet below the ocean to 2,660 feet above sea level. It exploded sending 21 cubic km of rock into the air and depositing rock and ash over 800,000 sq. km (300,000 sq.miles). The ocean was so full of floating pumice stone (lightweight gaseous expanded rock) that shipping was interrupted. The noise of the explosion could be heard in Sydney and Tokyo, and sound waves reverberated around the globe for years.

As bad as Krakatoa was, it is minuscule compared with what will occur during the Tribulation when, as John foresaw:

"A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Rev.8:8-9).

When one third of sea creatures (trillions) are destroyed by such a violent upheaval their blood will discolour the oceans, just as a whale's blood turns the water red when it is harpooned. Imagine the tsunamis that will race across the oceans of the world when such a disturbance occurs.

A NASA scientist speculated that when the December 2004 tsunami occurred the axis of the earth had been shifted by one inch. His assertion had not been verified in early January 2005 and awaits measurements from satellite instruments, however, Scripture indicates that the earth will “wobble” during the Tribulation. Isaiah wrote:

“The earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage” (Isa.24:19-20).

Scientists tell us that the axis of the earth already “wobbles” within certain limits, but nothing compared with what will happen during the Tribulation.

Worst Tsunamis in History

Apart from Krakatoa, none of the worst tsunamis come near the December 2004 Indonesian tsunami for severity or loss of lives and property. The following is a list of some of the worst previous tsunamis from records compiled by the University of Southern California and other sources (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/tsunamis/>).

- 1293 Japan - 23,000 killed
- 1498 Japan - 26,000 killed
- 1690 Virgin Isles - 3,000 killed
- 1707 Japan - 30,000 killed
- 1746 Peru - 18,000 killed
- 1755 Portugal - 60,000 killed
- 1765 China - 10,000 killed
- 1771 Japan - 13,000 killed
- 1782 Taiwan - 50,000 killed
- 1815 Indonesia - 10,000 killed
- 1868 Chile - 26,000 killed
- 1883 Indonesia - 36,000 die - In 2004 Krakatao same height as 1883
- 1896 Japan - 27,000 killed
- 1908 Strait of Messina, between Italy and Sicily - approx 60,000 died.
- 1917 Indonesia - 15,000 killed
- 1941 India - 5,000 killed
- 1946 Aleutian Isles, Alaska - 165 killed
- 1960 Chile - Estimates of between 490 and 2,290 died
- 1975 Hawaii - Over 122 killed



The Basics of Bible Prophecy

- 1976 Philippines - 8,000 killed
- 1992 Nicaragua - 170 lives lost and extensive damage. 9.7m waves and quake measured 7.2 on Richter scale (RS).
- 1992 Indonesia - 1,000 lives lost and extreme damage. 26m waves and quake measured 7.5 RS
- 1993 Japan Sea - 330 lives lost and \$1.5 billion damage. 31m waves and quake measured 7.6 RS.
- 1994 Indonesia - 250 lives lost and \$2.2 million damage. 14 m waves and quake measured 7.2 RS.
- 1994 Kuril Islands, eastern Russia - 11 lives lost and some damage. 9m waves and quake measured 8.1RS.
- 1994 Indonesia - 238 killed
- 1994 Alaska - one death reported and \$21 million damage. Waves measured 10 m.
- 1994 Philippines - 62 lives lost and \$25 million damage. 10 m waves and quake measured 7.0 RS
- 1996 Irian Jaya - 161 killed
- 1998 Papua New Guinea - up to 3,000 lives lost. 15m waves and quake measured 7.0 RS
- 2001 Peru - approx 100 lives lost. 7m waves and quake measured 8.3 RS
- 2002 Papua New Guinea - 5 lives lost. 5.5 m waves.
- 2004 Indonesia - over 168,000 lives lost, 5 million refugees, billions of dollars of damage and a quake measuring 9 RS. The impact will be assessed for a long time.

Other Natural Disasters

As bad as the December 2004 tsunami was, it is not the worst natural disaster in history. *Time* magazine 10 January 2005 indicated that the greatest of all natural disasters occurred in China when the Yangtze River flooded in 1931, drowning 145,000 and killing a staggering 3 million through the famine and disease which followed.

More recently, in 1970, cyclonic floods claimed 300,000 lives in Bangladesh, and back in 1923 a massive earthquake in Japan took an estimated 140,000 lives in Tokyo and Yokohama.

Disease the worst Killer

The greatest of all global catastrophes, apart from the Biblical Flood in Noah's day, was undoubtedly the Black Death (Bubonic) plague of 1347-50. Within 20 years approximately one third of the population of England, Europe, and the Near East perished. The total number of

dead cannot be accurately stated but estimates range up to 40 million; 25 million in Europe and up to one half of England alone. Numbers in Russia and the Near East are uncertain.

So great was the loss of life that there was a labour shortage, and new conditions of employment were demanded by the peasants, who saw the opportunity to revolt.

The Black Death plague came from the Far East on ships and was transmitted by flea-ridden rats at every port.

The Great Plague of London was a significant disaster and took 70,000 lives in 1665, according to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of World History*.

Following WWI the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918 took **22 million** lives, far exceeding the deaths of the Great War. In WWI, 8.5 million died, 21 million were injured, and 7.5 million were prisoners and missing, according to *Timetables of History* by Bernard Grun.

The AIDS epidemic currently ravaging Africa and Asia could prove worse than all previous plagues. As yet science has no answer, although large sums of money are being spent on research.

A great deal of research on tsunamis is being carried out to provide early warning systems. About half of the American population of 280 million live within 50 km of the coastline, and since tsunamis travel at the speed of a jet liner it is imperative that efficient early warning systems be set up to allow maximum time for evacuation.

The countries bordering the Pacific have invested in an early warning system, however, countries around the Indian Ocean had determined not to instal detection and warning devices and as a result tens of thousands received no prior notification of the 2004 tsunami. Early warning systems are being installed and population in the region will receive some early warning in the future.

Help from wealthy nations such as USA, UK and Australia was generous and medical teams began arriving in disaster areas after the first week, but that was too late for many survivors who suffered horrible injuries. In the unsanitary tropical conditions disease threatened the lives of many and authorities feared that the death-toll could double. Fortunately that seems to have been averted.

Complaints were made that relief was arriving too slowly, but with road and rail systems destroyed it was left to helicopters and naval craft to reach the needy with food, water, and medical supplies. It seems to have been forgotten that there was earthquake damage prior to the tsunami.

The Worst is Yet to Come

If the relief effort is hampered when only one major calamity occurs, what will it be like in the foretold coming days when calamity follows calamity? Jesus indicated that for the seven years after the Rapture there will be such devastation on earth that *“except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved”* (Matt.24: 22). Imagine what it will be like with the following events occurring in quick succession within a short 7-year period:

1) Peace will be taken from the earth and there will be wars, famine, and disease that will wipe out 25% of world population (Rev.6:4-8).

2) Great earthquakes will shake the globe and *“the cities of the nations fell”* (Rev.16:19). Mega cities like Tokyo, Shanghai, Los Angeles, Mexico City, etc, now have populations running into many millions of people. Men will flee into the rocks of the mountains and want to die for fear of those things which are coming on the earth (Rev.6:12-17).

3) A great island mountain will plunge burning into the sea and one third of all sea creatures and ships will be destroyed (Rev.8:8).

4) The world will be tinder dry from a drought that will last for at least 3½ years, and hail and lightning will ignite a bushfire that will destroy one third of the earth’s trees and grass (Rev.8:7; 11:6).

5) Russia, and a Muslim alliance of Iran, Turkey, Libya and Sudan will attempt to occupy the Middle East, but will be destroyed by God on the mountains of Israel as that nation repents of her rejection of Messiah (Ezek.38-39; Joel 2).

6) Demon activity will reach a new level as the bottomless pit (Greek *“abussos”* meaning abyss) is opened, and spirit beings will attack humans (Rev.9:1-11).

7) A world ruler who will arise from the revived Roman Empire (Europe) will attain global influence and establish himself as God in a rebuilt Jewish Temple at Jerusalem. At this time all Jews will have turned to Christ, and Antichrist will attempt to annihilate the nation. He will also seek to destroy every religion on the face of the earth so that he alone is worshipped (Rev.13:1-18; 2Thess.2:1-12).

8) Asia will erupt in awful warfare that will cause the death of one third of the world’s population. An army of 200 million will converge on the Middle East (Rev.9:14-21).

The foregoing judgments are only some of the terrible things which the Bible predicts will happen in just 7 years before Christ returns to judge the nations and set up His everlasting kingdom on earth. Any attempt at providing relief in these circumstances will be futile.

Jesus warned that the Great Tribulation would bring *"distress of nations, with perplexity"* (Luke 21:25). In the Greek text the word *"distress"* means *"anxiety"*, and *"perplexity"* means *"to be in a quandary, at a loss as to what to do, to have no way out"* (See Strong's Greek Dictionary).

Preparing for the Last Days

It is quite clear from the signs already discussed that we must be approaching the end of the age and the second coming of Jesus Christ. While we may see further developments in Israel, Europe, Russia and the Muslim world, many of the prophecies yet to be fulfilled could occur after the Rapture and during the 7-year Tribulation period. Events are accelerating, and since much that happens is not reported in the media, things could be further down the track than we think.

There is one event, however, that will trigger the Great Tribulation (Day of the Lord), and it is referred to by Jesus in the Olivet discourse.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24:40-41).

These verses are part of the Olivet discourse which occurred **before the Church age** and was spoken to **Jewish disciples**. To them, the Rapture of the Church was simply "missing persons". It was not until God revealed the mystery of the Church to Paul that the identity of the missing persons was understood to be the Church (Eph. 3:1-7).

Once the Rapture takes place there will be a company of 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel who will believe in Jesus Christ and be sealed by God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, ie. that the King is coming to establish His kingdom (Matt. 24:14). Persecution will be intense, and Antichrist will demand the worship of the world. Many who refuse to wear his mark will be put to death (Rev. 7:1-17; 13:1-18; 20:4).

