

MAKE IT PLAIN

BY RAY EWART

**A STRAIGHTFORWARD STATEMENT
FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE**

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**And the LORD answered me, and said,
“Write the vision, and MAKE IT PLAIN” ... Habakkuk 2.2**

I have endeavoured to be

BRIEF – that I might not consume much of the readers time.

CANDID – in quoting extracts from Scripture that the reader may know that no attempt is being made to pervert the truth, and

DIRECT – that the reader may have no difficulty in understanding the message.

Habakkuk 2.2:

“And the LORD answered me, and said, “Write the vision, and **MAKE IT PLAIN** upon tables, that he may run that readeth it”.

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations of Scripture have been taken from the King James Version.

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FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

I regard it as a privilege to be asked to write a Foreword to my valued friend's first book. I have long noticed that many of God's true people tend to run to two opposite extremes. Some have added all kinds of prophetic theories (admitted by them to be quite unknown through the centuries) to the Word of God. The effect has been to make the study of Scripture prophecy so complicated that average believers have regarded it as too intricate to fathom for themselves. They think it best left to the "experts", whose divisions and interpretations have to be followed in every detail or else one is "unsound" and departing from the "fundamentals"! They overlook the basic fact that it is every person's duty to "search the Scriptures" – not to find proof texts to support favourite authors, but to see whether all the statements contained in their books are genuine Bible truths.

The other extreme – now come amongst us at the least appropriate time in history, one would think – is to swing violently away from the first attitude and avoid the study of unfulfilled prophecy altogether, interpreting the plainest passages in the most vague and unnatural ways.

The author has used the best method of all, taking Scriptures as they stand to prove his point, as would be done in any other doctrine. These serious days in which we find ourselves are certainly not the days in which we may bolster the people of God with false hopes of escape from the Conflict of the Ages. Nor is it an appropriate time to throw away the only guide we have to lead us through the maze. I thoroughly share my friend's earnest desire to **MAKE IT PLAIN**.

(PASTOR) HARRY D BLAKE

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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

When I wrote this book (over twenty five years ago) I was concerned about two things in particular:

1. The seeming vastness of the number of people who do not pay attention to the Word of God.
2. The number of Christians who have been lulled into a false sense of security by the unscriptural notion that they will escape all the end time troubles.

As I reviewed and updated this book, I discovered that twenty plus years have served to only increase my concerns.

Perhaps if I had been writing the book now, rather than twenty years ago, I would have used the wording of the New King James Version for extra clarity but in reviewing it I have left the quotations as they are. I have, however, made a few changes to my own wording of some thoughts.

My own efforts to awaken people to take these things seriously are feeble and ineffective, unless God chooses to take them and use them, for nothing short of revival prompted by God the Spirit will lift us out of apathy, indifference, unbelief or misbelieve.

As I review this book, the current dreadful Palestinian/Israeli situation in the Middle East, has suddenly escalated into virtual open war (today is 12 October 2000).

Perilous situations have come and gone, but who knows when the actual situation, that triggers the beginning of the series of the end time events, that will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ, will occur.

Ray Ewart

1. TROUBLE IS COMING

Almost everyone is interested in the future. The degree of interest may vary greatly from person to person as may the motives for wanting to know what lies ahead. Individual reactions to knowledge gained may differ but nevertheless the greater part of humanity is united by a desire to know for sure what will happen beyond tomorrow.

Surely the chief duty of anyone who writes about the future is to state clearly what he or she suspects, believes or knows will happen. The things that are certain should be published in terms which leave no doubt in the mind of the reader. No better advice can be followed than the instruction given to the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk ... **"make it plain"** (**Habakkuk 2.2**).

The world has entered a period of happenings from which it will not emerge until every nation is disturbed and every government is toppled to give way to one world ruler who will judge righteously. The events are so important and their effects will be so dramatic that those who know about them must declare them in words which cannot be misunderstood.

We need make no apology for saying that we know for sure that an event will take place when we see it written in the Word of God. God is truth and from Him all truth emerges. I affirm that my first and final proof that what I say is true, is that Scripture records it. Here I stand and from this standpoint I have written this book.

For the sake of clarity I will avoid theological terms wherever possible. Extracts from Scripture will be taken from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

But be assured that trouble is coming to this world, in the days that lie ahead.

WHY TROUBLE?

There is no shortage of trouble in the world today. To be told that it will increase in the future does not make you walk with a lighter step. To be further told that it will increase sharply, to a degree never before experienced at any time in the history of this world, might draw comments from some to the effect that we would be better not to know about it at all. This reaction would be entirely wrong, and one of my reasons for writing this book is to show just how wrong this attitude is.

The writer who was instructed to make plain what he knew was about to come to pass, was burdened about the iniquity and violence already rampant.

“The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see, O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear, even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save. Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgement proceedeth” (Habakkuk 1.1-4).

I find myself to be in the same position. What words can we use to describe the emotions many of us feel when we consider the increase in crime, the lowering of moral standards, the persecution of Christians in many countries, the terrorist activities plaguing many nations, the starving millions, the black versus white struggle, the Arab versus Israeli conflict, and so many other problems?

Nevertheless Habakkuk had to tell of greater trouble to come. The truth had to be proclaimed no matter how it would be received. It was so close and so important that people had to be warned.

“Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgement and their dignity shall proceed themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for

violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand” (Habakkuk 1.5-9).

Again I find myself in the same position as that writer. Greater trouble is coming for us on a world wide scale.

History records the accuracy of Habakkuk’s words and we can, if we are willing, learn to believe the Word of God when we see so many parts of it fulfilled as this part was.

If we are to derive benefit in our generation, we need to believe the Word of God and follow its advice, before the greater trouble comes.

It would seem natural to me to ask, “Why is there so much trouble in the world today?” Habakkuk asked,

“Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?” (Habakkuk 1.3).

Indeed, this question has often passed the lips of puzzled inquirers. Another question then follows. “Why should there be even more trouble?”

The answer is the same to both questions – **“There is no other way”**. Trouble is necessary and unavoidable, but the forces of evil that cause it, and the followers of evil who sadistically enjoy certain facets of it, have had their days numbered.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24.6).

