



**Your Redemption
Draweth Nigh**

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Your Redemption Draweth Nigh

A study booklet by
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Preface

Is there room for another book on the return of Jesus Christ?

Obviously, I believe there is, otherwise I would not have written this one!

The return of Jesus Christ is such an important subject that sufficient (let alone too much) could never be written about it. To merely say that His return is the most important event in the future of this world is to grossly understate its significance. Every individual, whether law maker, law keeper or law breaker, will be dramatically affected by His return. Every family, every tribe, every nation, every state, country, government and institution will be affected. People need to know the implications of His return. Each of us needs to know what is going to happen and what we have to do to be prepared for it. The story must be told, and told again from this moment on, until He comes!

Over the years I have had the privilege of leading Bible Study Groups. Sometimes they have been in church buildings but more often they have been in my own home or in the homes of other people. I have not kept full records of how many such studies I have been involved in or what subjects we have covered, but, ranging over the last fifty plus years of my life they have been numerous and the subjects have been wide-ranging, and, from time to time we have considered aspects of the Lord's return.

Recently, in one such study, I was asked to deal fairly comprehensively with "The Return of Jesus Christ". Realising that I had often dealt with aspects of the subject I decided to use this series of addresses to consolidate my notes. As the months passed the conviction grew within me that it would be a logical step to expand the notes into a book. The ground work I have done may well motivate some reader to take the subject further for the benefit of others.

I trust you enjoy reading this book and I pray that you benefit from it. I do, however, realise that it will not be light reading. It will require effort and patience but the effort will be rewarded in the study of the Scriptures referred to, even if not in the text of the book itself.

May I say at this point that I respect the views, opinions and beliefs of every individual born again believer who earnestly follows the Lord and bases his or her opinion on what the Scriptures say, even when those views, opinions and beliefs differ from those I hold. We are all searching for the truth, but, almost inevitably, we all make mistakes and come to wrong conclusions.

However, when I come to a conclusion, after having sought the Lord's leading and studied His Word, I tend to state my views confidently and forcefully. I trust you will not be put off by this.

I must pay TRIBUTE to three people in particular:

- To my wife, Joan, who has been so supportive and so patient when I have 'disappeared', for hours on end, to work on this book.
- To my daughter, Joy, who has so efficiently typed the manuscript without ever complaining about my poor hand writing, and
- To my brother, Trevor, who has so carefully read the script and provided honest comment, from his perspective, on its contents.

May the Lord bless each of them richly.

What this Book is About

The Bible is a remarkable book. It was written by people like you and me but they were guided by God as to what to write. The outcome is that it says to us, in essence, what God would have said had He written it Himself. No other book compares with it. It tells us about God, it tells us about ourselves, it records important information about the past and, among other things, it tells us about the future.

As regards the future, the Bible records prophecies made since Adam was alive and significant events are foretold for all time from the creation of the world until eternity. These prophecies are sufficiently clear for us to identify which have been fulfilled and which are yet to be fulfilled. Consequently, we can, within limits, tell where we are in the sequence of events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ.

This little book seeks to draw the reader's attention to prophecies that have recently been fulfilled. The reader is then taken on a journey through prophecies we can expect to be fulfilled in the near future. The journey does not end until time, as we know it, has finished. Along the way we discover that some amazing things will occur and some amazing characters will play their part on the stage of life. The world will pass through an unprecedented few years of trouble when an evil world ruler called "The Beast" will hold sway, aided by an almost equally evil miracle-worker called "The False Prophet". Wars will rage, calamities will devastate and many will lose heart, but God will be working through it all, never leaving Himself without a witness, whether it be by specially empowered messengers or faithful believers who follow Him.

This period of trouble, called "The Tribulation" will be brought to an end by the return of Jesus Christ in power and glory. He will take the reins of government and rule the rejuvenated earth for a thousand years, with His true followers from every age and with the nation of Israel enjoying the fulfilment of every promise God has made to them for that time.

The thousand year rule on earth, called "The Millennium" will end with a confrontation between Jesus Christ (and His followers) and His arch-enemy, Satan (and his followers). Satan will be utterly defeated.

The final judgement follows and the eternal state is brought into being with a new heaven and a new earth.

I have endeavoured to take us on this journey in such a way that a person who knows little or nothing about it can at least learn what I believe the Bible teaches. I have also tried to present what I believe in a way that enables a person to check my

beliefs from the Bible itself and his or her own perspective, in areas where he or she believes the Bible teaches something different.

It is virtually impossible to write a book on this subject without using theological terminology. I have tried to keep the use of theological words and the jargon of religion to a minimum. If you are reading this book, and you are totally unfamiliar with the religious terminology I use from time to time, please do not let it put you off. I encourage you to read on, ignoring the terminology. The subject of the book, and the message I am attempting to convey, are more important than the jargon.

It is also virtually impossible to write a book on this subject without attracting criticism. I can almost hear some of the criticisms before they come! However, fair criticism is welcomed as it aids the search for truth. All criticism should be judged solely on the basis of what the Scriptures say - Isaiah 8:20, *"To the Law, and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."*

May you read this little book and profit from it.

Approach and Format

I have not written this book as a dogmatic statement, but rather as my personal opinion of what Scripture teaches on the subject. I believe we are currently seeing significant, prophetic scriptures fulfilled in the world around us. I was converted when I was 18 years of age and I am now in my seventies. Over the years I have gathered information on this subject, read and listened to other people's opinions and sought the leading of the Lord as to what the Scriptures teach. My opinions have, therefore, been formed over a long period and have been reinforced and confirmed by repeated examination of the Scriptures.

In recording my views I have endeavoured to present them in a format that will help the reader to form his or her own opinion. Space has been left for the reader to make notes and comments. The blank pages adjacent to the text can be used by teachers (preparing for classes) and Bible Study attendees (taking notes during teaching sessions).

If you are embarking on your first serious study of what the Scriptures teach regarding the return of Jesus Christ it might be useful to read this book through once without making any notes, then read it a second time, more slowly and critically, making notes and examining the Scriptures in depth.

It is my hope that this book, in its current format, will be used by individuals and study groups to disperse knowledge on the subject, to encourage further study of it and to enable more individuals to form an opinion on what the Scriptures teach.

The **Appendix** has been used to give additional information and detailed proofs on specific topics. The text of the book flows more smoothly if beliefs are stated simply and supporting Scriptures are quoted. In some cases, however, beliefs differ markedly. Where I am conscious that a belief I hold is disputed to any significant degree (by certain "schools" of thought) I have taken the opportunity to set out, in the Appendix, a reasoned argument, backed by the Scriptures, as to why I hold to my belief.

For my professional secular career I studied for, and obtained, good academic qualifications and paid careful attention to Continuing Professional Development and a diligent approach to my day to day work. I trust my standards in the realm of Theology are not lower than those I pursued in my day to day employment. However, for whatever it may mean to the reader, I have no formal Theological training in terms of man's teaching on the subject. I am dependant on the teaching the Lord Himself gives to those who know Him as personal Saviour and Lord. I respect scholarship, but I am dependant on others with formal training when I need to look up the meaning of words in the original languages of Scripture or when I require any other such 'technical' help.

To let readers know where I am coming from in my views, may I say that I believe in the VERBAL (**Jeremiah 1.9**) and PLENARY (**2 Timothy 3.16**) inspiration of the Old and New Testaments as originally given. I believe in One, only, living and true God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and in salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. I believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust and in eternal heaven and hell. I believe in God as Creator and Sustainer and if categorised for my beliefs in eschatology, I am a Pre-millennial, Post-Tribulationist *. But none of that need frighten anyone!

I believe God says what He means and means what He says. Wherever He does not intend a literal interpretation of His Word He makes that clear. I use many translations in my studies, but, for its familiarity I find myself returning to the King James Version. All quotations in this issue are from that Version. Words in brackets in the quotations are not in the original manuscripts from which the English translation was made. They were added by the editors to help clarify the meaning of the original text.

Quotations are given as continuous text (i.e. not broken into verses). Comments on quotations do, however, refer to verses to help the reader check the comments against the appropriate part of the text.

On some subjects Scriptures are quoted in full; but in some instances are only partially quoted or references given, to enable the reader to check my assertions.

I am, however, considering issuing an edition of this book with the quotations of Scripture being from the New King James Version (the Version I generally use, for sake of clarity, for public reading and preaching).

Let us begin this journey together!

***NOTE: - I have adopted the following simple definitions.**

- **The MILLENNIUM** is a period of 1000 years when Jesus Christ will reign with His saints on this earth.
- **The TRIBULATION** is a 7 year period of extreme trouble on this earth immediately prior to the return of Jesus Christ. (“The Great Tribulation” is the last 3 ½ years of this period).
- **PRE-MILLENNIALISTS** believe the Lord will return before the Millennium.
- **POST-MILLENNIALISTS** believe the Lord will return after a golden period of peace and plenty (their version of the Millennium).
- **A-MILLENNIALISTS** do not believe in a Millennium.
- **PRE-TRIBULATIONISTS** believe the Lord will return before the Tribulation.
- **MID-TRIBULATIONISTS** believe the Lord will return in the middle of the Tribulation.
- **POST-TRIBULATIONISTS** believe the Lord will return after the Tribulation

CHAPTER 1:

Where We Are.

Has Sufficient Prophetic Scripture been fulfilled in recent years for us to know WHERE WE ARE in relation to the return of JESUS CHRIST?

In my opinion, we can give a resounding “YES” as the answer to this question! We have sufficient evidence from fulfilled prophecies to determine where we are, within certain parameters, in relation to the return of Jesus Christ.

Time marches on. We are in an unstoppable march towards the end of time as we know it, but time will not end in calamity or chaos as some people imagine to be the case. Time will end when God fulfils His purposes for it.

I subscribe to the view that time began when God started His six-day work of creation (as recorded in **Genesis 1**) and it will end at the final judgement when God replaces “*the first heaven and the first earth*” with “*a new heaven and a new earth*” (as outlined in **Revelation 20.11 – 21.1**). Outside of those boundaries eternity exists, as it always has and always will.

The concept of eternity (**Revelation 22.5**) and the God who inhabits it (“*the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*”, **Isaiah 57.15**) are beyond the ability of our finite minds to comprehend. God has, however, given us a very satisfying revelation, in the Scriptures, of all we need to know about time, eternity, ourselves, Himself and His purposes for time and eternity.

Unnoticed by many people, time is being played out according to God’s prophetic predictions. We see this when we look at the past, we can discern it when we look at current happenings and we will have it reinforced to us as the future unfolds.

Paul reminds us as he writes to the believers at Ephesus that God has “*made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*” (**Ephesians 1.9**). He goes on to refer to God as the One who “*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” (**Ephesians 1.11**). At Athens he spoke of God as being the One who has “*made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, and the bounds of their habitation.*” (**Acts 17.26**).

God is further revealed by Isaiah as being the one and only God who says, (**Isaiah 46.9-10**). “*Remember the former things of old: for (I am) God, and (there is) none else; (I am) God, and (there is) none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times (the things) that are not (yet) done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*”

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God issues a challenge – **Isaiah 44.6-7** “*Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts: I (am) the first and I (am) the last; and besides me (there is) no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.*” No one, of course can take up His challenge.

Many other Scriptures could be called upon to witness to the fact that God knows everything including all future events. We can safely conclude, as James and the other apostles did as they discussed God’s doings – “*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*” (**Acts 15.18**).

God speaks of His purposes for time in ways that help us to understand what stage we have reached. For example, He outlines ‘time’ in terms of His INTERVENTIONS in the affairs of men. We can choose a few of the major interventions, as follows, to illustrate what I mean:

- Not much more than 6,000 or so years ago God “*created the heaven and the earth.*” (**Genesis 1.1**) – and time began!
- Not much more than 4,300 years ago He flooded the earth. (**Genesis 7**).
- Not much more than 2,000 years ago God The Son (Jesus Christ) “*was made flesh, and dwelt among us*” (**John 1.14**).
- At a time future Jesus Christ will return to this earth. (**Acts 1.10-11**).
- Not much more than 1,000 years after His return Jesus Christ will officiate at the final judgement – and time will be finished! (**Revelation 20.11-15**).

Obviously we live between the First Coming of Jesus Christ (to die for our sins) and His Second Coming (to reign on earth). But God has told us much more about His interventions and intended interventions and this will help us to discern, within closer parameters, where we are in the passage of time.

Scripture contains many prophecies and so many have been fulfilled over recent years that we can list them and use them to identify the prophecies we can expect to be fulfilled next.

God has intervened recently in man’s affairs and God has promised to intervene many more times before Jesus Christ returns. If we can identify a recent intervention and a promised future intervention then we can conclude that we live in the period that lies between them. Let me do just that by identifying, very specifically, but very briefly, a time when God recently intervened. Let me then similarly identify a time, possibly in the not too distant future, when God will intervene again.

(1) – A time when God intervened, recently, in fulfilment of prophecy:

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Israel, as a nation, started to occupy their promised land around 1500B.C. in the days of Joshua. Their hold on the land was patchy during the period of the Judges but in the days of the Kings it reached its historical peak, particularly during the reigns of David and Solomon. Things deteriorated when the Kingdom divided but it was not until the 8th century B.C. (in the case of the Northern Kingdom) and the 6th century B.C. (in the case of the Southern Kingdom) that God removed them from their homeland.

God brought a remnant back to the Promised Land in the latter part of the 6th century B.C. and they remained, as a nation, in their homeland, until the dispersion in A.D.70.

In 1948 the Jewish State was re-established. After almost 1,900 years of dispersion Israel was again a nation with a homeland on part of the territory promised to it by God. God had intervened in man's affairs to bring it about in fulfilment of **Isaiah 11.11-12**. *“And it shall come to pass in that day, (that) the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*

It seems to me that the first time God “*set his hand*” to bring a remnant of Israel back to their promised land, from wide dispersion, was in the 6th century B.C., and the “*second*” time was in 1948 A.D.

(2) – A time when God will soon intervene again in fulfilment of a prophecy:

In a day future God will cause a confederacy of nations to invade Israel, as **Ezekiel 38. 5-8** says, *“Persia, Ethiopia and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: (and) many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land (that is) brought back from the sword, (and is) gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.”*

We live between these two events (i.e. God's intervention in bringing Israel back to their homeland in 1948 and God's intended intervention in sending a confederacy of nations to invade Israel in the near future).

Later, in this book I will give details of my reasons for asserting that we live between these two events. But first, we have some ground work to do.

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CHAPTER 2:

Jesus Told Us what to Look For

One day Jesus' disciples were showing Him the magnificent temple complex at Jerusalem (**Matthew 24:1**). They were proud of it (**Luke 21:5**). Herod the Great had not spared any effort or expense on the buildings and work had continued on the complex after his death (**John 2.20**). Jesus amazed His disciples when He said to them, *"See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."* - **Matthew 24:2**.

This surprising statement prompted the disciples to ask some very direct questions, namely, *"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* - **Matthew 24:3**. And, far from avoiding the questions, Jesus gave detailed answers of such importance that three records of it appear in the Scriptures (**Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13 and Luke 21:5-36**).

The wording of the questions differs in each account (c.f. **Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7**). This may indicate that the disciples were confused. They may have thought that such a catastrophic event as the destruction of the temple must inevitably be linked with the return of Jesus Christ and even the end of the world. However, the different wordings help us to recognise the different aspects of Christ's answers emphasised in each record.

The wording in Matthew's gospel, for the questions and the answers, affords us the best opportunity of drawing out the information that is most relevant for us today. Jesus addressed three questions:-

1. ***"When shall these things be?"*** In other words, "when will Herod's temple be destroyed?" History records how this happened in A.D. 70 and Jesus' prediction was fulfilled.

Luke, by his wording of the questions (**Luke 21:7**, *"Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign (will there be) when these things shall come to pass?"*), directed particular attention to the part of the answer that dealt with the destruction of Herod's temple and Jesus said, *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let them that are in the countries enter thereinto."* - **Luke 21:20-21**.

The Roman response to the Jewish revolt in A.D. 66 was to surround Jerusalem. Jewish Christians recognised that sign. The siege was briefly lifted as the Romans sought to replenish their supplies. In A.D. 68 the siege was reimposed but in the interim those who heeded the sign escaped.

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2. **“What shall be the sign of thy coming?”** In answering this question Jesus gave us information we can use to discover where we stand, time-wise, as His return approaches.
3. **“What shall be the sign of the end of world?”** The information Jesus gave us in response to this question assists us in understanding what God has planned subsequent to the return of Jesus Christ and leading up to the end of “time”.

It would seem to me to go without saying that the best place to start in searching for an answer as to where we stand in relation to the return of Jesus Christ is with the information Jesus gave in response to these questions. His answers give us a framework for understanding the host of prophetic Scriptures God has graciously given to us relating to the Jesus’ second advent.

Before we develop a framework let me ask an interesting question –

TO WHAT DEGREE CAN WE KNOW, IN ADVANCE, THE TIMING OF THE LORD’S RETURN?

Matthew 24:29-36 makes it clear that God the Father alone knows the timing of all things. **Mark 13:31-33** and **Luke 21:33-35** support the view that we do not know the exact timing of the Lord’s return. We must, however, balance this with the fact that the whole intent of the Lord’s answers was to help us to recognise the signs that would herald His coming.

Jesus made very pointed statements regarding our ability to know when He is coming (**Matthew 24:32-33**, **Mark 13:28-29** and **Luke 21:28-31**). Clearly then, we will know when it is “near” (**Luke 21:28**) or “at the doors” (**Mark 13:29**, **Matthew 24:33**) but we will not know the “day and hour” (**Matthew 24:36**). There will be an element of surprise for everyone (**Luke 21:35**.) “DAY” and “HOUR”, however, are very fine limits.

It is interesting in relation to the FIRST coming of Jesus Christ that if those who knew the OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES had fully understood Daniel 9:24-27 they would have been able to determine the YEAR in which the Lord would be crucified (**Daniel 9:26**.) (A simple breakdown of this prophecy is included in Section 7 of the Appendix). Similarly, if we know when “The Beast” breaks his covenant with Israel we will, at that time, know that the return of the Lord will be three and a half years later (**Daniel 9:27**). This will be discussed in some detail later but it emphasises the fact that, AT A TIME FUTURE, WE WILL KNOW THE YEAR during which the Lord will return, and possibly even the month!

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The Lord's return is likened to the coming of a "*thief in the night*" - **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**. On using this analogy Paul goes on to say that it does not apply to believers (**1 Thessalonians 5:4**.) It is interesting to note that this same analogy is used in **Revelation 16:15** where reading in context shows that time-wise it is near the end of The Great Tribulation (**Revelation 16:12-16** – a time when we will know, at the very least, the YEAR of His return).

So we can safely answer the question posed at the head of these paragraphs thus:

"No, we cannot know the exact time which God has set for the return of Jesus Christ, but we know the signs that will herald His coming and as events unfold we will eventually (three and a half years in advance) know the year during which He will return, ultimately arriving at a position where we can count down the months with a degree of certainty."

SIGNS

When Jesus was asked, "*What shall be the sign of thy coming?*" He answered the question. Some would have us believe that there will not be any such sign but that is not the case.

There is a teaching abroad that the return of Jesus Christ will be a TWO-STAGE event (i.e. He will come firstly FOR His people, then several years later He will return WITH His people to rule on the earth). This two-stage return, in my opinion, is devoid of support in the Scriptures (**refer to Sections 2 and 3 of the Appendix**). One of the side-effects of this teaching is that it discourages many of the Lord's people from looking for, and being aware of, the signs Jesus spoke of, for it teaches that the first stage of His return is "*imminent*" and will not be preceded by signs.

On one occasion, when the Pharisees and Sadducees asked for a sign, Jesus rebuked them for not being able to "*discern the signs of the times*" - **Matthew 16:1-3**. Many prophecies had been fulfilled in their day and they ought to have been able to understand at least some of them. Similarly, for our day, prophecies are being fulfilled and we should be able to identify them and recognise where we are in the passage of time (**Luke 21:28**).

GENERAL SIGNS

Some of the signs Jesus gave, to help us to know that His return is near, are of a general nature, for example:

Matthew 24:5 - "*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*"

False Christs have been appearing for a long time.

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Matthew 24:6 – “*ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars.*”

This has been happening for centuries.

Matthew 24:7 – “*nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*”

Sadly there is nothing new in these happenings either.

Jesus went on to say that even these signs, when combined, would merely signal “*the beginning of sorrows.*” – **Matthew 24:8.**

General signs such as these could be multiplied but it takes the fulfilment of more specific prophecies to give us confidence that we are identifying, with any degree of accuracy, the days in which we are living, and their proximity to the return of Jesus Christ.

SPECIFIC SIGNS

Jesus proceeded, however, to give much more specific signs and it is these that give us a basis to examine the prophetic Scriptures to determine how close we are to the Return of Jesus Christ.

The clearly fulfilled prophecies concerning the first of the disciples’ questions (‘When will Herod’s Temple be destroyed?’) help to inform us about the changes that will occur shortly before the Lord returns, for example:

- (i) Herod’s temple would be destroyed – **Matthew 24:2.**

But A NEW TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT – **Matthew 24:15** (to provide “*the holy place*” that is to be defiled).

- (ii) The Jews would be scattered – **Luke 21:12-24.**

But THEY WILL BE BACK IN THEIR LAND and they will be WORSHIPPING IN THEIR OLD TESTAMENT FASHION – **Matthew 24:1-21** and **Mark 13:14-19.**

As Jesus spoke of these things He went on to mention other specific things that would happen before He returns, for example:

- (iii) Worldwide proclamation of the gospel – **Matthew 24.14.**

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- (iv) Defilement of the NEW temple – **Matthew 24:15**.

It is only after the fulfilment of these things that Jesus Christ will return – **Matthew 24:21-31, Mark 13:19-27 and Luke 21:25-28**.

MAKING USE OF THE SIGNS

The disciples who heard Jesus' answers and were in Judea leading up the time of the destruction of Herod's temple passed through a certain process. There were early stage warnings when many happenings confirmed that Jesus' words were being fulfilled,

Luke 21:12-13. *“But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute (you), delivering (you) up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.”*

The record of The Acts of The Apostles confirms that these things happened.

But then came the fulfilment of very specific prophecies,

- (i) *“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” - Luke 21:20.*

They were required to act if they were to benefit from the warnings.

- (ii) *“Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.” - Luke 21:21.*

Jewish Christians obeyed these instructions and escaped.

We are in a similar position. Many of the preliminary general signs for the Lord's return have already been fulfilled, but lately we have entered a phase where more specific signs have been fulfilled and we need to pay attention to them. Eventually, as all relevant prophecies are fulfilled, we will be required to take action for our own benefit.

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CHAPTER 3:

Putting the Signs Together

I feel that this book would lose its focus and its purpose if I filled its pages with documented evidence from secular sources that the general signs referred to in the prophecies made by the Lord in answering the disciples' questions in Matthew 24:3 have been fulfilled. Much of it is common knowledge so my references to fulfillments will be brief. We do not need to record the dates and details of wars waged over the last hundred years to conclude that we have witnessed a fulfilment of His prediction, "*ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars*" - **Matthew 24:6**, nor do we need to quote statistics of the devastating famines that have claimed so many lives in recent years to recognise the truth of what He said, "*there shall be famines ... in divers places*" (**Matthew 24:7**). It is common knowledge.

It is much more important, as I see it, to simply acknowledge that certain prophecies have been fulfilled and then to proceed to identify the prophecies we can expect to be fulfilled in the near future. As these prophecies for the near future are fulfilled we will be able to trace with confidence the numerous events predicted in Scripture that lead to the return of Jesus Christ, and on to the end of time and our entry into eternity.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED RECENTLY

As we address the identification of prophecies recently fulfilled I will use the answer Jesus gave to the disciples' questions in Matthew 24:3 as a starting point but I will widen the task to include prophecies made in various parts of the Scriptures.

