

The Church
In the
Last Days...

END GAME!

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SEVENTH EDITION

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The church in the last days...

END GAME!

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MEET THE AUTHORS

REV. DR. HANK KANTERS

Hank, along with his wife Kathy, are founding pastors of Cambridge Christian Centre, an inter-denominational church.

Hank's ministry and call is to prepare God's people for what is coming. His emphasis is first on purity of heart and then on the power of God available to the church.

Hank has unique insights into the Biblical teaching of the nature and needs of the human heart, and Christ's answer to those needs.

To fulfill His specific call on their lives, God has blessed Hank and Kathy with a broad scope of ministry. Hank is an anointed and gifted teacher, able to expound profound spiritual truth with simplicity, line upon line. Beyond leading his audience to a clear understanding of the Word of God, he imparts practical, balanced instruction in applying these truths to everyday living in order to produce the character of an over comer.

Hank and Kathy also operate in an anointed ministry of healing and deliverance. They conduct overseas crusades, revival meetings and leader's seminars in third world countries, with miraculous results.

Their interest in world missions has taken them to Mexico, Guatemala, India, Bulgaria, Kenya, Haiti, Egypt, Serbia, Bosnia, Oman, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nepal, Singapore and Malaysia.

MEET THE AUTHORS

REV. HARVEY G. LAINSON, M.B.R.

A graduate of Prairie Bible Institute, Harvey served as a teaching pastor in New Brunswick, Ontario and Michigan. Ordained in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Harvey was a credentialed minister of the Missionary Church of Canada. He served as crusade director for a city wide evangelistic team, working with more than 50 denominations; for eleven years he was Canadian Executive Director for a foreign missionary society.

In thirty years of activity with a Christian political party, Harvey served in many capacities, from constituency secretary to National Leader. He has represented many evangelical charities before government departments.

He is founder and president of Bible Research International, a degree granting organization promoting Bible training for Christian workers. All of the courses offered are accredited with B.R.I. Which issues the Bachelor of Bible Research degree.

Administrator and consultant to Christian organizations for over 20 years, he has served on many boards (Worldteam, Missionary Internship, Christian Freedom, Bible Ministries International, etc.) and the Board of Governors of Emmanuel Bible College.

Overheard at one of his courses: "I grew up on this kind of teaching; my pastor was Dr. A. W. Tozer!"

END GAME !

The church of the last days.

INTRODUCTION

End game...

The term is well known to chess players.

Opening moves are critical; middle-game is crucial...but a player can be good at both of these and lack the skill to finish off his opponent. He lacks "the killer instinct," say the chess experts. He has no end game.

End game...

NHL hockey teams are notorious for squandering early leads. Leading four goals to one, they lay back in their own zone, waiting for the other team to come to them; eventually and inevitably, their defense breaks down. Before you know it, the score is tied and they can't seem to re-kindle the offensive game that gave them the lead in the first place. The other team's end game decides the contest.

End game...

As this is written, an American league baseball team wanders in the league cellar...and yet they won the World Series the last two years in a row. Everyone knows why they are in last place. The problem is in their bullpen, the relief pitchers who come in when the starting pitcher has tired and their team is ahead. A good relief pitcher is known as a "closer", he can shut down the other team's batters in the last innings and secure the win. These former world champions have no "closers"...no end game.

End game...

An Olympic runner leads the pack as he rounds the turn and heads into "the bell lap", the last time round the track. The next time he turns this bend he will see before him the finish line and the chest high tape that the winner will break. Not far behind him is another runner who is known for his "finishing kick", the ability to increase his speed at the end of the race. As they approach the final turn, the lead runner is tiring. Now is the time for the runner behind him to make his move...and he does, sprinting past the leader to take the prize away from him in the last seconds. His end game is the difference!

Last days...

End times...

The End of the Age...

As You See the Day Approaching

...all these terms are well know to Bible students who are familiar with the prophetic Scriptures. They are aware that special conditions will prevail in the world as we approach the return of Jesus Christ. They know that there are a host of Scriptures directed to the church of the last days; these instructions are not for information purposes only...they are commands. NOT to obey is to sin!

These Scriptures constitute God's manual for the end game strategy of the church, as His servants complete the divine mission of the church upon earth.

There is coming (or now is here) a generation of Christians of whom Jesus said,

*"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall
Not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."
(Matthew 24: 34)*

This generation of Christians will say, in the words of the Apostle Paul, and in a manner that none before them has ever been able to say:

*“...(these) are written for OUR admonition,
Upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
(1 Corinthians 10: 11)*

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It is absolutely critical that this last generation KNOW they are the last generation !

The church of that time MUST be aware that these end time verses are for them !