The true believers in this Church age will **not** pass into the Tribulation. Paul says,

*"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day** should overtake you as a thief...For God hath not appointed us to wrath (of the Day of the*

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Lord), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep (die), we should live together with him" ie. at the Rapture (1Thess.5:4,9-10).

The question is, "Are you ready?" If the Rapture took place at this moment, would you be caught up to meet the Lord (1Thess.4:13-18), or would you be left behind for Great Tribulation? *"One shall be taken, and the other left"!*

How can you be ready?

The Bible says. Jesus Christ came from heaven on the first Christmas Day. He was Immanuel, *"God with us"*, but He was also Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. He came not only to show us how to live, but He came to die a substitutionary death on a cruel cross where He, the sinless Son of God, bore our sins in His own body on the cross. The prophet Isaiah wrote:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...all we like sheep have gone astray... and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:5-6).

Christ shed His precious blood to make an atoning sacrifice, thus satisfying the just demands of God's perfect law which we could not keep. Now there is salvation in no other name,

"for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The choice is yours, dear reader. What will you do with Jesus, who is called Christ? You can accept Him by simple faith, repenting of your sin, or you can reject Him to your eternal loss.

The time is short, and the Rapture is approaching, after which the events of the Great Tribulation will swiftly run their course.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa.55:6).

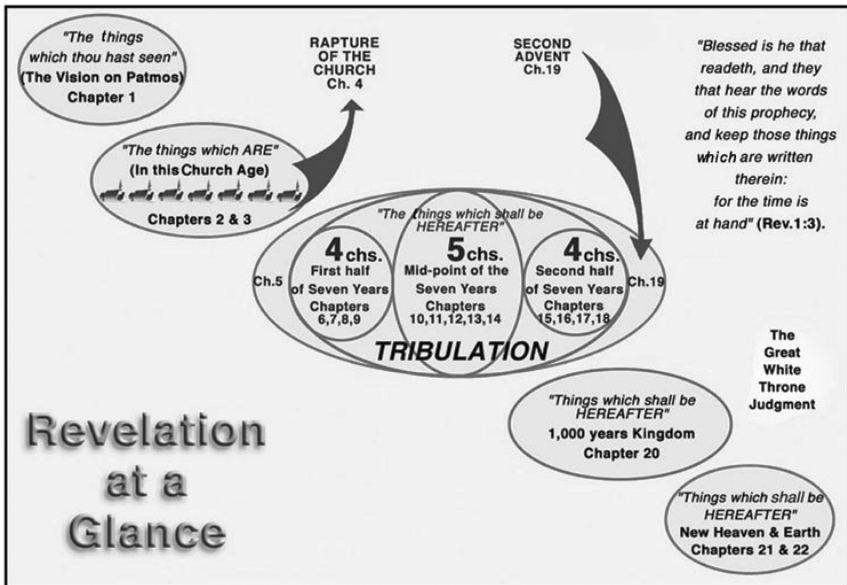
"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1John 5:12).

A suggested prayer: "Dear God, I know I am a sinner and Christ died for me. I now receive Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord". God will hear your cry, and promises that

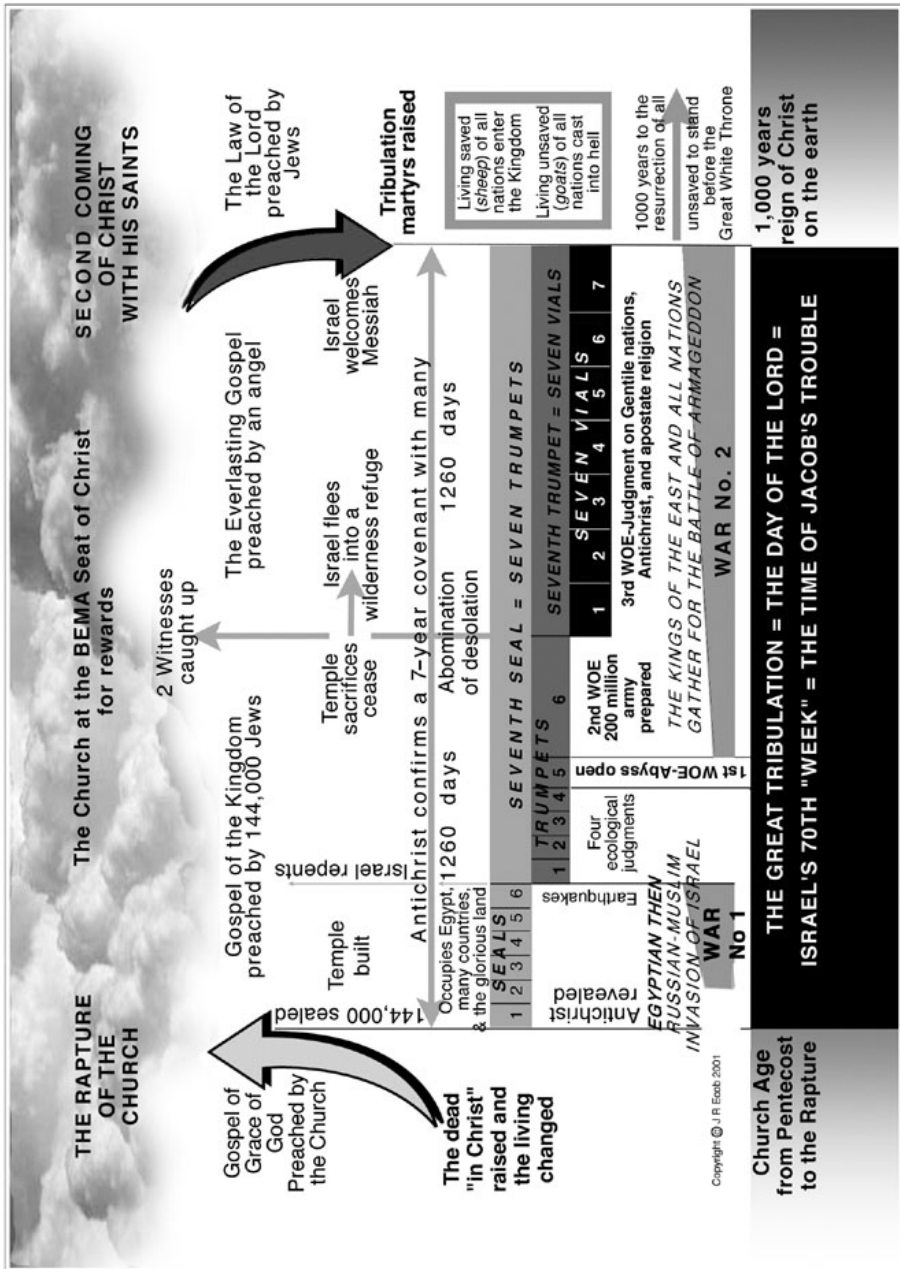
"whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED" (Rom.10:13).

Section 6

Outline of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ



*"Write the things which thou hast **seen**, and the things which **are**, and the things which shall be **hereafter**" (Rev. 1:19).*



Introduction to the Book of the Revelation

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is not difficult to understand once we are aware of the God-given key to its interpretation. That key is found in Rev 1:19, and it divides the book into three parts. These parts identify past, present, and future events, spanning the period from the early Church to the new heaven and new earth.

The **KEY** verse reads as follows:

*"Write the things **which thou hast seen**, and the things **which are**, and the things **which shall be hereafter**"*
(Rev.1:19).



The book is a revelation of "**things** (events) *which must shortly come to pass*". In chapter one John sees a vision of the risen Lord. In chapters 2 and 3 he writes seven letters to "*the seven churches which are in Asia*" (Rev.1:4), communicating the Lord's commendation and concern for their spiritual state. From chapter 4 to chapter 22 we have a description of those events which are future to the Church Age, beginning with the words:

"Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter"(Rev.4:1).

The **past event** is the vision of the Lord which John saw on the Isle of Patmos.

The **present** describes the Churches of Asia existing in John's day, but could be typical of any individual Church throughout history. They are also a picture of the historical progress of the Church from Pentecost down to the Rapture, when the Church Age will be complete.

The **future events** are those which are future to the Church Age, and include the Rapture of the Church followed by the Great Tribulation, and then the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, the establishment of His millennial kingdom, the second resurrection, and the eternal new heaven and new earth.

Thus we have the key to the interpretation of the book. God has divided it in the following manner:

Things which thou hast seen Ch. 1	Things which are Chs. 2 & 3	Things which shall be hereafter Chs. 4 thro' 22
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Part 1 - The Things Which Thou Hast Seen
(Chapter 1)

The Revelation (αποκαλυψις) of Jesus Christ is the "unveiling" to John on the Isle of Patmos of *"things which must shortly (suddenly) come to pass"*. The Father revealed these **events** to Christ for *"his servants"*, and Christ communicated them to John by His angel.

The book begins with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in his full Deity as follows:

- a) He is the second person of the Godhead with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is equal and eternal, without beginning and without ending (vs.4-5).
- b) He is *"the faithful witness"* - perfect in His earthly testimony (v.5).
- c) He is *"the first begotten of the dead"* - nobody could rise in resurrection power before Him (v.5).
- d) He is *"the prince of the kings of the earth"* - He now reigns on the throne of heaven, and one day will come as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign over the earth (v.8).
- e) He is *"the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending"* - Creator and final Judge of all creation.
- f) He is the Eternal God, *"which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"* (v.8) - there is none greater in heaven or earth.

The above description leaves us in no doubt about the absolute Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any lesser description of Him would be *"another Jesus"* (2 Cor.11:4).

The ultimate triumph and climax of God's plan is the victory of Christ over all the forces of wickedness, be they human or demonic, and so John exclaims:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev.1:7).

At Christ's second coming every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father! (Phil.2:10-11). He will come visibly in the clouds of heaven, as declared by the angel (Acts 1:9-11), and as Jesus Himself said (Matt.24:30).