Jesus started His answer by warning about false Christs. It is interesting to note that before the end of the first century A.D. this prophecy was already being fulfilled, for John writes in his first epistle, "*even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*" -**1 John 2:18**. In recent days, however, false cults have thrown up leaders like David Koresh of the Waco cult or Jim Jones who led his followers to drink poison in a mass suicide in Guyana.

Some years ago, when I was speaking on this subject, I was able to identify more than twenty individuals in various parts of the world masquerading as Jesus Christ and attracting varying levels of support. They all proved to be fakes.

The orthodox Jews are still waiting for a Messiah, the Muslims await the Iman Mahdi, the New Agers await their Maitreya, the Buddhists the next Buddha and the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna, so it should not surprise us that branches of false Christianity throw up false Christs in fulfilment of Jesus' prediction that, "*many*

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shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” - Matthew 24:5. Jesus went on to say, *“ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars” - Matthew 24:6.* While this has often been the case down the centuries, what time has ever compared to the last one hundred years in this regard? The 1914/18 war (World War 1) and the 1939/45 war (World War 2) are striking examples, but what of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Arab/Israeli Wars and the dozens of wars currently being waged?

Jesus then predicts *“famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” - Matthew 24:7.* My daughter worked for World Vision Australia for twenty six years and over that period, as we have supported the work of that organisation, we were kept well supplied with information relating to the ever increasing number of disasters in various parts of the world.

The earth has always had its share of what we call natural disasters, but over recent years there has been a constant flow of floods, droughts, storms, earthquakes and tsunamis stretching the resources of many countries beyond their ability to cope. Published statistics lead us to believe that the incidence and severity of such things as earthquakes and lightening strikes is increasing markedly. As Luke records part of the Lord’s answer, referring to the period immediately prior to His return, he says there will be, *“distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” - Luke 21:25-26.*

When the threats from global warming, terrorism, poverty and AIDS are factored in, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that all the general signs given by the Lord have been fulfilled. Only the fulfilment of specific signs is now required to confirm that we are in the run-up to the Lord’s return.

However, before we turn our attention to the fulfilment of specific signs, let us look at some predictions made in other parts of the Word of God.

FALLEN STANDARDS IN SOCIETY

As Paul writes to Timothy he says, **(2 Timothy 3:1-5)**. *“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, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*

How apt a description this is of many parts of society today! So much time and effort is expended in the pursuit of money, the promotion of self and the satisfaction of the flesh and yet people talk of a renewed ‘spirituality’.

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As the Lord spoke about the condition of society in the days leading up to His return He drew a comparison with the days of Noah and the days of Lot. He said, (**Luke 17:26-30**). *“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed (them) all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”*

There was plenty of economic and social activity but the days of Noah and Lot were marked by immorality, violence and disinterest in God, as the Genesis record shows, *“And God saw that the wickedness of man (was) great in the earth, and (that) every imagination of the thoughts of his heart (was) only evil continually.” - Genesis 6:5.*

Genesis 6:11-13 *“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”*

Genesis 18:20-21 *“And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.”*

God sent two angels to Sodom to confirm the reports and Lot received them into his house, (**Genesis 19:4-5**), *“But before they lay down, the men of the city, (even) the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where (are) the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.”*

Falling standards have seen homosexuality and same-sex marriage legalised in many countries and abominable practices foisted on society as being acceptable. However, what God has condemned will remain condemned and the spread of these things provides another indication of where we have arrived at in the fulfilment of prophecy.

The angels had to say to Lot, *“For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.” - Genesis 19:13.*

Peter tells us in his second epistle that God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, *“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned (them) with an overthrow, making (them) an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” - 2 Peter 2:6-7.* While we associate Sodom with the perverted form of sexual activity to which it gave its name, it is interesting that Ezekiel gives a list of other sins against it as God

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speaks through him (**Ezekiel 16:49-50**), *“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw (good).”* In doing so he identifies other things we commonly see today.

FALLEN STANDARDS IN CHURCHES

I am approaching my seventy fifth birthday. Thirty nine years ago I emigrated from Northern Ireland to Australia with my wife and children, so I have spent almost equal time in both countries. When we first arrived in Australia my wife and I both missed what we saw as better churches with stronger teaching, closer fellowship and more enthusiastic outreach. Part of it was, of-course, that the Australian approach was new to us and was different in many ways from the Northern Ireland way of doing things. The experience did, however, cause us to compare different aspects of churches in both places and having been back to Northern Ireland several times (sometimes for periods of three or four months) we have noticed a decline in both countries.

This again is consistent with what the Word of God leads us to expect. Paul in writing to Timothy says, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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 unto fables.”*

- 2 Timothy 4:2-4.

Peter tells us, *“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**). And Paul warned the elders of Ephesus that after his departing, *“shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”* - **Acts 20:29-30.**

In principle, Jesus had warned about the decline as He answered the disciples' question of Matthew 24:3 when He said, *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”* - **Matthew 24:12.**

Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, in very clear terms, about the return of Jesus Christ and the events that would both precede and follow His return. Later in this book I will discuss some of the things he said, but he also refers to this decline when he says that the Lord will not return, *“except there come a falling away first”* - **2 Thessalonians 2.3.**

It has been heart-wrenching to see how the gospel has been watered down and the truth has been compromised from pulpits in recent days. Many people want forgiveness without repentance and service without a cross and many ministers respond

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with preaching saturated with notions of our inherent goodness as people and a gospel that has a heaven but no hell.

Many churches have become places of entertainment where repetitious music passes for worship and the main concern is the number of people in membership.

GREATLY INCREASED ABILITY TO TRAVEL

Sometimes a lot is conveyed in very few words. Daniel received and recorded many amazing prophecies and we will look at some of them later but in the last chapter of his book, when he has received almost all of the prophetic word that it fell his lot to receive, he is told, "*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, (even) to the time of the end*" - **Daniel 12:4**. Then he is given a very concise prophecy:-

"many shall run to and fro" - **Daniel 12:4**.

The full significance of this brief prophecy could not have been realised until recently. During the last few generations the ability for people to "*run to and fro*" has increased beyond all expectations.

When my grandfather was a boy the fastest means of transport was a horse. This had been the case since Adam was on the earth. When I was a boy only one family in our street had a car and it was only used on special occasions. When we had to move furniture my father borrowed a horse and cart.

What a change now! I have crossed the world more than a dozen times at speeds my grandparents would have thought impossible (and in the relative comfort of a jet plane).

During the last few months my wife and I have spent a week in Surfer's Paradise and a week in Darwin. I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who are in airports when I go to one to catch a plane or pick up an incoming passenger. Truly 'many are running to and fro'. Even as regards motor vehicles, governments are struggling to provide sufficient roads to accommodate the exceedingly high, and increasing, number of them.

THE KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION

The very same verse in Daniel's prophecy follows up with another brief statement filled with meaning,

"knowledge shall be increased"- **Daniel 12:4**

It became patently obvious when I was a young man that I was being privileged to have access to more knowledge than my parents. As I passed through my twenties an increasing number of young people were receiving University educations.

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Now academic degrees are commonplace and more and more people are not satisfied with a Bachelor's Degree.

Knowledge is disseminated through the media but the advent of the Internet has placed almost limitless knowledge literally at our fingertips. Who could have foreseen it? The answer of course is obvious. God foreknew it and told us about it so that we would have yet another sign of the times!

FORMING A CONCLUSION

Surely the fulfilment of so many prophecies prompts us to form a conclusion. If so many things are falling into place it must be time to follow the advice given by Jesus as He answered the disciples' questions of Matthew 24:3, namely, "*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**.

Surely it is time to take a closer look. As we do so we will discover many other fulfilments of prophecy but what I am particularly interested in finding is the fulfilment of a specific prophecy that would alert us to other specific prophecies that are likely to be fulfilled in the near future.

This book may not convince anyone that the return of the Lord is near but if it awakens us to specific prophecies that we can expect to be fulfilled shortly and we subsequently see them fulfilled, then it will be difficult to avoid being convinced.

Anything that will so alert us to the near return of Jesus Christ that we fully prepare for it, and move other people to fully prepare, will be welcome.

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CHAPTER 4:

Confirming the Conclusion

Having laid the groundwork in Chapters 2 and 3 I will now seek to present sufficient evidence from Scripture to prove that the assertion I made at the end of Chapter 1 is true, namely that a specific prophecy has recently been fulfilled which enables us to say where we are chronologically in the fulfilment of a series of specific prophecies.

We are living in the period between:

(a) The return of the Jews to the land of Israel,

and,

(b) The invasion of Israel by an identifiable confederacy of nations.

The predicted details of the invasion and its results are sufficiently clear to make the fulfilment of the prophecy unmistakable when it occurs.

Let us ask, and seek to answer, a series of questions to establish the facts:

WAS THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO BE DISPERSED EARLY IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA?

The answer is “yes”? **Luke 21:24**, *“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.”*

This happened in A.D. 70 when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, took it and destroyed the temple.

WAS THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO BE BACK IN THEIR LAND BEFORE THE LORD RETURNS?

The answer is “yes”! They are to be back in their land, with a temple rebuilt for the “*abomination of desolation*” spoken of by Daniel to be fulfilled during the ‘*Great Tribulation*’ that precedes the return of Christ.

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Matthew 24:15-21 *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*

The fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecy during the great tribulation with the Jews in their land with a temple

Matthew 24: 29-30 *“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.”*

The return of the Lord at the end of the great tribulation.

IS THE RETURN OF ISRAEL TO THEIR PROMISED LAND THE FULFILMENT OF A SPECIFIC PROPHECY?

Again the answer is “yes!” Not only is it a specific prophecy but it is repeated in several Scriptures and identified as a deliberate intervention by God in the affairs of mankind. It happened on the 14th May, 1948 when the State of Israel was re-established. Towards the end of Chapter One, I quoted Isaiah 11:11-12, *“And it shall come to pass in that day, (that) the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*

Several things should be noticed about this prophecy, namely -

- (i) Isaiah says it will be fulfilled *“in that day”*. The *“day”* referred to needs to be drawn from the context. Verses 6 to 10 of Isaiah chapter 11 refer to end time happenings (conditions during the Millennium) and verse 10 also uses the phrase *“in that day.”*

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(ii) God is seen as recovering the remnant of Israel “*the second time.*” Isaiah wrote this prophecy more than one hundred years before the captivity in Babylon so his prophecy looked forward to two returns of the Jews to the land of Israel – the first during the 6th century B.C. and the second in the end times.

The return of the Jews to their homeland is an event of such significance that it is referred to several times in the prophetic Scriptures. Let me mention a couple of them accompanied by a few comments:

- **Zechariah 8:7-8** - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”*
 - Zechariah wrote this prophecy shortly after the return from Babylon and spoke of a future return that would bring Jews from all parts of the world. We are seeing this happen before our eyes.
 - Zechariah looked ultimately to both a PHYSICAL and a SPIRITUAL restoration of his people. The physical/geographical restoration would come first. The spiritual restoration would follow and have its completion when the Lord returns – **Zechariah 12:9-10**. *“And it shall come to pass in that day, (that) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for (his) only (son), and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for (his) firstborn.”* From that point Zechariah continues to describe the saving nature of the restoration, *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”* - **Zechariah 13:1**. The spiritual restoration will occur in the land of Israel to the nation of Israel.
 - Prior to the spiritual restoration there are times of extreme trouble in store for Israel. As regards Jerusalem Zechariah says, *“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth “be gathered together against it.”* **Zechariah 12:3**. And of the Jews he says, *“And it shall come to pass (that) in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off (and) die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It (is) my people: and they shall say, The LORD (is) my God.”* - **Zechariah 13:8-9**.
 - Surely we can see these things being fulfilled as the Jews have returned to their land, still in unbelief and Jerusalem has become the centre of continuous

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trouble. Little do the nations that continue to vent their anger on Israel realise that they are assisting the fulfilment of prophecies made thousands of years ago. Little do they realise that the outcomes of their efforts to wipe Israel off the map of the earth have already been determined, in Israel's favour, by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Indeed, God is great!

- **Ezekiel 36:24** – *“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”*
 - Israel is the subject of Ezekiel's prophecy, as all of **chapter 36** makes clear.
 - Just as Zechariah sees it, so Ezekiel sees Israel restored to their land in unbelief, just as we have it today.
 - When they are back in their land God starts to take them through a cleansing process, for Ezekiel goes on to say, *“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you.”* (**Ezekiel 36:25**).
 - The cleansing process is spoken about in detail in the Word of God, and we will consider these Scriptures in future chapters.

CAN WE TOTALLY DEPEND UPON THE FULFILMENT OF THIS PROPHECY AS A SURE SIGN THAT THE LORD WILL RETURN SOON?

I have tried to avoid both overstatement and understatement so I will answer this question as honestly and accurately as I can.

It is always possible that Israel will once again be displaced from their land and be dispersed among the Gentiles, but it is unlikely. Since their reoccupation of the land in 1948 several attempts have been made to remove them but their hold on the land has strengthened. The Six Day War in 1967 was a good example of opposition leading to a strengthening, rather than a weakening of their hold. After that war, and their recovery of Jerusalem, Moshe Dyan, the general who led them to victory, went to the “Wailing Wall” and said, “We have returned to our holiest of holy places, never to leave her again.” These words typify the determination of this nation.

When God said through Isaiah that He would, *“recover the remnant of his people”* THE SECOND TIME it is hardly likely that we need to look for a third recovery some time in the future. It is true that there will be a significant exodus of Jews from Israel as is predicted in **Matthew 24:15-16**, *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.”* This is the same

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exodus as is spoken about in **Revelation 12:13-14**, “*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.*” But when this happens the Beast will already be at the height of his power, the False Prophet will be exercising his ministry and so many clear cut unmistakable prophecies will have been fulfilled that no one with any knowledge of prophetic Scripture will be in any doubt as to where we are time-wise in relation to the return of Jesus Christ.

We will be within three and a half years of the Lord’s return and several of the current “schools” of prophecy will have closed for lack of adherents.

If, as seems most likely, we have seen in recent days the fulfilment of many general prophecies relating to the end times, and we have seen the fulfilment of at least one such specific prophecy, our approach should be to ask, “What do we look for next?”

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CHAPTER 5:

What to Look for Next

If the return of the Jews to Israel in 1948 was the fulfilment of the prophecies quoted in chapter 4 we can clearly point to other prophecies that will soon be fulfilled. We would be guessing as to the chronology of their fulfilment but we should be able to track a path of prophecies that are to be fulfilled between now and the actual return of Jesus Christ.

(i) A TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT AT JERUSALEM

As already quoted, Jesus, in answering the disciples' questions of **Matthew 24:3**, made reference to the fulfilment of a prophecy made by Daniel.

Daniel had said, "*And from the time (that) the daily (sacrifice) shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, (there shall be) a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*" - **Daniel 12:11**. Read in context, Daniel is speaking about what is to happen during the great tribulation (as he says in **12:1**, "*a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, (even) to that same time.*")

Jesus is speaking of the same time when He says, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*" - **Matthew 24:5**.

To the Jews "the holy place" was "the Holy of Holies" (or the inner room of the temple at Jerusalem) so to have "*the holy place*" you have to have "*the*" temple! So a temple will be built in Jerusalem prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

This is confirmed by Paul as he writes to the Thessalonians saying, "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 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, showing himself that he is God.*" - **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**. When the "beast" (the "man of sin") is at the height of his power he will seek to be worshipped as God. He will seek to suspend all other worship and sit in the temple as if he is God. For this to happen there must be a temple.

Many Jews in Israel and in many other parts of the world would love to see the temple rebuilt and their ceremonies and sacrifices reinstated. Preparations have

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been made and continue to be made for this to happen. And happen it will when the time is right, as surely as the Scriptures are the Word of God.

As the events of the Tribulation are unfolded in the Revelation the temple comes in for mention, (**Revelation 11:1-2**). “*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty (and) two months.*”

(ii) ISRAEL WILL BE INVADED BY A CONFEDERACY OF NATIONS

Details of this invasion are given in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Some years ago as I read of this invasion, and realised how unmistakable it will be as a sign of the end times when it is fulfilled, I promised myself that if I lived to see it fulfilled I would visit every unsaved person I know (or assemble them in groups) and read these chapters to them. My thought was that when they would hear the prediction, made two and a half thousand years ago, and see the fulfilment of so many details, they could not help but believe. It is a nice thought, but, realistically, people do not believe, even in the face of the amazing number of prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the fulfilment of this prophecy will be significant by any measure.

Let me just make a few observations that may help anyone reading the prophecy for the first time:

- The countries comprising the confederacy are named (**38:2, 5 & 6**). Magog, Meshech and Tubal (**v2**) are interpreted by many as referring to Russia. Persia is Iran and it is followed by Ethiopia and Libya (**v5**). Gomer covers areas of Europe (mainly to the east but including Germany) and Togarmah is part of Armenia (**v6**).

There are, however, three things that prevent us from being certain about the nations that constitute the confederacy:

- (i) Names and boundaries of countries have changed over the years.
- (ii) The statement in 38.6, “*many people with thee*”, may mean that additional unnamed countries will participate.
- (iii) Gog (**38:1**) is only a title for the otherwise unnamed leader.

The precise foreknowledge of all of the members of the confederacy is not critical.

- The target of the invasion is clear.
“*After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land (that is) brought back from the sword, (and is) gathered out of many people,*

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against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.” (38:8).

Israel is identified as the target and this is confirmed in several verses (38:14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 39:2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 17, 22, 23, 25, 29). Israel is specifically named in these verses and is referred to in other ways in other verses so there can be no doubt.

- The manner of the invasion is clear.

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.” (38:9).

It will be a sudden, unexpected attack with an immense force.

- The purpose of the invasion is clear.

And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places (that are now) inhabited, and upon the people (that are) gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.” (38:11-12).

Several points are worth making about the content of these verses:

- (a) Changes will need to occur before Israel can be described as “at rest” and dwelling “safely.”
- (b) The “spoil” and “prey” is not identified. We can only speculate as to what it may be.
- (c) The purpose of the invasion as far as the confederacy is concerned is for “spoil” and “prey”, but God has other things in mind.

- It is God who moves them to come, “*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.” (39:2).*

- And God has His own purposes for doing it, “*Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I (am) the LORD.” (38:23).*

- The outcome of the invasion is clear.

God says to the confederacy, “*Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that (is) with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and (to) the beasts of the field to be devoured.” (39:4).*

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The confederacy will be defeated in a way that will pale into insignificance the defeat of the Egyptian armies in the Six Day War of June, 1967. These chapters of Ezekiel give a detailed prediction of natural disasters and confusion among the troops of the confederacy (**38.17-23**) that will bring about their defeat with colossal loss of life (**39.11-12**).

And so many unprecedented events occur in connection with the invasion that, when it occurs, no one will be able to question the fulfilment of the prophecy, for example:

- (i) There will be an earthquake, centred on the land of Israel that will noticeably shake the whole earth (**38:19-20**). It will be of such severity as to change the topography, destroy man-made structures and significantly affect animals and humans.
- (ii) The earthquake will be accompanied by “*Overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.*” (**38:22**).
- (iii) Leftovers and debris from the weapons of the defeated armies will provide fuel for burning for seven years (**39:9-10**).
- (iv) So many people in the invading armies will be killed that a special mass burial location will be created (**39:11**).
- (v) It will take seven months to bury the dead (**39:12**).
- (vi) The burial task will be so great that people will be appointed to it on a full-time employment basis (**39:14**).

So amazing will this whole episode be that God’s hand in it will be almost universally acknowledged. (**38:16, 23** and **39:6-7, 21**).

It is interesting to note that at least some of the nations looking on (and not being part of the invading confederacy) raise questions, about the invasion, to the confederacy (**38:13**). This, along with a host of other reasons, shows that this invasion should in no way be linked with or confused with The Battle of Armageddon, when God will gather ALL NATIONS together against Jerusalem (**Revelation 16:12-16, 19:19, Zechariah 14:1-3**).

(iii) THE BEAST WILL COME TO POWER

This is a matter of such moment that it is addressed in several parts of the Word of God. Sometimes he is mentioned on his own account, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, (quoted earlier in this chapter in connection with the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem), “*for (that day shall not come), except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*” Sometimes he is mentioned as events related to the last world empire are unfolded as in Daniel 7:23-25, “*Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and*

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break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak (great) words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

In the 2 Thessalonians passage “*the Beast*” is referred to under a couple of titles (“*that man of sin*” and “*the son of perdition*”) but in the passage from Daniel he is referred to as a “*horn*” (a “*king*”) who is “*diverse from the first.*” But regardless of how he is referred to he is consistently shown as coming to power in the decade prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

When he comes to power he will be unmistakably recognised by:

- The kingdom from which he emerges (**Daniel 7:7-8**).
- His passage to power (**Daniel 7:24**), as he “subdues three kings.”
- The “covenant” he makes with Israel (**Daniel 9:27**).
- His proclaiming of himself to be God (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**).
- The “number of his name” (**Revelation 13:8**).
- His companion and supporter, The False Prophet (**Revelation 13:11-17**).

And many other things.

(iv) AND MUCH MORE

On one of his advances Napoleon Bonaparte sent word ahead that as he and his troops approached townships they were to signal their surrender by firing a canon (blank of course!), otherwise he would attack the town, kill the inhabitants and burn the buildings. As he approached a certain town the leaders came out on horseback with evidence of surrender and a list of reasons as to why they had not sounded off a canon. “Tell me your reasons”, said Bonaparte. The person with the list said, “Reason number one – we do not have a canon.” “Enough,” said Napoleon, “No other reasons are required.”

As you read the Scriptures relating to end times it becomes evident that a chapter such as this could be stretched out by listing one event after another with their supporting Scriptures, as specific prophecies to be fulfilled. But enough is enough.

BUT WAIT!

Having gone this far in making a point (i.e. that we should be looking for what we can expect to happen next) it would make good sense to complete the picture by identifying (however briefly) the events we can expect to occur from now until eternity.

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The mention of “the Beast” raises several issues:

- The Beast emerges through the last world empire and EMPIRES are a key subject in prophetic Scriptures. It will be well worth devoting a chapter to them.
- The Beast emerges immediately prior to the period known as The Great Tribulation and this period is packed full of specific events that must occur before the Lord returns, so a chapter on The Great Tribulation is a must.
 - The Lord returns at the end of The Great Tribulation and that is the greatest future event this world will experience. This is what we should all be waiting for! and working towards! This is our “*blessed hope*” (**Titus 2:11-14**). This is the next great step in the fulfilment of God’s purposes (**Ephesians 1:7-10**). This I must write about and as I do so I will naturally write about The Rapture and The Judgement Seat of Christ.
 - But the story does not end there, for Jesus Christ is coming to reign on the earth, so I will write about The Millennium.
 - And the Millennium will be followed by The Final Judgement and as Jesus spoke about that, so must I.
 - Which will take us through to eternity with “*a new heaven and a new earth.*” (**Revelation 21:1**).

So a few more chapters are in order.

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CHAPTER 6:

“Time” in terms of World Empires

God has revealed His plans for “time” in several ways. One of the key subjects in prophetic Scripture is **world empires**. In reading these Scriptures it is possible to gauge where you are, (within limits) in the passage of time, according to which empire you live under.

Daniel says much about them and an overall appreciation of how they inform us regarding the passage of time can be gained by studying the second and the seventh chapters of his prophecy.