And they MUST dedicate themselves to obey these verses as no generation of Christians before them ever has.

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The story is told of a yacht captain and his crew who, late in the race, found themselves in the lead. The crew member holding the wheel asked the captain where the next course marker was. The captain replied, “I don’t know; I didn’t study the maps because I didn’t expect to be in first place. I figured we could just follow the other boats.”

Clearly, the captain was negligent in his preparation, and would fail in his quest for the prize. His end game was a disaster. “Following the other boats” is not a strategy for winners; it is a formula for failure.

Following the traditional church patterns will not be good enough in the last days.

I talked with the president of a Bible college recently. We both agreed that we now live in the last days. I said, "I do not know of a single church that has designed its program specifically for the end times, to fulfill the instructions to the church of the last days." He replied that he did not know of any either.

Since that conversation, we have heard of churches that share our concern and are shaping their church program to conform to the prophetic Scriptures.

But most are still more concerned about next Sunday's bulletin than about obeying the prophetic Scriptures; most are more concerned about a good attendance at next month's corn roast than about successfully accomplishing the "end game" of the church.

The men of Issachar in the Old Testament "understood the times in which they lived, and knew what Israel should do".

Church leadership today, as never before, must have both discernment and knowledge: discernment to understand the times in which we live, and knowledge of the prophetic Scriptures to know what the church should do.

There is a personal dimension to this as well; Christian individuals and families must know how to conduct their personal and family affairs as we approach the end.

If it is true that we live in the last days (and this book will convince you of that), and if it is true that this world society is preparing for the final ruler (the antichrist)...then the forces that will bring him to power are now at work in this world. Perceptive Christians will discern those forces and will not cooperate with them. They will protect themselves, their families and their churches against the disastrous consequences of cooperation with those trends that will inevitably lead to the mark of the beast.

What a glorious study is the drama of the ages, from creation to coronation! What a marvelous role the church plays — from martyrdom to missions, from theological discourse to mercy ministries.

And now comes her most glorious hour...the final act of total obedience to her Lord, the crowning witness of truth and miracle power in the midst of the greatest opposition in history. What a time to be called upon to serve our Lord!

End game in the church.

Disastrous to the unprepared.

Glorious to those who understand.

It is to the raising up of “men of Issachar in the last days’ that this study is dedicated.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

CHAPTER ONE
LAYING THE FOUNDATION

For those not familiar with the study of Bible prophecy, we would first of all like to lay a Biblical foundation for the time period that we will be studying in this book.

Let us turn to the book of Daniel for an understanding of the last 7 years of this era before Jesus comes to establish His earthly kingdom. This 7 year period is referred to by prophecy teachers as Daniel's 70th week.

Daniel is wrestling with a perplexing problem; he has a copy of Jeremiah's writing in which the 70 year exile of Israel is predicted...and stated to be exactly 70 years (*Daniel 9:1-3*). However, Daniel has also received prophecies about a series of empires...Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and lastly the antichrist empire. After these empires have "had their day", God will establish His eternal kingdom on earth.

Daniel's lifetime had included the end of the Babylonian empire and the beginning of the Medo-Persian empire. But Jeremiah's 70 years are almost up. How can Greece, Rome and the antichrist empire ever be completed in the very short time left in Jeremiah's 70 years?

Daniel goes to prayer over the matter, and an angel is dispatched to help him understand.

The angel says, in effect, "No, Daniel, not 70 years, but **70 sevens** (or weeks) of years will pass before YOUR prophecies are fulfilled, Israel's return to the land after 70 years of exile (as prophesied by Jeremiah) is NOT the time of the establishing of the eternal kingdom of God."

Daniel records the angel's message in chapter 9. Let's read verses 24 to 27:

24 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. 25 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 three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after three-score 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. 27 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 over spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

(Daniel 9)

It is stated in verse 24 that there are seventy weeks (or seventy sevens) decreed. A time frame has been predestined by the will of God to accomplish the six objectives of *Daniel 9:24* concerning the Israelites and the Holy City (Jerusalem),

The Hebrew word for week (Shabua) means seven. So Daniel is speaking of a time period of seventy sevens or 490 years. We know that one week (or seven) refers to a seven year period, since other Scriptures that speak of this same time period (the 70th week) divide this time period into two halves, each declared to be three and a half years long.

(Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11 :2; Rev. 13:5)

We conclude then that the final seven (or week) is literally a seven year time period and that seventy sevens is a period of 490 years.

As we read in verses 25--27, these seventy weeks or seventy sevens are divided into three main time periods or divisions:

- (1) The first division: 7 sevens or 49 years for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
- (2) The second division: 62 sevens or 434 years covers the time period from the completion of the city at the end of the 49 years to the time Messiah is cut off or crucified for mankind (v. 25 -26).