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Matthew 18.7).

God often uses one evil force to smite another and ultimately He will deal with all evil, Himself.

In actual fact, it is God’s desire to give opportunity to individuals to learn and obey the truth of the gospel of grace, that causes Him to permit the present state of affairs to continue to its predetermined conclusion.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away

with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3.9-10).

WHEN IS IT COMING?

Whilst there are many things we know without shadow of doubt, there are many more things which we do not know.

"For now we see through glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13.12).

One thing we do not know with any precision is the timing of certain events.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1.6-7).

When speaking of His return Christ said,

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24.36).

On the other side of the scale, we have to take note that Christ rebuked the religious leaders of two thousand years ago, for not being able to recognise the times they were living in. Many predicted "signs" had been fulfilled. They should have known that He was The Messiah.

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16.1-3).

Signs have been set for us today that we might know that we are close to the second coming of Christ. Many of these signs are given in general terms, but many are quite specific. Many recorded happenings of the period of widespread trouble are described so accurately, that there will be no doubt in the mind of any child of God that we are actually in that

period, when the things take place. Several significant individuals will appear on the scene, and they will be fully recognizable.

It would, however, be advantageous to know slightly in advance that this great tribulation is coming. **Well, there has been a significant happening in recent years which may well show us that the troubles I am referring to are not very far way.**

Since the Roman Legions under Titus took Jerusalem in A.D. 70, that city has been in Gentile hands until the six-day war in June 1967. Christ told his disciples that the Gentiles would control Jerusalem, from the time Titus would take it. The times of the Gentiles would, however, not last forever.

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Luke 21.20).

Christ spoke here of the coming of the Roman Legions for destruction of the city. He went on to say,

*“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 21.24).*

It is recorded that over one million people perished in the five month siege and the storming of the city. History bears witness to the scattering of the Jews among the nations of the world.

We have, however, seen, in recent years, the progressive return of Israelis to their God-given land. On 14th May 1948, Israel became a nation again with a national home, but Jerusalem was not fully recovered by them until June 1967. Moshe Dayan, the general who led Israel to victory, went to the “wailing wall” and said, “We have returned to our holiest of holy places, never to leave her again”. His words typify the determination of the Israelis.

Having given us this clear sign Christ went on to speak of the distress and perplexity there would be, mentioning other things that would happen and said,

“So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21.31-32).

The implications could be tremendous. When the Gentiles cease to rule over Jerusalem, we are within a generation of Christ's physical return to take the reins of government. The recapture of Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1967 may well be once for all, never to be reversed. It may have marked the end of "the times of the Gentiles". If not, it should at least alert us to the possible close proximity of such an event.

MANY MORE THINGS

Perhaps I make it appear that the conclusion that Christ may return, within the normal life span of some people living in the world today, rests entirely on one's interpretation of **Luke 21 verses 24 and 31-32**, in light of the six-day Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. This is not the case. There are many more things which lead me to conclude that Christ's coming is close. The apostasy in church circles, the rise of Satan worship, the emergence of the European Economic Community, the Ecumenical Movement, modern technological developments, seemingly insoluble problems confronting major nations, and many other things in the world today, can be seen, in varying degrees of clarity, as predicted in the Word of God to come to pass in the years preceding Christ's glorious return to earth.

My purpose, however, has been to choose the simplest indication of the proximity of the coming trouble.

Before jumping to conclusions, however, we need to consider what other Scriptures say on the same subject. For example, **Mathew 24.33** says, "*.. when ye shall see **ALL THESE THINGS**, know that it is near, even at the doors*". So the return of Christ (and the troubles that proceed His return) will be heralded by the fulfilment of several prophecies, for example:

- The preaching of the gospel "in all the world" (**Matthew 24.14**).
- The rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem (for there to be the "holy place" spoken of in **Matthew 24.15**).
- The defiling of the "holy place" spoken of in **Matthew 24.15** – which itself necessitates the appearance of "the man of sin" who will defile it (**2 Thessalonians 2.3-4**).

HOW LONG IS A GENERATION

More than one view could be taken of what is meant by a generation in the Word of God.

Many would contend that the 70 or 80 years mentioned in **Psalm 90.10** is the measure of a generation.

Others believe that Moses, in being inspired to write Psalm 90, was referring to the judgement God pronounced on the generation who refused to go in and possess the promised land (**Numbers 14.29**). In the forty years of wandering in the wilderness a whole generation died. Many died before the age of 70, some survived to 80 or a little more, but around 70 would have been common.

There is reason to claim that the reduction in life span mentioned in **Genesis 6.3** is the only reduction the Lord made. On this basis a generation would be 120 years. Moses himself lived to that age. Others have lived longer, but, in today's world the longest recorded lives are of this order.

Whichever view you take, if the recapture of Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1967 marks the end of "the times of the Gentiles", the time from then until the return of the Lord will not be long.

HOW MUCH MORE TROUBLE?

When I first read the inspired accounts of the trouble to come, I was staggered. It will be of such an intensity, and over such a wide area, that it is easy to understand how it will have such an effect on individuals as is recorded in **Luke 21.25-26**.

"And 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 looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken".

The reaction of the true children of God should differ from the reaction of those who do not know God.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21.28).

Predicted coming events are without precedent. We will see:

(I) VEGETATION AFFECTED

“And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up” (Revelation 8.7).

(II) MARINE LIFE AFFECTED

“And the second angel sounded, and as it were 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” (Revelation 8.8-9).

(III) FRESH WATER AFFECTED

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter” (Revelation 8.10-11).

(IV) OUR SOLAR SYSTEM AFFECTED

“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise” (Revelation 8.12).

(V) MANKIND AFFECTED

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river

Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men” (Revelation 9.13-15).

These are but a few of the things which must shortly come to pass on this earth. And they happen against a background of international struggle for power, which will bring to the fore a world dictator whose ability, cunning, ruthlessness and wickedness has never known equal.

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2.8-10).

“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13.6-8).

It is obvious that the trouble will be immense in its proportions.