DANIEL CHAPTER 2

As Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream the “**great image**” that Nebuchadnezzar dreamt about is seen to represent four kingdoms (or empires), as follows:

Verses 31 to 33

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness (was) excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof (was) terrible. This image’s head (was) of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

1. BABYLON – The head of gold – v 37- 38

“Thou, O king, (art) a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou (art) this head of gold.”

2. MEDO-PERSIA – The chest and arms of silver – v 39

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee;”

3. GREECE – The belly and thighs of brass (bronze.) – v39

“and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.”

4. ROME – The legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay v 40-43

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all (things): and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And (as) the toes of the feet (were) part of iron, and part of clay, (so) the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

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And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

Two very important messages need to be taken from this chapter, namely: -

- (i) God only recognises FOUR WORLD KINGDOMS from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, to the return of Jesus Christ and the setting up of His earthly kingdom – **v44**.

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

(At this point it seems relevant to say that I am aware that many people do not believe in a literal earthly reign of Jesus Christ on this earth for 1000 years even though, to my reading of the Scriptures, it is plainly taught. This kingdom (the Millennium) is my subject in chapter 9. Suffice to say that when the Lord returns He will set up His kingdom and as Daniel says, “**it shall stand for ever**”, the first phase of it being a 1000 year reign on this earth.)

- (ii) The most complex of the four kingdoms is the last one and, for this reason, more words are used to describe it.

The information given in Daniel chapter 2 is confirmed and expanded upon in –

DANIEL CHAPTER 7

In this chapter we are told of a “*dream*” Daniel had and of “*visions of his head upon his bed*” (**v 1**). Daniel, in his dream, saw the Mediterranean ocean, stirred up by “*the four winds*” (**v 2**). As he takes in the scene “*four great beasts*” (**v 3**) rise up out of the sea.

What he is being shown is a confirmation of what had been revealed to Nebuchadnezzar. There will be FOUR WORLD EMPIRES spanning the period between Nebuchadnezzar and the return of Jesus Christ, namely:

1. BABYLON – The lion – v 4

“The first (was) like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.”

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It is interesting that God views EMPIRES as BEASTS in several Scriptures. Men may look on their empires as magnificent contributions to the progress and culture of the world but God sees them as ravenous beasts. He sees a side of them they prefer to hide. Nebuchadnezzar said, *“Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”*

- **Daniel 4:30.**

But God speaks of Babylon through Jeremiah saying,

“And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, (that) I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”

- **Jeremiah 25:12.**

The reference of *“a man’s heart”* being given to it is probably a reference to the experience of humiliation that God took Nebuchadnezzar through, as is recorded in Daniel chapter 4.

2. MEDO-PERSIA – The bear – v5

“And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and (it had) three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.”

Medo Persia did take over *“suddenly”* from Babylon, as Daniel 5:30-31 indicates, *“In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, (being) about threescore and two years old.”*

While the Medes and the Persians had combined to overthrow the Babylonians there was not total equality in the sharing of power between them and this probably accounts for the bear having *“raised up itself on one side.”* The *“three ribs in the mouth”* may refer to Babylon, Egypt and Lydia, the kingdoms it conquered.

3. GREECE – the leopard – v6

“After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.”

The Greek empire spread quickly under Alexander the Great, but on his death, while still a young man, it was divided between four generals (no doubt the reference to *“four heads”*).

4. ROME – The “dreadful and terrible” beast – v7

“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 brake 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.”

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Daniel 7 teaches us the same two important facts as Daniel 2, namely:-

- (i) God only recognises FOUR WORLD EMPIRES from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the return of Jesus Christ and the setting up of His earthly kingdom – **v17 & 18**.

“These great beasts, which are four, (are) four kings, (which) shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”

- (ii) The most complex of the four kingdoms is the last one. This is emphasised even more in Daniel 7 than it was in Daniel 2.

- As the fourth empire is described, five verses are absorbed in talking about it (**verses 7 to 11**) as opposed to one verse for each of the other empires.
- As Daniel enquires about the meaning of the visions all four beasts are mentioned in one verse (**v17**) then eight verses are used to further explain the fourth beast (**v19 - 26**).

The detailed explanations of the fourth beast are very enlightening and add greatly to our understanding of where we are in relation to God’s plans and purposes for “time”.

THE FOURTH BEAST OF DANIEL CHAPTERS 2 AND 7

The fourth empire of **Daniel chapters 2 and 7** is revealed as an empire that -

(a) HAS SEVERAL PHASES

In Daniel chapter 2, as we have seen, it has a phase where it is all “iron” (the “legs”) and a phase where it is “*part of iron and part of clay*” (the “*feet and toes*”).

In **Daniel 7** it has a phase where it has “*ten horns*” (**v24** – “*And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise*”). The same verse refers to a period when it will have eleven kings, quickly followed by a phase when it has eight kings (**v24** – “*and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings*”).

When we focus our attention on this eleventh horn, the king who arises and subdues three other kings, we find we can identify him as the “Beast”:

- **Daniel 7:8** says, “*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.*”

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- **Daniel 7:19-22** says, “Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth (were of) iron, and his nails (of) brass; (which) devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that (were) in his head, and (of) the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even (of) that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look (was) more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.”
- **Daniel 7:24-27** says, “And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak (great) words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy (it) unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom (is) an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

When these Scriptures are compared with the following:

- **Revelation 13:1-2** – “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. 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

The similarity of imagery with **Daniel chapter 7** is amazing. But when **Revelation 13** proceeds to identify the leader of this empire in the following terms –

- **Revelation 13:5-7** – “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty (and) two months. 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.”

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the “**little horn**” of Daniel 7:8 and the leader of the empire in Revelation 13 are one and the same person. He looks the same, sounds the same, does the same things and occupies the same position at the same time in the future history of this world.

We will have more to say about this man, “the beast”, “the man of sin”, the “little horn”, the “son of perdition” and the most notable period of his reign (the “*time and times and half a time*” - **Daniel 7:25**, the “*forty (and) two months*” of - **Revelation 13:5**, the three and

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and a half years of The Great Tribulation) in the next chapter. But the point to be made here is that THE RULE OF THE BEAST IS ANOTHER PHASE OF THE FOURTH EMPIRE OF DANIEL 2 AND DANIEL 7.

THIS FOURTH EMPIRE, which I conveniently, for identification purposes, called The Roman Empire (because that is the name by which it is commonly known), IS MUCH, MUCH MORE THAN THE ROMAN EMPIRE we read about in history books.

The most famous early stages of it were correctly called The Roman Empire, but, in God's eyes that fourth Empire still exists. It has gone through phases where it continued with vague Eastern and Western Centres of Power (following on from the 4th Century A.D. division of the former unified Roman Empire with their headquarters in Constantinople and Rome). It has, for a long time, ceased to be strong like iron and has become iron mixed with ceramic clay.

It matters little what name we give to the overall empire but we are in the "feet" stage (**Daniel 2:41**), "*part of potters' clay, and part of iron.*". And we are yet to enter the "*toes of the feet*" (**Daniel 2:42**) phase where the "*ten kings*" (**Daniel 7:2**) will be in place and the "*beast*" (**Revelation 13:18**) appears, to run his course.

LET'S RECAP

It was never a prospect that we would be able, at this stage, to tell how close we are in years to the return of the Lord but the evidence considered so far leads me to believe that, in the passage of time, we stand:

- (1) Between the return of the Jews to Israel and the invasion of Israel by a confederacy of nations.
- (2) Between the return of the Jews to Israel and the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem.
- (3) In the latter phases of the fourth and final Gentile World Empire counting from the Babylonian Empire (and including it).
- (4) In the time leading up to the ten-toed, ten-horned, ten kings, phase of the fourth and final Gentile World Empire counting from the Babylonian Empire (and including it).
- (5) In the time leading up to the emergence of "*the Beast.*"
- (6) In the time leading up to *The Great Tribulation.*

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CHAPTER 7:

The Great Tribulation

Oddly enough, there are people who believe that there will be no such thing as The Great Tribulation. Their reading of Scripture leads them to believe that the world will become better and better in preparation for the return of the Lord. I cannot agree with their conclusions.

The coming of this period of exceptional trouble immediately prior to the return of the Lord is so well documented in Scripture (**Daniel 12:1**, **Matthew 24:21**, **Revelation 3:10** etc) that I will make no attempt to compile a proof that it will occur. I propose to simply quote Scriptures that show something of its nature, its purposes and the possible chronology of events.

A: ITS NATURE AND ITS PURPOSES

Due to the close connections between the nature of the troubles caused during The Great Tribulation, and the reasons for which they are instigated, it is convenient to deal with their nature and purposes under the one heading.

As Jesus answered the disciples' question, "*and what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*" - **Matthew 24:3** He said, "*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.*" - **Matthew 24:29-30**

Of that time of tribulation, which Jesus says will immediately precede His return, He says, "*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*"- **Matthew 24:21**

This statement tells us a lot about the nature of this period. It will be of a scope and intensity such as this world has never experienced. And, thank God, there will never, after it, be another such period.

Trouble will come from every source possible.

In essence there are three levels of power. At the lowest level is HUMAN power, at a higher level is SUPERNATURAL power and at the highest level is DIVINE power. All three levels of power will be at work causing trouble during The Great Tribulation.

At the HUMAN level men will make trouble to advance their own ends. As has always

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been the case men will pursue power, wealth, pleasures and anything else that feeds their fallen nature.

At the SUPERNATURAL level Satan and his followers will seek to deceive mankind, vent their wrath and defeat the purposes of God.

At DIVINE level God will justly move against evil and will use trials and tribulations to refine those He is drawing to Himself.

(i) **Trouble From Human Sources**

Recently I read a book that recorded the worst known deeds of what the author claimed to be the two hundred most evil people who have ever lived. Their names were drawn from ancient, modern and very recent history. I had two reasons for buying it. The first was that I hate to miss what appears to be a bargain (the book, regardless of the recommended retail price, was being sold for 1AUD a copy) and the second was that I wanted to confirm some things regarding the lives of a couple of the people mentioned by the author. Having bought the book I read it, but was so sickened by the deeds of some of these people that I destroyed the book when I finished it, to ensure that no other family member would read it.

On reflection I was foolish to persevere in reading that book when it was so offending my mind and soul.

Who can learn of the deeds of men like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Idi Amin and not be horrified. Yet there is a man coming who will be worse than all of history's worst tyrants. As has been written, *"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."* - **2 Thessalonians 2:3**.

The emergence of this man will herald the approach of The Great Tribulation and he will have a major role in world events during that period. Scripture says sufficient about him for us to fully recognise him when he takes his place on the world stage.

He is given several titles in the Word of God, for example:

- that man of sin - **2 Thessalonians 2:3**.
- the son of perdition - **2 Thessalonians 2:3**.
- that Wicked (one) - **2 Thessalonians 2:8**.
- antichrist - **1John 1:18**.
- the beast - **Revelation 11:7**.
- another little horn - **Daniel 7:8**.
- the prince that shall come - **Daniel 9:26**.

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This is not a complete list of his titles; but this selection is sufficient to show the nature of person he will be and the ability he will have for causing trouble.

- As “**that man of sin**”, he will have the nature, the inclination and the drive to extend the boundaries of horrific and despicable behaviour beyond any of his predecessors.
- As “**the son of perdition**” he is linked to the betrayer Judas Iscariot who bore the same title (**John 17.12**). It is said of Judas, “*Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot*” - **Luke 22:3-4**. Jesus called Judas “*a devil*” - **John 6.70**. The Beast will be the Devil’s man, and probably, to a greater degree than Judas..

Satan is referred to in **Revelation 12.9** as a “*dragon*” and it is said of the empire the Beast will control that it receives its power and authority from “*the dragon*”- **Revelation 13.4**. Again, we are told in **2 Thessalonians 2.9** that the Beast comes “*after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*” With the full support of Satan the Beast will have immense power to cause trouble.

- As “**that Wicked (one)**” he will observe no rules. If laws do not suit him he will seek to change them - **Daniel 7.25**. His promises, even when made publicly on the world stage, will count for nothing - **Daniel 11.27**. He will publicly make a seven-year covenant with Israel (**Daniel 9.27**) but half way through that period he will break the covenant unleashing the worst period of trouble for the Jews, and for the whole world, that has ever been or will ever be experienced. (**Daniel 9.27, 11.31-32, Matthew 24.15-22**).
- As “**antichrist**” he will be the human being who will most oppose God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). He “*opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.*” The same verse of Scripture that tells us this goes on to tell us he will sit “*in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*” - **2 Thessalonians 2:4**.
He will speak blasphemously against God and will attack, persecute and kill God’s people (**Revelation 13:6-7**) but not content with that, he will follow his master, the Devil, in the path of ultimate folly. Just as the Devil opposed God and suffered for it (**Isaiah 14:12-15**) so the Beast will lead his army, eventually, against Jesus Christ and suffer the consequences (**Revelation 19.11-20**).

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Both master and follower will share eternity regretting their actions (**Revelation 20.10**).

- As “**the beast**” he is revealed as the evil leader of the evil empire that will rule the world immediately prior to the return of Jesus Christ (**Daniel 7:7-14, Revelation 13:1-10**). His partner in crime “**the false prophet**” (**Revelation 20:10**) earns the title of “**another beast**” since his nature and intentions so match those of the Beast. This other beast assists the Beast in making this period the worst ever to be known in the history of the world (**Revelation 13:11-18**).
- As “**another little horn**” his ruthless nature and his lust for power are easily seen. Under this title he emerges as a leader in the last world empire who disposes of three of his fellow leaders in his rise to power - **Daniel 7.7-8**. He eventually dominates (**Daniel 7.24-25**) becoming the most powerful man in the world for a short period (three and a half years) (**Revelation 13:5-8**)
- As “**the prince that shall come**” we are given information concerning his identity. We have no shortage of information to assist us in identifying him, but this piece of information lets us know that he will be the leader of the last phase of the fourth and final world empire. This empire started as the Roman Empire, and after many changes will resume world influence with “**ten kings**”, (**Daniel 7:24**) before the Beast rises to power removing “**three kings**” and eventually becoming world ruler (**Revelation 13:7**). “King” is the term used here for a leader but he may not be a crowned king in the normal sense.

We can be fairly certain that since he will be OF THE PEOPLE WHO DESTROYED JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70 (i.e. **Daniel 9:26** tells us that “*the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*”) he will be a GENTILE. The text ties him down to being of ROMAN origin – but this may not of necessity mean that he will be European or Italian for Romans from any part of the Roman Empire could rise through the ranks to be a leader.

His policies and actions will cause desolation and destruction in many ways. He will lay desolate the Jewish religious system (**Daniel 11:31**) and cause trouble for the Jewish nation (**Matthew 24:15-16**). He will attack Christians (**Revelation 13:7**) and cause havoc on a massive scale (**Revelation 13:15-16**) – aided by the false prophet. Eventually he will lead his armies to desolation (**Revelation 19:19-21**).

This vile man of sin will be so proud that in his own mind he exalts himself to the status of God (**Daniel 11.36**), tramples down those who get in his way (**Daniel 7.8**), shows no mercy to his subjects (**Revelation 13.15-17**) and does whatever he wishes to attain his ends (**Daniel 11.37, 7.25**), be it flattery (**Daniel 11.32**) deception (**2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**) or force (**Daniel 11:41-42**).

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without doubt he will be the main source of trouble, at human level, but he will by no means be the only human being who will cause trouble during The Great Tribulation, for:

-“**the false prophet**” **Revelation 20:10** will be busy in his supporting role – **Revelation 13:11-17**.
- **the kings of the east**” will be on the move (**Revelation 16:12**) and lesser rulers in various parts of the world will be following their (and Satan’s) agendas –**Revelation 16:13-14**.
“**perilous times**” (**2 Timothy 3:1-4**) will have arrived with every manifestation mentioned in these verses. What form of world can we expect when “*men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*”

We live in a time when many of these traits already show. If we live in a day when marriage and traditional family life is undervalued, when crime flourishes and corruption affects so many governments and authorities, when immoral practices are condoned, when adherents to a major religion believe you can earn entry to paradise by killing innocent people, then how will it be when things get worse? In the days of The Great Tribulation evil men and women will react to the obvious judgements of God by cursing God Himself and continuing in their evil ways (“*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 16.10-11**).

There will be plenty of trouble from Human sources.

(ii) Trouble from Supernatural Sources

Satan has been a source of trouble since the day he sinned. As a being created by God he was perfect, but, by some means he had the desire to rise above his appointed position and for this he was judged.

(Ezekiel 28:13-17 tells the story):-

“Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone (was) thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou (art) the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee (so): thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou (wast) perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy

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merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

Isaiah adds to our information about him as he says **Isaiah 14:12-17**

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (how) art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, (and) consider thee, (saying, Is) this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (That) made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; (that) opened not the house of his prisoners?"

Both prophets say more about him, and their discourses cover his past, present and as-yet unfulfilled future. We can only guess at his beauty, his abilities, his wisdom and the extent of his duties – but since he sinned he has been a trouble-maker.

- He caused our first parents to sin bringing judgement upon them (Genesis 3) and bringing disaster to the human race - **Romans 4:12**.
- He mercilessly pursued Job, attacking him to the maximum of his permitted ability - **Job 1 & 2**.
- He moved David to number the people, bringing judgement on David and the nation - **1 Chronicles 21**.
- He opposed Jesus Christ at every possible opportunity - **Genesis 3:15**, seeking to have Him killed as an infant (compare Revelation 12:4 with Matthew 2:16) . He sought to divert Him in His ministry (**Matthew 4:1-11**), hinder in His sacrificial death (**John 14.28-30**) and, right to the end, will attack Him by seeking to take over His millennial kingdom - **Revelation 20:7-10**.

He is the adversary of every believer (**1 Peter 5:8**) and the enemy of God (**Matthew 13:37-39**), always intent on causing trouble. During The Great Tribulation he will be working overtime (**Revelation 12:12**). Co-ordinating his hosts of demons he will be responsible for:

- Empowering the final phases of the last world empire (**Revelation 13:1-2**).
- Guiding and enabling "*that man of sin*" - **2 Thessalonians 2:3**.
- Stirring '*the kings of the earth*' (by his own direct actions and through the instrumentality of "*the beast*" and "*the false prophet*") to fall in line with the beast (**Revelation 16:13-14**)
- Troubling mankind in general by demonic works and deceptions (**2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**) and leading them into all sorts of violence, false worship and depravity to the full scope of his ability - (**Revelation 9.1-12 + 20-21**)

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Satan will attack anyone and everyone. He is the father of lies and was “*a murderer from the beginning.*” - **John 8:44**. He will do no one any good and he will lead his own followers to destruction, but, there are people he particularly wants to harm due to their place in God’s plans. The twelfth chapter of the book of the Revelation gives us a glimpse of his hatred:

- In **v1 & 2** we see the nation of Israel as “*a woman*” through whom Christ the “*child*” came (**Romans 9:1-5**). [**v5** confirms the “*man child*” to be Jesus Christ].
- In **v3 & 4** the “*dragon*” is Satan. [**v9** confirms this]. And in **v3** we see his hatred for Jesus Christ. He wanted to “*devour*” Him as soon as He was born.
- In **v5** we see that Satan fails totally in his plans for Jesus Christ.
- In **v6** we see God has plans to bring Israel through her darkest hour (The Great Tribulation) (**Jeremiah 30:7**)
- In **v7 - 12** we see that Satan will not be permitted to move “*in heaven*” during The Great Tribulation. He will be restricted to earth. This, together with his knowledge that “*he hath but a short time*”, will move him into top gear. Everyone will be fair game to him (**v12**).
- In **v13 - 16** we see Satan’s hatred for Israel. He will make her a special target, but, God will help her, much to Satan’s frustration.
- In **v17** we see Satan’s hatred for Christians (**Romans 11:17-18**).
- His frustration with protection afforded to Israel makes him redouble his efforts to persecute those who have been brought into the Kingdom through the gospel that came to the Jew first, then, through the Jews, to us Gentiles. Much of his wrath toward Christians he will vent through the agency of the beast (**Revelation 13:7**) and the false prophet (**Revelation 13:15**).

There will be more than enough trouble from supernatural sources.

(iii) Trouble From God

Divine power is supreme. God is sovereign. He says, “*To whom will ye liken me, and make (me) equal, and compare me, that we may be like?*” - **Isaiah 46:5**. And again he says, “*I will do all my pleasure*” - **Isaiah 46:10**.

God, “*who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*” - **Ephesians 1:11** planned this period a long time ago. He says, “*Therefore wait ye upon me saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination (is) to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, (even) all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.*”- (**Zephaniah 3:8**) and The Great Tribulation will be part of the fulfilment of this prophecy.

People have often said, “How does God hold back from judging evil people?”, or,

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“If there is a God why does He not intervene and stop the evil that goes on in the world?” Well, there is a God, and He will intervene – and it will not be a fun time when He does. He has said, “*Vengeance is mine; I will repay*” (**Romans 1:2.19**) – and so He will!

This is, perhaps, a suitable place in the book to say a little about what I believe to be COMMON ERRORS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHETIC SCRIPTURE. Of course, I am as susceptible to making errors as anyone else. All we need to do to be in error is to fail to follow the teachings of The Holy Spirit or to blindly follow the beliefs of someone else who is in error.

I respect the men of God who taught me in my early days as a Christian, but my examination of the Word of God has led me to the belief that some of what they taught was not right. I respect the scholarship of the writers of many books on prophecy but believe some of what is written is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures.

All error is serious and does harm. Error increases in its harmful effects and deceptive misleading when it is mixed with truth (Satan knows this!). When you compare the teachings of Preterists, Historicists and Futurists, or Amillennialists, Premillennialists and Postmillennialists, or Pre, Mid and Post-Tribulationists, it is obvious that they cannot all be right. All may be wrong but ONLY ONE COULD BE RIGHT. Each of these beliefs are held by some people who preach a true gospel in relation to the way of salvation and many of the proponents of one or other of these views have so argued with holders of the other views that the whole subject of The Lord’s Return has been damaged and it’s preaching hindered or set aside. All of this is sad to see.

When Jesus was questioned by the Sadducees regarding the woman who had seven husbands (**Matthew 22.23-33**) (whether the case was real or imaginary) He told them the source of their error – (**v 29**) “*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*” These remain two main sources of error. Many people tell me what they believe but they cannot prove their belief from the Scriptures. (i.e they do not know the Scriptures). Others do not believe God can (or will) do what He says, so they spiritualise the Scriptures away (i.e they down play the power of God).

Let me say something very boldly and leave it to **sections 2 and 3 of in the Appendix** to set out a proof based on the Scriptures. There is a widely circulating belief in Christian circles that Christians will not go through The Great Tribulation (often expressed by saying “the Church will not go through The Tribulation”). This belief is based on several misinterpretations of Scripture, i.e. that:

- There will be a SECRET RAPTURE.
- To go through The Great Tribulation would be to suffer from THE WRATH of God.
- The CHURCH started at Pentecost and ends at The Rapture.

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Any reading of the Scriptures dealing with the Rapture shows it to be anything but “secret”; God is very careful in dispensing His Wrath and will not cause any of it to harm anyone who is promised protection from it; and, the Church will contain all of God’s Saints whether Old Testament, New Testament, Tribulation, Millennial, Jew or Gentile. Scriptures that say so will be referred to in the Articles in **The Appendix (for the “Rapture” refer to sections 2 and 3 and for the “Church” refer to section 1 of the Appendix).**

While I say these things with conviction I do not say them with any venom or disrespect for anyone who believes something other than I do. I can only say what I believe and why I believe it – and I am ready to be persuaded otherwise if the Scriptures so teach.