Israel, who pierced Him, will be repentant when Jesus comes again; they *"shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son"* (Zech.12: 10).

At that time one will ask, *"What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"* (Zech.13:6).

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Behold, He is coming in clouds of the sky,
Every eye shall behold Him, exalted on high;
Israel who pierced Him will cry out aloud,
Remembering the cross, the grave, and the cloud.
The Alpha, Omega, beginning and end,
For His elect nation His angels will send,
And Gentiles, now bending before Him, will fall,
As Jesus, at last, is crowned LORD OF ALL!

The Lord's Day and the Day of the LORD

John says, *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day"*. This refers to the first day of the week when the early Christians met together for fellowship. We should remember that the Lord rose on the first day of the week at the feast of Firstfruits. He was the *"firstfruits of them that slept"* (1 Cor.15:20-23). The Church was born on the day of Pentecost, which was also the first day of the week. Christians do not keep the sabbath, which God said was *"a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever"* (Exod.31:15-17; Col.2:16).

The Day of the Lord is quite different from the Lord's Day. Throughout the Scriptures the Day of the LORD refers to that period of time at the end of the age when God's wrath will be poured out on the nations, during the 70th week (seven years) of Daniel's prophecy (Dan.9:24-27).

The Day of the LORD is called by Jesus *"a time of great tribulation"* (Matt.24:21-29); by Jeremiah, *"the time of Jacob's trouble"* (Jer.30:7); by Daniel, *"a time of trouble"* (Dan.12:1); and by Joel *"a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness..."* (Joel 2:1-2).

The Day of the LORD occurs **immediately before** the second coming of Christ to the earth (Matt.24:29-31), and **cannot begin until the Church Age is terminated** by the Rapture of the Church. Paul says, *"That day (the Day of the LORD) shall not come, except there come a falling away first (literally "the departure first"), and that man of sin be revealed"* (2Thess.2 :1-9). After the Church is removed, Antichrist will be revealed and the last 7 years of Israel's history will begin.

The Day of the LORD begins with the sound of the trumpet of God. (1Thess.4:16; 1 Cor.15:51-54). The trumpets were used in Israel to call an assembly of God's people, to sound an alarm of war, and for Israel to mobilize. When the trumpet of God sounds the Church will be assembled to the Lord in the air, an alarm will be sounded to the Gentile nations of the impending Tribulation, and Israel will be mobilized to become God's testimony during the Great Tribulation!

The Vision of the Risen Lord

The vision given to John needs no embellishment. John said,

"I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white his eyes were as a flame of fire; his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, his voice as the sound of many waters. He had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance (face) was as the sun shineth in his strength."



This is how the Lord appeared to John. It is what he saw, and constitutes the first section of the Book of the Revelation.

John fell at Jesus' feet as dead, but then was told: "*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*" (Rev.1:17-18).

It is at this point that John is told to "Write!" The key passage then follows:

1. *the things which THOU HAST SEEN*
2. *the things which ARE*
3. *the things which shall be HEREAFTER.*

The Number Seven

The number seven occurs 44 times in this book. It is the number of "fullness" or "completion", and the seven golden candlesticks signify seven Churches in Asia (Rev.1:20). They also describe the **complete** Church Age from Pentecost to the Rapture, and the book is therefore addressed to the whole Church. We shall see this in Chapters 2 & 3.

Angels in the Revelation

There are 76 references to angels in this book. No other book in the Bible reveals so much about the heavenly host, and the reason for this must surely be that the greater part (chs.4-22) concerns itself with what John saw AFTER he was caught up through the open door into heaven (Rev.4:1-2). From that point onward he sees the things which must be hereafter (Rev.4:1), ie after this present Church Age which closes with the sound of the trumpet and the Lord's call to "*Come up hither!*" (1Thess.4: 16; 1Cor.15:52; Rev.4:1).

Part 2 - The Things Which Are (Chapters 2 & 3)

The seven Churches of Asia are located on the western end of Turkey as we know it today. To each of these Churches Christ reveals Himself in a manner appropriate to the spiritual condition of that Church.

Just as Jesus predicted that tares would grow amongst the wheat, birds would lodge in the branches, and leaven would be mixed with meal (Matt.13:24-33), so the description of these seven Churches indicates that there are varying degrees of apostasy in local Churches.

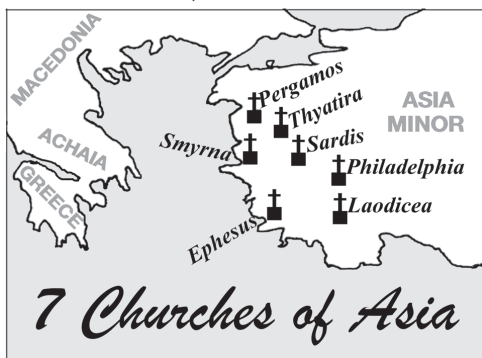
The "overcomers" in each Church represent the "true Church" within the visible professing Church. This is how it has ever been, and it will continue so until the Lord takes the true Church out at the Rapture. Then all that will remain will be the final apostate Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth (Rev.17:5).

It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the true Church, the body of Christ, which restrains the full manifestation of apostasy.

*"The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hinders will hinder, until he be **taken out of the way**. And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed..."* (2Thess.2:7-8).

Each of the seven letters records:

- a) The Revelation of Christ to that Church
- b) The Commendation of Christ for that Church
- c) Condemnation by Christ of that Church (except Smyrna and Philadelphia)
- d) The Exhortation of Christ to that Church
- e) The Appreciation of Christ for the Overcomers (the saved remnant).



The seven Churches of Asia represent seven stages of Church history from the Apostolic Church to the last-days Church.

The overcomers are the saved remnant in all ages who will be raptured. The apostate Church will go into the Tribulation.

The Church at Ephesus-lit "Desired" (Rev.2:1-7)

Practical

To this Church the Lord is revealed walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, and He commends the Church for its patience, **faithfulness to the Word of God**, and hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes who sought to impose hierarchal authority over the believers. (nicolaitan means "victorious over the people")

Condemnation was expressed for the loss of first love for Christ, and the exhortation is to *"Remember...and repent!"* (Rev.2:5). Remember the joy of salvation, repent of formalism, and serve the Lord with a rejoicing, excited, loving heart.

They are warned that their candlestick of testimony will be removed unless they repent.



Prophetic

The Ephesian Church is a picture of the **early Apostolic Church** which spread the Gospel throughout the world (Col.1:6).

The Lord was in their midst, and they faithfully exposed and dealt with false apostles. The early Church stood against those who would introduce an ecclesiastical hierarchy - the Nicolaitanes. They hated their deeds as God does. It was the rise of this hierarchal class within the Church that became the channel for much traditionalism and later superstition.

The early Church was therefore fundamental in doctrine, but during the second generation began to lose its first love. Its faithful stand for the great doctrines of the Word was not warmed by a rich, loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Church at Smyrna- lit "Myrrh" (Rev.2:8-11)

Practical

Christ is revealed as the *"first and the last, which was dead, and is alive"* (Rev.2:8).

This Church is commended because it suffered for Christ. There is no word of condemnation.

The Lord is gentle with those who suffer, for He trod that path Himself.



Prophetic

The meaning of Smyrna is "myrrh", and this suggests suffering since it was used in the burial of loved ones. It was used by Nicodemus when he laid to rest the body of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 19:39).

Smyrna represents the second stage of Church history, which saw what Church historians have called the "Ten Pagan Persecutions".

Practical (cont.)

"Which was dead, and is alive!"
Death is not the end but the way to victory.

The exhortation is to be *"faithful unto death"*, and the reward is a *"crown of life"*.

"He that overcometh (is saved) shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev.2:11).



The second death (Rev.20:14-15), which is the lake of eternal fire, can never harm them. Some may be burned at the stake on earth, but that is nothing compared with the judgment of hell-fire which is the portion of all the unsaved.

Suffering on earth makes heaven all the sweeter, and we know that *"if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Tim.2:12).*



Prophetic (cont.)

Under pagan Rome, Christians suffered terribly.

Many died for the cause of Christ. These periods of persecution occurred during the reign of the following emperors:

1. Nero (AD54-68)
2. Domitian (AD81-96)
3. Trajan (AD98-117)
4. Marcus Aurelius (AD161-180)
5. Severus (AD193-211)
6. Maximian (AD235-238)
7. Decius (AD240-251)
8. Valerian (AD253-260)
9. Aurelian (AD270-275)
10. Diocletian (AD285-305)

Scripture says in Rev 2:10,
"Ye shall have tribulation ten DAYS: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Sometimes persecution was directed at the leaders of the Church, as Rome endeavoured to "cut down the tall poppies". The Scriptures were targeted, and those who refused to surrender their copies were put to death. However, the Church grew, and the "blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church."

The Church at Pergamos- lit "married" (Rev.2:12-17)

Practical

To this Church, Christ is revealed with *"the sharp sword with two edges"*. The Word of God is a sharp sword *"dividing asunder"* (Heb.4:12).

The Church is commended for holding fast the Lord's name and not denying the faith, even in persecution.

Condemnation comes for some who have compromised by holding the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Error was coming in.

We remember that the false prophet Balaam was forbidden to curse Israel, but taught Balak, the king of Moab, how to destroy Israel through introducing immorality and idolatry into their ranks (Numbers ch.25). The Church at Pergamos was to be separate from apostasy and the sins of the flesh. The Bible says, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1John 2:15).

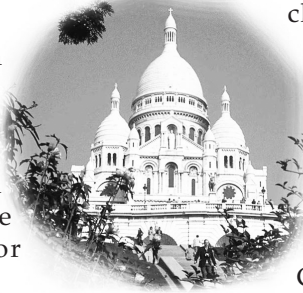
Unless repentance takes place, the Lord will fight against the apostates with the sword of His mouth to separate them from their unholy associations.