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and 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 every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12.1).

THE PARALLELS CONTINUE

I have drawn some parallels between the events in the days of Habakkuk and events today. Let me finish this chapter by referring to a few more such parallels.

Habakkuk 2.2-3	Habakkuk's day	Our day
<p><i>"And the Lord answered me and said, Write the Vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it".</i></p>	<p>People were busy, so he had to make the message PLAIN so that the person hastening by would understand it.</p>	<p>People are busy today. We need to make the message equally PLAIN.</p>
<p><i>"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry".</i></p>	<p>God knew the appointed time for events in Habakkuk's day. Habakkuk did not. He had to wait, but to be ready, for everything predicted would surely happen.</p>	<p>God know the timing for events in our day. We do not. We have to wait and be ready. All prophesied end time events will surely occur.</p>

The recapture of Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1967 may have marked the end of "the times of the Gentiles", or it may be the forerunner to an event that will mark its end, but the stage is being set for a series of events that will happen in such quick succession that from start to finish they will be fulfilled within a single generation.

The fulfilment of these events will end this age, and culminate in the return of Jesus Christ. If we are to get this message across to the world today we must **MAKE IT PLAIN**.

2. TROUBLE IS ORGANIZED

The need for organisation is seen in all sorts of activities, whether good, or bad, or a mixture of both. For a business to be successful it needs to be well organised. The bigger the business the more efficient the organisation needs to be. Trouble is big business and is organised as such.

Trade unions play an important role in today's workplace relations (and rightly so). Like employer organisations some of their activities may be good and some of them may not. It would be no mere coincidence, for example, if all of a city's tram drivers or all of a State's train drivers go on strike on the same day. It would be organised action aimed at causing maximum disruption, so that a point can be made, an argument can be won, a concession can be obtained, working conditions improved, or higher pay can be secured. So well organised are such affairs that often many people find themselves unwillingly taking part in a strike and feeling helpless to do anything about it.

When people pay money to gangsters for protection against "trouble", they are not paying for insurance against calamities which might inadvertently happen. They know full well that trouble will be organised for them if they fail to pay.

The sanctions imposed upon one country by others are organised at high level. The troubles in Northern Ireland have been organised both inside and outside that country. The Vietnam war was typical of modern day trouble skilfully sustained in a power struggle affecting almost every corner of the world.

In these days when police organisations are combating ever increasing organised crime, and governments are using more and more of their resources to maintain control of their countries, we do not need to spend many words to convince people that trouble is organised.

THE FUTURE PATTERN

As trouble increases in the world a pattern of organisation will emerge. There will be **three sources of trouble**, each with its own purposes.

1. **“Man’s inhumanity to man”** is almost unbelievable. The total depravity of man will never have been so obvious and open to view as it will be during the great tribulation period, which looms large in the near future. **Man himself** will be a source of colossal trouble, and yet he will be the least of the sources.
2. Many people do not believe that **Satan** exists as a personality, but the number who do believe in him is increasing rapidly as thousands, in countries all over the earth, are turning to him, and pouring out their worship in his direction. He will be the second source of trouble. Being much more capable than man, he will accomplish much more in his evil pursuits.
3. The third source of trouble is the **God of Heaven and Earth**, the Almighty. Unlimited in power, taking counsel with no one, He will unleash His righteous anger on those who stand against Him. Unerringly, and in absolute justice, He will preside over the period which I am about to describe. When God troubles you there is no one who can deliver you from His hand.

It may seem surprising to refer to God as a source of trouble. It will, however, be trouble only for His enemies. Many are His enemies by their own choice, for He would rather have them as friends. God is loving, merciful and gracious, but when people reject His provision for their salvation, and insist on opposing His will, He eventually has to move against them.

MAN

A. Man in general

The words used in Scripture to describe the nature and character of the average unregenerate man, during this black period, do not conjure up a very pleasant picture.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3.1-4).

As a generation, mankind at that time will fully fit the prophetic description:

“There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men” (Proverbs 30.11-14).

With basic material like this to work on the leaders of the nations will have no problems inducing their subjects to carry out atrocities on those they nominate as enemies.

B. Nations and Empires

It does not surprise me that when God speaks about powerful empires, nations or individual rulers, He often refers to them as “**beasts**”. It is a fitting term when one considers the ways in which they climb to their exalted positions, and use their authority. When the prophet Daniel recorded his visions, unfolding events which would occur at the time of Christ’s return to earth, he wrote,

*“As concerning the rest of the **beasts**, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time” (Daniel 7.12).*

World powers (“the rest of the beasts”) will continue to strive with one another until the Lord Himself returns and “their dominion” is taken away. There will be wars of disturbing magnitude like the one recorded by Ezekiel.

“Son of man, set they face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of

Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: 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 his bands: and many people with thee" (Ezekiel 38.2-6).

He tells of the amazing losses to be sustained by these armies.

"And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel" (Ezekiel 39.2).

To have five-sixths of such an army killed in one battle will present quite a problem. He describes it,

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it the Valley of Hamon-gog".

"And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land".

"Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God".

"And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-gog. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land" (Ezekiel 39.11-16).

C. One Leader in particular

Out of the striving for power an individual will rise to a position of supreme importance. He is viewed as one of the symbols of power (a horn) of an empire (a beast) which will arise. He is known as "**THE BEAST**", "*the man of sin*" and "*the son of perdition*" (**Revelation 19.19**).

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Revelation 13.1).

Seeing the same beast in another vision John says,

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom, as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast” (Revelation 17.12).

As a leader he will apparently be ruthless in disposing of those who limit his power or challenge his authority. Daniel saw the same beast arise and noted this characteristic in the individual we are now discussing.

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the 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 man, and a mouth speaking great things” (Daniel 7.7-8).

This individual is of course the “*little horn*”. He will not be content with directing his anger against mankind in the earth but he will burn in hatred towards God.

“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Revelation 13.6).

He will consider it one of his special duties to declare war on the people of God.

“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13.7).

The true people of God will never submit to his evil rule, for he will seek to put himself in the very place of God.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth 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" (2 Thessalonians 2.3-4).