To resume our consideration of the trouble that will be caused by God during The Great Tribulation, it goes without saying that what God does He does thoroughly. The trouble He will unleash will have physical, mental, emotional and spiritual repercussions:

- PHYSICAL in that people will suffer pain as a result of the judgements (**Revelation 9:1-6**),
- MENTAL in that people will be deceived (**2 Thessalonians 2:11**),
- EMOTIONAL in that people will be afraid (**Luke 21:25-26**), and
- SPIRITUAL in that Satan-worship and following the influence of evil spirits will increase under the judgements God unleashes as will the scope He gives for Satan and his servants to do their work (**Revelation 13:4, 16:8-14**).

Something of the scope of the effects of God’s judgements to be poured out on the earth during The Great Tribulation can be gleaned by reading Revelation 8. We cannot be dogmatic about the timing of these judgements but it is possible that they occur in the early stages of the Tribulation.

The remarkable prophecy in **Daniel 9:24-27** identifies several time periods, for example:-

a) From the decree given by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to restore and build Jerusalem until the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.	(7 + 62) x 7 years = <u>483 years</u> (454 B.C. to 29 A.D.)
b) From the time the beast makes a “ <i>covenant</i> ” with Israel until the return of the Jesus Christ. (This period of seven years I think of as being THE TRIBULATION	(one “<u>week</u>” of years) = <u>7 years</u>

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c) From the “ <i>middle of the week</i> ” (of years) until the return of Jesus Christ. (This period we can correctly call THE GREAT TRIBULATION (Matthew 24:15-21) (This is the “forty (and) two months” referred to in Revelation 13:5, the “a time, and times, and half a time” of Revelation 12:14 and the “thousand two hundred and ninety days” of Daniel 12:11).	3 ½ <u>years</u>
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[For a more detailed explanation of Daniel 9:24-27 refer to section 7 of the Appendix].

It's possible that the events recorded in Revelation 8 start in the early stages of THE TRIBULATION. Matthew 24:7-8 and Luke 21:25 would probably support this view. Matthew 24:29-30 may, however, suggest that the fourth trumpet (**Revelation 8:12**) heralds the events of the last 3½ years.

Consider then what we are told in Revelation 8:-

- v1** – There is a pregnant pause before the judgments are poured out. These things are not done hastily. God is very deliberate in His actions.
- v2** – Everything is controlled by God.
- v3-4** – Down through the ages the saints of God have been misunderstood, mistreated and martyred (Revelation 6:9-11) but they committed themselves to God. Many have prayed for God's intervention. Now their prayers begin to be answered.
- v5-6** – The introduction is completed.
- v7** – The first judgement is released and VEGETATION is affected.
 - The second judgement is released with devastating effects on THE SEAS and everything in them and everything and everyone upon them.
 - The third judgement is released and the earth's resources of FRESH WATER are affected with drastic consequences.
- v12** – The fourth judgement is released and THE SUN, MOON AND STARS are affected.
- v13** – Catastrophic as the effects of these judgements will be they are merely introductory with greater judgements to follow.

It is worth quoting Revelation 15 and 16 at this point, as a self-explanatory proof that God will cause trouble on the earth during The Great Tribulation to an extent never before experienced (and, thankfully, as I have said before, in a way never to be repeated – **Matthew 24.21**).

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“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, (and) over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous (are) thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true (are) thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for (thou) only (art) holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” **Revelation 15:1-8.**

“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. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead (man); and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 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. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous (are) thy judgments. 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. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits 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 of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 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. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, (and) so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the

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fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, (every stone) about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”- Revelation 16:1-21.

It is worth noting that what God does meets with the approval and receives the full endorsement of the group of God’s people referred to in the early part of these quotations (**Revelation 15.2-4**).

As part of God’s wrath poured out at this time God will :-

- Judge the apostate religious system existing at that time – **Revelation 19.1-4**.
- Judge The Beast and The False Prophet – **Revelation 19.11-21**.
- And, eventually, imprison Satan himself who has caused such havoc throughout the ages of time – **Revelation 20.1-3**.

Someone may ask,

WHY WILL GOD DO THESE THINGS?

We can be sure that God will do these things because it is right to do them!

As God talked to Abraham about what He might do to Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 18.:6-33**) Abraham was convinced that whatever God would do would be right **Genesis 18:25** – “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”. While posed as a question, Abraham had total faith in the just judgement of God.

It is the same with the multitude in heaven who endorse God’s judgements during The Great Tribulation -

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous (are) his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.”
- **Revelation 19:1-4**

God has many reasons for pouring out wrath and permitting men and Satan to cause trouble during The Great Tribulation, for example:

- (i) It is part of His plan to bring in everlasting righteousness – “*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to bring*

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in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” - Daniel 9:24. In the verses that follow Daniel is told about The Great Tribulation as part of the “seventy weeks” (i.e. as part of “seventy” SEVENS of years – refer to Section 7 of the Appendix).

- (ii) To test the whole world – **Revelation 3:10** speaks of *“the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”*
- (iii) To satisfy His righteous anger – *“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination (is) to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, (even) all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” - Zephaniah 3:8.*
- (iv) To purify the nation of Israel – *“And it shall come to pass, (that) in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off (and) die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It (is) my people: and they shall say, The LORD (is) my God.” - Zechariah 13:8-9.*
- (i) To reveal His purposes – *“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 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 10:5-7*

In delaying the pouring out of His wrath to this late stage in the history of the world two things will have occurred, namely –

1. Maximum time will have been given for people to be saved – *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering 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 the 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.*
2. God will have patiently waited until people’s sin has reached its limit – *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to full he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human hand.” (Daniel 8:23 & 25).* It was when the iniquity of the Amorites had reached a peak that God gave Israel their land (**Genesis 15.12-16**) and when the Jews similarly reached a peak in their iniquity that God turned to the Gentiles
- **1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**

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It is important that we recognise one very important fact about the pouring out of God's wrath during The Great Tribulation, namely –

GOD POURS OUT HIS WRATH WITH DISCRIMINATION

As God unfolds His purposes in the pouring out of His wrath during The Great Tribulation He makes it clear that He is not directing His wrath toward any of His own people who will be on earth during that period.

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 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 7.1-3.**

Before God's judgements are released God marks His servants (**Revelation 7:3**). In the context of Revelation 7 that would include the 144,000 of the children of Israel (**v4-8**) and the “*great multitude, which no man could number*” from all nations (**v9-17**), for the latter company consists of servants of God (**v16**) as well as the former (**v3-4**).

We have a situation during The Great Tribulation where God has marked His servants and the False Prophet sets about marking the servants of the Beast - **Revelation 13:15-17.**

God's purpose in marking His servants is made clear in the opening words of Revelation 9, “*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 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 9:1-4**

He marks His people for protection! They will certainly not be the objects of His wrath. God will not miss His targets, as Scripture amply illustrates:

- “*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.**

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- “After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, “*Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous (are) his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*” **Revelation 19:1-2.**

This is consistent with how God acts. We saw it when God sent His judgements on Egypt in the days of Moses. “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms (of flies) upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms (of flies), and also the ground whereon they (are). And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms (of flies) shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I (am) the LORD in the midst of the earth.*” - **Exodus 8:20-22.** And so you find with other plagues at that time.

Just as Jesus warned true believers who would be in Jerusalem to flee when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by the Roman armies in A.D.70 (**Luke 21:20-24**), so God will warn true believers to flee from the judgements falling on Babylon during The Great Tribulation - **Revelation 18:1-5.**

When we consider the persecutions, calamities and judgements that will fall on the earth during this period we might be prompted to ask,

HOW WILL IT ALL END?

Surprisingly, it will end superbly well! THE LORD WILL RETURN, the Rapture will occur, the Jewish nation will turn to God recognising their Redeemer and the Lord will set up the Millennial Kingdom. Even through the darkest hour of this world's history God will be continuing to work out His purposes.

So, while earth is going through its most troubled period, some great things will be happening.

God never leaves Himself without a witness and during these doubly dark days God will send TWO SPECIAL WITNESSES to fulfil a remarkable ministry. Their story is told as follows in **Revelation 11:3-12**, “*And I will give (power) unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred (and) threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against*

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them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies (shall lie) in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”.

A few comments on this passage might be appropriate:

- **v 3** By the duration of their ministry (1260 days) it is likely that they will be present, to anger and frustrate the Beast and the False Prophet, during most of The Great Tribulation. It is obvious from the verses that follow this passage (**Revelation 11.13-14**) that more trouble is yet to come after their departure, so their ministry must begin during the first half of the seven-year Tribulation period.
- **v 4** We are not told who they are and speculations have been made on the basis of the information given. It is of limited value to speculate. It is their ministry that is important.
- **v.5** Their enemies will soon learn not to try to harm them. They must be left to fulfil their ministry.
- **v.6** Their ministry will remind people of Moses and Elijah.
- **v.7-10** They will eventually be killed, but not before their ministry has been fulfilled.
- **v.11-12** Their deaths will be temporary and their exit from earth will be victorious!

What a remarkable witness this will be in the midst of so many calamities and yet, it will not, to my way of thinking, be the greatest thing that will happen during this period. As I see it, the greatest thing that will happen (that is, apart from the return of Jesus Christ at the end of the period) is THE SALVATION OF A MULTITUDE FROM EVERY NATION. Who would have thought that this would happen at such a time - and how it exposes as false the foolish teaching that somehow God the Spirit will be absent from the earth during The Great Tribulation. These dear souls will be born of The Spirit just the same as every other blood-bought, born-again believer (**John 1.12-13; 3.3 + 7-8; 1 Corinthians 12.13**). The story is told in Revelation 7, and it is worth quoting this chapter in its entirety here.

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 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. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: (and there were) sealed an hundred (and) forty (and) four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.. Of the tribe of Juda (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin (were) sealed twelve thousand. 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. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and (about) the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, (be) unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 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, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of 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. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Again, a few comments on this passage might be appropriate:

v.1-3

- The 144,000 are seen, being marked for protection, before the onslaught of judgements that will follow the opening of the seventh seal. They are seen as “servants” of God being prepared for service during these dark days.
- Interestingly they are seen again, when their work is over, in Revelation 14:1-5, where we are told that they are “redeemed from among men, (being) the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (v.4) and that “in their mouth was found no guile.”
- The verse immediately after (i.e Revelation 14.6) draws our attention to “the everlasting gospel” that is to be preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

v.4-8

- Each member of the 144,000 is a Jew, able to identify his tribe.
- The 144,000 are a band of evangelists (“firstfruits” of the HARVEST, serving the Lord as preachers) playing their part to bring about “a great multitude, which no man could number” being saved from all nations (in response to the everlasting gospel”).

v.9-17

- Show us a great harvest of souls – “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” (v.9) who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”- (v.14).

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- God will turn to His ancient people, the Jews, and save a remnant (**Daniel 12.1, Zechariah 12.9-14, Zechariah 13.8-9**) at this very time. Doing so will produce a harvest of saved souls among the Gentiles (**Romans 11.13-15**). **Revelation 7** is filling in part of the picture.

I hope I am right. It would be a wonderful scenario! I would not be dogmatic about how it all fits together, but this I would be dogmatic about, that this period will see THE SALVATION OF A MULTITUDE FROM EVERY NATION!

So not all of the happenings during The Great Tribulation will be bad – far from it! And it will end in triumph for the Lord, *“Then 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**

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS???

It would be useful to set down a possible chronology of some of the major events for The Tribulation period. In attempting such as thing, I freely admit that I will probably be wrong in some of my conclusions. I do not think anyone, except the Lord, knows the actual order of all events but that should not deter us from making an attempt to give a possible chronology of some of the major events.

1. AS THE TRIBULATION APPROACHES

Israel will be invaded by a confederacy of nations	Ezekiel 38 + 39
The Ten-Horned Empire will emerge	Daniel 7.15-25
A temple for Jewish worship will be built at Jerusalem	Matthew 24.15 2 Thessalonians 2.4 Revelation 11.1-2
Natural disasters will increase	Luke 21:11 & 25-26 Matthew 24.6-8
Values will fall in society	2 Timothy 3.1-5
Violence, corruption and immorality will increase	Luke 17.26-30 Genesis 6.1-14 Genesis 19.1-5
Many churches will deteriorate	2 Timothy 4.1-5 Acts 20.26-32 1 Timothy 4.1-3 2 Peter 2.1-2
The Beast will emerge and rise to power	Daniel 7.24-25

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2. AND WHEN ALL THINGS ARE IN PLACE

The Beast will make a treaty with Israel	Daniel 9.27
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This marks the start of The Tribulation (the last 7 years of man's rule on earth) the last half of which will be the 3 ½ years of The Great Tribulation.

The judgements of the first six seals. They are probably spread over the entire seven year period.	Revelation 6
A world-wide evangelistic movement. Again, probably lasting the full seven years	Matthew 24.14 Revelation 7
The ministry of the "two witnesses". Probably starting towards the end of the first half of the seven year period and running till near the end of the second half.	Revelation 11.3-12
The Beast will break his covenant with Israel.	Daniel 9.27

This marks the start of THE GREAT TRIBULATION and occurs at the half way point of the seven year period.

Its duration is variously referred to as:

42 months (Revelation 13:5)	
1260 Days (Revelation 12.6) 1290 Days (Daniel 12.11) 1335 Days (Daniel 12.12)	Showing that the Great Tribulation has time divisions for specific purposes
3 ½ "Times" (Daniel 7:25)	Showing that these 'times' and the 'times' of Daniel 9.24-27 are YEARS

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There is war in heaven followed by increased activity of Satan on earth	Revelation 12:7-12
Satan persecutes Israel and the Church militant	Revelation 12.13-17
The “ Abomination of desolation ” is set up	Daniel 9.27 Matthew 24.15-16 2 Thessalonians 2.4
The Beast persecutes the Church-militant	Revelation 13.5-10
The judgements of the seventh seal will occur. They probably start towards the end of the first half of the seven year period and run through to the return of Jesus Christ	Revelation 8-9 Revelation 15-19

This is not truly a chronology of events occurring during The Tribulation period, but merely a list of some of the events set out in a manner that should assist people who have not studied the subject to get an initial grasp of what will occur. Armed with this information they should be able to delve deeper into it for themselves. I have left out many details and even major events (like the judgement of the apostate religious system in **Revelation 17** and secular Babylon in **Revelation 18**). These would be more appropriately dealt with in an analysis of the book of The Revelation.

However, The Great Tribulation will take us through to The Return of Jesus Christ and the colossal events that accompany it, including:--

The battle of Armageddon	Revelation 16:12-16, Revelation 19:19 & Zechariah 14:1-2
The defeat and judgement of the Beast and the False Prophet	Revelation 19:19-21
The restriction of Satan	Revelation 20:1-3
The “<i>First Resurrection</i>”, the Rapture, the “<i>Judgement Seat of Christ</i>”, the “<i>Marriage of The Lamb</i>” and	But more of that in the next chapter

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CHAPTER 8:

The Return of Jesus and the Momentous, Accompanying Events

The return of Jesus Christ is what every true believer is waiting for. He had told His disciples, “...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, (there) ye may be also.” - **John 14:2-3**. And surely every true believer would respond with the words John records in the penultimate verse of The Revelation, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” - **Revelation 22:20**.

His return will herald the fulfilment of our best hopes and dreams!

There is another side to it, however, for many are, and will be, unprepared for His coming and the thought of it terrifies them, “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 6:15-17**.

The Lord is coming with dual purposes – to glorify His true followers and to judge His enemies, “...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” - **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**.

In fact, the Lord is returning with a full program of events to fulfil, “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. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.” - **Revelation 11:15-18**.

Let us briefly consider some of the MOMENTOUS EVENTS that will follow His return.

(i) THE “FIRST RESURRECTION” AND THE RAPTURE

The “*First Resurrection*” is a Scriptural term (**Revelation 20:6**) but ‘the Rapture’ is merely a man-made term to describe the same event.

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I would love to be able, in one sentence, to cover the interminable arguments that have been made to try to prove that the Return of Jesus Christ is a two-stage event. Some are based on the meanings of words and some on human reasoning aided by dubious interpretations of a few Scriptures, but all crumble before the straight forward reading of Scripture. Jesus Christ came ONCE before “to bear the sins of many” and He will return ONCE to complete this “salvation” - **Hebrews 9:28**. He will come to “the air” - **1 Thessalonians 4:17** and to “the earth” - **Zechariah 14: 4 & 9**. It will be His **αποκαλυψις (apokalupsis - revelation)** and His “παρουσια” (**parousia -presence**) as it will be His “επιφανεια” (**epiphaneia - appearing**). He will come “for” and “with” His saints – and ALL AT THE ONE AND ONLY second coming!

(A simple explanation of this is given in sections 2 and 3 of the Appendix).

In one of the most direct statements in His answer to the disciples’ question, “...*what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world*” - **Matthew 24:3** Jesus said, “*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**.

Such a clear statement:

- The TIMING is clear - “*immediately after the tribulation.*”
- The MANNER is clear - Visibly – “*they shall see the Son of man coming.*”
- Gloriously – “*with power and great glory.*”
- The PURPOSE is clear - To “*gather together his elect.*”
- By implication they will meet Him “*in the clouds of heaven*” as He comes to the earth for they are assembled “*from one end of heaven to the other.*”

All of these things are confirmed by other Scriptures with more information added.

Let us look at a few:

(a) **1 Corinthians 15.51-58**, “*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal (must) put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where (is) thy sting? O grave, where (is) thy victory? The sting of death (is) sin; and the strength of sin (is) the law. But thanks (be) to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*”

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(b) **1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**, *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

(c) **Revelation 20:4-6**, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment 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.”*

What a marvellous experience awaits the children of God as Jesus Christ returns. All the saints who have died, whose bodies are in the grave and whose spirits are with the Lord shall, in one glorious moment of time, have their bodies raised in the incorruptible state and have their spirits re-inhabit the risen bodies. In that same glorious moment the saints who survive until the Lord returns shall be transformed and, in their incorruptible state, will join the resurrected saints in one great company around the Lord, in the air and, as one, we will accompany Him to the earth for His remaining purposes to be fulfilled.

It will be necessary, at this time, for the Lord to carry out, sundry judgements

(ii) **SUNDRY JUDGEMENTS**

Jesus taught many things by parables and on one occasion He said, *“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”* - **Matthew 13:24-30.**

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He had been speaking to the multitudes with the disciples listening on. The disciples did not fully grasp what He was saying, so, when Jesus had dismissed the multitudes, the disciples asked him to explain the parable. He replied, *“He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked (one); The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* - **Matthew 13:37-43**.

> From the Lord's explanation of this parable it is clear that certain judgements must proceed when the Lord returns, as He prepares the earth for His Millennial Kingdom. He will *“gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.”*

> Part of that will be the judgement of the Beast, the False Prophet and the armies that come against Him at Armageddon as described in (**Revelation 19:19-21**), *“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 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. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which (sword) proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”*

> Part of it MAY be what is popularly called ‘The Judgement of The Living Nations’ as described in (**Matthew 25:31-46**.) *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth (his) sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed (thee)? or thirsty, and gave (thee) drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took (thee) in? or naked, and clothed (thee)? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done (it) unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done (it) unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed (thee)? or thirsty, and gave (thee) drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took (thee) in? or naked, and clothed (thee)? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

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And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done (it) unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done (it) unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did (it) not to one of the least of these, ye did (it) not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

It is, however, possible that this judgement will be part and parcel of the final judgement spoken of in - Revelation 20:11-15. (Refer to the notes on “**The End -Times Judgements**” in **section 6 of the Appendix**).

It is not necessary for us to know the detailed order in which the Lord will carry out His program. Our part is to be ready for the things that affect us and in the meantime to be following the Lord’s will for our lives.

> Part of it will be the temporary restriction of Satan, for the period of Christ’s reign on earth as described in **Revelation 20.1-3**, “*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”*

One judgement the saints need to pay particular attention to is:-

(iii) **THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

This is a judgement specifically for believers. It is not a judgement to decide whether or not a person goes to heaven or to hell. That is not in question. All believers are saved from hell by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, but how we have served the Lord will be tested.

Let us look at a few Scriptures on the subject before commenting any further.

(a) Romans 14:10-13, “*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, (As) I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in (his) brother’s way.”*

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- (b) **1 Corinthians 3:9-17**, *“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, (ye are) God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and (that) the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which (temple) ye are.”*

We have to “take heed” how we build. Our works will be “made manifest”, “declared”, “revealed” and “tried.” If our works have been useless we will “suffer loss.”

During our lives on earth we can deceive other people. We can pretend to be serving God and living as He would have us live, but there will be no pretence at the Judgement Seat of Christ. We will be seen to be what we really are!

- (c) **2 Corinthians 5:7-11**. *“(For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, (I say), and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things (done) in (his) body, according to that he hath done, whether (it be) good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”*

The “good” and the “bad” will be considered, with nothing being passed over lightly.

- (d) **Hebrews 13:17**, *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that (is) unprofitable for you.”*

We should not make things difficult for those who have accepted leadership roles within the churches. Conversely, those who have accepted responsibilities must take them seriously, for they will give account of how they have done their job.

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- (e) **1 Peter 4.15-19**, *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or (as) a thief, or (as) an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if (any man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time (is come) that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if (it) first (begin) at us, what shall the end (be) of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls (to him) in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”*

There are activities we should never be involved in but if we suffer, being wrongfully accused, as has often happened to genuine believers, we need not be ashamed. God fully understands, and will, in due time, deal justly with those who treat us badly!

Notwithstanding, the judgement of believers will be inescapable and it will be searching.

Many other Scriptures could be used to bring out aspects of the judgement we will face as the people of God but these will suffice. My purpose is merely to identify some of the important events that will occur when the Lord returns.

Another event well worthy of mention will be:

(iv) **THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB**

Marriages are happy occasions and people look forward to marriage suppers.

This will be the marriage of all marriages and it will cause a stir of anticipation in heaven and a flood of joy on earth!

As the closing events of The Great Tribulation occur and the inhabitants of heaven see the Lord prepare for His return to earth the excitement is palpable.

John takes up the description in **Revelation 19:1-10**, *“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous (are) his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, “Write, blessed (are) they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”*

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And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it] not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

What a time it is going to be!

It is a sobering thought that when the Lord instituted human marriage it was a pre-figuring of the greatest marriage that would ever take place. It pictured the marriage of Jesus Christ to his bride, the Church.

God instituted marriage in **Genesis 2:20-24** and when Paul quotes from this passage in Ephesians 5:31 he immediately follows it with the statement, "*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" - **Ephesians 5:32**.

Let us hear the whole passage, "*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so (let) the wives (be) to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife (see) that she reverence (her) husband."* -**Ephesians 5:22-33**.

This marriage will last for eternity!

ALL THESE EVENTS will occur ON EARTH when the Lord returns. In my opinion, futile attempts are made to try to show that some will happen on earth and some in heaven but they are as futile as the attempts to show that there are two Second Comings! They will be part of the lead up to the establishment of the long promised Millennial Kingdom on earth – but more of that in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 9:

The Millennium

It has always amazed me ever since, as a believer, I read the prophetic Scriptures, that some genuine believers stumble when it comes to accepting that God has promised a LITERAL KINGDOM ON EARTH, lasting for a thousand years, prior to setting up the Eternal Kingdom. Often this lapse of faith (which is about all I can call it) is linked to a failure to recognise that God has a FUTURE FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL. I have often felt emptiness when I have spent time discussing the subject with people of A-millennial persuasion. I fear the effects of some of their teaching just as I fear the effects of the false hopes raised by those who teach a Secret Rapture and a two-stage return of Jesus Christ. I fervently hope that neither teachings interfere with the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls or the maturing of believers, but I fear teaching that says that God will not keep His promises or that says that God will do things He has not promised to do.