An indefinite period of time lapses between the 69th and 70th week of years, the period in which we now live (between Calvary and the treaty with Israel that begins the 70th week).

Evidence of this gap between the 69th and 70th week is in the events predicted in verse 26 that happen between Messiah's cutting off and the treaty (such as the destruction of the city and the sanctuary which happened in 70 AD.).

- (3) The third division: one seven or 7 years is the last seven years of this age, ending with the second advent of Christ to complete the fulfillment of the six objectives listed in verse 24 (which have not yet been accomplished.) and to establish His kingdom.

The last "week", this final seven years of the 490 prophetic years, will be a most eventful and difficult time for Israel, as a cruel world ruler (called the antichrist in the New Testament) first grants peace and religious freedom to the Jews, then breaks his agreement and launches the greatest persecution against the people of God in this world's history.

Sixty nine weeks of sevens (483 years) of this time period had passed when Jesus was crucified.

That leaves only "one seven", or 7 years, for these things to be accomplished and for this prophecy to be fulfilled.

Because this prophecy involves the nation of Israel, the temple, and the temple sacrifices, the prophecies could not be fulfilled until Israel became a nation and was in control of Jerusalem. The temple must be rebuilt and the, Jewish sacrificial worship will be reinstated.

With Israel becoming a nation in 1948 and recapturing the city of Jerusalem in 1967, the stage has been set for this last 7 year period of Daniel's prophecy to come to pass.

In subsequent chapters we will see the importance of these two events along with the signs of the times of which the New Testament writers spoke, so that we can be watching and know that the time is near. We will also look at other prophetic Scriptures concerning the church during this seventieth week,

In the next chapters we will show the prophetic events that lead up to the seventieth week. We will tell you why we believe that all of this will happen during this generation.

Let us make one item clear that will help the reader to comprehend Biblical prophecy in an "uncluttered" fashion and we will refer to this in a later chapter as well. For Christians in this late 20th century, this simple lesson is essential as we enter into this study.

NEVER.. .NEVER...in all of Scripture, is this last seven years of Daniel (the 70th week)... EVER called "the tribulation". That is a tag that has been hung on this time period by the church without any Biblical justification.

When the New Testament speaks of a time of persecution, and calls it a "tribulation", modern Christians immediately equate it with the seven year period. That has created so much confusion in the minds of 20th century Christians! In this book, we have chosen to avoid the word "tribulation" in order to avoid the confusion. We will speak of persecution, and the seventieth week or the final seven years of Daniel ...and the two are not identical.

And there is a second item that will help the reader to walk through the Scriptures with us. Although there are a number of events (signs of the times) listed elsewhere in Scripture that lead up to the beginning of this seventieth week, no where is there a reference to the treaty with Israel as a "sign of the times"! This verse in Daniel is the ONLY reference in the entire Bible to this event.

Accordingly, we will not give a greater importance to the signing of the treaty than the Bible does. Why is an event that begins a very important time period in prophecy not mentioned by Jesus, Paul and John?

It is possible that there will be a series of seven year treaties (just as the U.S.S.R. had a series of five year plans), or perhaps the treaty is signed in secret and is not given "11 o'clock news coverage". Whatever the reason, no New Testament writer calls upon the Church of the last days to watch for the signing of the treaty, nor is it used as a TimePost in any prophetic portions of the New Testament Scriptures.

So...let us proceed in the pursuit of our goal.. to understand the times in which we live, and know what the church and Christian families ought to be doing in these last days.

CHAPTER 2
**OF JIG SAW PUZZLES...
AND TIMEPOSTS
ARE WE "THIS GENERATION" ?**

Opening the Bible to study prophecy is like opening a jig saw puzzle box and seeing scrambled pieces in unattached fashion.

Piecing together the events of prophecy in proper order is very similar to assembling the pieces of a jig saw puzzle.

Most jig saw puzzle boxes have a picture on the cover that tells the puzzler what the finished product is supposed to look like. Unfortunately for the prophecy student, there is no cover picture to guide us.

Yet those who are experienced at jig saw puzzles often ignore the cover picture anyway, preferring to "start from scratch",

They sort out the "edge pieces", assembling the straight edged pieces in logical sequence (grass on the lower edge, sky and tree leaves at the top, etc.). Then they sort out pieces that are obviously to be connected; like identical colours, horizontal lines (horizon, sidewalks, etc.), and pieces with part of a word needing more letters of similar size and style to complete the word.

Expert puzzlers then notice the *adjacent* clues; a piece with part of a sidewalk and part of a flower bed containing red roses causes the red rose pieces to be brought to this area adjacent to the sidewalk; likewise, the pieces that complete the roses will give a clue to what is next to the flowerbed,

Without this *adjacent feature*, completing a jig saw puzzle would be most difficult

As we will see in a few moments, prophetic Scriptures also contain these "adjacent features" that are extremely helpful in assembling the complete picture.