He will, nevertheless, command the admiration, loyalty and worship of the unregenerate.

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13.8).

D. A Supporting Leader

The beast will be greatly helped by another powerful leader who will arise. Scripture gives him, in one place, the title of "***the false prophet***" (Revelation 20.10). No name could be more fitting, for he leads multitudes to worship the false god.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13.11-12).

As a supporter of the "*man of sin*" he will be well fitted in ability to lead people to "*worship the first beast*".

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Revelation 13.13-14).

His depraved nature will lead him to resort to murder to deter disobedience.

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship him the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13.15).

He will put into effect a plan which will have far reaching effects on the people of God.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13.16-17).

People cannot exist for long in modern society if they cannot buy food.

SATAN

Many people have little or no knowledge of the spirit world, despite the fact that Scripture gives us a great deal of information about it. We are told of the creation of Satan, his sin, his fall, his empire, his activities, his ability, his limitations, and amongst other things, his conflict with the angels who serve God. On a day in the near future the enmity between Satan and the holy angels will precipitate a battle.

“And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12.7-9).

Distress caused by Satan’s efficiency throughout the history of man’s occupation of the earth will be as nothing when compared with the trouble he will be responsible for after his defeat in this battle. He has moved fairly freely, to and fro, both on this earth, and in other locations inhabited by spirits, but from that day he will concentrate on those who dwell on the earth. His activities will be influenced by the fact that he will know that his time is limited.

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Revelation 12.12).

Conforming to his familiar pattern, **he will use men for his own ends.** One of his chief agents will be the man, mentioned earlier, who will rise to such prominence (“**the man of sin**”, “*the beast*”, “*the little horn*”).

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2.9-10).

This “**man of sin**” will lead **the last great world empire**, which will rule for a brief period before the return of Christ, being empowered by Satan to carry out his dreadful plans.

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Revelation 13.2).

It goes without saying that Satan is the sworn enemy of Jesus Christ. This enmity showed itself when he tried to divert Christ, and lead Him into sin during the temptation in the wilderness: it showed itself again when he filled the heart of Judas Iscariot, and led him to betray Christ: and it will show itself in the last days, when he attacks everyone who has a connection with Christ.

He will attack the nation through which Christ came. This is seen in one of the unique pictures Scripture gives. The nation of Israel is pictured, in the opening verses of **Revelation Chapter 12**, as a woman giving birth to a child.

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne” (Revelation 12.5).

This child is Jesus Christ. He has yet to fulfil the prophecy concerning His rule over the nations.

The nation is seen as running to hide for a defined period.

“And 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” (Revelation 12.6).

The latter part of the chapter has more to tell us of this flight, and the reasons for it. In very dramatic and figurative language we are told that Satan is behind persecution which will break out once more for the nation of Israel. **The nation will, however, receive help in unexpected ways.**

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child”.

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent”.

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood”.

“And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth” (**Revelation 12.13-16**).

Satan will not be content with general prosecution of Israel but will maintain hostilities on all who honour Christ.

“And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (**Revelation 12.17**).

You will have noticed the duration of the time of Israel's trouble in **Revelation 12.6** – 1260 days (approximately three and a half years). This is the duration of the great tribulation, which will affect the whole world. It is the period of which the prophet Jeremiah wrote,

“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” (**Jeremiah 30.7**).

Joining with his most able human agents Satan will play his part in gathering the nations of the world together for a catastrophic war.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and 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 in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (**Revelation 16.13-14 and 16**).

GOD

It may seem strange to some that a **Just and Holy God of Love** should be involved in causing trouble. A little thought, however, will surely lead a sincere person to the conclusion that **justice demands punishment for the guilty** as well as protection for the innocent. Holiness can have no fellowship with sin, and love of good is consistent with hatred of evil.

God will cause trouble for those who deserve it. For those who reject the truth, God will send delusion that they might follow what is not true.

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2.11-12).

If the histories of many **so-called churches** were revealed, it would be seen that they have been responsible for causing sorrow, poverty and distress to many people. This will not go unpunished. These same apostate **“churches”** will **amalgamate** in the near future to form the most despicable religious association ever witnessed on earth. John, in the Revelation, has a vision of this company in which this association is seen as a woman.

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns”.

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth”.

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Revelation 17.3-6).

Eternal judgements await those who perpetrate evil deeds in the name of religion, but, apart from this, **God will trouble this wicked system during the tribulation period.** He will influence the last great world empire to destroy this company.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Revelation 17.16-17).

God will trouble those who worship the dictator who will dominate all other rulers in that day.

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth”.

“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image” (Revelation 16.1-2).

This is but one of many plagues, and it is worth noting the predicted reactions of men to the afflictions God will send.

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory”.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds” (Revelation 16.8-11).

As these judgements proceed, the angels voice their approval.

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus”.

“And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgements” (Revelation 16.5 and 7).

Perhaps it is as well to say the obvious. **God will not attack His own servants.**

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Revelation 7.2-3).

Having caused His servants to be marked, so that they can be recognised by the angels, the Lord permits the troubles to start. ***It is an example of God’s selective judgement.***

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power”.

“And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (Revelation 9.3-4).

Being absolutely without limitation God will use the holy angels, restrict or let loose Satan and his host, motivate mankind, and direct the forces of nature exactly as He chooses, to pour out His wrath. The effect will be devastating.

“And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places”.

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6.12-17).

3. TROUBLE CAN BE FACED

Adversity can cause many people to become bitter, whilst the same conditions can have a refining effect on others. Perhaps **a person's true nature is revealed when facing difficulties**. Most certainly such times come as tests.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Proverbs 24.10).

When Christ warned His followers that they could expect persecution, He was careful to assure them that they need not be worried about it. **To be on Christ's side is to be on the side of victory.**

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16.33).

Christ's forecast of persecution for His followers was accurate. He had told them,

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16.2).