To me, the promises of a literal kingdom on earth are as clear as crystal.

It is clear that the last kingdom on earth ruled over by men will be that of the Beast and it will be followed by a kingdom on earth ruled over by Jesus Christ and His saints, for **Daniel 7:11-14** says, *“I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld (even) till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, (one) like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion (is) an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom (that) which shall not be destroyed.”*

Further explanation later in the same chapter, **Daniel 7:24-27** says, *“And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak (great) words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy (it) unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom (is) an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”*

The fact that both passages describe it as “an everlasting kingdom” is NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER for once Jesus returns and takes the reins of government He will never again hand them back to man. The one thousand year rule on earth is merely an introductory phase to this everlasting kingdom.

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The only sense in which Jesus Christ will transfer rule after His return is when He hands over the kingdom to God The Father, - **1 Corinthians 15.28**, *“And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”* Even this we must temper with the statement Jesus made, *“I and (my) Father are one.”* - **John 10:30**.

Revelation 19:20 – 20:10, speaking specifically about the return of the Lord and the setting up of the earthly phase of the kingdom makes things clear when it says, *“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. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which (sword) proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment 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. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom (is) as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet (are), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

- Jesus Christ reigns **(20.4)**
- The saints reign with Him **(20.4)**
- It is on earth **(20.8)**
- It is for one thousand years **(20.4)**

It could not be clearer and God could not be more emphatic about its duration for the “thousand years” is mentioned six times in those few verses.

To get a grasp of what this kingdom will be like we will look first at the NATURE of it and second at the NECESSITY for it.

1. THE NATURE OF THE MILLENIUM

As can be imagined, with the Beast and his armies having been dealt with, offenders

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having been judged, Satan having been imprisoned and Jesus Christ reigning on the earth with His saints, the nature of many things will differ greatly from the kingdoms men have ruled over. Nevertheless, some things will remain unchanged. Unless we consider both the things that will be the same, and the things that will be different we will not gain an adequate appreciation of what the Millennial Kingdom will be like.

(a) Things That Will Be The Same

- It will be the same EARTH! When Zechariah describes the return of the Lord to this earth he says, *“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which (is) before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, (and there shall be) a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”* - **Zechariah 14.4**. He goes on to say in **V 9** of the same chapter, *“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth.”* God has plans to replace this earth with a “new earth”, when He changes the whole scheme of things, but that will not happen until the end of the Millennial Kingdom and the final White Throne Judgement, when time will be finished forever and we enter the eternal state. **Revelation 21.1** speaks about that change, *“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.”* How different that future earth will be from our current earth where 70% of its surface is covered by sea!
- We will have the same NATIONS! Zechariah in that same part of Scripture tells us, *“And it shall come to pass, (that) every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”* Zechariah 14.16. As the prophet goes on to discuss the Lord’s response to any nation that does not go up to this Feast he says, *“And it shall be, (that) whoso will not come up of (all) the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that (have) no (rain); there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”* - **Zechariah 14.17-19**
- People will inhabit the same CITIES! While some striking changes will occur around Jerusalem it will still be the city of Jerusalem for the prophet says, *“All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and (from) the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses. And (men) shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”* - **Zechariah 14.10-11**.

We will experience the same SEASONS! This may be reassuring in a way. With all of the current concerns about the effects of global warming I do take comfort in the assurance given to us by the Lord Himself when He caused the floods to recede in the days of Noah. **Genesis 8:22** records His promise, “While the earth

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remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” In light of the mess mankind is making of the environment this may well indicate that the Lord will soon intervene to take things out of man’s hands! Zechariah 14.8 tells us that, *“it shall be in that day, (that) living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”*

- From a passage like **Isaiah 65.19-25**, *“And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner (being) an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit (them); and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree (are) the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they (are) the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust (shall be) the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”* we can see that, during the Millennium:
 - People will die (**v.20**)
 - Children will be born (**v.23**)
 - People will work (**v.21-22**), and
 - There will be sinners (**v.20**), so,

There are many things that will be unchanged from how we have always known them to be.

Naturally not everything will be the same. Some things will be radically different in a world where resurrected saints with incorruptible bodies will rub shoulders with people who are no different from how people are now. So let us think about:-

b) Things That Will Be Different

- **GOVERNMENT** will be different! Jesus Christ will reign on the earth and His saints will reign with Him. Scriptures that speak of this are numerous, but the following selection will establish the truth of it:
 - **Daniel 7:13-14**, *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, (one) like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion (is) an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom (that) which shall not be destroyed.”*
 - **Daniel 7:21-27**, *“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the*

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saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak (great) words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy (it) unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom (is) an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

- **Zechariah 14:9**, "*And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.*"
- **Matthew 19:27-30**, "*Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, 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. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many (that are) first shall be last; and the last (shall be) first."*

1 Corinthians 6:1-2, "*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"*

- **Revelation 2:26-27**, "*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."*
- **Revelation 19:15**, "*And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."*
- **Revelation 20:4**, "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment 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."*

In this new order of things the Lord will have a special place for the nation of Israel as He fulfils the numerous promises made to them over the years. It will

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be wonderful to see Israel taking a prominent, and even dominant place among the nations!

- **Deuteronomy 15:6**, *“For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.”*
- **Isaiah 14:1-2**, *“For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.”*
- **Isaiah 49:22-23**, *“Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in (their) arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon (their) shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with (their) face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I (am) the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.”*
- **Isaiah 60:1-3**, *“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”*
- **Isaiah 6:4-9**, *“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien (shall be) your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: (men) shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame (ye shall have) double; and (for) confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they (are) the seed (which) the LORD hath blessed.”*
- **Zechariah 8:23**, *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days [it shall come to pass], that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard (that) God (is) with you.”*

God does not make promises in vain. Every promise He has made to the children of Israel He will fulfil. We, as fallible human beings, may not understand the timing of the fulfilment of some of these promises, but the vast number, that have not yet been fulfilled, will most assuredly be fulfilled in the last kingdom this earth will experience,

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the Millennial Kingdom. At that time God will restore both “houses” of His ancient people as **Jeremiah 3:18** says, *“In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for inheritance unto your fathers.”*

The myth of the **“ten lost tribes”** and the predictions that have been made by proponents of British Israelism (and the attempts to give England and the United States of America a place in prophecy that is, in my opinion, unwarranted) will be seen to be figments of overactive imaginations.

Ezekiel 37:15-23 will be fulfilled, *“The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and (for) all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou (meanest) by these? Say unto them. “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which (is) in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, (even) with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.”*

The borders of the land they will inherit will extend well beyond the meagre limits afforded them to-day, for **Ezekiel 47:13-23** says, *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; This (shall be) the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph (shall have two) portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: (concerning) the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. And this (shall be) the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which (is) between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which (is) by the coast of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And (this is) the north side. And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel (by) Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And (this is) the east side. And the south side southward, from Tamar (even) to the waters of strife (in) Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And (this is) the south side southward. The west side also (shall be) the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This (is) the west side. So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, (that) ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel;*

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And it shall come to pass, (that) ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, (that) in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give (him) his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD."

It will be a glorious time for the nation of Israel, for they will dwell in their land safely with peace, prosperity and security, as the Word of God tells us:

Ezekiel 34.25-31, *"And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season. there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I (am) the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make (them) afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God (am) with them, and (that) they, (even) the house of Israel, (are) my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, (are) men, (and) I (am) your God, saith the Lord GOD.*

Ezekiel 36.8-15, *"But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I (am) for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, (even) all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better (unto you) than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I (am) the LORD. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, (even) my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them (of men). Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou (land) devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD. Neither will I cause (men) to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD."*

Ezekiel 36.28-38, *"And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that (were) not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I (this), saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause (you) to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay*

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desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities (are become) fenced, (and) are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined (places, and) plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken (it), and I will do (it). Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet (for) this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do (it) for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I (am) the LORD."

These times have been spoken about for thousands of years. Isaiah referred to the future Millennial Kingdom when he recorded his prophecy concerning the First Advent of Jesus Christ, *"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 judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* **Isaiah 9:6-7.**

The angel Gabriel spoke of it as part of his message to Mary prior to the birth of Jesus Christ, *"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."* **Luke 1:31-33.**

As Jesus reigns, and the saints share in His rule, and Israel takes its promised place, dominion will be taken away from other nations. **Daniel 7:12** tells us, *"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."*

However, it is not just government that will be different.

- THE ENVIRONMENT will be different! Much is written and spoken about the environment these days. People have justified fears for its future and there can be no doubt that the degree of pollution caused by mankind has had, and will have dire consequences. However, when the Lord takes measures to change things, as He will for the Millennial Kingdom, there will be dramatic improvements.

There are two aspects of the environment that will improve for the Millennial Kingdom, namely –

The Physical Environment and The Spiritual Environment

(a) THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

God controls all things and He alone knows the resources He has stored within the earth for its renewal. An article in "Creation 29 (3) June-August 2007" records :-

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“Scientists analysing more than 600,000 seismograms of earthquakes traveling through the earth have found evidence of a ‘vast water reservoir’ beneath eastern Asia. At least the volume of the Arctic Ocean, it is the first time a body of water so large has been found deep in the mantle. The Bible says that at the beginning of Noah’s Flood ‘the springs of the great deep burst forth’, indicating that the floodwater came partly from deep underground”. {See also ‘Drowned from below’, Creation 22(3): 52-53, 2000}.”

By whatever means, the Lord is going to transform deserts as we are told in **Isaiah 35.1-2**, *“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.”*

The land of Israel in particular will experience striking changes. As the Lord returns to the earth to set up the Millennial Kingdom an earthquake will split the Mount of Olives and cause a new valley to be formed. Water will spring forth from the earth flowing toward the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean ocean. The effects will be spectacular. The Dead Sea will be transformed into a vibrant body of water full of fish.

Two Scriptures convey the picture:- **Zechariah 14:4 & 8**

- v. 4** *“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which (is) before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, (and there shall be) a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”*
- v. 8** *“And it shall be in that day, (that) living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”*

These fresh waters springing forth plentifully will have an amazing effect on the Dead Sea as we are told in **Ezekiel 47:1-12**, *“Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house (stood toward) the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south (side) of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters (were) to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters (were) to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters (were) to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; (and it was) a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen (this)? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river (were) very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: as the (which being) brought forth into the sea,*

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the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, (that) every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, (that) the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a (place) to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”

There is more than a suggestion that topographical changes will take place in Israel. **Isaiah 2:2-3** tells us that, *“it shall come to pass in the last days, (that) the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”* This indicates to me that topographical changes will occur in the area surrounding Jerusalem. The millennial temple will be on a mountain of greater height than the current hills.

(b) THE SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

We are assured that during the Millennial Kingdom, *“the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)*. With the Lord residing on the earth and ruling over it with His saints, the spiritual environment cannot help but be superb.

When you add to this the fact that our adversary, the devil, will no longer be wandering about to cause trouble (**Revelation 20:1-3**) and all the saints from “the first resurrection” (**Revelation 20:4-6, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57**) will be there in their eternal state, it bodes well for how things will be.

There will be almost a universal desire to know the Lord and His ways and to worship Him. (**Micah 4:1-2**) says, *“But in the last days it shall come to pass, (that) the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”*

Zechariah 14:16 says, *“And it shall come to pass, (that) every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”*

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(I say ALMOST a universal desire to know the Lord and His ways and to worship Him for even during this glorious period there will be those who are reluctant for **Zechariah 14:17-19** says, “*And it shall be, (that) whoso will not come up of (all) the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that (have) no (rain); there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles*”, such is the condition of the unregenerate human heart).

A new temple will be built and a new system of worship and sacrifice will be instituted. These things are described in detail in the prophecy of Ezekiel (refer to **Ezekiel 40 to 48**). It will all be within the context of “*the times of restitution of all things*” referred to in **Acts 3:21** (which I will refer to in more detail later in this chapter).

Some people are puzzled by the re-introduction of temple worship, sacrifices and feasts but God has reasons for everything He does. In searching out the possible reasons, for my own satisfaction, I have put together a statement on the Millennial System of Worship and Sacrifice and included it in **section 8 of the Appendix**.

Changes will not be limited to government and the environment for:-

PEOPLE’S TEMPERAMENT will be different! Recent history has been marred by wars at a national level and all sorts of tensions at a personal level. Rather than improve, the situation will get worse, in the days leading up to The Great Tribulation. However, when The Tribulation is over and the Millennial Kingdom is in place, the Lord will change all of that. (**Micah 4.3-4**) tells us that, “*... he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make (them) afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken (it).*”

There will be joy and relaxation under Jesus’ rule for the Lord says:-

Isaiah 65:18-19, “*But be ye glad and rejoice for ever (in that) which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*”

- **Zechariah 8:3-5**, “*Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in*

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the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

These Scriptures paint a beautiful picture. It will be a golden age!

When Adam sinned the whole creation suffered. **Genesis 3** records that God cursed Satan (**v.14-15**), Eve (**v.16**), Adam, and the ground (**v.17-19**) and **Romans 8:20** tells us that *“the creature was made subject to vanity.”*

Romans 8:19-23, tells us that when the children of God enter into their *“glorious liberty”* the whole creation will be delivered. This happens as God shows who His children are, at the resurrection. The whole passage reads as follows, *“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected (the same) in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only(they), but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, (to wit), the redemption of our body.”*

Changes to government, environment and temperament will include:

(a) RESTORATION OF PEACE IN THE DOMAIN OF THE ANIMALS

No longer will animals be described as *“nature red in tooth and claw”* but as **Isaiah 11:1-9** says, *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. 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 fating 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’ 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 touches on the subject again when he says in **chapter 65:25** - *“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust (shall be) the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”*

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(b) EXTENDED LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR HUMAN BEINGS

This, of-course, applies to inhabitants of the earth who were not part of The First Resurrection. Anyone who is part of The First Resurrection will have been raised or transformed to the incorruptible state, but there will be many of the lost, who will turn to Jesus as they see Him coming. They will be too late to be included in The First Resurrection, but they will enter the Millennial Kingdom as converted people, in their natural bodies. This will be the case for many Jews, as is evident from (**Zechariah 12:9-13:1**), *“And it shall come to pass in that day, (that) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for (his) only (son), and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for (his) firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”*

When it says, *“they shall look upon me whom they have pierced”*, it is evident that Jesus has returned. It will have the effect of making them *“mourn”* for they will regret that they had not recognized Him earlier. They are on the earth, at Jerusalem, so evidently they were not caught up in the rapture and they are having their sins dealt with in the *“fountain”* that is opened *“for sin and for uncleanness.”*

This whole process had started during The Great Tribulation, when, as (**Zechariah 13:8-9**) tells us, *“it shall come to pass, (that) in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off (and) die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It (is) my people: and they shall say, The LORD (is) my God.”*

The entire subject of the conversion of the remnant of Israel at the beginning of The Millennial Kingdom is a complex one. It leads ultimately to the marvelous statement in **Romans 11:26-27**, *“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this (is) my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”* It is, however, possible to deal with it as a separate subject so I have included an article on it in **section 4 of the Appendix**.

There will, however, be many Gentiles converted when they see the Lord coming in His glory, for and with His saints. **Revelation 1:7** says, *“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.”*

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From ALL NATIONS people will have been prepared to accept Him at His coming. Every nation will have people who will “mourn” their previous lack of faith, when they see Him.

If this was not the case there would be no one in their natural body left to populate The Millennial Kingdom. People would either be caught up in the Rapture and The First Resurrection or they would perish. However, this is evidently not the case, for in describing events during The Millennial Kingdom **Isaiah 65:19-24** says, “*And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner (being) an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit (them); and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree (are) the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they (are) the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*”

This passage establishes several things that clearly indicate that people in their natural bodies will inhabit The Millennial Kingdom (along side the saints in their incorruptible bodies) for it confirms that:

- children will be born (**v.23**), “*They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they (are) the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.*” It mentions “the seed” and “offspring”
- people will age (**v.20**), “*the child shall die an hundred years old*”
- people will die (**v.20**) “*the child shall die*”

and, it also confirms the extended life expectancy for human beings for:

- “*for as the days of a tree (are) the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*” Trees live a long time but they do not live for ever. Those with incorruptible bodies will live for ever.

The longest human life-time recorded in Scripture was that of Methuselah (969 years – **Genesis 5:27**). He almost reached one thousand years. It is likely that some of the natural, un-resurrected citizens of The Millennial Kingdom will live through the full one thousand year period.

Having said all this we must not lose sight of the fact that for multitudes of people the return of Jesus Christ will bring to an end their hope of salvation.

2 Thessalonians 1 clearly states “*when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels*” (**v.7**),

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- He will *“In flaming fire”* take *“vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (v.8).
- Their fate is certain for it says, *“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.”* (v.9-10)

We must, at all cost, avoid giving any person any false hope of being converted when they see the Lord coming. That will not happen if they have rejected Jesus Christ when God is calling them to repentance.

We must not be guilty of *“handling the word of God deceitfully”* **2 Corinthians 4:2**, but we must let it say what it does in its totality. For this reason I have included an article in **section 5 of the Appendix** titled ***“Who Will Populate The Millennium”***

It is amazing that such a golden age should end in rebellion, but this is just further testimony to the depravity of the unregenerate human heart. At the end of this glorious period Satan will be released to deceive the nations.

Revelation 20:7-10 tells the story, *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom (is) as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet (are), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

This is not merely testimony to the depravity of the unregenerate human heart, that people should reject Jesus Christ after experiencing the justice of His rule for a thousand years, but it is added proof that many of the citizens of The Millennial Kingdom will still be in their natural state. It is also a reminder of the power of Satan to deceive.

With such an abundance of Scripture describing conditions during The Millennial Reign, it amazes me that there are any A-Millennialists! However, sadly, there are quite a few, so I would like to turn to my second main point about the Millennium, namely -

2. THE NECESSITY FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Let me set out for you SEVEN SCRIPTURAL REASONS why there **must** be a literal kingdom on earth with Jesus Christ as the Head: -

(i) The Uninterrupted Narrative

The Millennial Kingdom is described as an integral part of God's plans.

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The Word of God says what it means and means what it says and the continuous narrative includes descriptions of the kingdom on earth. It is not manufactured by interpretation but simply sits there as part of the story unfolded by the Word of God. To leave it out would mean violating the Word of God!

Take, for example, the continuous narrative of **Revelation 19:11 – 20:9**, “*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him (was) called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes (were) as a flame of fire, and on his head (were) many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he (was) clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies (which were) in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on (his) vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all (men, both) free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 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. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which (sword) proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment 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. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom (is) as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”*

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Here the description starts with Jesus Christ returning to the earth at the end of The Great Tribulation and it flows straight in to the one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on earth. That is how it is going to be. This is the Word of the Lord!

Take, as another example, **Daniel 7**, “*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, (and) told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first (was) like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and (it had) three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 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 brake 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. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment (was) white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne (was like) the fiery flame, (and) his wheels (as) burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld (even) till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, (one) like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion (is) an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom (that) which shall not be destroyed. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of (my) body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, (are) four kings, (which) shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth (were of) iron, and his nails (of) brass; (which) devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that (were) in his head, and (of) the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even (of) that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look (was) more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus And the ten horns out of this kingdom (are) ten kings (that) shall arise: and another shall rise he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from*

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all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak (great) words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy (it) unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom (is) an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto (is) the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Daniel describes the four major world empires the world would experience from his own day until the return of the Lord. The initial description (v 1-10) is followed by a detailed look at the latter part of the fourth empire leading into the return of Jesus Christ (v 11-14). Daniel then asked for further understanding of these things and we are taken for a third time through the late stages of the fourth empire and the Kingdom that follow it (v 15-23). In all three accounts the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on earth is part of the continuous narrative.

It amazes me that anyone should question the certainty of these things recorded so clearly in the Word of God.

(ii) The Unfulfilled Promises and Prophecies

There are many prophecies and promises in the Word of God that will remain unfulfilled unless there is a literal kingdom on earth ruled over by Jesus Christ. Let's list a few.

Matthew 2:6, *“And thou Bethlehem, (in) the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”*

This is a quotation from **Micah 5.2** but the verse in Micah goes on to identify the Ruler as Jesus Christ as it describes Him with the words, *“whose goings forth (have been) from of old, from everlasting.”*

Matthew 5:5, *“Blessed (are) the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”*

Luke 22:28-30, *“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

1 Corinthians 6.1-2, *“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”*

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Revelation 2.26-27, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”*

Zechariah 14.16-19, *“And it shall come to pass, (that) every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, (that) whoso will not come up of (all) the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that (have) no (rain); there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”*

It will readily be appreciated that many of the Scriptures quoted under other headings could be requoted under this heading, and visa versa, for many prove several of the headings to be true. However, I believe I have included sufficient under each heading to prove the point.

(iii) **The Unexplained Happenings**

How could any of the happenings mentioned below be explained without The Millennial Kingdom?

- People fishing in the Dead Sea – **Ezekiel 47:8-11**, *“Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: (which being) brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, (that) every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, (that) the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a (place) to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.”*

- Peace in the animal kingdom – **Isaiah 11:6-9**, *“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,*

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and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' 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."

Extended human life – **Isaiah 65.22**, "*for as the days of a tree (are) the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*"

(iv) The Unclaimed Titles

Scripture attributes many titles to Jesus Christ that only become appropriate and fulfilled if there is a literal earthly rule when He assumes the roles described, for example:

Matthew 2.1-2, "*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*"

Psalms 47.2-3, "*For the LORD most high (is) terrible; (he is) a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*"

Revelation 19.16, "*And he hath on (his) vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*"

We know, of course, that Jesus is all these things and that He has many other titles but the point I am making is that, unless there is a literal earthly rule, some of them will not be used in practice (particularly the first two mentioned above). But the time will come when He will literally fill these roles, as **Revelation 11:15** says, "*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become (the kindoms) of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*"

(v) The Unrewarded Servants

Jesus promised rewards for His servants which can only be experienced and enjoyed if there is a literal Millennial Kingdom. Examples are:

Matthew 19:28-30, "*And Jesus said unto them, 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. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many (that are) first shall be last; and the last (shall be) first.*"

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- **Matthew 25:14-29**, *“For (the kingdom of heaven is) as a man travelling into a far country, (who) called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made (them) other five talents. And likewise he that (had received) two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, (thou) good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, (there) thou hast (that is) thine. His lord answered and said unto him, (Thou) wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and (then) at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give (it) unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”*

- **Luke 14.12-14**, *“Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor (thy) rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”*

(vi) The Unused Potential

One day this earth will have used all its resources. It will grow old and God will discard it and replace it. (**Hebrews 1:10-12**) says, *“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”*

2 Peter 3.10 further informs us that, *“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the 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.”*

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And **Revelation 21:1** completes the picture when it says, “*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.*”

But God will not discard this earth until He has realised its full potential. He alone knows what unused potential He has stored within it and during the Millennial Kingdom God will use stored resources of which mankind is totally unaware. Adequate testimony is borne to this when we read:

Isaiah 35:1-2, “*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.*”

The abundance of fish in what is now The Dead Sea referred to above under heading (iii) gives further testimony to what can be achieved as the Lord redirects available resources.

Earlier in this chapter I quoted from an article in “Creation 29 (3) June-August 2007” (refer to the opening paragraphs under “(a) The Physical Environment” on page 146) referring to the ‘vast water reservoir’ beneath eastern Asia. God has it there for a purpose. This resource, and many other resources of which we are currently unaware, could well have been placed there, at the creation, for use during the Millennium.

(vii) The (As Yet) Unenforced Revelation

When Jesus was here on earth during His first advent He stated quite clearly Who He was and is.