Prophetic

Pergamos describes the period of Church history from AD 313 to 600 when the Church was "married" to the State. After Emperor Diocletian there was a power struggle in the Roman Empire; Constantine emerged as the undisputed ruler. During the struggle for power he claimed to have seen a vision of a cross in the sky, and the words, "By this conquer".

He adopted this symbol, and aligned himself with the large number of persecuted Christians.



In AD313, Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration and Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, replacing the Roman mystery religions.

Thus Christianity became popular, and in AD325 Constantine presided over 318 bishops at the Council of Nicea which produced the Nicene Creed. The popularization of Christianity opened the door to a flood of superstition and error.

Monasticism, secularism, veneration of Mary, prayers to martyrs and saints all began in this period, and the clerical system flourished.

Practical (cont.)

To the overcomers who refuse to partake in pagan feasts God will give heavenly manna, a white stone of acquittal, and a new personal name indicating a close personal relationship with Christ. (In Roman courts, the members of the court would cast a white stone into a bowl to indicate innocence).

***The Church at Thyatira- lit "continual sacrifice"
(Rev.2:18-29)***

Practical

To Thyatira, the Lord is revealed as the

"Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

Christ is revealed in judgment to this Church. No other Church has descended to such depths of depravity, and no other Church has such awful judgment pronounced against it.



Prophetic

The doctrine of Balaam which taught tolerance to idolatry and immorality, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which elevated the clergy over the people, were certainly characteristic of the Pergamum period. The Byzantine State Church prepared the way for the Dark Ages under papal rule.

Thyatira aptly describes the fourth stage of Church history when the papacy began about AD600 with Gregory the Great (AD590-604). The continual sacrifice of the Mass became the central feature of the idolatrous Roman Catholic worship.

Thyatira was also characterized by a woman who taught idolatry and fornication. Idolatry in Scripture is called fornication (Ezek.16:20-41).

In addition, this church has the character of Jezebel, who slew the faithful prophets of the Lord. The same brutal character is seen in the Romish church which is

"drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"(Rev.17:6).

Romish worship also has a woman at the centre as Mary is set forth as "the Queen of Heaven". This pagan practice existed in Jeremiah's day and was condemned by the prophet (Jer. 45:15-27).



Practical (cont.)

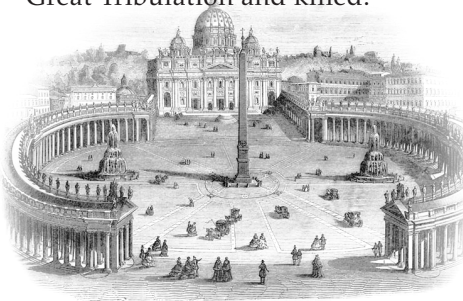
Its adherents have descended to *"the depths of Satan"*, and God will *"kill her children with death"*.

Commendation is given for works more than faith, but condemnation is expressed for awful idolatry and immorality introduced by a prophetess called Jezebel.

There is a clear parallel here with the Jezebel of Old Testament times. This woman was the wife of Ahab, king of Israel. She was also the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. She slew the prophets of the Lord (1Kings18:4,13), funded 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves (1Kings 18:19), and promoted idolatry and immorality in Israel. Spiritual apostasy is usually accompanied by moral depravity.

The only word of comfort is for those who *"have not known the depths of Satan"* (v.24). They are to *"hold fast till I come"* (v.25), and then will be rewarded. They will reign with Christ in His kingdom.

In contrast, the children of this apostate Church will be cast into Great Tribulation and killed.



Prophetic (cont.)

The Roman Church will continue into the Great Tribulation.

"Behold, I will cast her... and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation..." (Rev. 2:22).

During the Great Tribulation apostate Rome will be judged;

"I will kill her children with death" (Rev 2:23).

This is described in Revelation ch.17, where the harlot woman is clearly apostate Christendom headed up by Rome during the Tribulation (Rev.17:9,18). After Christendom rides the fourth beast to power (ie the Revived Roman Empire), Antichrist will turn against Christendom.

"The ten horns...shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev.17:16).

Christendom has craved political power throughout the Holy Roman Empire, and lately by its influence in the EU. However, only the saved will reign with Christ (Rev.2:26), and these will be given the *"morning star"* (ie they will be caught up at the Rapture). Christ's second coming is likened to the *"Sun of righteousness"* arising (Mal.4:2), but the *"morning star"* rises **first**; Christ will come to catch away the saved **before** the Tribulation.

The Church at Sardis- lit "escaping few" (Rev.3:1-6)

Practical

To Sardis, the Lord is revealed as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (seven angels).

"The seven Spirits of God" refers to the seven aspects of the Holy Spirit. He is the *"spirit of the Lord...the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might (power), the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"* (Isa.11:2).

Little commendation is offered. A few were not defiled (v4), but the Church had *"a name that thou livest, and art dead"* (v1).

They were to

"be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...remember...hold fast and repent"

The warning is given, *"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee"* (v3).

The remnant, the overcomers, will walk with the Lord in white, in the righteousness of the saints (Rev.19:8), a righteousness which is imputed by the Lord Jesus.



Prophetic

The Sardis Church is a picture of the Reformation Church which began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg. He was protesting against the sale of indulgences sold in order to raise money for the repair of St Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

In 1516 Erasmus produced the first printed Greek Text, and when Luther translated this into German the superstition of Rome was exposed to the people. Instead of salvation by works, justification by faith was preached and multitudes entered into salvation. Thus we have the *"escaping few"* breaking free from the clutches of the papacy.

In time Protestantism became formal, clung to infant baptism, a priestly hierarchal system, vestments, and union of Church and state. It had a name to live doctrinally, but was void of spiritual life. Protestantism generally, holds to the amillennial position and denies any future for Israel, the Rapture of the Church, and Christ's promised kingdom on earth. The Lord says, *"If therefore thou shalt not watch (for His coming), I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee"* (Rev.3:3).



The Church at Philadelphia -lit "brotherly love"
(Rev. 3:7-13)

Practical

The Lord reveals Himself as the One that is "holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." This is an obvious reference to Isa.22:22 which speaks of Christ who, as the rightful heir to the throne of David, would be "cut down", and the glory of His father's house (David's house) would be "cut off". Christ was "cut down " at Calvary in AD32, and the glory of his Father's house (Israel) was "cut off" in AD70 (v.25).

Only commendation and an open door are offered to this Church. Their enemies would know that God had loved them.

Because they have "kept the word", the Lord promises to keep them from "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" (v.10). They are to "hold that fast" in view of the Lord's return, and not let any man take their crown. Jesus said,

"Behold, I come quickly!"

Overcomers will be forever with the Lord, will "go no more out", will bear God's name and the name of new Jerusalem, which is reserved for the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev.21:2,9-10).



Prophetic

The Church at Philadelphia wonderfully depicts the great evangelical awakening which occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries.

At the beginning of the 1700s the Reformation had broken the power of Rome in the north of Europe. Luther's German translation of the Scriptures was completed in 1522 and Tyndale's English translation in 1526. The 1611 King James English version of the Bible gained universal acceptance and the Word of God was spread across the world through missionary societies. Rome could do little to stop it. God opened a door to this Church which no man could shut! (Rev.3:8)

Men like the Wesleys, Whitfield, Hudson Taylor, Moody, Finney, William Booth, and CT Studd, and the Moravians, the Brethren Movement, and Faith Missions, all saw multitudes saved. The great doctrinal hymns, which Satan is trying his best to dispose of today, were born in this era.

The hope of the Lord's return was preached with fervency, and God's plan for Israel and the Church became clear through the preaching of faithful men of God.

The Lord's promise is to keep this Church from the Tribulation-"from THE HOUR of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev.3:10).



***The Letter to Laodicea- lit "the people rule"
(Rev.3:14-22)***

Practical

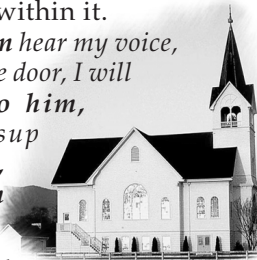
The Lord reveals Himself as *"the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God"* to this worldly Church.

No commendation is given. The Lord says, *"I will spue thee out of my mouth"*. This Church is neither cold nor hot. It is materialistic and occupied with earthly riches, but God finds it utterly bankrupt, naked and blind. The only solution is repentance, or chastening will follow.

To this Church, Christ is standing OUTSIDE the door. It does not need Christ to run its program. It is self-sufficient and has *"need of nothing"*. It is a popular Church and knows nothing of the purifying *"offence of the cross"* (Gal 5:11) which is characteristic of a godly Church.

The Lord's appeal is not to this Church as a whole, but to individuals within it.

*"If any man hear my voice,
and open the door, I will
come in to him,
and will sup
with him,
and he with
me."*



The Church had rejected Christ, and God has no choice but to reject the Church as a whole. He appeals to the individual. The godly remnant (overcomers) will reign with Him .



Prophetic

As the meaning of the name suggests, the Laodicean Church period of history has experienced a takeover by human intellect, and no longer does it bow to the Word of God as the final and only authority on matters of faith and conduct. In our day the Church Age is closing in much the same way that Israel finished the period of the Judges;

*"Every man did that which was
right in his own eyes"*
(Judges 21:25).