God has given us such a delightful task; we are to assemble the pieces of prophecy in such a way that the pieces form a sequence of events. We can then see the "big picture"; we can then identify our location in the plan.

There are no "game rules" printed on a jig-saw puzzle box. It just takes common sense. Let me illustrate.

One Christmas, our family was doing the traditional jig saw puzzle; my grandmother was trying to fit a piece where she thought it ought to go, and it just wouldn't fit. She asked me to fetch a hammer so she could make it fit where it obviously belonged! It was a great source of humour in our family for many years after. Common sense tells us a hammer is not an appropriate tool for a jig saw puzzler.

It is not so humorous, however, when prophecy students do violence to the Scripture in order to produce a system they have predetermined ought to be. Some have invented pieces that are not in the Scripture in order to harmonize their plan of events; others have ignored Scriptures or selected parts of sentences while conveniently omitting the rest; others have declared the pieces that don't fit their plan to be nonliteral. Some exaggerate a piece into such major proportions as to distort the entire picture. And many prophetic teachers twist the Scriptures in order to fit in events from today's newspaper.

We set out to study prophetic Scriptures with an open mind and without forcing verses into a pre set mould. Further, we wanted to arrive at an understanding of prophecy that included ALL the prophetic Scriptures.

ADJACENT PUZZLE PIECES

Let's go back to our illustration of the jig saw puzzle for a moment.

Suppose that a puzzle has in it several tree trunks, each one a different type of tree. There is a tall birch tree with its distinctive bark; there is an oak tree, whose bark would never be confused with birch. And, for the sake of illustration, there is a stately palm tree in the picture as well, also distinct from the other two trees. Now, suppose that you gather those pieces that belong to each tree trunk and assemble each from top to bottom. Many of the pieces will be "edge" pieces that is, part of the piece will be the edge of the tree trunk, and will contain a clue to what is adjacent to the tree like a part of a bright green bush or a segment of a sidewalk slab. This would lead one to look for the pieces that form the rest of the bright green bush, and the rest of the sidewalk. This can be done on both sides of each tree. In this way the vertical columns of the tree trunks become a solid fixture and a reference point for many other features.

Suddenly one finds that the objects to the right of one of the trunks matches the objects to the left of another trunk. Excitedly the puzzler carefully maneuvers blocks of connected pieces into place to find the interlocking of multiple features. He has established the positions of the two trees *relative to each other*, and has filled in the gap between them.

Finally, the puzzler can confirm his accuracy by fitting the picture with the border he has assembled from the straightedge pieces.

Properly assembled sections will fit perfectly with the "outline" of the four borders.

TIMEPOSTS AND THE PROPHECY PUZZLE

NOW SUPPOSE that Jesus, the prophets and the apostles have selected certain events as ONE TIME ONLY events that are unmistakable as reference points...**TimePosts**...tree trunks in the picture that will guide us in assembling the picture and that alert us to our place in the sequence of events.

AND SUPPOSE that each of these TimePosts lists *adjacent events*, before and after. And suppose that, when we have assembled these TimePosts along with the adjacent events, we recognize that these adjacent events interlock with those of another TimePost. Then, with mounting excitement, we discover those portions of Scripture that show major orders of events (like Daniel's kingdoms and Revelation's seals, trumpets and vials), confirm the assembling of blocks of prophecy we have pieced together like the borders of a puzzle confirm the location of items in the puzzle. Suppose there is multiple confirmation from one Scripture portion to another, and that all of the pieces fit! Without a hammer! What a glorious reward this is for those who take the time and spend the energy to labour in prophetic study with the Spirit's help!

This has been our experience...with the discovery of the TimePosts principle.

Repeatable events cannot be TimePosts. For instance, if the Bible had mentioned an earthquake as one of these TimePost events, we would be at a loss to know *which* earthquake; even if the Bible described it as the biggest earthquake ever, we would be asking each other after the biggest earthquake on record occurred, "Is THIS the really big one, or is there another one coming that will be even bigger?"

Such a TimePost would not be helpful; it would actually be confusing. None of the TimePosts we have found are repeated events, nor are they uncertain signs. Each one is distinct, unmistakable, and either a "once in history" event or a "first time ever" event.

TimePost events are identified clearly, and inspired writers often say, "When you see this happen..." and "When this occurs..." In so identifying these events, the Bible is offering a "once only" event AS A SIGNAL to those who watch in the last days.