When He spoke with the woman of Samaria she said to Him, “*I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.*” And Jesus replied, “*I that speak unto thee am (he).*” - **John 4:25-26**.

When the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “*How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*” He said, “*I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.*” He went on to say, “*I and (my) Father are one.*” - **John 10:24, 25 & 30**.

When the chief priests, scribes and elders asked Him, “*Art thou then the Son of God?*” He said, “*Ye say that I am.*” - **Luke 2:70**

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When Pilate questioned Him asking, “*Art thou a king then?*” He answered, “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*” - **John 18:37.**

Some people accepted His testimony but most refused to believe Him. The Jews rejected Him, as **John 10:31-33** records. “*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*”

As Pilate sat in the judgement seat at Gabatha he said to the Jews, “*Behold your King!*” But they cried out, “*Away with (him), away with (him), crucify him.*” Pilate saith unto them, “*Shall I crucify your King?*” The chief priests answered, “*We have no king but Caesar.*” - **John 19:14-15.**

The majority of the Jews rejected Him then and most of the world rejects Him now. But one day God will insist on Jesus being fully recognised for Who He really is. We are assured that, “*God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of (things) in heaven, and (things) in earth, and (things) under the earth; And (that) every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ (is) Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” **Philippians 2.9-11.**

This will happen in large measure, during the Millennial reign, when Jesus will be seen

- In His full glory **Matthew 24:29-30, Revelation 1:7.**
- As King of the Jews **Matthew 2:1-2.**
- And King over the earth **Psalms 47:2-3.**

We have been told to pray for this coming kingdom, **Matthew 6.9-10**, “*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as (it is) in heaven.*”

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We are blessed in having been given an understanding of what to pray for. In Old Testament times Isaiah could say, *“For since the beginning of the world (men) have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, (what) he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”* - **Isaiah 64:4**. But in New Testament times Paul is able to quote from this verse and add significantly to it as he writes, *“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**.

Jesus Christ will reign on the earth for one thousand years, completing His plans and purposes and fulfilling His promises! Having done this He will then deliver up the Kingdom to the Father for transition to the Eternal State. This is what Paul is saying in **1 Corinthians 15:19-28**, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, (and) become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man (came) death, by man (came) also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then (cometh) the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy (that) shall be destroyed (is) death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under (him, it is) manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”*

Before entering the Eternal State God will carry out all His purposes in relation to The Final Judgement. This is the subject of our next chapter.

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CHAPTER 10:

The Final Judgement

Before the earthly reign of Jesus Christ can transition to the Eternal Kingdom there are two significant events that must occur, namely:

1. The Second Resurrection – When all the dead who had not been part of The First Resurrection will be raised for judgement. As a final resurrection it will include all who died during the Millennial Kingdom.
2. The Final Judgement – Of all people and spirit beings who have not yet been judged.

Other events will necessarily occur at this juncture as the current earth and the current heavens are replaced by the New Earth and the New Heaven and the Permanent Hell is revealed.

This will be an unspeakably solemn series of events as **Revelation 20.11-15** conveys: *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

The finality and comprehensiveness of the judgement are awe-inspiring. No one, apart from God Himself, fully understands what will happen – and why! But the word of God sheds light and gives us assurance on two important issues.

1. GOD WILL MAKE NO MISTAKES

When God told Abraham His intentions for Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham had fears for Lot and his wife and family but Abraham knew that God would be just in his actions as he posed the question, *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” - Genesis 18:25.*

(ii) JUDGEMENTS WILL BE APPROPRIATE

This, to me, implies that while all sin is condemned (**James 2.10**), there will be

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grading of sin (as Jesus said to Pilate, “*the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.*” **(John 19.11)**) leading ultimately to DEGREES OF JUDGEMENT as indicated by the following Scriptures:

Matthew 11.20-24, “*Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*”

Luke 12.47-48, “*And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not (himself), neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many (stripes). But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few (stripes). For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*”

Taking **Revelation 20.11-15**, quoted above, let us try to draw some conclusions:-

v.11 Jesus Christ will be the One seated on the throne for God The Father has committed all judgement to Him. - **John 5:22**.

His saints will be present (**Jude v14-15**) for we have been told that we will judge the world, and angels - (**1 Corinthians 6:1-3**)

v.12 There will be no escaping this judgement.

There will be no denying the evidence presented. God’s records are complete.

Jude v15 tells us that the Lord will “*convince*” the ungodly. Before the judgement is over there will be absolute certainty, even in the minds of the guilty, that the judgement is deserved.

- **Jude v15** says **God will convict the ungodly** “*of all their hard (speeches) which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*” **and (Matthew 12.37)** says, “*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*”

v.13 Body, soul and spirit will be re-united for all who appear. There is no word of the body (raised from Death in the grave or in the sea) being changed from the natural state, and there is no word of change to the soul or spirit (brought back from Hades). The future prospect for

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the lost has to be seen in terms of what the Lord said three times over in **Mark 9:43-48**, that they go to hell, “*where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*” This is confirmed in **Revelation 20:14**.

v.15 The presence of “*the Book of Life*” indicates to me that there will be those present who are saved. It does not require much thought to come to a conclusion as to who these people will be. They must surely be:-

- (i) Those who were not part of the First Resurrection but who were converted at the return of the Lord.

People referred to in Isaiah 65 as “*my people*” and “*mine elect*” (**v.22**) or “*the blessed of the LORD*” (**v.23**) would be included in that number.

- (ii) People born during the Millennium who turn to the Lord. Those referred to in Isaiah 65 as “*the seed of the blessed of the LORD.*” (**v.23**) could be among that number.

However, the overwhelming majority of those present at The Great White Throne Judgement will be lost. What a terrible thought!

There are no second chances, neither for Jew nor Gentile. More will be said about this in the last chapter of the book, but anyone who hears the gospel, and feels the Lord drawing them to be saved, should respond immediately. If you are not saved to-day the risk is that you never will be.

In the next chapter we will look at The Eternal State.

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CHAPTER 11:

The Eternal State

Having completed all His plans and purposes for TIME God will take His people into His Eternal Kingdom. **Ephesians 1.3-12** tells part of the story,

“Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly (places) in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; (even) in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

The joys that await us there are beyond imagination!

A few years ago a lady who attends one of my Bible Studies asked the question, “What will heaven be like?” The question fascinated me and as I tossed it about in my mind I decided to give a series of talks on the subject and, as a consequence, in that study group, we spent several months seeking answers to some of the commonly asked questions about heaven.

We have to admit that there is a lot we do not know about heaven, but it is also surprising how much we have been told.

God has always inhabited eternity, but His omnipresence assures us that while He is INFINITELY HIGH He is also EXQUISITELY NIGH as far as His people are concerned. **Isaiah 57.15 says**, *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name (is) Holy; I dwell in the high and holy (place), with him also (that is) of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”*

It is natural that we should think of His dwelling place as HEAVEN for Isaiah 66.1 says, *“Thus saith the LORD, The heaven (is) my throne, and the earth (is) my footstool: where (is) the house that ye build unto me? and where (is) the place of my rest?”*

When God caused TIME to commence for the carrying out of His purposes for mankind He made arrangements for all occurrences. No arrangement is surplus to

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requirement for God knows in advance everything that will happen as it says in **Isaiah 46:9-10**, *“Remember the former things of old: for I (am) God, and (there is) none else; (I am) God, and (there is) none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times (the things) that are not (yet) done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”*

It is not surprising then that God made temporary dwelling places for the spirits of those who would die as TIME ran its course. **Luke 16:19-31** makes it clear that there was one place for the saved (like *“Lazarus”* – a place where he is *“comforted”*, here called *“Abraham’s bosom”*, **Luke 19:22 -25**) and another place for the lost (like the *“rich man”* – a place of *“torments”*, - **Luke 16:22-23**).

It is also clear that there was a place created for the *“angels that sinned”* - **2 Peter 2:4**.

We are told that while Jesus’ body was in the tomb He went, not only to preach to the lost in hell (**1 Peter 3:18-20**) but to the saved in *“Abraham’s bosom”* (**Ephesians 4:8-10**) to lead them out (and into God’s immediate presence in heaven).

Now, for the saved, to depart this life is to go, in spirit, immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ - **Philippians 1:21-24**.

It is one of the great joys of the Christian life to know that when your body dies you go immediately in spirit into the presence of the Lord - **John 11:25-26 & 2 Corinthians 5:1**.

Scriptures abound in proofs and confirmations of these things but all these temporary arrangements will come to an end as we enter THE ETERNAL STATE.

- FOR THE LOST things are summed up in the words of **Revelation 20:14-15**, *“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

Who can read such words without being devastated! No one can fail to be horrified that such a fate will be the just desert of any individual, let alone the multitudes, who will inhabit this final hell (**Matthew 7:13-14 & Luke 13:23-27**). As God speaks about the saved who *“shall inherit all things”* He also speaks of the lost, who will suffer the second death, as **Revelation 21:7-8**

says, *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”* God’s offer of mercy is still available. Escape for your life while there is still TIME!

It seems clear that this final hell will be the eternal dwelling of Satan and his

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angels as well as lost humans for **Revelation 20.10** says, “*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet (are), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*” **Matthew 25.41** confirms it with Jesus’ own words of condemnation of people at the judgement, saying, “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

There are many people to-day who say there will be no eternal hell, but who are they to set aside what God clearly says in His Word?

- FOR THE SAVED things are summed up in the words of **Revelation 21:1-5**, “*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 that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*”

v.1 – It is all NEW (see v.5).

v.2 – God has prepared it. It will be beautiful.

v.3 – God’s presence will be forever there.

v.4 – There will be no tears, no death, no sorrow and no pain.

Expanding our thoughts to encompass the information given to us in **Revelation 21 & 22** we can say three things about the eternal state for the saved, namely:

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It is (1) Planned, (2) Perfect, and (3) Permanent

1. IT IS PLANNED

It is said of Abraham that “*he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker (is) God*” (**Hebrews 11:10**). I am told that the words used here convey the thought of God being both the architect and the builder. Everything will be designed and built for a purpose. The dimensions of New Jerusalem (**21:16**) are such that on plan it is three quarters the area of Australia. Evidence of the planning abounds:

- The new earth is planned – “*no more sea*” (sea speaks of separation and we will never be separated from each other or from God, in any way, again (**21:1**)).
- The New Jerusalem is planned – its shape (**21:16**), its materials (**21:18-21**), the thickness of its walls (**21:17**), its gates (**21:12-13**) and much more.
- It is planned for fellowship (**21:3**).

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- It is planned to represent its residents (**21.12** – the Old Testament saints and **21.14** the New Testament saints, gathered together into one company).
- It is planned for use and activity (**21.24-26**).

2. IT IS PERFECT

Everything that comes from God's hand is perfect.

- It is perfect because of what is included:
 - God Himself is there (**21.3**).
 - The throne of God and of the Lamb is there (**22.3**).
 - The fountain of the water of life is there (**21.6**).
 - The glory of God is there (**21.11**).
 - All saved people are there (**21.24**).
- It is perfect because of what is excluded:
 - There are no tears, no death, no sorrow and no pain (**21.4**).
 - There is no temple (**21.22**). No further need for sacrifice, and God Himself is there to be worshipped directly.
 - There is no sun or moon (**21.23**). God is its light!
 - There is nothing that defiles (**21.27**).
 - There is no more curse (**22.3**).

Indeed, as **1 Corinthians 13.10** says, “...when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

3. IT IS PERMANENT

This is the eternal state. There is nothing to follow. Nothing can follow. No adjustment is necessary; no improvements can be made.

- It is “*for ever and ever*” (**22.5**).
- There will be no death. Life there is permanent (**21.4**).
- It is a kingdom that “*cannot be moved*” **Hebrews 12.28-29**.
- It is a “*continuing city*” **Hebrews 13.14**.

Some interesting questions were asked at the Bible Study to which I referred at the beginning of this chapter. I will close with our conclusions on just three of the questions:

(i) Will we know each other in the Resurrection?

Yes! It appears that we will.

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- The women recognized the risen Jesus (**Matthew 28.9-10, John 20.16**) as did the disciples - (**Luke 24.31 & 36-47, John 21.1-4**).
- Moses and Elijah were recognized on the mount of transfiguration (even by those who had never met them) - (**Matthew 17.1-4**).
- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be recognizable - (**Matthew 8.11-12**)

Why then should we not be recognizable? We are told that we will see our fellow-believers who have died (**1 Thessalonians 4.13-14**) at the Rapture. Those who remain will have the same body transformed into the incorruptible state instantaneously (**1 Corinthians 15.50-55**). Why should it not be recognizable?

(ii) **Will we bear the same relationship to one-another in the Resurrection?**

Apparently not! When Jesus talked to the Sadducees about the husband and wife relationship in the resurrection in **Matthew 22.23-33** He made it clear that *“in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.”* (**v.30**).

In the resurrection we will be “sons”, “brethren”, and “children” (**Hebrews 2.10-13**) of equal standing. My son or daughter will relate to me as a brother or sister and that will be no problem for there will be no such thing as age.

(iii) **Will any things in the eternal state be the same as we have known them to be here and now?**

There is one sense in which ALL THINGS WILL BE NEW - (**Revelation 21.5**). This might mean that the answer must be, “No”. However, it would appear that many things in the eternal state will bear a close relationship to things we have known them to be here on earth. In a certain way this may help us to gain an appreciation of how things will be in eternity. Examples are:

- The “*tree of life*” was on earth in the Garden of Eden and it will also be there in the eternal state - (**Genesis 2:9 & Revelation 22:2**).
- “*Months*” are mentioned in eternity (**Revelation 22:2**), so while TIME will have no function as regards any aging process it may have a function for order and measurement.
- There will be no sickness in eternity but there will be leaves for the “*healing*” of the nations (**Revelation 22:2**) The healings must be preventative.
- In eternity we will be ONE people (**John 10:16, Ephesians 1:10 &, Galatians 3:28**) yet there is mention of “*nations*” (**Revelation 22.2**.)
- There will be WORK in eternity for we, God’s “*servants*”, will “*serve*” Him (**Revelation 22:3**).

We praise and thank God for what He has revealed to us, but there is certainly a lot we do not know!

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CHAPTER 12:

How to Prepare Yourself for the Things that are Coming to Pass.

The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is GOOD NEWS!

In light of what God has done for sinful men and women there is absolutely no reason why we should not fully enjoy our lives here on earth then pass peacefully from this scene of time into the presence of God to enjoy eternity forever.

It is true that life has its problems, but Paul was right when he said, “*the sufferings of this present time (are) not worthy (to be compared) with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*” (**Romans 8:18**). He was right to go on to say that, “*we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to (his) purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate (to be) conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God (be) for us, who (can be) against us?*” - **Romans 8.28-31**.

The best way to prepare FOR the will of God is to be IN the will of God. In this regard you may not know where you stand and it may be necessary for you to ask yourself one very serious question.

Ask yourself – AM I A CHRISTIAN?

Most people will KNOW the answer to this question. If you do NOT KNOW the answer it is almost certain that you are not a Christian. We do not become Christians unknowingly or by accident!

A Christian is a person who has gone through a life-changing experience as a result of recognising their need, placing their faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and being born again through God the Spirit. **2 Corinthians 5.17** says, “*if any man (be) in Christ, (he is) a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*”

I do not think it is difficult to look at your life and come to the conclusion that you have a sinful nature. We all share this defect and Scripture confirms it when it says in **Romans 3.23** that “*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” It is something else to realise that you inherit your sinful nature from Adam and as a consequence you are condemned as **Romans 5:18** confirms saying, “*as by the offence of one (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation.*” It takes the work of the Holy Spirit to convince you that “the wages of sin (is) death.” (**Romans 6.23**) and that you need to have your sins forgiven if you are to be admitted to heaven.

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Jesus said as He taught in the temple, “ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.” - **John 8.21.**

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews had to learn the truth of the gospel, that, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” - **John 3:3.** Jesus went on to explain to him, that, “*as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*” - **John 3:14-21.**

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. He said of Himself, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” - **John 14:6.** Peter, “*filled with the Holy Spirit*” said to the high priest, the elders and the scribes, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” - **Acts 4:12.**

Leave no stone unturned until you settle the matter of your soul's eternal welfare.

Having become a Christian you will seek to grow as a disciple. Make Jesus Christ your example. Study the Word of God, commune with God in prayer, fellowship with His people and become a maker of disciples yourself.

As you get to know the WORD of God you will get to know and love the WILL of God and do everything you can to be part of it.

God makes great promises to His people and He keeps every one of them. We can never be separated from Jesus Christ or from His love for us, as Paul says in **Romans 8.35-39**, “*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.*”

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We need not fear anything that lies ahead in the plans and purposes of God, if we are numbered among His children. Jesus said, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any (man) pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave (them) me, is greater than all; and no (man) is able to pluck (them) out of my Father’s hand. I and (my) Father are one.”* -**John 10:27-30.**

APPENDIX

In writing this account of what I believe to be God's plan of events from to-day to eternity I have made a few assertions without giving details of why I believe them to be true. I have done this to avoid being side-tracked from the main task of making the account as brief as possible. However, along the way I have indicated that I would deal with these assertions in the Appendix.

In addition to giving details of why I believe these assertions I have also promised to give details on other issues.

I trust I have not missed any of the assertions or issues in the following statements.

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In providing articles on these subjects I hope to help people think through their conclusions regarding the plans and purposes of God.

SECTION 1. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Paul makes a marvellous statement in the opening chapter of his epistle to the saints in Ephesus. He says God has *“made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; (even) in him.”* **Ephesians 1:9-10.**

He goes on to say that he (Paul) and the saints to whom he is writing have been included in that number (**v11-14**) and that the unified group they have been included in is THE CHURCH (**v22-23**) as can be seen in the full text below –

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also (trusted), after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what (is) the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set (him) at his own right hand in the heavenly (places), Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all (things) under his feet, and gave him (to be) the head over all (things) to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” **Ephesians 1:11-23.**

So there will be ONLY ONE CHURCH; it will be COMPLETE WHEN TIME IS OVER; and it will be MADE UP OF ALL REDEEMED MEN AND WOMEN (whether “in heaven” or “on earth” i.e. dead or alive, or yet to be born at the time Paul wrote the letter).

This comes out clearly in the Scriptures in three ways, namely:-

- (i) In Definitions of The Church
- (ii) By Clear Statements About The Church, and
- (iii) In Illustrations of The Church

(i) DEFINITIONS OF THE CHURCH

We have more than one definition of THE CHURCH in Scripture to help us form an opinion of what it is. Let us look at a couple of Scriptures:

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- **Ephesians 1:22-23**, “*And hath put all (things) under his feet, and gave him (to be) the head over all (things) to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*”

So it is inseparably linked to Jesus Christ. It is part of Him. It is linked to Him in all that He is over and all things to which He relates. This leads me to reject the suggestion that it is an exclusive group of people from one point in time to another point in time (for example, from ‘Pentecost’ to ‘The Rapture’, as some suggest) in favor of believing that it embraces ALL redeemed people from ALL time(s). This sounds more like His “fulness” to me.

Surely this is what is conveyed by **Colossians 1:17-20** as it says, “*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all (things) he might have the preeminence. For it pleased (the Father) that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, (I say), whether (they be) things in earth, or things in heaven.*”

- **Hebrews 12:22-24**, “*But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than (that of) Abel.*”

Here we learn that THE CHURCH is a “general assembly”. It includes “*the spirits of just men made perfect.*” This suggests to me a gathering together of all of God’s people including all the ‘Old Testament saints’ whom the Lord descended to liberate before He ascended into heaven - **Ephesians 4:8-10**, “*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things).*”

This is very likely what the Lord was referring to when He said to Peter, “*I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” **Matthew 16:18**. The Lord intended, after He had made His great sacrifice for sin, to descend into Hades and to take to heaven with Him the spirits of all the redeemed people of Old Testament times. They are part of His church and they will come with Him when He returns. Otherwise we could not sit down in His Millennial Kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (as we surely will – **Matthew 8:11**).

This passage makes reference to “*the heavenly Jerusalem*” where THE CHURCH will dwell. In giving a description of it in **Revelation 21:9-27** John says, “*And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the*

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Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light (was) like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, (and) had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are (the names) of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred (and) forty (and) four cubits, (according to) the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was (of) jasper: and the city (was) pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city (were) garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation (was) jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates (were) twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city (was) pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb (is) the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither (whatsoever) worketh abomination, or (maketh) a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

It is evident that the city is built to represent its citizens. On the twelve gates we have the names of the tribes of the nation of Israel (**v12**) representing the Old Testament saints and on the foundations we have the names of the twelve apostles representing the New Testament saints. Everybody "*written in heaven*" (**Hebrews 12:23**) will be there. This is confirmed in **Revelation 21:27**. This register has been running for a long time as confirmed by Scriptures such as **Exodus 32:31-33**, **Psalms 69:28** and **Daniel 12:1**.

It is evident that the one and only true gospel was preached to Abraham, establishing the truth that inclusion in CHURCH is by faith alone, in Christ alone, as it says in **Galatians 3.7-29**, "*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, (saying), In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed (is) every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, (it is) evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ*

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hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed (is) every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though (it be) but a man's covenant, yet (if it be) confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, (that) the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance (be) of the law, (it is) no more of promise: but God gave (it) to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then (serveth) the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; (and it was) ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not (a mediator) of one, but God is one. (Is) the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster (to bring us) unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye (be) Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

An indicative list of men and women of faith is given in **Hebrews 11** and starts with Abel (**v 4**) running through to "us" (**v 40**) and recognizing no dispensational boundaries.

(ii) CLEAR STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CHURCH

When THE CHURCH is referred to it is always in the singular when the concept is The Body of Christ as a whole. People refer to the church in different ways. A person might refer to THE CHURCH MILITANT when thinking of the total number of redeemed persons currently living on earth. Someone might refer to THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT when thinking of all of the redeemed who have lived in the past but whose spirits are now with the Lord.

The word translated "church" (ἐκκλησία) in the New Testament can refer to the entire company of God's people (as in **Ephesians 1:21-22**) but it can also be used of a local church assembly of professing Christians (as in **1 Corinthians 1:1-2**). When referring to local churches it can be used in the plural (as in Galatians 1.2). The word means "assembly" and can also be used of AN UNRULY MOB (as in **Acts 19:32**). So there is no exclusive theological meaning in the word itself.

It is worth noting that in **Acts 7:38** the word is used of God's people in Old Testament

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times (the nation of Israel) and it has been translated “church” or “congregation” linking it to the hundreds of mentions of “congregation” in the Old Testament.

To me arguments attempting to establish limits or boundaries to THE CHURCH based on the narrow and shaky foundation of the use of the Greek word “ἐκκλησία” carry no weight. Plain statements of Scripture are what we need, and we have many.

Scripture is emphatic regarding things of which there can only be ONE. Take for example **Ephesians 4:4-6**, “*(There is) one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who (is) above all, and through all, and in you all.*”

ONE BODY (the church)
ONE SPIRIT (God The Spirit)
ONE HOPE (salvation)
ONE LORD (Jesus Christ)
ONE FAITH (“once for all delivered to the saints” – **Jude v3**)
ONE BAPTISM (for entry to the church – **1 Corinthians 12:13**)
ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL (self explanatory)

These all are linked, and, sitting at the front of the list is THE CHURCH. This must dismiss forever the notion that there will be one group of believers (an assembly, a church) from before Israel was established, another from Old Testament Jews, another from Old Testament Gentiles, another from between the first and second advents of Christ, another from the Tribulation, and another from the Millennium etc. And if there is only ONE it must cover ALL the redeemed.