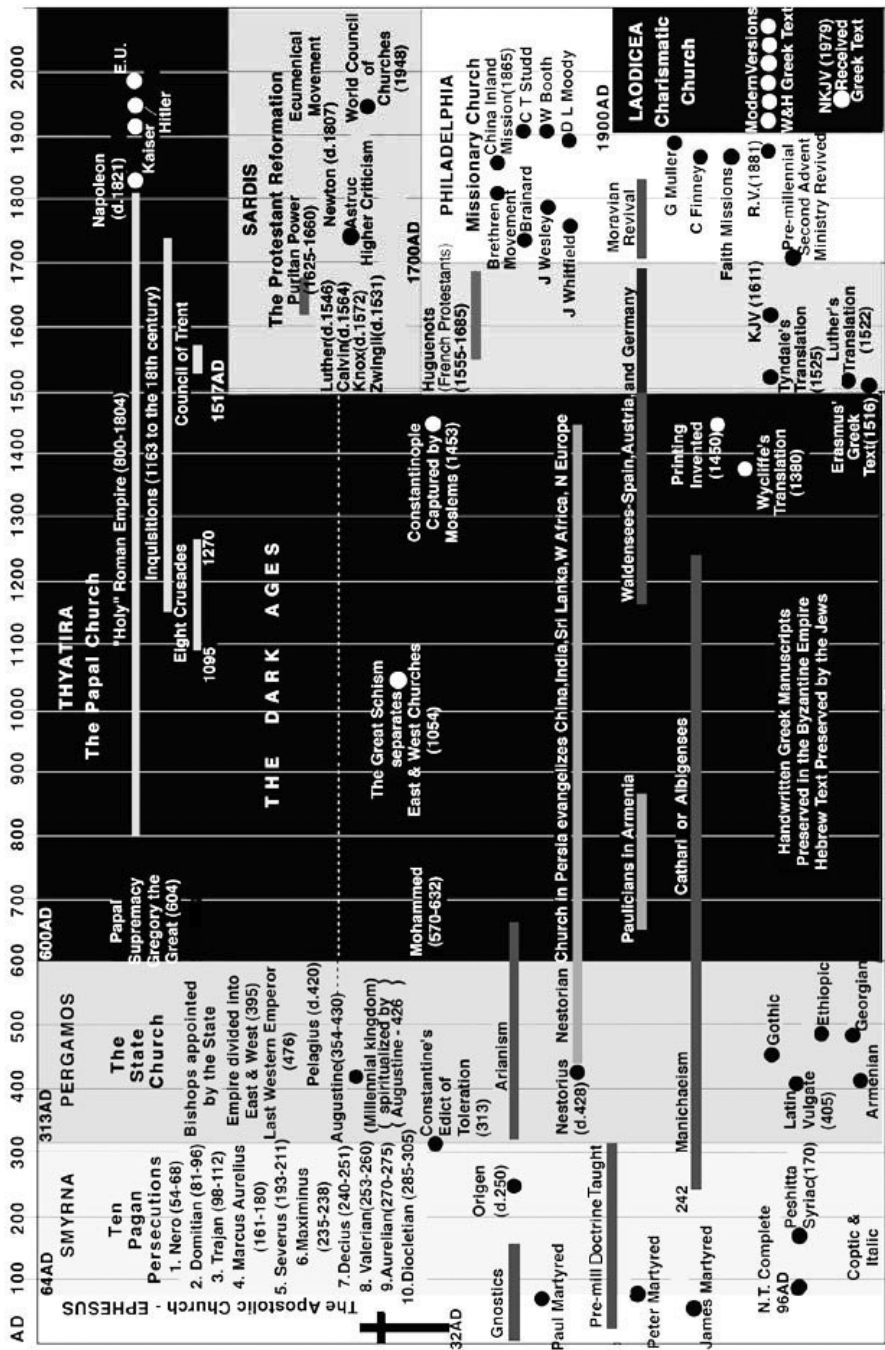
Christendom has accumulated enormous wealth and no longer can say like Peter, *"Silver and gold have I none"* (Acts 3:6).

Unscrupulous leaders have preached a wealth gospel and become exceedingly rich as they deceive people with phoney claims of healing miracles.

The proliferation of modern versions of the Scripture based on corrupt manuscripts, the acceptance of evolution, theistic and otherwise, the use of "gospel" rock music, the promotion of women in Church leadership, the tolerance of alternative life styles, together with ecumenical inclusivism, all bear testimony to the fact that within Christendom, "the people rule"!

The Lord is ready to spue this Church out of His mouth!

CHURCH HISTORY FORTOLD IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES



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Section 3 - The Things Which Shall be Hereafter (Chapters 4 to 22)

We now come to FUTURE EVENTS which follow this present Church Age and we will deal with this period as follows:

- i) The Rapture of the Church
- ii) The Great Tribulation on Earth
- iii) The Rise, Reign and Ruin of Antichrist
- iv) Israel's 70th "Week" - the Time of Jacob's Trouble
- v) Christ's Second Coming
- vi) Christ's Millennial Kingdom
- vii) The New Heaven and New Earth



i) The Rapture of the Church (Rev.4:1 to 5:14)

We know that we have reached the third section of the Revelation because John sees a door open in heaven and hears a voice saying, *"Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be HEREFTER"* (Rev.4:1).

If John is given a preview of future events beyond this present Church Age, then he would have to foresee **his own Rapture** into the Lord's presence, and what he sees immediately after this would be what he, and every member of the Body of Christ will see as we gather around the throne of God.

The voice he hears is not that of an angel but the Lord Jesus, *"the Alpha and Omega"* (Rev.1:8). *"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout"* (1Thess.4:16). The Greek word for "shout" is "κελευσμαι", and signifies "a commanding shout, a shout of incitement". The Lord will issue the command, *"Come up hither!"* The same command is given to two Jewish prophets who are martyred during the Great Tribulation, and we read:

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud..." (Rev.11:12).

The Rapture is described elsewhere as follows:

*"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" (1Thess.4:16-17); and **"We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"** (1 Cor.15:51-52).*

The Rapture is described before the beginning of the Great Tribulation which commences in Chapter 6. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the scene in heaven as the Church gathers around the Lord at the throne of grace.

All attention is focused on the One who sits upon the throne. He is likened to a jasper and sardine stone - the last and first stones on the high priest's breastplate. Peter says ,

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (1Pet.2:7)

Ezekiel saw the same throne:

"As the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it... it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain" (Ezek.1:26-28).

The rainbow which circles the throne is the token of God's covenant of mercy to Noah (Gen.9:13), and indicates that the Church does not come before a throne of judgment as in Rev.20:11, but to a throne of grace! Before the throne is the crystal sea, and around the throne are four angelic beings, each with six wings, which proclaim the eternal holiness of God. Before the throne are *"seven lamps of fire...which are the seven Spirits of God"* (Rev.4:5), and *"in the midst of the throne...stood a Lamb as it had been slain"* (Rev.5:6).

On twenty-four seats round about the throne are seated elders with crowns on their heads. These elders are representative of the Church for they are from *"every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"* (Rev.5:9). They no doubt will exercise a role in the orderly worship of the saints in heaven, just as there were twenty-four courses of priests appointed to lead the worship of Israel (1Chron.24:7-19; Luke 1:9,23).

Crowns are rewards for service, and there are many crowns promised to believers. There is the crown of life for martyrs (Rev.2:10; Jas 1:12), a crown of glory for faithful elders (1Pet 5:4), a crown of rejoicing for soul-winners (1Thess 2:19; Phil 4:1), and a crown of righteousness for all who love His appearing (2Tim.4:8).

These are incorruptible crowns (1 Cor.9:25) given at the judgment seat (bema seat) of Christ to those who labour for Him. Jesus says, *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."* (Rev.3:11).

The elders *"cast their crowns before the throne"* (Rev.4:10). Our labour is for His glory!

ii) The Great Tribulation on Earth (Rev.6:1 to 18:24)

John saw a book sealed with seven seals, in the right hand of God, and he wept because no one was found worthy to open and read the book, or even to look on it. Then one of the 24 elders spoke:

"Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev.5:5).

When John looked he saw *"a Lamb as it had been slain"*, who came and took the book. Instantly all heaven broke into song, praising the Lamb and proclaiming Him *"worthy...to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"* (Rev.5:12). The Lion of Juda, the Root of David, is the Lamb who bore the wrath of God for all human sin. He alone can administer judgment. Jesus said,

"The Father...hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27).

Daniel had *"sealed"* these judgments (Dan.12:4,9) till the *"time of the end"*, and now the Lamb opens each of the seven seals of the Tribulation.

The First Seal: A rider on a white horse goes forth conquering and to conquer (6:1-2). He has a bow but no arrows, and a crown is given to him. Other



Scriptures indicate that as soon as the Church is raptured, the *"man of sin"* will be revealed (2Thess.2:3-9). This conquest is peaceable and an imitation of Christ's appearance (Rev.19:11). Paul wrote of the Day of the Lord,

"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..." (1Thess.5:3).

It is written of the great antetype of Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, that he would *"by peace...destroy many"* (Dan.8:25). The Tribulation will begin with a great peace movement which will include a seven-year covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27), but he will break the covenant halfway through the seven years. (See Section 2).

The Second Seal: A rider on a red horse appears and takes peace from the earth. A state of anarchy prevails and men kill one another (Rev.6:3-4).



The Third Seal: A rider on a black horse appears with a pair of balances to measure basic foods; this speaks of famine (Rev.6:5-6).



The fourth Seal: A rider on a pale horse appears with power to kill one quarter of the world's population. If total world population was 6 billion, then this would involve the death of 1½ billion! (Rev.6:7-8).



The Fifth Seal: The souls of martyrs are seen in heaven praying for vengeance. They are told to rest for *"a little season"*. The Great Tribulation will only be for a short time - seven years (Rev.6:9-11).

The Sixth Seal:

A great earthquake and meteorites strike the earth. The sun and moon are darkened and the islands are moved. Men hide in caves and cry for fear of the Day of the Lord, and the wrath of the Lamb (Rev.6:12-17).



The Seventh Seal: Seven more judgments are announced. These are the seven trumpet judgments and follow the seven seal judgments.

Some have suggested that these may simply be the same as the seal judgments in greater detail. However, this cannot be the case because the seventh seal incorporates all of the seven trumpet judgments, and we will see that the seventh trumpet announces yet other judgments - the seven vial (bowl) judgments. The seven seals are followed by the seven trumpets, which in turn are followed by the seven vials which are called "*the seven last plagues*". **Each of these judgments is therefore in sequence and becomes more intense as the Tribulation progresses** (Rev.8:1-6).