The Acts of the Apostles gives a clear account of some of the persecutions suffered by the followers of Christ during the first century. Historians record the waves of persecution which have broken on the people of God in succeeding centuries. At this very moment, as you read these words, true followers of Christ are suffering for their faith in many lands, yet those who escape from these countries to tell of what is happening bring news of the glorious truth that trouble can be faced. The peace of God can keep a person's heart and mind even under interrogation, forced labour, starvation, imprisonment and torture.

Despite the fact that Christ made this forecast, and despite the fact that it proved to be accurate, **there is widespread erroneous teaching that the children of God will not go through the period of the Great Tribulation on earth**. The contention is that Christ will come, secretly,

to take away the last members of "His Church" before this awful period begins.

THERE WILL BE NO SECRET PRE-TRIBULATION RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

Whilst I have every sympathy with those who hope for a secret pre-tribulation return of Jesus Christ, I must confess that I believe it to be contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. It is always important to accept truth and refute error, and it is critically important for Christians today to grasp the truth on this subject, since it is possible that we are of the generation who will face this time of trouble.

Scripture does teach that the people of God will be caught up from the earth to meet Christ "in the air" but it will not be done secretly.

*"For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a **shout**, with the **voice** of the archangel, and with the **trump** of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17).*

The question needing an answer is – does this happen before the period of tribulation or afterwards? Scripture leaves us in no doubt.

*"Immediately **after** the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 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".*

"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24.29-31).

This passage speaks of the **trumpet sounding** and the people of God being assembled in the air ("*from one end of heaven to the other*"). It says that it happens "*immediately **after** the tribulation*". **Until this time the people of God have been on the earth. It is worth noting that the events that occur as the children of God are caught up, could by no means be kept secret!**

JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN AT THE END OF THE TRIBULATION

The two most prominent figures on the earth during the tribulation will be "the beast" and "the false prophet". Christ will destroy them when He returns.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19.20).

Naturally enough this happens at the end of the tribulation. Paul wrote in the Thessalonians about it.

*"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and by **our gathering together unto Him**" (2 Thessalonians 2.1).*

This "*gathering together unto Him*" happens when He comes to destroy "*the beast*", for in this same passage Paul refers to the event we have just seen as being recorded in **Revelation 19.20**.

*"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, **and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming**" (2 Thessalonians 2.8).*

Thus, Christ returns, destroys the beast, and gathers together His own, **at the END of the tribulation.**

After the tribulation this earth will experience a magnificent period, one thousand years in duration, when Jesus Christ Himself will reign over the earth. This is referred to in the following passage:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: 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 a thousand years".

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Revelation 20.4-5).

At the time when the people of God are caught up to meet the Lord in the air there is a resurrection, i.e. ..., "*the dead in Christ shall rise first*". This

will be the first mass resurrection. This quotation (**Revelation 20.4-5**) clearly shows that the first resurrection includes people who had been killed during the tribulation and occurs at the end of the tribulation, bringing us again to the conclusion that people of God pass the time of tribulation on the earth and are caught up to meet their Lord when it is over.

The Scriptures already quoted should be sufficient to show that Jesus Christ will not return until the end of the tribulation, but I know that the erroneous teaching I am seeking to refute has been so fervently taught, and so readily accepted, that I will need to give more proof. From those who find it hard to forsake what they have been taught, and what they dearly want to believe, regardless of proof, I merely ask that you consider the Scriptures, quite apart from any comment I make about them. They are set before you in an earnest attempt to bring you to the truth. God will not change the truth to suit our desires. What He intends to do He will do.

JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN ONLY ONCE

Those who teach that the children of God will be taken away from the earth, before the tribulation begins, assert that Christ will come twice more. The first of these comings will be to the upper atmosphere to take away His own people, the second, some seven years later, will be to the earth to take the reins of government. They teach that the first coming will be in secret, whereas the second will be openly seen by all.

Contrary to this teaching, Christ will only return once, to deal with Christian and non-Christian, and His dealing with His own people will be quite open. Paul writes to a group of Christians who were being persecuted,

*“And to you who are troubled rest with us, 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, and from the glory of His power; **when He shall come to be glorified in His saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1.7-10).*

Here it is clearly seen that He moves against those who oppose Him at the same time as He rescues His own troubled people. It is all done openly when He is "**revealed** from heaven".

Any thought that Christ's coming would be secret was dispelled by Jesus Himself when He said,

"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24.26-27).

The assumption that Christ will take away the members of His Church, and leave everyone else for tribulation, is sometimes mistakenly taken from the following Scripture.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be".

"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be".

"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" (Matthew 24.37-41).

It is evident, however, **that those who were "taken" in Noah's day were the ungodly** and they were taken in judgement. The passage says that it will be the same when Christ comes back.

The teaching that Christ will come secretly is often based on references to Christ coming like a thief.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come".

"But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up".

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 24.42-44).

It is not the secrecy of the coming of a thief that is being brought before us, but rather the surprise element of his timing. This is the

thought in each of the verses just quoted, and it was the stated reason Christ had for making the comparison,

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24.36).

Revelation 16.15-16 makes it clear that Christ's coming "as a thief" occurs at the end of the tribulation when the battle of Armageddon occurs; "Behold, I come **as a thief**. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon".

The surprise element of the timing of His return is again emphasised with the exhortation to watch.

The events which will take place are by no means secret.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom His Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season?"

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing".

"Verily I say unto you, That He shall make him ruler over all His goods".

"But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24.45-51).

God would not ask His prophets to make His message plain if He had not made it plain Himself. **Christ will not come a second and third time.** He has been here once already and He will come once again.

*"For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself".*

*"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the **second** time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9.26-28).*

HIS COMING WILL BE SEEN BY ALL

“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” (Revelation 1.7).

His coming is at the end of the tribulation (as already mentioned in **Matthew 24.29**: *“Immediately after the tribulation ...”*) **when God reveals Himself, dispelling mystery.**

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as He hath declared to His servants the prophets” (Revelation 10.7).

“And the seventh angel sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11.15).

HE WILL THEN DEAL WITH ALL CLASSES OF MEN, BOTH SAINT AND SINNER

“And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Revelation 11.18).