This is the only way it can fit in with there being only ONE SAVIOUR (**Acts 4:1**), only ONE WAY OF SALVATION (**John 14:6**), only ONE GOSPEL (**Galatians 1:6-12**) and only ONE REDEMPTIVE SAVING WORK (**Hebrews 10:7-14**).

It cannot come as any surprise that Scripture abounds with crystal clear statements confirming that there is ONLY ONE CHURCH, for example:

- **John 10:16**, “*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, (and) one shepherd.*”
Jesus came to the Jews, but He came to save Gentiles too and to join them into ONE CHURCH. Many Scriptures confirm this truth.
- **Romans 12:4-5**, “*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, (being)] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*”
Our own bodies give us a perfect example of the truth that ALL the redeemed are united in ONE CHURCH.
- **1 Corinthians 12:13**, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether (we be) Jews or Gentiles, whether (we be) bond or free; and have*

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been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

There are no race or class distinctions. We are all saved the one way into the ONE CHURCH. (See Galatians 3.28).

- **Ephesians 1: 9-10**, *“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; (even) in him.”*

This is God’s great purpose, to gather from ALL TIME(S) all of His people in ONE CHURCH.

- **Colossians 3:15**, *“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”*

We can be at peace about it. We can be thankful about it. There will only be ONE CHURCH.

(iii) ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Scripture gives us several illustrations of THE CHURCH and each one helps us understand the concept of its all-embracing unity, as far as the redeemed are concerned, for example:

- It is the BODY of which Christ is the HEAD (**Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23 & 4.11-16, Colossians 1.18 & 3:15**).

Since there is only one Head there can only be ONE BODY. This truth is emphasized time and time again (**Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 10:17, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:4 and Colossians 3:15**).

- It is the BRIDE to whom Christ is the BRIDEGROOM (**2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:23-32, and Revelation 21:9**).

The picture is clear. There is only ONE Bride and ONE Bridegroom

- It is the BUILDING of which Christ is the BUILDER (**Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-7**).

It is ONE church, ONE building, ONE temple, ONE dwelling place, ONE spiritual house with ONE foundation and ONE Chief Corner Stone.

- It is a FLOCK with Christ as the SHEPHERD (**Luke 12.32, John 10.1-16, Acts 20.28 and 1 Peter 5.3-4**).

There is only ONE flock and ONE “*Good Shepherd*”.

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- When Paul pours out his heart, in Romans 9, 10 &11, concerning Israel he clearly says that THE OLIVE TREE, representing the nation of Israel and the Old Testament economy still lives and THE WILD OLIVE TREE, representing the New Testament economy and the bringing in of the Gentiles, is merely “grafted in” to the original tree. **Romans 11:1-24** says, *“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, (of) the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to (the image of) Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then (is it) no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if (it be) of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but (rather) through their fall salvation (is come) unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them (be) the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation (them which are) my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them (be) the reconciling of the world, what (shall) the receiving (of them be), but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit (be) holy, the lump (is) also (holy): and if the root (be) holy, so (are) the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, (take heed) lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in (his) goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural (branches), be grafted into their own olive tree?”*

This certainly destroys the notion that the New Testament state of

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things is a separate entity.

- When Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus about their salvation, and the fellowship into which it brought them, he combined several metaphors for THE CHURCH. In **Ephesians 2** we see his development of the theme.
- In **v 1- 6** he speaks about the spiritually “dead” being “quickenened” (i.e.made alive) as they are joined to Christ.
- In **v11-16** he talks about the “*Gentiles*” (the “*Uncircumcision*”) being joined to the Jews (the “*Circumcision*”) in one “COMMONWEALTH” (**v12**), making “ONE NEW MAN” (**v15**), as “ONE BODY” (**v16**). In **v19** the members of the church are “FELLOW CITIZENS” and of one “HOUSEHOLD”. In **v21** the church is a “TEMPLE”.
- This chapter abounds with word pictures, each one given to show that God’s redeemed people form only ONE group. There is only ONE by whom we can be “quickenened” (**v1**) and there is only ONE way to be “saved” (**v8-10**). This salvation transforms “strangers and foreigners” (**v19**) into “fellow-citizens” (**v19**) in a “commonwealth” (**v12**) that has no racial divisions and no divisions between Old Testament “prophets” (**v20**) and New Testament “apostles” (**v20**).

So much more could be written on this subject. Scripture has so much more to say about it but let me direct your attention in closing to the Lord’s Prayer in John 17. He was praying for His people (**v6** – those whom The Father had already given Him and, **v20**, those who would believe later, through the ages of time). He prayed, “*that they all may be one.*”

Jesus prayers were always answered (**John 11:41-42**) so it has already been done. We are ONE in a marvelous spiritual unity in the same way as the Godhead is One – **v21** and one day God will show this to be the case (**Ephesians 5:25-27**). The challenge for us, here on earth, in front of a watching world ,is to show that unity in the way God wishes us to (**Ephesians 4:1-3 & John 13:35**).

Sometimes we do not make a good job of it!

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SECTION 2. THE CHURCH and THE GREAT TRIBULATION

(Will the church go through the Great Tribulation?)

SECTION 3. THE RAPTURE AND THE RETURN OF JESUS

(Are The Rapture and The Glorious Second Advent of Jesus ONE SINGLE EVENT?)

These two questions are so closely linked that it is convenient and sensible to deal with both together.

Those who believe in a two-stage return of Jesus Christ believe He will come “for” His saints some time before His glorious return “with” His saints. Those who believe in a single-stage return believe He comes both “with” (the spirits) and “for” (the living and the bodies of the dead) His saints. Both groups believe in a glorious, visible, public return.

Answering the questions hinges on two main issues, namely: -

- (i) TIMING and
- (ii) THE EVENTS THAT OCCUR

It goes without saying that if the Rapture and the Glorious Return of Jesus occur at the same time they are the same event. It also goes without saying that if the same events occur at The Rapture and The Glorious Return then they are one and the same event.

Let us look at one of the most popular descriptions of The Rapture in the Word of God – **1 Thessalonians 4.13-5.11** which reads, *“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as (do) others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”*

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(Let us compare parts of this with extracts from descriptions of the Glorious Return, such as **Revelation 19:11-20.6, Matthew 24:29-31 & Luke 17:26-30** etc..)

The first thing that hits me is that The Rapture involves A RESURRECTION (i.e. **1 Thessalonians 4.16**, “*the dead in Christ shall rise.*”) This is significant in the extreme for **Revelation 20:5** says categorically of the resurrection that occurs AT THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION, “*This (is) the first resurrection.*” “*First*” means FIRST! There had been NO MASS RESURRECTION before this so there could have been NO RAPTURE.

“*The first resurrection*” clearly occurs at THE END of The Great Tribulation and, being the “*resurrection of the just*” (**Luke 14.1**) it must be The Rapture!

We can draw three conclusions from this, namely:-

- a) The Rapture is at the end of The Great Tribulation (and that answers the question of TIMING for (i) above).
- b) Since The Rapture is at the END of The Great Tribulation the church must go through the Tribulation.
- c) Since The Rapture occurs at the end of The Great Tribulation it COINCIDES with THE GLORIOUS RETURN of Jesus Christ, so they are one and the same event!

The second thing that occurs to me is that The Rapture is a very noisy, visible, public event. Consider what it says in the passage from **1 Thessalonians**:-

- 4.14** The spirits of the saints who have died will come back “with” Jesus Christ (as in Jude v14-15 at The Glorious Return).
- 4.16** “*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven*” (as in **Matthew 24:29-31, Revelation 19:11-16, Zechariah 14:4** etc, etc. at The Glorious Return).
- 4.16** It is a noisy event! There is a “*shout*” and the “*trump of God*” (as in **Matthew 24:29-31** at The Glorious Return).
- 4.16-17** It is a visible event! “*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.*” And this will be happening on a worldwide basis (as in **Matthew 24:29-31** at The Glorious Return).

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5.1-9 It is a public event! God is dealing openly with the saved (“*you*”, “*you brethen*”, “*we*”, “*us*”) and the unsaved (“*they*”, “*them*”, “*those*”) as “*salvation*” and “*wrath*” are dispensed (as in **Revelation 19:11-20.6**, **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**, **Luke 17:23-37**, etc. at the Glorious Return).

This answers the question of THE EVENTS THAT OCCUR for (ii) above and **confirms the conclusion that The Rapture and The Glorious Return are one and the same event!**

For me, this would be sufficient to prove the conclusions I have drawn and I would be happy to end this article at this point. However, since I came to understand that the church will go through The Great Tribulation, and that The Rapture and The Glorious Return are one and the same event I have seen more confirmations of it in the Scriptures than I can count. Without making the article unduly long I would like to share a few of them with you, chosen at random.

- **Acts 3:18-21** – This extract is from Peter’s words to the people who gathered at the temple when the lame man was healed. He refers to the First Advent of Christ (**v18**), and the Second Advent (**v20-21**). In referring to His Second Advent he says that Jesus will not return “*until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*” This is a clear reference to The Millennium when there will be physical restoration (as in **Isaiah 11.6-9 & 35.1-2**) and spiritual restoration (as in **Zechariah 12:9-10 & 13:1**). So Jesus is not coming back until the Millennial kingdom is being set up i.e. at the END of The Great Tribulation!
- **Revelation 16:15-16** – The Lord has still not come “*as a thief*” (one of the arguments used to support a “secret” pre-tribulation Rapture) and the battle of Armageddon is about to commence. So Jesus is not coming back until the END of The Great Tribulation!
- **Titus 2:11-14** – The “*blessed hope*” (The Rapture) and “*the glorious appearing*” are the same event (**v.13**). The word linking the two can be translated “*even*” which makes it very emphatic (i.e. “*the blessed hope even the glorious appearing*”).
- Jesus will “*change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*” (**Philippians 3:20-21**) at THE RAPTURE “*when he shall appear*” (**1 John 3:1-3**) at THE GLORIOUS APPEARING, showing that they are one and the same event.
- **2 Thessalonians 2.1-10** – Paul is talking about “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and (by) our gathering together unto him” (**v1**) (THE RAPTURE) when He will destroy the beast (**v3-8**) (AT THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION). So The Rapture will occur at The Glorious Appearing.

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It would not be right to end this brief statement without saying something about a few WORDS that have been used to try to prove a Two-Stage Return. The word “rapture” does not occur in the Scriptures but is said to be derived from the Latin word “rapere” (meaning to seize, snatch out or take away) which in turn is said to be the Latin equivalent of the Greek word “ἡραπαζω (harpazo - translated “caught up”) as in

- **1 Thessalonians 4:17**. Those who believe in a Two-Stage Return believe The Rapture will occur some time before The Great Tribulation and that it will be sudden (and could have occurred at any moment down through the centuries since Jesus Christ returned to heaven after the resurrection), secret (with Christians just disappearing, leaving children parentless, cars driverless etc) and leaving a state of confusion in the world. It is a major plank on the Dispensationalist’s platform and has been preached so often and emphasized so much that the word “Rapture” is in common usage.

Three words used in the New Testament in relation to the return of Jesus Christ are used by those who believe in a Two-Stage Return to try to substantiate their view. They are:

- “παρουσια”(parousia - translated “coming”) which they say refers to The Rapture when Christ comes “for” his saints.
- “επιφανεια” (epiphaneia - translated “appearing”(appearing, “manifestation” or “brightness”) which they say refers to The Glorious Return.
- “αποκαλυψισ”(appokalupsis - translated “revelation” which they say also refers to The Glorious Return, when Christ comes “with” His saints.

They divide Scripture accordingly contending that this is “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” (**2 Timothy 2:15**) (another favorite topic for Dispensationalists who say such things as “The church will not go through The Great Tribulation because the word “church” is not used in chapters 4 to 20 of the book of The Revelation” – even though “*the servants of our God*” (**Revelation 7:3**), “*saints*”, (**Revelation 13:7**) those “*who have the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (**Revelation 12:17**) etc. are mentioned time and time again)..

Scripture, however, shows that “parousia”, “epiphaneia” and “apokalupsis” are used interchangeably and refer to one and the same event.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:15** Christ is coming “for” His saints and in **1 Thessalonians 3:13** He is coming “with” His saints and in both cases the word is “parousia”.

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In **2 Thessalonians 2.8** (when Jesus Christ destroys the Beast at His Glorious coming) it refers to “**the brightness**” (“epiphaneia”) of “His coming” (“parousia”).

The disciples asked the Lord, “*what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*” (“parousia”) (**Matthew 24:3**) and He answered, “*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.*” (**Matthew 24.30**) Obviously the Lord was referring to His Glorious Return (“epiphaneia” and “apokalupsis”).

There are several other “words” that have been the subject of debate but I honestly believe the pursuit of them is unprofitable. Words are important, and in some instances a single word is of extreme importance (as in the use of the word **once** in **Hebrews 12:26-27**) but, in general, I find the selection of individual words (usually without context) to back up notional doctrines to be a poor use of time and energy.

It is better, I believe, to accept the clear message of many words in context.

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SECTION 4. "WILL ALL ISRAEL BE SAVED?"

(What does Paul Mean when he says "All Israel will be Saved?)"

Having said what I did about reading things in context it would be wise for me to advise you to read **Romans 9, 10 and 11** before reading what I believe to be the answer to this question –

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom (pertaineth) the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service (of God), and the promises; Whose (are) the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ (came), who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they (are) not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, (are they) all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these (are) not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this (is) the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only (this); but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, (even) by our father Isaac; (For (the children) being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? (Is there) unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then (it is) not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will (have mercy), and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed (it), Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (What) if God, willing to show (his) wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, (that) in the place where it was said unto them, Ye (are) not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut (it) short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That they which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

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But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because (they sought it) not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ (is) the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down (from above):) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, (even) in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith (cometh) by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by (them that are) no people, (and) by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, (of) the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to (the image of) Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then (is it) no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if (it be) of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but (rather) through their fall salvation (is come) unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them (be) the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,

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I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation (them which are) my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them (be) the reconciling of the world, what (shall) the receiving (of them be), but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit (be) holy, the lump (is) also (holy): and if the root (be) holy, so (are) the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, (take heed) lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in (his) goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural (branches), be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this (is) my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, (they are) enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, (they are) beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God (are) without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable (are) his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, (are) all things: to whom (be) glory for ever. Amen."

From the context we can identify THINGS THAT GOD IS **NOT** SAYING for example:-

- (i) He is **NOT** saying that every Israelite who has ever lived will be saved, for,
 - 9.27** – he acknowledges that only a “*remnant*” of Israel will be saved, and,
 - 11.14** – he is hopeful that his ministry will be used to “*save some of them.*”
- (ii) He is **NOT** saying that any Israelite will be saved any other way than by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, for,
 - 9.31-32** – he acknowledges that they “*stumbled*” because they sought righteousness “*by the works of the law*” instead of “*by faith*”,

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and,
10:4

- Jesus Christ is the only way to righteousness and only to those who “believe” (also **10:9-10 and 13**).

(iii) He is **NOT** saying that anyone will have a second chance, for

11.15
11.21

- Many in Israel were “cast away”, and,
- “God spared not the natural branches” (and then “graft them in again” **11:23**), as we will see, is a grafting in of different individuals from Israel, at a later time, by the one and only means of salvation – by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. The rest are as “Sodom” and “Gomorrhah”).

From the context we can also see WHAT GOD IS SAYING, namely:-

- (i) Israel received many privileges (**9:4-5**).
- (ii) But they erred (**9:31-32, 10:2-4**).
- (iii) And, apart from a remnant they were set aside (**11:1-5**).
- (iv) But they will, as a nation, be brought back to God in a time future (**11:11-24**).
- (v) At the time of being brought back in God will be doing a remarkable work of judgement in Israel and upon the whole earth (**9:27-28**).
- (vi) And when they are brought back in, every Israelite in the land of Israel will be a born again believer (**11:26-27**).
- (vii) And in the meantime God will have brought in to His church “the fulness of the Gentiles” (**11:25**) all in the ONE BODY (**11:24**), all saved the same way (**10:12-13**).

Paul traces all this in these chapters, showing his heartfelt concern for his fellow Israelites (**9:1-3, 10:1**) and his absolute belief in the sovereignty, judgement, grace and goodness of God (**9:14-24, 9.30-33, 11:5-6, 11:33-36**).

This is the answer and we will see it as God reveals His intentions through the prophets, so,

LET US SEE HOW GOD UNFOLDS THIS PLAN

The work the Lord will do in Israel and upon the whole earth, referred to in Romans 9:27-28 will be what He does during The Great Tribulation. Paul is quoting from Isaiah 10:22-23 where the Hebrew text says, “for a consumption and decree shall the Lord of hosts make in the midst of the land.”

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The Lord, speaking of the same period says, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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 24.21-22**).

Prophetic Scripture reveals how severe the judgment will be world-wide but specifically as regards Israel, reducing populations, during this period. (**Zechariah 13:7-9**) says, *“Awake O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man (that is) my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, (that) in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off (and) die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It (is) my people: and they shall say, The LORD (is) my God.”*

God will move both against and in favour of Israel bringing them to a point where they are ready to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. (**Zechariah 12:1-13:1**) says, *“The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah (and) against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD, will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem (shall be) my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, (even) in Jerusalem. The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify (themselves) against Judah. In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David (shall be) as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, (that) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for (his) only (son), and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for (his) firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”*

God will so move in relation to Israel that they will be ready to accept Him as He returns. As ever, however, there will be exceptions. There will be rebels and the Lord tells us how He will deal with them. (**Ezekiel 20.33-38**) says, *“(As) I live, saith the*

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Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I (am) the LORD.”

So the rebels will be excluded from the land and from the nation. Each person will be dealt with as an individual. Every Israelite left in the land of Israel will be a born again believer as the Millennial Kingdom starts.

Ezekiel 37.21-28 describes the conditions that will then prevail as it says, *“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant (shall be) king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, (even) they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David (shall be) their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”*

“And so all Israel will be saved!”

It is worth noting that British Israelism is dealt a death blow by **Ezekiel 37.22**. The “Ten Tribes” are not “lost” and God will gather them (Israelites – not British or American!) as He reunites the nation – but that is another subject!

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SECTION 5: WHO WILL POPULATE THE MILLENNIUM?

(Who will populate the Millennial Kingdom?)

I have been prompted to include a few words on this subject as a result of being asked this very question recently during a Bible Study session with a small group, namely, "Who will populate the Millennial Kingdom?"

The gentleman who asked the question was thinking of the millions who would perish during The Great Tribulation and the millions who would be slain as the Lord returns. He seriously wondered if there would be anyone left to populate the earth during The Millennial Kingdom.

If The Great Tribulation was to commence in the near future there would be approximately 6,000 million people on earth as it starts. With this as a starting point we could estimate how it will reduce, for example:-

• Initial population of the earth		6,000 million
• Allow for Revelation 6.8	Deduct	1,500 million
	Leaving	4,500 million
• Allow for Revelation 8.9	Deduct (say).....	5 million
	Leaving	4,495 million
• Allow for Revelation 8.11	Deduct (say)....	15 million
	Leaving	4,480 million
• Allow for Revelation 9.15	Deduct (say)....	1,493 million
	Leaving	2,987 million
• Allow for deaths from wars and local judgments	Deduct (say)....	100 million
	Leaving	2,887 million
• Allow for the battle of Armageddon	Deduct (say)....	300 million
	Leaving	2,587 million

To this we would have to add for people being born during the seven year Tribulation period. If this was taken at even half the rate of population increase we experience currently it would be 7 x 70 million

Add 490 million

Giving a total of... 3,077 million

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On these approximations, 3.077 billion will survive The Great Tribulation. The figure of itself is notional, but it serves to show that there will be many, many people on earth to potentially populate the Millennial Kingdom.

This 3 billion plus would be comprised of all kinds of people. The following comments may give some clarification:

- (a) believers will be transformed and raptured as the Lord returns **1 Thessalonians 4:17. These will enter the Millennial Kingdom**
- (b) many unbelievers will be judged as the Lord sets things in order for the Millennial Kingdom **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10** – (as mentioned in paragraph 4 on page 112). **These will not enter the Millennial Kingdom.**
- (c) people (both Jews and Gentiles) will accept the Lord as He comes and thus, having missed the Rapture, pass into the Millennial Kingdom in their natural state (**Zechariah 12:10-13.1, Revelation 1:7**) – (as mentioned under “Extended Life Expectancy For Human Beings pp154). This is a group that is seldom identified. Most preaching and teaching gives the impression that everyone who is not included in the Rapture will be judged for eternity when the Lord returns. However, it is clear from many Scriptures that **many people will pass into the Millennial Kingdom in their natural physical state.**

To those identified above as entering the Millennial Kingdom [(a)+ (c)] would have to be added ALL THE SAINTS who have died and are raised as the Lord returns (many, many millions). According to **Revelation 7:9-17** the number of people saved during The Great Tribulation alone will be “*a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*” (v 9).

This is consistent with the picture painted by the following Scriptures:-

- **Ezekiel 36:34-36** – “*And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities (are become) fenced, (and) are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined (places, and) plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken (it), and I will do (it).*”
- **Daniel 7:12** – “*As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*”

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The nations and kingdoms that exist when the Lord returns will rule no longer but they will continue to be there under the rule of Jesus Christ.

- **Zechariah 8:3-5** – *“Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”*

A lovely picture of a well populated city.

- **Zechariah 8:23** – *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days (it shall come to pass), that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard (that) God (is) with you.”*

Testimony again to the prosperity of the Jews and the existence of other nations during the Millennium.

- **Zechariah 14:16-19** – *“And it shall come to pass, (that) every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, (that) whoso will not come up of (all) the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that (have) no (rain); there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”*

Another picture of the state of things during the Millennium.

Rather than thinking that there will be a shortage of people to populate the Millennial Kingdom I am inclined to believe that, given the number of people who will be there as it starts, combined with the peaceful conditions and long life expectancy during it, there will be more people on the earth toward the end of the one thousand year period of the kingdom than have ever been on the earth at any time before. Natural population increase over a thousand years of relative calm and peace would be quite high. Certainly, **Revelation 20:7-10** lets us know that the population of the earth at that time, will be “*as the sand of the sea*” when it says, “*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom (is) as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet (are), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

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NOTE: Answering one question can lead to raising others. I can think of several questions that could arise from the answer to this question, but I honestly consider that I have said enough in this Section of the Appendix and in the main body of the book to explain what I believe on this subject.

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SECTION 6. END-TIMES JUDGEMENTS

(When will the Judgment of the Living Nations Take place?)

The judgment described in **Matthew 25:31-46** is generally called "*The Judgment of the Living Nations*" and it is commonly assumed that it will take place on earth at the end of The Great Tribulation, when the Lord has returned in glory to set up the Millennial Kingdom.

The description reads as follows, "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth (his) sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed (thee)? or thirsty, and gave (thee) drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took (thee) in? or naked, and clothed (thee)? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done (it) unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done (it) unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did (it) not to one of the least of these, ye did (it) not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*"

Conventional opinion may be correct, but when we read that the judgement on "them on the left hand" is "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*" it sounds more like a pronouncement that would be made at The Great White Throne Judgement described in **Revelation 20.11-15** ("*and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*").

It is possible that, at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, the Lord will assemble all who have ever lived (the "glorified" saved, already in their resurrection bodies and having enjoyed the Millennial Kingdom; the lost, being a mixture of those who have been on earth for all or part of the Millennial Kingdom and those raised from "*death and hell*" (**Revelation 20:13**) and those who have been saved during the Millennium) for judgment.