Seven angels are given trumpets to sound. Each trumpet is yet another judgment, and these judgments are in response to the prayers of the martyrs (Rev.8:3-5). Jesus said, *"Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him... I tell you that he will avenge them speedily"* (Luke 18:7-8).

After the Rapture, any who turn to Christ will suffer intense persecution.

Seven Trumpet Judgments

The following is a brief summary of the next phase of the Tribulation. The first four trumpets affect one third of the earth. Which third, we are not told. The fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets are described as three woes ("*Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earth*").

The last Woe is the seventh trumpet, which embraces the seven vials.



The First Trumpet

brings hail, fire and blood, and a third part of all trees and grass is burnt up. This will be a global bushfire of gigantic proportions (Rev.8:7).



The Second Trumpet

sounds and a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea. One third of the sea is turned to blood. Sea life and ships are destroyed (Rev.8:8).



The Third Trumpet

brings a great star, probably an asteroid, into collision with earth. The rivers and water-systems are contaminated and many men die (Rev.8:10).



The Fourth Trumpet

sounds and one third of the sun, moon and stars is smitten. This results in the light during the day and night being shortened by one third. Climatic changes will no doubt occur (Rev.8:12).

FIRST WOE



The Fifth Trumpet

sees an angel open the bottomless pit which has hitherto been kept locked up. Out of it come what appears like locusts, yet they are not locusts, but imprisoned demonic beings like those in Jude 6 & 2 Pet. 2:4. For a short time Satan will have his full complement of demons to fight against Christ, before being bound for 1,000 yrs at Christ's second coming (Rev.9:1-12).

SECOND WOE



The Sixth Trumpet

brings together the largest army ever assembled on earth. It numbers 200mill. and is responsible for the death of one third of mankind. This operation is demonically organized for a specific time. Yet men will not repent of idolatry and sin (9:13-21). **The first 3½ yrs is passed (Rev.11:3,14).**

THIRD WOE



The Seventh Trumpet

announces the kingdom of Christ. The time has come for God to destroy them that destroy the earth. The time to reap has come, and the kingdoms of earth will be compelled to submit to Christ. The seventh trumpet completes prophecy to the coming of the Lord, and releases the seven vials (Rev.10:7-11; 11:15-19; 15:1-8).

The Seven Vial Judgments

The vials are described as "*the seven last plagues*" (Rev.15:1; 21:9). They bring us to the **second 3½ years of the Tribulation.**



The First Vial

A grievous sore falls on all who have the mark of the beast or worship his image (Rev.16:2).



The Second Vial

The sea is turned to blood and every living soul in the sea dies (Rev.16:3).



The Third Vial

The rivers and drinking water are turned to blood as punishment for shedding the blood of saints (Rev.16:4-7).



The Fourth Vial

The sun is judged and men are scorched with great heat yet do not repent (Rev.16:8-9).



The Fifth Vial

The kingdom of the Beast is filled with darkness and disease yet they do not repent (Rev.16:10-11).



The Sixth Vial

Euphrates dries up for the armies of the kings of the east to come to Armageddon (Rev.16:12-16).



The Seventh Vial

A great earthquake flattens the cities of the nations and Mystery Babylon is judged (Rev.16:17-21; ch17 & ch18).



iii) The Rise, Reign, and Ruin of Antichrist (Rev.6:1-2; 13:1-18; 17:1-18; 19:19-20)

When the Rapture takes place and the Holy Spirit indwelling the true Church is removed, all hindrance to the "*mystery of iniquity*" (2Thess.2:7) will be gone. The apostate Church will remain and continue to support the Revived Roman Empire (the EU) as it is today.

Explanations will have to be provided for millions of missing persons whose clothes will be left exactly where they were, as a testimony, in the same manner as Jesus' clothes were left in the tomb.

The Middle East crisis will need resolution, and Israel will be under tremendous threat from rising Islamic fundamentalism linked to Russia.

The Rise of Antichrist (Rev.6:2)

Immediately after the Rapture, Antichrist will appear as the rider on the white horse having a bow (military capacity) but no arrow (peacably). His first peace initiative will confirm a "*covenant with many for one week* (seven years)" (Dan.9:27). (See Section2). As the great peacemaker he will appear to have the solution to many of the problems confronting the world. His covenant, or treaty, will involve Israel, because halfway through the 7 years the agreement is broken resulting in interference in Jewish Temple worship;

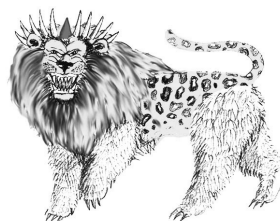
"he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation"(Dan.9:27).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Antichrist will come out of the Revived Roman Empire, for we read in Dan 9:26 that *"the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary"* (the Temple). It is a fact of history that the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD, and therefore the **Antichrist must be a Roman prince**.

Also the Antichrist is seen as the "little horn" on the head of the fourth beast in Daniel's vision recorded in Dan 7. This fourth beast represents the *"fourth kingdom on earth"* (Dan. 7:23): Babylon, Persia, Greece, and **Rome** continuing right down to the day when Christ comes, *"whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions (rulers) shall serve and obey him"* (Dan.7:27).

Antichrist will be the ruler over the final stage of the Roman Empire which we see coming together under the banner of the European Union (EU). Immediately after the Rapture he will appear and confirm the covenant with Israel for seven years (See Section 3)).



The Reign of Antichrist (Rev 13:1-18; 17:1-18).

Two beasts are seen rising on the world scene. The first comes out of the sea and is given *"his power, and his seat (throne) and great authority"* by the dragon, or Satan (See Rev.12:9). He is seen as a beast with seven heads and ten horns, having a mouth like a lion, feet like a bear, and a body like a leopard. Here we recognize the likeness of the four beasts in Daniel's vision (Dan 7).

The main difference with Daniel's beast is the seven heads, which are *"seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth"* (Rev.17:9). The woman, as we shall see, is apostate Christendom, which had not been revealed in Old Testament times but was a reality in John's day. (Rev.17:1-18; Eph.3:3-9; Rom.16:25-26; Col.1:24-27).

Antichrist will capture the worship of people all over the world by spectacular "miracles" which he and his **false prophet** will perform. *"He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven...in the sight of men"* (Rev.13:13). He will have military power, and people will say, *"Who is able to make war with him?"* (Rev.13:4). He will blaspheme God and the Temple, and turn against the saints, ie Israel and the Gentile believers (Rev.13:7).

Antichrist is a political head of state, but just as the Ceasars demanded worship and sacrifices, so *"the man of sin"* will exalt *"himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"* (2Thess.2:4). To administer

his new religion Antichrist will have his chief priest -**the false prophet (the second beast)**.

It will be halfway through the seven-year treaty with Israel that Antichrist will:

- 1) Turn on apostate Christendom which assisted him to power (the harlot woman Rev 17), and burn her with fire (Rev.17:16-18).
- 2) Break his covenant with the now-converted nation of Israel (See Section 4)), and persecute the nation mercilessly.
- 3) Move into the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem and set up the "*abomination (idol) of desolation*" (Matt.24:15; Dan.9:27; 11:36-39).
- 4) Control all commercial activity. His mark 666 will have to be accepted in order to buy or sell (Rev.13:16-17).

This period of blasphemous rule will last for 42 months, 1260 days or three and one half years (Rev.13:5; 12:6,14), until Christ comes.

The Seven Heads (Rev.17:9-10)

The seven heads are also descriptive of seven kings (or kingdoms). Five had fallen in John's day, one was present in John's day, and one was yet to come, and there would be an eighth who would be the beast, Antichrist himself.

This beast comes out of the sea which is symbolic of the Gentile nations (Dan.7:2-3). He is the final Gentile world ruler and completes the "*times of the Gentiles*" (Lu.21:24). The seven heads therefore represent the following:

"Five are fallen" - Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Greece were past history.

"One is" - Rome existed in John's day and continued to 1804 as the Holy Roman Empire. Attempts to revive it under Napoleon, Kaiser and Hitler failed.

"One is not yet come" but continues for "*a short space*" - This is the Revived Roman Empire emerging as the EU in our present day.

Antichrist is the eighth and is "*of the seven*" and goes into perdition (ruin) at Christ's second coming as described in Rev.19:20. He is cast into "*a lake of fire*".

The Ten Horns (Rev.13:1; 17:3,12)

The ten horns refer to "*ten kings*" which make up Antichrist's kingdom.

"The ten horns... are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev.17:12).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

The Revived Roman Empire is currently dissolving internal borders between member countries under the Schengen Agreement and discussion is going on about regionalizing the EU. When the population of the EU approaches 500 million with the inclusion of Eastern European countries, it will be necessary to divide the whole into manageable elements, and this may result in **division into ten states** answering to a central head - Antichrist.

The False Prophet (Rev.13:11-18)

Jesus warned of great deception in the last days. He spoke of "false Christs" Matt.24:5,24), and "false prophets"(Matt.24:11,24), and said these would "shew great signs and wonders". This would be at the same time as the "abomination of desolation" was set up in the holy place of the Temple, and all of this would occur during the Great Tribulation immediately prior to the return of the Lord to the earth.

The modern-day false prophets are following the same pattern. They engage in signs, healings, miracles, "slaying in the spirit", "holy laughter", talking in tongues, casting out demons, making prophecies, etc etc. All of this is preparing the world for the ultimate "faith healer" and supernatural miracle worker, and his false prophet. So convincing will he be, that apart from Divine protection the elect nation of Israel would be deceived into thinking he was the promised Messiah.

Jesus said,

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"(Matt.7:22-23).

The Harlot Woman (Rev.17:1-18; 18:1-24; 19:1-3)

The beast with seven heads and ten horns is seen ridden by a harlot woman arrayed in "gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations (idolatry) and filthiness of her fornication"(Rev 17:4).