All this leads to one conclusion. People of God will be on earth during the great tribulation, and will have to face trouble just as surely as those who reject God will have to face it. Trouble must be faced. This being the case, **it is heartening to know that trouble can be faced.**

WE NEED TO BE READY

It is an inspiring thing to read the records of how magnificently people have faced trouble in the past. There have been many courageous people who have endured affliction and emerged victorious.

For the non-Christian to emerge victorious, however, he needs to preserve his life. If he loses that, he loses everything and launches out

into what is to him the unknown. This unknown is, in fact, for the non-Christian, the worst fate possible.

Death for the Christian is merely the gateway to fullness of joy in Christ. Only the true follower of Christ can understand and obey the instruction Christ gave when He said,

"And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do".

"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12.4-5).

The only one who can cast into hell is God. **We need not fear any man.**

We have already seen that many of those who oppose God will be killed during this period of great tribulation. Many followers of Christ will also be killed.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6.9-11).

The people of God who enter this period, and those who come to know the Lord during this period, will come through the thick of it. **These things must happen, but God will prepare His people** that they may face them in a manner becoming His saints, and through it all not waver, as far as faith is concerned.

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Revelation 13.10).

There are things which the people of God should fear much more than outward physical violence. There are subtle attacks made upon us, and their effect is more far reaching.

We must beware of the advances made to us by evil spirits. This form of activity is already on the increase and will, no doubt, intensify, seeking to change our opinions and attitudes against that which is right.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4.1).

"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; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4.1-3).

It can be seen from both these passages that evil spirits are very closely linked with false teachers. Hypocrisy is a mark of the times. We have probably never had more hypocrites professing themselves to the children of God than we have today. They are exceedingly dangerous.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction".

*"And **many shall follow their pernicious ways**; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2.1-2).*

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24.24).

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many".

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24.11-12).

This apostasy was predicted in more than one inspired passage.

*"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come **a falling away** first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth 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" (2 Thessalonians 2.3-4).*

In this quotation the “falling away” is seen as being closely linked in time with the coming dictator to whom we have referred earlier. The growing presence of apathy among the people of God in many places is further indication of the times in which we live.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables” (2 Timothy 4.3-4).

No doubt this falling away, coupled with an acceptance of false and foolish teaching, will have the effect of leading many of God’s own people, who have not been sufficiently diligent, into the despicable religious association that is to emerge. We recounted how God would use the last great world empire to destroy it, and it is worth noting that some of the people of God will have to be called out of it.

*“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, My people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18.4).*

It is, nevertheless, abundantly possible to avoid being part of the apostasy. Having dealt with the qualities the diligent child of God can, by the grace of God, add to his life, Peter says,

“Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1.10).

This form of trouble can be faced, as can all other forms, if we are equipped with all of the armour God provides.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6.13).

Peter made it clear; when he quoted Joel’s prophecy, that the happenings during the Feast of Pentecost, after Christ’s resurrection, were only part of what was to come. The Lord had still many things to do.

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My

Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2.16-21).

We can depend upon it, that until the sun is turned into darkness and the other wonders are fulfilled, the Lord will continue to pour out blessings. After all, the promise is, "*I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh*".

GOD WILL PREPARE MANY OF HIS PEOPLE

One way and another God will fully prepare many of His people, and it will be more than interesting to watch this process unfold itself.

The prophet Habakkuk, who was told to make his message plain, was himself so prepared by God for the coming trouble in his own day that he was able to testify – and here I quote from The Amplified Bible,

"I heard, and my whole inner self trembled, my lips quivered at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones and under me – down to my feet – I tremble".

"I will wait quietly for the day of trouble and distress, when there shall come up against my people him who is about to invade and oppress them".

"Though the fig tree does not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines; though the product of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will exult in the victorious God of my salvation".

"The Lord God is my strength, my personal bravery and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hind's feet and will make me to walk (not stand still in terror, but to walk) and make spiritual progress upon my high places of trouble, suffering and responsibility" (Habakkuk 3.16-19).

God had given him understanding. He understood what would happen in his own day.

*"Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work **in your days**, which ye will not believe, though it be told you".*

"For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs" (Habakkuk 1.5-6).

He also knew what the ultimate and eventual outcome would be, when Christ would take the reins of government.

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2.14).

This will, apparently, be repeated today. Not only has God revealed in Scripture the things that will happen in our day, and ultimately, but He has revealed that He will raise up people who understand, to instruct those who do not, as I quoted earlier from **Daniel 11.33**, *"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many"*.

A strong band of fearless Christians who have deep, intimate, effective knowledge of God will, apparently, soon be evidenced.

*"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: **but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11.32).***

There will apparently arise more awareness of God's ability to deliver. People will remember that they serve the God who preserved Israel in the land of Goshen while Egypt was being plagued; the God who smote one hundred and eight-five thousand men in one night in Sennacherib's army to save Judah; the God who delivered Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego from the furnace; the God who delivered Daniel from the lions; the God who delivered Peter from prison; and so I could go on. Indeed, time itself would fail if we tried to tell of all God's deliverances.

"And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection;: and others had trial of cruel mocking and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:

(of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth”.

“And of these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11.32-40).

The true children of God today have received much more by way of spiritual help from God than those referred to by the writer of that passage. We should be far more able to face what God sends. **The truth is that we should be as monarchs in our lives.**

*“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more **they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ**” (Romans 5.17).*

Nothing we have to face can come between us and the love of God.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”.

*“Nay, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him that loved us”.*

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8.35-39).

There needs to be a renewal, in God’s people, of the assurance that Paul had.

“For I reckon that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8.18).

Though there may initially be trembling as these terrible days approach, their coming will, I trust, find many of the people of God prepared in body, mind and spirit.

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our

God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (**Revelation 7.9-10**).

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?"

*"And I said unto him, Sir, though knowest. 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. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (**Revelation 7.13-15**).*

Yes, the coming trouble can be faced in peace of mind and in the attitude of victory. Regardless of cost we can face it in the same manner as those who have gone before us have faced the adversary.

*"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" (**Revelation 12.11**).*

Even in the tribulation God will comfort us.