The Great White Throne Judgment is a judgment of individuals ("*WHOSOEVER was not found written in the book of life*" **Revelation 20.15** but that does not preclude

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grouping of people who will have similar ultimate judgement. The “groups” of people associated with “*The Judgement of The Living Nations*” (i.e. the “*sheep*” and the “*goats*”) could well be part of the assembled company at The Great White Throne. The “*goats*” would go to “*everlasting punishment*” and the “*sheep*” to “*eternal life*”. This view does not, to me, appear to be in conflict with any Scripture.

I have included these few words on this subject for your consideration. It is but one of many things on which I have not yet reached a conclusion.

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SECTION 7. DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

When I read Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks I never fail to be amazed that the children of Israel were told, in this little prophecy, the very year the Messiah would come, and yet by and large, they failed to understand it, or perhaps failed to even believe it. It is a challenge to us to examine the prophetic Scriptures carefully and discover what the Lord is telling us.

Daniel 9:20-27 reads as follows, *“And whiles I (was) speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I (was) speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed (me), and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show (thee); for thou (art) greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, (that) from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince (shall be) seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof (shall be) with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make (it) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”*

Daniel had been reading the book of Jeremiah (**Daniel 9.2**) and had been reflecting on and praying about the 70 YEARS of desolation for Jerusalem (i.e. the 70 year exile in Babylon) when Gabriel was sent to him, from the Lord, to tell him about ANOTHER PERIOD OF SEVENTY sets of years which God had in store for the nation of Israel. It is called “70 WEEKS” and the word translated “weeks” is “shabua” (also translated “SEVENS” – **Ezekiel 45:21**). The thought is that it is 70 PERIODS OF SEVENS or 70 PERIODS OF 7 YEARS (i.e. 490 YEARS). The word translated “determined” in **v 24** is more accurately translated “DIVIDED” (refer to “Tregelles On Daniel” page 97 paragraph 3), and we discover that the 490 years is divided into three distinct periods as follows:

- 7 Periods of 7 = 49 years (rebuilding Jerusalem) (v.25)
 - 62 Periods of 7 = 434 years (to the death of Christ) (v.26)
 - 1 Period of 7 = 7 years (of Tribulation) (v.27)
- TOTAL 490 years

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From v's 25 & 26 we learn that, "*from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem*" (i.e. the command from Artaxerxes to Ezra in 454 B.C.) *until Messiah the Prince (shall be) seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:* (i.e. $69 \times 7 = 483$ years, taking us to A.D.29) ... *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.*" Given that the birth of Jesus Christ has been most accurately set at 4 B.C. this gives the very year during which Christ died for us!

This gives us great confidence in understanding the last 7 YEAR PERIOD, which is "divided" from the rest.

The "*prince that shall come*" is the beast. He makes a covenant with Israel for ONE WEEK (7 years – "The Tribulation"), but breaks it half way through, signalling the commencement of the 3½ YEAR GREAT TRIBULATION period and the events described in the latter part of v27 as, "*he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make (it) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate..*"

These things are confirmed by other prophecies such as the Lord's words to His disciples in Matthew 24.15, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*" confirming the desolation, and Revelation 13.5, "*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty (and) two months*" confirming the duration. There are many other confirmations but I will not pursue them here. My intention in this brief article is merely to explain the prophecy given to Daniel concerning the Seventy Weeks. I will leave it to you, the reader, to apply it.

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SECTION 8. WORSHIP IN THE MILLENNIUM

(What will be the System of Worship and Sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom?)

To date I have spent almost half of my life in Northern Ireland and the remainder of it in Australia (having come to Australia with my wife and family some thirty nine years ago). In the early days of settling into Australia we attended a little church in Belgrave Heights, on the outskirts of Melbourne, and my wife, Joan, and I struck up a friendship with a retired missionary couple, Albert and Dorothy Drysdale, who attended the church.

Albert had been a pioneer missionary in Papua New Guinea and had been the first white man to venture up the Fly River. He had served the Lord faithfully and, as I got to know him, I developed a great respect for him.

One afternoon when we were at their home I sat talking with him while Joan and Dorothy spent time together and the children played in the garden. Albert was in a solemn mood and shared with me that there were two things that caused him to become depressed, from time to time. The two things that troubled him were very different from each other, but I was interested to learn that one of them was that he had the utmost difficulty in understanding, or accepting the apparent message of, chapters 40 to 48 of the book of Ezekiel. It is these chapters that give us, among other things, information relating to The Millennial System of Worship and Sacrifice.

It surprised me that such a mature and spiritual man should be troubled at what the Lord has ordained but I have since discovered that many sincere believers find it difficult to accept that the Lord will re-introduce temple worship, sacrifices, feasts and Sabbaths during the Millennium. But He will, and we can rest assured that He has good reason to do so.

Some see this re-introduction as a backward step, others see it as much worse than that, condemning it as a setting aside of grace. I see it as neither of these but rather as A NEW SYSTEM, appropriate to the time. Just as The Law given through Moses was appropriate to its time and The Lord's Table and Believer's Baptism are appropriate to our time so this New System will be appropriate to its' time.

Ezekiel 40 to 48 gives details of things as they will be during the Millennium, as far as the land and nation of Israel are concerned. Many things are covered (the borders of the land, the division of the land for the tribes, the temple area, the temple, the effects of water flowing from the temple etc.) but the main portions relating to worship and sacrifice are as follows: -

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Ezekiel 40:38-46 – “And the chambers and the entries thereof (were) by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering. And in the porch of the gate (were) two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, (were) two tables; and on the other side, which (was) at the porch of the gate, (were) two tables. Four tables (were) on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew (their sacrifices). And the four tables (were) of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And within (were) hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables (was) the flesh of the offering. And without the inner gate (were) the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which (was) at the side of the north gate; and their prospect (was) toward the south: one at the side of the east gate (having) the prospect toward the north. And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect (is) toward the south, (is) for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house. And the chamber whose prospect (is) toward the north (is) for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these (are) the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.”

Ezekiel 43.18-27 – “And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These (are) the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put (it) on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse (it) with the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing (it), thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up (for) a burnt offering unto the LORD. Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat (for) a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. And when these days are expired, it shall be, (that) upon the eighth day, and (so) forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.”

Ezekiel 44.5 – 46.24 – “And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary. And thou shalt say to the rebellious, (even) to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, In that ye have brought (into my sanctuary) strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, (even) my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary,

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of any stranger that (is) among the children of Israel. And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, (having) charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy (place): but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall come to pass, (that) when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird (themselves) with any thing that causeth sweat. And when they go forth into the utter court, (even) into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads. Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before. And they shall teach my people (the difference) between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; (and) they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths. And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days. And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD. And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I (am) their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I (am) their possession. They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering: and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. And the first of all the firstfruits of all (things), and every oblation of all, of every (sort) of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast. Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length (shall be) the length of five and twenty thousand (reeds), and the breadth (shall be) ten thousand. This (shall be) holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred (in length), with five hundred (in breadth), square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary (and) the most holy (place). The holy (portion) of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it

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shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary. And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers. And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy (portion): it shall be for the whole house of Israel. And a (portion shall be) for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy (portion), and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy (portion), and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length (shall be) over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border. In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and (the rest of) the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer. And the shekel (shall be) twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh. This (is) the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley: Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, (ye shall offer) the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, (which is) an homer of ten baths; for ten baths (are) an homer: And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD. All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part (to give) burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first (month), in the first (day) of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary: And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put (it) upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. And so thou shalt do the seventh (day) of the month for every one that erreth, and for (him that is) simple: so shall ye reconcile the house. In the first (month), in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock (for) a sin offering. And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams withoutblemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily (for) a sin offering. And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. In the seventh (month), in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil. Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of (that) gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons. And the burnt

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of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons. And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day (shall be) six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. And the meat offering (shall be) an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And in the day of the new moon (it shall be) a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish. And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of (that) gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof. But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it. And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth. And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, (one) shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth (one) shall shut the gate. Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the LORD (of) a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning. And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD. Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil, every morning (for) a continual burnt offering. Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it (shall be) their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them. Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; (but) he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession. After he brought me through the entry, which (was) at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there (was) a place on the two sides westward. Then said he unto me, This (is) the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear (them) not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people. Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court (there was) a court. In the four corners of the court (there were) courts joined of forty (cubits) long and thirty broad: these four corners (were) of one measure. And (there was) a row (of building) round about in them, round about them four, and (it was) made with boiling places under the rows round about. Then said he unto me, These (are) the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people."

Ezekiel 48:9-22 – “The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD (shall be) of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth. And for them, (even) for the priests, shall be (this) holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand (in length), and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof. (It shall be) for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept

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my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. And (this) oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites. And over against the border of the priests the Levites (shall have) five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length (shall be) five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand. And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for (it is) holy unto the LORD. And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane (place) for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof. And these (shall be) the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred. And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty. And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy (portion shall be) ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy (portion); and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city. And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel. All the oblation (shall be) five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city. And the residue (shall be) for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house (shall be) in the midst thereof. Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, (being) in the midst (of that) which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince."

It is important to remember that salvation never did come through laws or worship systems, nor will it ever come from such a source.

Enoch was taken home "*by faith*" (**Hebrews 11:5**), Job was assured that he was redeemed (**Job 19:25-27**), Abraham had "*the gospel*" preached to him (**Galatians 3:6-9**) and Moses esteemed "*the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*" (**Hebrews 11:26**), and ALL of this was before THE LAW was given.

No one, either during the period of The Law or after it was saved by The Law, for we are told that, "*by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*". (**Romans 3:20**) and many verses of Scripture testify to this truth. The same chapter of Romans goes on to tell us that, "*the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God (which is) by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.*" (**Romans 3:21-22**). And there is no salvation any other way!

The Old Testament Law, however, was not void (**Romans 3:31**) or sinful (**Romans 7:7**) but holy (**Romans 7:12**) and spiritual (**Romans 7:14**). It served its purpose (**Galatians 3:19**) looking forward to Christ. It was our tutor, to bring us to Christ (**Galatians 3:24**).

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It was appropriate to its time!

Similarly today we are not saved by water baptism or observing The Lord's Supper, nor is anything added to our salvation by these ordinances! Jesus Christ, however, remains central to our salvation and water baptism, by immersion of a believer, gives outward testimony of what has happened (**1 Corinthians 12:13 & Romans 6:3-12**) and it is a matter of obedience - (**Matthew 28:18-20 & 1 Peter 3:18-22**).

Likewise Jesus Christ remains central in the observance of The Lord's Supper as we look back to what He accomplished when he died for our sins and look forward to His return to complete His purposes (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**). Its observance is also a matter of obedience - **Luke 22:14-20**. These things are appropriate to our time!

I believe an examination of the extracts from (**Ezekiel 40 to 48**) set out above will show that:

THE MILLENNIAL SYSTEM OF WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE IS A SYSTEM APPROPRIATE TO ITS TIME

It does not appear to me to be a complete re-institution of what was given through Moses, for example:

- There is no Ark of the Covenant - **Jeremiah 3:16-18**.
- There is no Law in Commandments.
- Only Two Feasts are mentioned (Passover (**45:21**) and Tabernacles (**45:25**) see also **Leviticus 23:34** and **Zechariah 14.:6**).

To my way of thinking this is absolutely appropriate for we must never forget the sacrifice of Christ of which the Passover speaks **1 Corinthians 5.7-8** (Jesus Christ will still carry the title of "*the Lamb*" in eternity **Revelation 22.3**), and The Feast of Tabernacles speaks of the dwelling with God in eternity, which will still be future to the Millennium.

NOTE: I believe THE FEASTS OF THE LORD set out, prophetically, the whole plan of God from Calvary to Eternity as follows: - (Refer to **Leviticus 23**)

1. PASSOVER – Calvary
2. FIRSTFRUITS – Christ's Resurrection
3. PENTECOST – The Church

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4. TRUMPETS – The Glorious Return of Christ
5. ATONEMENT – The Judgment
6. TABERNACLES – Dwelling with God in Eternity

This is a subject all by itself but if the Lord chooses to highlight Passover (looking back on Christ's redemptive work) and Tabernacles (looking forward to eternity) during the Millennium it will be very appropriate.

Beyond these few comments I doubt that I need say any more. I have made my point and to take it further might spoil your own investigation of the subject.

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SECTION 9. LIFE AND DEATH

Several things combine to make it difficult to form clear views of what the Scriptures teach on the subject(s) of 'Life' and 'Death', for example:

- There is NATURAL (or PHYSICAL) life and there is SPIRITUAL life. In **Ephesians 2:1** Paul reminds the Christians at Ephesus that there was a time when they were alive physically but dead spiritually and God saved them by grace through faith in rebirth by God (The Holy Spirit).
- There is NATURAL death (**Genesis 5:5**) but there is also a SECOND death (**Revelation 20:14**), for those who have not been born again.
- Death is sometimes referred to as SLEEP (**1 Thessalonians 4:13**).
- The living spirits of those who die do not all go to the one place (**Luke 16:19-23**).

And other complicating factors could be cited.

I have included this article in the Appendix to set out what I believe Scripture teaches concerning life and death so that you, the reader, will know what motivates some of the statements I have made in the body of this book.

I believe that human beings are TRIPARTITE, being made up of BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**). This may be part of being made in "*the image*" (**Genesis 1.26-27**) of The Triune God (**2 Corinthians 13:14**).

When Adam and Eve sinned they died spiritually (toward God) and subsequently died physically (hence the literal translation of the latter part of (**Genesis 2:17**), "*dying thou shalt surely die*"). We inherit our spiritually dead condition from Adam (Genesis 5.3) as we also inherit our mortality (**Romans 5:12**). Hence the need to be "*born again*", "*of the Spirit*" (**John 3.7-8**).

When a believer dies (in normal human terms) it is only his or her BODY that dies, but the spirit and soul live on. This helps us to understand several things, for example:

- What Jesus meant when He said to Martha, "*whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die*" - **John 11:26**.
- What Paul meant when he said, "*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh*"

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(is) more needful for you.” - **Philippians 1:23-24**.

- How John could see SOULS of believers who had been killed, living and conversing with God – “*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?*” - **Revelation 6:9-10**).

When an unbeliever dies it is also only the BODY that dies. The spirit and soul live on. It is the universal experience of all humanity, saved and unsaved to have the body and spirit part company at death, as it says in (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**), “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*” This Scripture does not imply that all spirits go to God in heaven. God is everywhere, even in hell, as it says in (**Psalms 139.8**), “*If I ascend up into heaven, thou (art) there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou (art there).*”

Scripture tells us that the spirits of those who are ready to meet God go to a very different place than the spirits of those who are not ready (as **Luke 16:19-31** makes clear). The fact that Adam’s spirit died TOWARD GOD when he sinned means that our spirit’s condition, inherited from Adam, is similarly dead toward God. The spirit and the soul of the unbeliever live on when the physical body dies just in the same way as the spirit and soul of a believer. The difference in the case of the believer is that the rebirth reconciles them to God (**2 Corinthians 5:17-19**) thus fitting them for heaven. This also helps us to understand several things, for example:

- What Peter meant when he talked about Jesus, while His body was in the tomb, going to “*prison*” (i.e. hell) and preaching to the spirits of unbelievers who had died – “*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*” - **1 Peter 3:19-20**.
- Why the spirit of the unbelieving rich man was immediately in hell after he died, as it says in (**Luke 16:22-23**), “*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...*”
- Why physical death has no effect on the soul or spirit, for Jesus 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.*” (**Luke 12:4**) (i.e. they can kill the body, but they cannot touch the soul or spirit). It is evident that this is what He meant for He goes on to say that we should fear God, who can cast both body and soul into hell (**v5**).

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It is worth noting that SOUL and SPIRIT are close, but DIFFERENT for **Hebrews 4:12** tells us that the word of God can pierce “*to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*”). It is also worth noting from the story of Lazarus and the rich man that the spirit possesses voice, sight, memory, eyes, bosom, fingers, tongue etc. (**Luke 16:19-31**) so that your soul and spirit encompass you, as a person, in totality. The body is merely the vehicle you use in this world. It is interesting to consider how each can be independently affected or damaged. A car accident may damage your body, but your spirit is intact. Your spirit can, however, be affected by a series of events that leave your body intact. Jesus, in thinking about what He was about to face said, “*Now is my soul troubled*” - **John 12:27**.

Our knowledge of life and death helps us understand many Scriptures in more detail. Let me give just two examples:-

1. **Matthew 22:23-33** - “*The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard (this), they were astonished at his doctrine.*”

Here Jesus is speaking to people who believed that the soul died with the body. He reminds them of God’s words to Moses at the burning bush and says that, “*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*” In other words Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ARE ALIVE! Obviously they are not alive in the body, but their souls and spirits are still alive.

No wonder they were “*astonished*”!

2. **Matthew 8:19-22** - “*And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air (have) nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay (his) head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*”

The disciple who wanted to bury his father wished to delay following the Lord. His father was not dead, but the disciple wanted to stay at home until his father died. When his father died he would then arrange the burial and carry out his duties and responsibilities to his father. He was entitled to do all of this but the point was, that

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he was putting his father, and his earthly duties, in higher priority than following the Lord. This moved the Lord to say (putting it in different words) “Put first things first. Follow Me, that is your first responsibility and your top priority. Other things will fall into place. The spiritually dead will attend to the burial of the physically dead.” The secular world will take care of itself, but if you, as a believer, have a calling, and an opportunity to follow God, respond to that calling and grasp the opportunity.

Having laid a foundation for setting out a simple statement concerning what the Scripture teaches, let me do so by tracing the path of believers and unbelievers.

A. BELIEVERS

Believers, are born lost, as tripartite beings spiritually dead toward God. In the course of their lives they respond positively to the gospel of grace and are reconciled to God. At death, as we refer to it, the body dies and the soul and spirit go to be with the Lord.

- Before Jesus died and rose again they went to a place appropriately referred to in **Luke 16:22** as “*Abraham’s bosom*” (Abraham being the father of the children of faith – **Galatians 3.7-9** etc.). This place is physically located in the centre of the earth. This is clearly taught in the word of God as is witnessed by the following Scriptures:
 - **Numbers 16:25-35**- *“And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for (I have) not (done them) of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; (then) the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that (appertain) unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that (was) under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that (appertained) unto Korah, and all (their) goods. They, and all that (appertained) to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that (were) round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up (also). And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*”

The bodies, souls and spirits went there together. This had never happened before. The bodies doubtless died quickly but the literal truth concerning the

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location of SHEOL (“the pit” – **v30**) is clearly spelt out.

- This is the same --SHEOL (**Psalms 16:8-11 – 10**) or HADES (**Acts 2.27**) Jesus Christ went to, in His Spirit, according to Peter, (**Acts 2.23-28**), “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*””, which Jesus Himself referred to as being “*in the heart of the earth.*” - **Matthew 12.40**, “*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*”

NOTE: There are in fact at least three places of abode for spirits, or spirit beings, in the centre of the earth, namely:-

- (i) For believers (*Abraham’s Bosom/Sheol/Hades*) like Lazarus - **Luke 16:20-22**.
- (ii) For unbelievers (*Sheol/Hades*) like the rich man - **Luke 16:22-23**.
- (iii) For “*the angels that sinned*” - **2 Peter 2:4** (Tartarus).

(Sheol/Hades has two parts, separated by an uncrossable void - **Luke 16:26**)

It may be that the rendering of **Psalms 86:13**, “*For great (is) thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell*” suggests THREE abodes (i.e. LOW, LOWER AND LOWEST).

- After Jesus died and rose again Abraham’s Bosom was VACATED. This happened as part of what The Lord did during the three days and three nights in which His body was in the tomb. During this period Jesus:
 - Descended into “*the heart of the earth*” - **Matthew 12:40**.
 - Visited Hades to preach to unbelievers (**1 Peter 3:18-20**) “*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*”
 - Visited Abraham’s Bosom to lead those held captive there to where He now is in heaven **Ephesians 4.8-10**, “*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what*

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is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”

- As He ascended he took the spirits of the just with Him, thus “*bringing many sons unto glory*” (**Hebrews 2:10**) and these spirits are now made “*perfect*” (**Hebrews 12:22-23**), “*But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*”

No longer do the spirits and souls of believers go to the interim place of Abraham’s bosom. It is now empty. The spirits and souls of believers go straight into the presence of Christ, at The Father’s right hand, as Paul says in **Philippians 1.23**, he had a desire, “*to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.*”

The rest of the story for believers is clear and is dealt with in the main chapters of this book. Their spirits and souls come back with Jesus Christ at His return. Their bodies are raised, incorruptible and as tripartite beings they are thereafter always with the Lord – in His Millennial Kingdom, through the judgments, and forever in His Eternal Kingdom. Having been born twice (the natural birth and being born again of the Spirit) they die only once (the physical death of the body) and some do not even die once for if they remain alive until The Lord returns they are “changed” (i.e. the body is changed to the incorruptible state without dying and being resurrected) as it says in **1 Corinthians 15:51-54**, “*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal (must) put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*”

NOTE: It is worth mentioning at this point that physical death is something euphemistically referred to as “**SLEEP**”. It says in **1 Corinthians 15:51**, “*We shall not all SLEEP*” when the subject is DEATH (**v54**). Jesus Himself used the term in this way when He spoke to His disciples about Mary and Martha’s brother, Lazarus (**John 11.11**, “*Our friend Lazarus SLEEPETH,*” then He says – **John 11.14**, “*Lazarus is DEAD*”). This term was never meant to imply soul sleep. It is both surprising and sad that some people, even believers, mis-apply it in this way!

B. UNBELIEVERS

Unbelievers are born lost, as tripartite beings spiritually dead toward God. They die in this condition never having responded positively to the gospel of grace and consequently never having being reconciled to God. At death the body dies and the

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soul and spirit go to the abode of Hades/Sheol where they are tormented being separated from God with no possibility of reconciliation, like the rich man in - **Luke 16:19-31**.

At the end of the Millennial Kingdom all unbelievers are raised. Their bodies are resurrected and their spirits are brought from Sheol/Hades and as tripartite beings they are judged and they go into the final hell (GEHENNA) as we are told in (**Revelation 20:11-15**), *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

There is more than a suggestion that the resurrected bodies of unbelievers will retain an element of decay for as The Lord warned about hell He said three times over in **Mark 9:43-48** that it is a place where, *“their worm dieth not”* (probably referring to physical decay), *“and the fire is not quenched”* (probably referring to spiritual torment). As Jesus indicated in this passage, this is a fate worth avoiding AT ANY COST! No one should speak about it without tears in their eyes for the lost!

I am well aware that many people do not believe what I believe regarding these matters. Many apply human reasoning, human emotions and science (falsely so-called) to come to other conclusions but to my mind no other conclusions are possible without disregarding, mis-interpreting or otherwise doing disservice to the Word of God.

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SECTION 10. THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL IN 1948

As I see it, **Isaiah 11:11-12** could be taken to refer to either one of the two sets of deliverances, namely,

- (i) a) The deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, and
b) The return of the remnant from Babylon

or,

- (ii) a) The return of the remnant from Babylon, and,
b) The return to form the Jewish State in 1948.

In chapter 1 I have stated my opinion that it is the latter and in chapter 4 I have used this interpretation in reaching the conclusion that we are living in the period between the fulfilment of this prophecy and the invasion of Israel prophesied in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39.

I make the point, however, that even if **Isaiah 11:11-12** refers to (i) above we are still living in the period between the return of the remnant to form the Jewish State in 1948 and the invasion of Israel predicted in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39.

Zechariah 8:7-8 or **Ezekiel 36:24** (Quoted under the heading, "*Is The Return of Israel to Their Promised Land the Fulfilment of a Specific Prophecy?*" in chapter 4) could easily replace **Isaiah 11:11-12** as specific prophecies fulfilled in 1948.