Identification of the woman is obvious from the following clues:

1) She is international. She sits "upon many waters" which are "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev.17:1,15).

2) She is political. "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev.17:2).



This graphic appeared in *Time* magazine 9 Dec. '91 in an article about the EU.

3) She is exceedingly wealthy. She is "*decked with gold and precious stones and pearls*" (Rev.17:4), and when destroyed, merchants will cry, "*so great riches is come to nought*" (Rev.18:17).

4) She is idolatrous. Her name is "*Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots*". Babylon was where idolatry began, and the golden chalice in her hand is symbolic of her worst idolatry. The Roman Mass is a blasphemous, idolatrous sacrifice at the heart of the worship of apostate Christendom (Rev.17:4-5).

5) She is guilty of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. "*I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*" (Rev.17:6). The Church of Rome has slaughtered faithful believers for more than 1,000 years! Its history is written in blood.

6) She has her headquarters at Rome. Rome is the city of "seven hills" (Rev.17:9) and was "*that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*" in John's day, AD96 (Rev.17:18).



The flag of the European Union bears the twelve stars of the Virgin Mary, and the EU has been described as "fortress Christendom". Turkey has been refused entry to the EU because it is a Muslim nation and therefore not acceptable to Europe's "Christian Club". The Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew, stated: "Preserving the unity of Europe is the foremost duty of all Churches today".

After the Rapture there will be nothing to hinder the formation of one World Church and Rome will be its leader. Ultimately, however, Antichrist will not tolerate its political activity or religious competition, and will burn her with fire (Rev.17:16-17). The horrific judgment that falls on her is described in Revelation chapter 18.

The Ruin of Antichrist (Rev.19:20)

At Christ's coming, "*the beast was taken and with him the false prophet...These both were cast alive into a lake of fire*".

Other Scriptures describing the judgment of Antichrist are discussed on page 70.

The Tribulation is Distinctly Jewish

Israel takes the centre stage as God's witness during the Great Tribulation:

1) There is no mention of the Church on earth from chapter 6 to chapter 18, ie during the Tribulation.

2) Israel, the Temple, Jerusalem, and Jewish prophets are referred to in these chapters (ie chs. 7; 11; 12; and 14).

3) In Revelation ch.7, martyrs from all nations are described as those who "*came out of [the] great tribulation*" (Rev.7:14). The definite article "the" is present in the Greek. The events described from chapters 6 to 18 are the "*day of the Lord*", or Great Tribulation about which Jesus spoke in Matt.24; 21, 29.

4) The Olivet Discourse describes the Great Tribulation and is entirely Jewish, since the Church did not begin until 55 days later. It teaches that the period of Great Tribulation **immediately precedes** the second coming of Christ to the earth and reference is made to Jerusalem, Judaea, the holy place, and the sabbath day.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened...and THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...(Matt.24:29).

5) The return and deliverance of Israel in the last days is elsewhere connected with unprecedented judgments of the last days. Jeremiah says,

*"For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah...and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it...Alas! for that day is great, so that **none is like it**: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; **but he shall be saved out of it**" (Jer.30:3-7).*

6) Daniel also foretells the Great Tribulation and links that time with Israel's deliverance.

*"At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and AT THAT TIME **thy people shall be delivered...**" (Dan.12:1).*

7) Other Scriptures speak of a **Jewish Temple** during the Day of the Lord (Great Tribulation) where Antichrist will set up his idol for worship:

*"That day shall not come (ie the Day of the Lord), except there be a falling away (lit "the departure") first, and that man of sin be revealed...who...exalteth himself...so that he as God sitteth **in the temple of God**, shewing himself that he is God (2Thess.2:3-4). See also*

Matt.24:15, where the "*abomination of desolation*" is set up in the Jewish Temple ("*the holy place*") during the Tribulation.

8) Antichrist will cause the "*sacrifice and oblation to cease*" halfway through the Tribulation (Dan.9:27). This implies that Israel must be re-established in the land and have recommenced Temple worship. Certainly the Church won't build the Temple and offer sacrifices. It must be Israel! For a full discussion on the "70 Weeks" prophecy see Section 2.

These Scriptures and many more connect Israel with the Great Tribulation period and with the coming of Christ to reign over the earth. It is not surprising therefore that considerable detail is found in Revelation about Israel as God's witness in that short period of time before Christ returns.

144,000 Jewish Witnesses

Revelation chapter 7 describes the sealing of 144,000 "*servants of God*" out of the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 7:1-8). The Father's seal is placed in their forehead for protection from the judgments of God that are about to fall, which indicates that this Tribulation is not the same as the tribulation that Christians endure. Christians may be persecuted by the world, but the Great Tribulation is judgment **from God**.

A similar thing happened in Ezekiel's day, when he saw a vision of God's judgment which was about to fall on Jerusalem. A man with an inkhorn was told to put a mark on the forehead of all the men in Jerusalem who "*sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof*" (Ezek. 9:4). Then six men with swords passed through the city, and only those with the mark were spared!

Only the Jewish nation could carry out the task of preaching the Gospel of the coming kingdom across the world in such a short time. Jews are the most international race and the most multilingual people on the face of the earth. Jesus said,

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt.24:14).

The result of their preaching will be a great company of Gentile martyrs:

"Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne (in heaven)...And he said to me, These are they which came out of (the) great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev.7:9-17).

The Construction of the Temple (Rev.11:1-13)

Instructions are given in chapter 11 to measure and build the Temple at Jerusalem. John is told:

*"Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But **the court** which is outside the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."*

This suggests that the Temple will be built in the open space next to the Gentile mosques, where the foundations of Herod's Temple have already been located. The Jews plan to build the Temple and collection of the holy half shekel began in 1997 for this purpose. See Section 5.

The Two Jewish Prophets (Rev.11:3-13)

Two Jewish prophets (witnesses) are associated with the reconstruction of the Temple and the restoration of Temple worship. These are to testify for 1,260 days, or three and one half years, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, which indicates that they are calling Israel to repentance. We read concerning them:

*"These are the **two olive trees**, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth"(Rev.11:4).*

This is an obvious reference to "*two olive trees*" mentioned in Zechariah's prophecy chapter 4. Here the Temple was being rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity, and because of opposition from the Samaritans the work had ceased. The Samaritans had obtained **an international decree** from the Persian ruler Artaxerxes to stop the work (Ezra 4:21). God raised up two Spirit-filled prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, who urged the people to complete the Temple and defy the Persian edict. Finally the edict was reversed in the reign of Darius, and the Temple was completed in 516 BC, twenty years after its commencement.

These two olive trees provide olive oil to the candlestick, and we read:

*"These are the **two anointed ones**, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech.4:14).*

During the Tribulation there will be two similar witnesses (prophets) who will encourage Israel to proceed, in spite of international opposition, to rebuild the Temple. In 2005 Jews can't pray on the Temple Mount, but that situation will be reversed, as it was in Zechariah's day, to allow the Temple to be built.

Some have suggested that these two prophets would be Moses and Elijah because of similarities in miracles performed. It is more likely

that they will be two godly Jewish prophets out of the "144,000 servants of God"; most likely from the tribe of Levi.

It is interesting that the **national symbol of the nation of Israel** since 1948 has been the seven-lamp candlestick and two olive trees, as depicted in Zechariah 4.

The two prophets are finally killed by Antichrist and their bodies will lie for three and one half days in a street of Jerusalem. The earth will rejoice to celebrate the victory of Antichrist over God's servants, no doubt interpreted as demonstrating his greater powers, but then we read they are given resurrection bodies.

"They heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour there was a great earthquake... and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven"(Rev.11:12-13).

This cannot be spiritualized, for we read,

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city...where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev.11:8).

We know that Jesus Christ our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, and the events described **must therefore be taken literally!**

Israel's History from Beginning to End (Rev.12)

In Revelation 12 we have a panoramic view of the nation of Israel described in the figure of a woman, who is

"clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev.12:1).

The woman gives birth to a "man child" who is destined to "rule all nations with a rod of iron". At the time of the child's birth, the dragon, who is defined as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world", seeks to destroy the child "as soon as it was born". The man child, however, is "caught up unto God, and to his throne".

Israel is depicted as the woman through whom Jesus Christ came. Satan tried to kill Him as a child. He will one day "rule all nations with a rod of iron", as David said.

*"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (Gentiles) for thine inheritance...**Thou shalt break***

Israel's National Emblem



Zech 4
Haggai & Zechariah
encourage the
Rebuilding of
the Second Temple

Rev 11
Two future Prophets
encourage the
Rebuilding of
the Third Temple

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them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps.2:7-9).

The nation of Israel is identified in Scripture with the sun, moon, and stars. In Genesis we read that Joseph had a dream and told his brothers,

*"Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the **sun and the moon and the eleven stars** made obeisance to me...his father rebuked him, and said unto him...Shall **I and thy mother and thy brethren** indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"*(Gen.37:9-10).

The **sun** represented Israel, the **moon** represented Joseph's mother, and the **twelve stars** represented the children of Israel. Only by comparing Scripture with Scripture in this way can we discern the meaning of the symbols in the Bible.

Paul wrote of Israel,

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom.9:5).

A Gap in Israel's History

Next we read that

"the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev.12:6)(1,260 days=42 months=3¹/₂ years).

This period of 1,260 days is clearly the second half of the 7 years of Tribulation, after Antichrist has *"caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease"* in the midst of the *"week"* (Dan 9:27).

Nothing is said about Israel from the ascension of Christ until this last seven years just prior to Christ's Second Advent! Why? Because that is the mystery Church Age. It was *"the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began"*(Rom.16:25).

Failure to recognize this gap renders understanding of Bible prophecy impossible.

Israel in Tribulation (Rev.12:6-17)

The second half of the Great Tribulation will be horrific for Israel. The nation at this stage is believing in Jesus Christ, and Satan has been cast into the earth. The faith of Israel in the face of this threatened holocaust is steadfast, and God declares from heaven:

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down...And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"(Rev.12:10-11).