*"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (**2 Corinthians 1.3-4**).*

In seemingly impossible situations **He will protect us.**

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday".

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee".

*"Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (**Psalms 91.5-8**).*

God in His sovereign will, will permit some of His people to be slain, as He has done in the past, but they will in no wise be losers for it. No lesser reward will be given them than God has seen fit to give in the past.

“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish” (Luke 21.16-18).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2.10).

For the sake of His own people God will shorten the period of trouble.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24.22).

God will terminate those days with the “blessed hope” of the true believer in Christ (and here I quote from The Amplified Bible). Those whom God brings through will be found,

*“Awaiting and looking for the fulfilment, the realisation of **our blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One**” (Titus 2.13).*

4. REST

The mere mention of this word can conjure up all sorts of pictures in our minds, and probably every one of them has a pleasantness associated with it.

Perhaps we might think of the deep satisfaction we experienced in resting after a particularly successful but very exhausting day at work. We might, on the other hand, remember the relief we felt in a place of safety after being rescued from a dangerous situation. Our memory might recall the exhilarating feeling we had when standing on the summit of a mountain we had climbed, or the pleasure we felt when recovering after winning a race.

If we were to be asked to speak about the best rest we ever had, we might talk about a long holiday we enjoyed. A time when we not only rested from our usual occupations and routines, but were refreshed by new occupations and different forms of exercise.

The people of God can look forward to rest which will embody every good experience of any earthly rest, plus much, much, more.

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4.9).

The rest into which the people of God will enter is the rest which God Himself enjoys.

“For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works”.

*“And in this place again. If they shall enter into **My rest**” (Hebrews 4.4-5).*

There will be satisfying rest from labour for many.

“For He that is entered into His rest, He also hath ceased from His own works, as God did from His”.

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Hebrews 4.10-11).

For those who have come through trials and tribulations, particularly those who pass through the last dark days before Christ returns, there will be relief. Paul mentions this in the passage already quoted from his second letter to the believers at Thessalonica.

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His almighty angels” (2 Thessalonians 1.7).

ULTIMATELY, GREAT THINGS LIE AHEAD FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

A. REWARDS

Scripture makes it clear, from place to place, that there will be the pleasure associated with receiving a reward for a job well done. The Christian life with its duties, joys, and trials is compared to the running of a race or the striving for victory in some other athletic pursuit.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12.1).

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 9.24-25).

“If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (1 Corinthians 3.14).

Paul, towards the end of his life, said,

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4.7-8).

B. ACTIVITIES

The rest into which we shall enter will involve activity. We shall enjoy a change of occupation accompanied by a change in ability. It is not a state of lying around doing nothing. Nor is it a pursuit of pleasure. It is rather a fullness of activity, in a state of constant joy and satisfaction, in the only company you wish to have, where it is impossible for hurtful influence of any sort to enter. It can only be spoken of in glowing terms.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him”.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2.9-10).

C. AN EARTHLY KINGDOM

When Christ returns to the earth He will, after initial war and judgements, set up a kingdom the like of which this world has never experienced. This kingdom will last one thousand years and the people of God will share in a wonderful way in the administration of it.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: 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 a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection”.

*“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall **reign with Him a thousand years**” (Revelation 20.4-6).*

On one occasion Christ went as far as to reveal the identity of some individuals who would be given positions of authority during this period. Peter, acting as spokesman, as he so often seems to have done, asked a question concerning the future of those present who had followed Christ.

“Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19.27-28).

Occupying a high position in the world today can weigh a person down with worries, cares, and anxieties that lead to an early grave, but this will not be the case in the coming millennium. The burden of government and the responsibility for maintaining law and order will rest on the shoulder of the only One who can properly bear it, the Lord Himself.

*“And **the Lord shall be king over all the earth**: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one” (Zechariah 14.9).*

We will see a more complete fulfilment of the verses often quoted in relation to Christ’s incarnation.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9.6-7).

The earth itself will be restored to its former beauty and peace during this time, and the animal kingdom will return to a serenity and peace it has not enjoyed since the curse resulting from the fall of man.

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God” (Isaiah 35.1-2).

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den”.

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11.6-9).

For the person who truly belongs to Christ at the time of His coming this whole period will be enjoyed in a liberated state, free from the inadequacies and limitations of our present physical make-up.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3.20-21).

D. A HEAVENLY KINGDOM

Outstanding as this time will be, it, in turn, will pass, and time will end to give way to **eternity**. This millennium, though predominantly peaceful, will end in Satan’s last uprising. It will be quickly subdued, the rest of the dead will be raised, fearful judgement will take place, sin and all of its victims will be forever restricted, and the people of God will enjoy, in its absolute fullness, the rest which God Himself enjoys.

What words can describe the limitless scope of life, in unfathomable depths of peace and joy, we are to experience for the immeasurable duration of eternity! To be free from every hurt and every possibility of being harmed, to know God as He knows us, and to follow perfectly His will in His immediate presence for evermore, is more than the human mind can take in – but, praise God, it’s true.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice

with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1.3-9).

It will be an eternally blessed experience, amidst an eternally perfect environment, in an eternally satisfying relationship.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea”.

“And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God”.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”.

“And He sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful”.

“And He said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely”.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21.1-7).

E. WILL YOU BE THERE

As we would think of these things surely we must conclude that any trouble which lies between us and this rest is trivial by comparison. If our minds linger for a moment in contemplation of the interval of trouble, let our thoughts be of the victory that God will give. Surely it would be a privilege and an honour to suffer in and for the name of the One who has made such rich provision for us.

Our concern should rather be directed to making sure that the promised rest will be our personal possession.

“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it”.

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”.

“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the work were finished from the foundation of the world” (Hebrews 4.1-3).

For the true child of God, the exhortation is clear.

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Peter 3.14).