We invite you to share our excitement...as we identify the TimePosts, catalogue the adjacent events, find them dovetailing and interlocking, with borders confirming. Come with us now to the first TimePost of the end days.

TIMEPOST NUMBER ONE:

THE JEWS TAKE JERUSALEM

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21 :24)

Following Jesus' prediction that Israel would be led away captive into all nations (which has happened), and the occupation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, Jesus identifies the event that will signal the fulfillment (or completion) of the "times of the Gentiles".

Gentiles have controlled Jerusalem ever since Jesus spoke those words...for centuries; He made it clear that WHEN CONTROL OF JERUSALEM RETURNS TO THE JEWS... the era of which He speaks will come to a close. The word "until" makes it clear that the FIRST time Israel controls Jerusalem, this time period is closed. Christians of the centuries, therefore, can keep an eye on Jerusalem, looking for an unmistakable event that is a TimePost in God's prophecy schedule.

In fact, the context allows us to conclude that this condition (Gentile control of Jerusalem) must come to an end so that the rest of the schedule can proceed.

The transfer of the control of Jerusalem back to the Jews becomes, therefore, a signal to all watchers that we are entering the new era in which prophetic events can proceed.

In passing, let us make a brief comment on the phrase "the times of the Gentiles". No where else does this phrase appear in sacred Scripture. We should not try to make it identical to some other phrase. It is enough at this point to acknowledge that Jesus had some time span in mind which He called "the times of the Gentiles"...and it would end when the Jews once again controlled Jerusalem.

In 1967...over 1,900 years later...an Israeli tank commander announced over his military radio to his command post: "Jerusalem is ours! Repeat: Jerusalem is ours !"

There it is...an event that Jesus said would be a signal...a TimePost. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, says Jesus, there is a signal to the church. And what a clear signal that is !

Both *Luke 17* and *Luke 21* contain excerpts from the same prophetic lecture by Jesus (along with *Matthew 24* and *Mark 13*). In *Luke 21 :28*, Jesus states, "when these things BEGIN to come to pass ...your redemption draweth nigh".

He follows that with the statement, as surely as you know summer is coming when the trees begin to bear leaves, so when these things begin to happen, you will know that "the kingdom of God is near -- even at the door".

And, in all three gospels (*Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21 :32*) Jesus then states, "this generation shall not pass" until all things are fulfilled!

What generation?

The event that BEGINS this last days sequence is the Jewish repossession of the city of Jerusalem...an unmistakable event that will not happen until "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". The people alive on the earth at THIS time will not all die until all the end time events that Jesus has listed in this chapter are fulfilled!

Some students of prophecy make a major mistake here, debating how long a generation is whether 20 years till this generation begets another generation, or 40 years, or whatever. This verse says nothing at all about how long a generation is, it says that the generation that sees this event WILL NOT DIE until all the events happen that Jesus has listed in His lecture.

When the Israeli tank commander broadcast those historic, prophetic words, "Jerusalem is ours !", there was an entire generation of human beings alive upon the earth. One of them was born the day before; that person is counted in "this generation". One person was born the day after the retaking of Jerusalem, he doesn't count in the definition of the phrase "this generation".

On the day after Jerusalem was retaken, someone of that generation died. Since 1967 a good many of those people have died. BUT SOME OF THEM WILL STILL BE LIVING when all things are fulfilled !

So this first TimePost signals the BEGINNING OF THE END, and sets the time frame in which all will be fulfilled. Actually, it sets the maximum time in which all will be fulfilled. If all had been fulfilled by the year 1980, this verse would be true (there still being on earth many who were alive in 1967). Likewise, if all is fulfilled by the year 2000, this verse will still be true, and for the same reason. However, if all has not been fulfilled by the year 2,500, then this verse would not be true, for all those alive in 1967 would by then be "long gone".

Now do you see the significance of this first TimePost? Never before in the history of the church has this event happened...but WE have seen it. A clock is now ticking...and before the alarm rings, Jesus will be back!

WE ARE THIS GENERATION!

All the Scriptures directed to the church of the last days belong to US! The prophecy has been given it has been fulfilled... and we understand.

Now let's look at the events that Jesus connected to this TimePost...events that will occur before this generation passes:

- (a) signs in the sun, moon and stars -- *Matthew 24:29;*
Mark 13:24-25; Luke. 21:25-26;
- (b) the Son of man coming in clouds with power
and glory in the sight of all -- *Matthew 24:30;*
Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27-28;
- (c) The rapture of the church *Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27*

Oh my brother, my sister...the Son of Man is coming before the generation that was alive in 1967 passes away! I am part of that generation!

To every Christian who was alive in 1967, and to every person born since and converted to Christ, without hesitation we declare that YOU are born to fulfill the end game of the church! To YOU belongs that host of Scriptures directed to the church of the last days.