Only a short time remains, and Satan has great wrath *"because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"* (Rev.12:12). He is enraged against the woman (Israel), and goes out to *"make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (Rev.12:17).

God will have special help for His persecuted people, a place of hiding in a wilderness (Rev.12:14). Some think this is the city of Petra or elsewhere in caves of the Judaeen wilderness. Antichrist's attempts to flush them out will fail (Rev.12:15-16), and as Jesus said, *"for the elect's sake (Israel's sake) those days shall be shortened"* (Matt.24:22).

If Satan could destroy Israel completely, then God's purposes to establish a kingdom on earth and to fulfil all His promises to Abraham and his seed would be defeated.

v) Christ's Second Coming Rev.19:1-21)

The Great Tribulation concludes with the appearance of Christ in the clouds of heaven and the *"Alleluia"* chorus is heard, the only time the word is used in the Bible.

Christ comes as *Lamb* and *Bridegroom* (vs.7,9), *Faithful and True* (v.11), *The Word of God* (v.13), and *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords* (v.16). The sword from His mouth smites the nations who are *"gathered together to make war against Him"* (v.19), and the beast and his false prophet are *"cast alive into a lake of fire"* (v.20). Christ's victory is complete.

Many Scriptures give vivid descriptions of the day of Christ's appearing, and these help us to understand the greatness of the occasion. No one passage of Scripture can describe all aspects of His triumph.

The event must be seen from the perspective of the Church fresh from receiving rewards for service at the bema seat. The Bride *"hath made herself ready"* (Rev.19:7), and she comes forth with her Bridegroom to the marriage supper of the Lamb. At this time He will come *"to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ...in that day"* (2 Thess.1:10). To contemplate the vast number of souls saved during this Church Age is difficult indeed, but the excitement of such a gathering is mind-boggling.

Can we grasp the mood of such a moment? The apostles, an army of martyrs, faithful missionaries, and ordinary Christians like you and me, will be displayed in all the perfection of Christ. *"We shall be like*

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him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). There in the heavens will be not only the **display of His glory**, but also the **evidence of His grace**. Millions of redeemed souls who have been lifted out of the pit of sin will give eternal testimony *"to the praise of the glory of his grace"*(Eph.1:6).

As A.T.Pierson put it:

*All these once were sinners defiled in His sight,
Now arrayed in pure garments, in praise they unite:
Unto Him who hath loved us and washed us from sin,
Unto Him be the glory, for ever. Amen.*

The spectators on that day will be countless angels. Michael, Gabriel, Seraphims and Cherubims, and ministering spirits who have watched over the heirs of salvation will fix their gaze on the Lord of Glory!

On earth, the scene will be quite different. The armies of the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem (Zech.14:2-3) displaying the rage of the kings of the earth. There two armies meet; the army of the King of Kings against the army of the kings of the earth (Rev.19:19). This will be the culmination of Antichrist's fury against Christ, *"against the Lord, and against his anointed"* (Ps.2:2), but the outcome is never in doubt.

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives..."(Zech.14:3-4). *"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"*(Rev.19:15).

Isaiah paints a vivid picture of this conflict:

*"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save...I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me...For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and **the year of my redeemed is come**"* (Isa.63:1-4).

Israel will be the Lord's redeemed people waiting for their Messiah. At first the nation will be plunged into mourning (Zech.12:10), as they reflect on how they nailed Him to a Roman cross. The nailprints will still be visible, and *"one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"*(Zech.13:6).

Then sorrow will be turned into joy, and the cry will go up:

*"Lo, **this is our God**; we have waited for him, and he will save us: **this is the LORD**; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa.25:9). **"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah;** We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" [lit. 'the rock of ages'] (Isa. 26:1-4).*

Many of the psalms will take on a new meaning after the Lord comes. Israel will be able to sing psalms like Ps 46.

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very **present help in trouble**. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the **mountains be carried into the midst of the sea**; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the **mountains shake** with the swelling thereof. Selah...**The heathen raged**, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted....Come, behold the works of the LORD, **what desolations he hath made in the earth**. He maketh **wars to cease** unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; **he burneth the chariot** in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps.46:1-11).*

The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt.25:31-46)

During the Great Tribulation there will be three classes of people on earth.

1) The Jewish nation. (The Lord's "brethren" Matt.25:40) At first 144,000 will turn to the Lord and preach the Gospel of the kingdom. Later, during the first half of the Tribulation when the Russian/Muslim nations invade the land, the whole nation will turn to the Lord. *"So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward" (Ezek.39:22).* So when Christ comes, all of surviving Israel will be saved (Rom.11:26-27) and watching for their Lord to return.

Many Jewish believers will be killed for their faith in Christ, including the 144,000 servants of God who are seen in heaven singing a new song *"before the throne"* while the Tribulation is continuing (Rev.14:1-5).

2) The Saved Gentiles. These will be saved through the testimony of the Jewish remnant. During the Tribulation these

Gentiles will support the persecuted Jewish witnesses with food and clothing. They will visit them when sick or cast into prison. These Gentiles will refuse to worship the idol of Antichrist and will not take his mark on their hand or forehead.

A great number of saved Gentiles will die as martyrs for Christ, and we see them *"before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes"* (Rev.7:9-10). These are raised as part of the first resurrection at the end of the Great Tribulation. We read about these in Revelation ch. 20.

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ 1,000 years" (Rev.20:4).

3) The Unsavd Gentiles. These will be those who follow the Antichrist, receive his mark, and worship his idol image.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark...the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"(Rev 14:9-11).

The Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will stand before the Lord at the *"throne of his glory"* (Matt.25:31), where He will separate the **sheep** from the **goats** after He has gathered together *"his elect"* nation Israel (Matt.24:31). The evidence of salvation in **the sheep** will be that they stood with the Lord's brethren.

*"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdomInasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of **these my brethren**, ye have done it unto me" (Matt.25:34-40).*

The **goats** go into *"everlasting fire"* because they did not stand with either Jewish believers or Gentile believers.

*"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of **the least of these**, (sheep) ye did it not to me" (Matt.25:45).*

vi) Christ's Millennial Kingdom (1,000 Years of Peace - Rev.20)

Millions have prayed it for nearly 2,000 years; the Lord's Prayer will finally be answered. *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"*(Matt.6:10).

The duration of this kingdom will be 1,000 years. Six times the period is specifically mentioned in Rev.20:2 to 7 as follows:

- 1) Satan will be bound for 1,000 years (v.2)
- 2) Satan will be sealed in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (v.3)
- 3) Thrones are established and the Tribulation saints, living and dead, will reign with Christ for 1,000 years (v.4)
- 4) The rest of the dead, the unsaved, will await the **second resurrection** at the end of 1,000 years (v.5)
- 5) The **first resurrection** includes only the saved, who will be priests of God and of Christ and reign with Him 1,000 years (v.6)
- 6) At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from his prison for a "*little season*" (Rev.20:3) and will deceive the nations once more. He will stir up Gog and Magog to surround the "*camp of the saints*" and "*the beloved city*" (Rev.20:9), Jerusalem, where the Millennial Temple and the glory of God will be present. This final rebellion will be judged with fire from heaven, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet will have already been for 1,000 years (Rev.20:7-10).

(The previous invasion of Israel by Gog was destroyed "*on the mountains of Israel*" during the Tribulation (Ezek.38&39) **before Israel repented** and could be called "saints". The details of each attack are quite different.)

vii) The New Heaven and New Earth- Revelation Chapters 21 and 22

At the conclusion of the millennial kingdom, the earth will be destroyed with fire and the eternal order will ensue. All of the saved from the Kingdom Age must receive a resurrection body and therefore the final stage of the first resurrection will occur at the end of the 1,000 years.

The Resurrections of the Just and the Unjust (John 5:29)

The first resurrection has been likened to a harvest which is gathered in three stages; there is the firstfruits, the main harvest, and the gleanings.

When Christ rose, He led Old Testament saints from paradise into heaven. Christ was "*the firstfruits of them that slept*" (1 Cor.15:20; Matt.27:52-53).

The great **harvest** occurs at the Rapture of the Church (1Thess.4:13-18) with **gleanings** at the end of the Tribulation (Rev.20:6) and again at the end of the millennial kingdom. The first resurrection is for the saved.

The **second resurrection** occurs as one event at the end of the millenium when all the unsaved from the beginning of time will stand before the great white throne, not to determine their eternal destiny, but to receive degrees of punishment in the lake of fire according to their works (Rev.20:11-15).

The New Jerusalem and the New Earth

A detailed description of the new Jerusalem is given in chapter 21. It is undoubtedly the place that Jesus has gone to prepare (John14:1-3). Its magnificence defies our imagination. Its streets, walls, gates, light, and materials will have to be seen to be appreciated.

It seems that the new Jerusalem is associated with the Church, for when the angel said to John, *"Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife"*, John says, *"he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"* (Rev.21:9-10). The names of the twelve apostles are on its foundations (Rev.21:14), and the Church is *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"* (Eph.2:20).

The nations from other ages will *"walk in the light"* of that city and *"bring their glory and honour into it"* (Rev.21:24), but the city will be the abode of the Bride of the Lamb!

Finally, the curse will be removed from creation and there will be no more sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, but the throne of God will be there. Everyone will have a sinless resurrection body.

We conclude with one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible:

*"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And **they shall see his face**; and his name shall be in their foreheads"* (Rev.22:3-4).

The Final Appeal

As we conclude our studies in the Book of the Revelation, we stand on the shores of eternity. The opportunity to trust Christ for salvation has forever passed. Destinies are eternally sealed. If souls are eternally lost, it will only be because they refused to come and take the free gift of eternal life. Three times we hear the cry, *"Come, Come, Come."*

It is not surprising that in the final chapter we read God's gracious invitation.

*"The Spirit and the bride (the Church) say , **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"* (Rev.22:17).