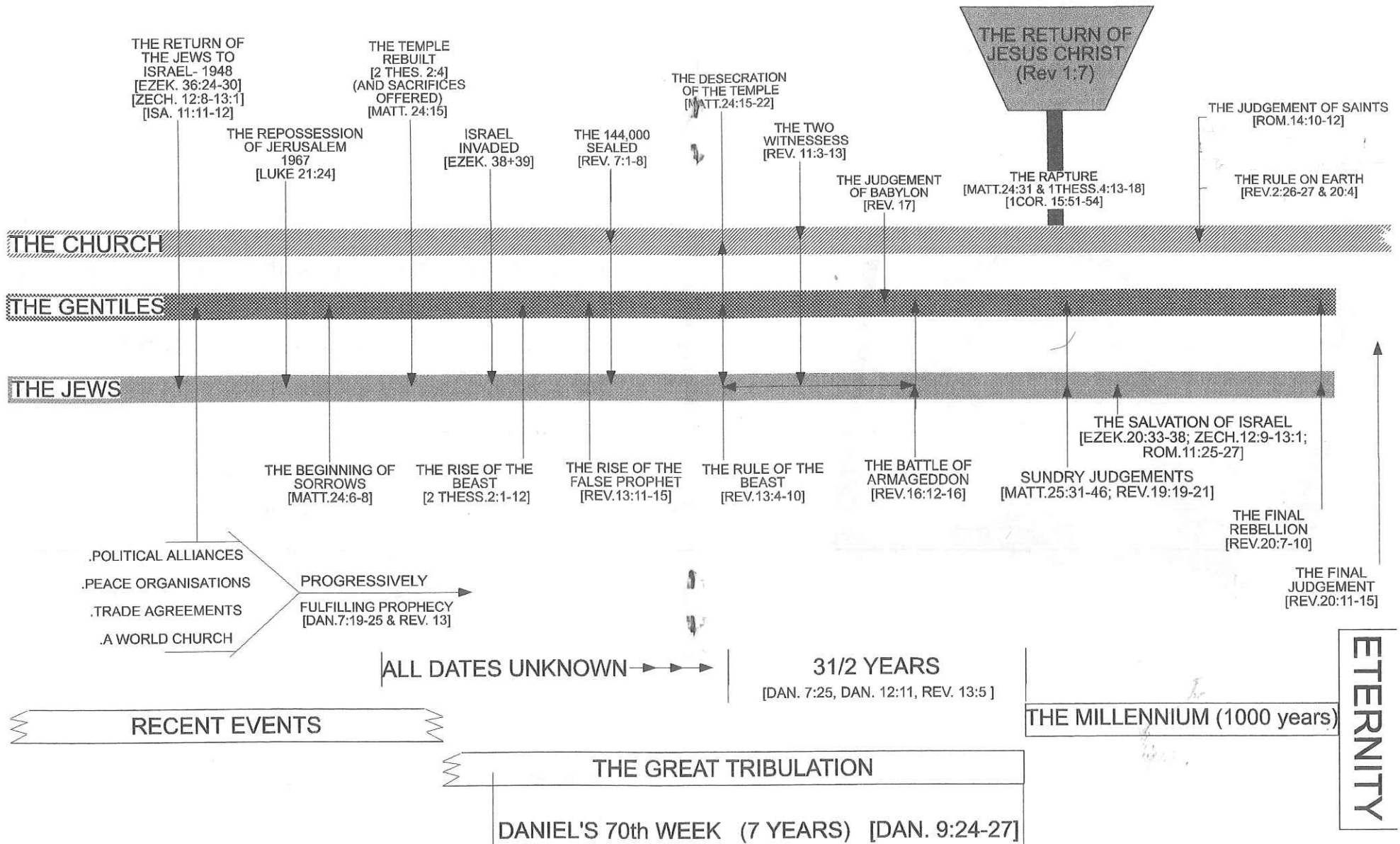
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

After some thought, prayer, and discussion with fellow believers I came to the conclusion that the effectiveness of this little booklet might be increased by the inclusion of a **CHART** showing what I consider to be the **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS** marking the end of times.

The chart over the page is of my own design and indicates major recent events and events we can expect to occur as we move toward The Great Tribulation, The Millennium, and the Final Judgement.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

MATT. 16:1-4
LUKE 21:28-32



APPENDIX 2014

I wrote this little book when I was a young man in my thirties. Reading it now there are, some forty years later, some things I would have included, emphasised or phrased differently had I been writing it today. Having said this, the many events that have occurred on the world scene, and what I have learned, in the intervening years, have had remarkably little effect on my opinion of the message the book carries for us as we move toward the ever-nearing return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As I write this appendix jihadist forces are seeking to establish a caliphate in eastern Syria and northern Iraq in what some believe to be an Armageddon confrontation in "greater Syria" (the Levant). These forces are reported to be the current incarnation of what we knew as al-Qaeda in Iraq, rebranded ISIS or ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant). Had I been writing the book today I would have drawn attention to God's first words to Habakkuk as He responded to the prophet's questions, namely, "Look among the nations and watch" (Habakkuk 1.5 NKJV). Amazing things are happening in the world today and they point toward what God is doing as the return of Jesus Christ approaches. It is interesting that in obeying God's instruction we would often be looking at what is happening in the very geographical area Habakkuk was told to look.

I would include a few paragraphs on the application God The Spirit makes of Habakkuk chapter 2 verses 3-4 in the New Testament. In Hebrews chapter 10 verses 37-38 the message to Habakkuk is applied to us in the setting of the return of Jesus Christ. In other words, we have to learn that, **as bad as things are today, they will get worse before the Lord returns**. We need to prepare ourselves for that and we need to tell this truth to others in such a way as to **"make it plain"**. This is, of-course, the theme of my book, but the message is made exceedingly more forcefully by showing that it comes directly from God The Spirit.

Finally, in referring to "when" the Lord will return I would make it clear that **we cannot, at this stage, say, even approximately, how many years or even decades it will be until "ALL" the prophecies the Lord referred to in Matthew chapter 24 verse 33 are fulfilled** ("So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near – at the doors" NKJV). Only when "ALL" of those prophecies have been fulfilled will the people of God, then still on the earth, be able to say, on the basis of the Word of God, that the return of Jesus Christ is "near – at the doors". Even then, no one will know the "day" or the "hour".

Ray Ewart