Pastor, Christian leader ..upon YOU has come the responsibility to shape the church's program to conform to the end time strategy commanded by Scripture.

Father, Mother, Christian adult...NOW is the time to heed the directives of Scripture and to apply your "sound mind" to the planning of your family and personal affairs.

NOW is the time to be, like the men of Issachar, those who understand the times in which they live, to know what the church should do !

WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

PART I

It is interesting that so many people, upon hearing of our very long study in prophecy, ask only one question: Where do you place the rapture? We almost hate to answer the question, because to give the answer usually ends the conversation. In some cases, that indicates a very shallow interest in prophecy study. This "surface interest" can be most frustrating for those who wish to share what they have discovered.

Further, we know what answer most want to hear: "Pre-trib". Woe betide the prophecy teacher that gives any other answer. He will not be given an opportunity to share prophetic insights in many Christian communities, nor will he be invited to be a featured speaker at prophecy conferences.

So, this study, and this chapter in particular, is directed to those special Christians who are keenly interested in knowing exactly what the Bible teaches, who desire to follow Bible logic, and who have the patience to assemble the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle. This exercise will not be successful without, (a) clear thinking, (b) an open mind, and, (c) a fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

It is not a light study...and we have broken it up into "bite size chunks" to provide the reader with places to pause and meditate, to agree, and then to proceed. This, then, is Part 1 of the chapter, "When Is the Rapture?"

Do the authors of this book despise or look down on those who have a different view? Not if they have evidenced a similar commitment in time and effort as that given to this study, and an equal dedication to the pursuit of truth. We invite all such to join us in a dialogue that will think through to a position that embraces ALL the Scripture.

We invite such Page 21 readers now to

engage in a mind sharpening theological study, exploring Scripture in depth. We think that this will be a friendship creating experience as we pursue the truth together.

In fact, we wish there were more who could engage in such a discussion, whether they agree with us or not. As one District Superintendent said to his denominational convention, "We used to be skilled in prophetic Scripture; now we avoid prophecy because we do not feel competent to engage in such a study, and we are afraid to be embarrassed to be shown to be 'over our heads',"

So...this chapter is for those special Christians willing and able to walk with us through the Scripture.

We are grateful to God for the way in which we have been led through the Book. We humbly declare without hesitation that we have found what we believe is the key to understanding the Biblical timetable, our position in the stream of events, and the exact placement in the sequence where the rapture will occur.

The longer we study and the more Scripture we explore, the more confirmation there is, and the more smoothly do the Scriptures interlock. In other time sequences of prophetic study (as done in past days before this sequence was discovered), continued Bible study raised question after question, with Scripture seeming to disagree with Scripture, jarring our sequence, requiring us to be "inventive", demanding that we add to the Scripture in order to make the pieces fit.

What a great relief it has been to find the "dove-tailing" of prophetic truth from chapter to chapter and from book to book" and what a spiritual experience it is to step back and admire the symmetry and unity of the greatest story ever told...stretching from creation to coronation!

will not be using the word "tribulation" as we explore the sequence of events, since NO WHERE in Scripture is the seven year period that begins with the signing of the treaty with Israel called "the tribulation".

That means the terms "pre-trib", "post-trib" and "mid-trib" are not Biblical terms...even though these terms have definite meanings within the prophetic teaching of many people, in this study, we will not use those terms. We invite the reader to set them aside, to allow clearer thinking and an openness to true Biblical terminology.

Where the word "tribulation" does appear in the Bible, it does NOT refer to Daniel's seven years. So, to avoid confusion, where the Scripture uses the word "tribulation", we will use the word "persecution". We invite the reader to join us in disciplining our vocabulary in keeping with Scripture. When we want to refer to Daniel's seven year period, we will call it exactly that (or "the 70th week" as Daniel also described it).

If the reader will join us in such a disciplined vocabulary, we will be well on our way to a clearer view of the prophetic Scriptures.

In a previous chapter of this prophetic study, we have explained the marvelous concept of "TimePosts" and the manner in which they place the order of events so clearly. Each TimePost has a cluster of events, before and after.

As you follow us in this study, you will recognize these TimePosts.. .and you can watch for them in the rest of our study. We invite you now to walk with us through the Book in a fascinating study, essential to understand the times in which we live.

So...finally, here we go into the Scriptures to look for (and find) the answer to the question: When does the rapture occur?

There are key portions of Scripture that help us to know exactly when the rapture will occur, what sequence of events is involved, and the place of the rapture in that sequence.

(This chapter is continued on the next page.)

WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

PART II

11 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER TWO

First, let us read verses one to three:

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our lord Jesus Christ, and by Our Gathering together unto him, 2 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. 3 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)

It is clear that "our gathering unto Him" (verse 1) refers to the rapture. In fact, Paul is writing to Christians who either believe that the rapture is about to occur, or has already occurred (see various translations of verse 2). In either case, Paul is saying that this is NOT POSSIBLE, since certain events must precede the rapture. He assures them this CANNOT happen until the man of lawlessness IS REVEALED (vs. 3). In other words, the Apostle Paul did NOT teach an "imminent" rapture. There was an essential event that must occur BEFORE the rapture.

What is that event? "...that man of sin will be revealed..." and UNTIL THAT HAPPENS, THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME! The Greek word used for "revealed" means to be unmasked or unveiled...to be positively identified.

When will that
Apostle Paul

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occur? The
provides that

definition for us in the very next verse:

*3 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;
4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above
all that is called God, or that is worshipped;
so that he as God sitteth in the temple of
God, shewing himself that he is God.
(2 Thessalonians 2)*

It is perhaps shocking to some that the positive identification of the antichrist is never taught to be at the time of the instituting of the seven year treaty. All Scriptures that speak of this identification state he will be revealed when the antichrist moves his headquarters to Jerusalem, and raises the abomination in the temple, a sign unmistakable, never to occur prior to that event. This is a TIMEPOST of prophecy. Notice the words "When ye see" in the text:

*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: 15)*

*But when ye shall see the abomination of
desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,
standing where it ought not, (let him that
readeth understand)
(Mark 13:14)*

sus, though speaking verbally to His hearers, is addressing these remarks to the READER, knowing that His words would be written and preserved for that generation that will be alive when this event occurs;

If He is speaking to the CHURCH of the last days, the obviously intended readers of the words of Jesus, then He is saying that the church will be here to see this event. When we come to study these portions, we will indeed find that the description of the rapture FOLLOWS this event.)

To complete the picture, we instantly think of the portions in Daniel, chapters 9, 11 and 12,

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.

(Daniel 9:27)

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

(Daniel 11 :31)

And from tile time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up".

(Daniel 12:11)

Notice the first text clearly states the abomination raised in the temple that identifies (unmasks, unveils) the antichrist occurs "IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK", *not at the beginning*.

The New Testament speakers and writers **NEVER** use the treaty as a TIMEPOST. It is **NEVER** stated, "When you see the treaty signed of which Daniel spoke...". But Jesus and other Scripture writers use the "abomination" event to positively identify the antichrist -- something to happen only once in the last days.

The person who does THIS (abomination)...IS...the antichrist God's people will know beyond a shadow of a doubt who the antichrist is by this event We are GUARANTEED that "watching Christians" will know when the abomination appears in the temple, for it is their sign. It will be a public event. And that event will signal for absolute certain that THIS is the man of sin. Suspicions will be confirmed and will NOT be absolutely confirmed until this event!

And that sign must happen BEFORE our gathering unto Him (the rapture), and that will not happen until the "midst of the week"!

Now look at verses 7 and 8:

*For the mystery of iniquity doth already
work: only he who now letteth will let,
until he be taken out of the way. And then
shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the
Lord shall consume with the spirit of his
mouth, and shall destroy with the
brightness of his coming: (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8)*

The Holy Spirit now holds back this event and other major evil events; there is coming a day when the Holy Spirit is "pulled back" to allow this event to take place in God's sovereign will and timing. This "pulling back" is not to be interpreted as being taken out of the earth, any more than the "backing away" of God's protection around Job signaled God's forsaking of the earth.

So this is a permitting of an event that the Holy Spirit has been hindering, as when Satan was not allowed to afflict Job because of the "hedge" God had put around him, which was then withdrawn to ALLOW Satan to do his evil work, a work, by the way, which ended up accomplishing the purposes of God. So the Spirit will withdraw to allow the evil antichrist to do what is in his heart and ultimately fulfill both the prophecies and the purposes of Almighty God.

This withdrawal is similar to the military strategy of pulling back a section of the front to lure the enemy forward into an ambush, Satan and the antichrist will seize what looks like an opportunity, when it is really God's "end time ambush".... as at Ai (see Joshua 8).

Some have taught that it is the church that is withdrawn, but note the male pronoun ("he") which is NEVER used of the church, the bride of Christ; the Holy Spirit is ALWAYS referred to as "He", Therefore, using this verse to teach the rapture of the church is not consistent with the rest of Scripture, and contradicts what was said in verses 1-3. The rapture CANNOT happen until the antichrist is revealed; and that CANNOT happen until "He" is withdrawn.

OUR CONCLUSION: Our "gathering to Him" (the rapture) CANNOT happen until the antichrist is identified by the abomination in the temple, Daniel says this does not happen until the middle (midst) of the seventieth week.

So we have an order of events; there may be other events that intersperse with these, but they do not change the order of these three events. They are, in order:

- (a) The Spirit terminates his "restraining", which allows the antichrist (who is already in power) to proceed with a part of his program that he has not been able to accomplish up to this point.

- (b) The raising up in the Jerusalem temple of the "abomination that causes desolation", a public event and well understood by watching saints.
- (c) The rapture, our "gathering unto Him",

Let us, then, remember two terms:

"Post restraining": the rapture is AFTER the Restrainer pulls back.

"Post abomination": the rapture is AFTER the abomination.

We now look at another TimePost that explains further the sequence of events that includes the rapture.

(This chapter is continued on the next page.)

WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

PART III

SIGNS IN THE SUN AND MOON

As with the abomination in the temple, this is a "Time Post" event, first described by the prophet Joel (2:30-31):

30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come, (Joel 2)

These events, the darkening of the sun and the moon turning to blood, also public in nature, are unmistakable and occur only once in the last days. The "great and terrible day of the Lord" refers to the "wrath days" when rapid fire judgments fall on the world from heaven. The word "BEFORE" makes it clear that the signs in the sun and moon PRECEDE the wrath of God. And so we have another "before and after" sequence:

- (a) Signs in the sun and moon,
- (b) The great and terrible day of the Lord (God's wrath).

This same TimePost is repeated in Acts 2:

*19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: (Acts 2)*

Joel, the order of the events is the same...and again the word "before" signals an order of occurrence:

(a) Signs in the sun and moon.

(b) The great and notable day of the Lord.

There is an intriguing word study here as Peter changes the adjective describing that day. Peter, quoting Joel on the day of Pentecost, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, changes "the TERRIBLE day of the Lord" to "the NOTABLE (NIV = glorious) day of the Lord". This day is both; it is terrible to the unsaved on earth at the time of the end, for it signals the soon to occur wrath of the Lord. To the church it is glorious, for it signals the rapture as we shall see in the third repetition of this TimePost in Scripture.

Of great interest is the literal Greek word used by Peter. The word "notable" is literally the Greek word "epiphanies" (English: epiphany), which means "to show forth or appear". This is a very significant word (appearance, epiphany) in view of the third repetition of this TimePost...for it **ADDS** to the sequence a third event, the appearance of Christ in the skies, when "every eye shall see Him". Let's look at that third portion of Scripture, starting with Rev. 6: '12, as the sixth seal is opened.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, 10, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 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; 16 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: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6)

Contained in verse 12 is the TimePost we have been studying, the signs in the sun and the moon. These are identical to those described in Joel and Acts. This verse adds another event...a great earthquake that coincides with this phenomenon in the sky. Since it is listed first, let us assume that the three events occur in this order, and probably on the same day: (a) a great earthquake shakes the world, (b) the light from the sun is totally obscured, and (c) the moon becomes blood red.

Now, if this is the exact same event described by Joel and Luke, then there should follow some event that can be described as an epiphany, or an appearing, and the wrath of the Lord upon the earth, Note verse 17 of the portion:

*For the great day of his wrath is come;
and who shall be able to stand?*

So the sequence of (a) the signs, and (b) the wrath holds firm. But this time, BETWEEN these two events is a third.,. which was hinted at in the word "epiphany appearing" in Acts. Note verses 14 to 16 of Revelation 6.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

*15 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; 16 And
said to the mountains and rocks, Fallon us,
and hide us from the face of him that
sitteth on the throne, and from the
wrath of the Lamb:*

(Revelation 6)

Thus, directly following the signs in the sun and moon is the appearance in the skies above the earth of Jesus upon His throne (the Lamb, vs. 16). Since all on earth seek a hiding place from His face and from His wrath, this is the fulfillment of Revelation 1 :7.

*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and
every eye shall see him, and they also
which pierced him: and all kindreds
of the earth shall wail because of
him. Even so, Amen.*

(Revelation 1:7)

This actually constitutes another TimePost, occurring so soon after the signs in the sun and moon as to be "twin TimePosts", signs in the sun and moon and Jesus' appearance in the skies, happening in rapid succession. So we have now added to the events that cluster around this TimePost, and they are listed in this order:

- (a) Earthquake.
- (b) Signs in the sun and moon.
- (c) The appearance of Jesus in the skies for all to see.

- (d) The beginning of the wrath of God, (begins in Revelation 8:1).

This sequence is also confirmed in *Luke 21:25-28*

But we have studied only the first half of the sixth seal. Let us list the other events connected with these twin TimePosts, both to complete our knowledge and to be ready for the confirmation we will find in another Scripture.

The next event is the sealing of the 144,000 (12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel) this protects them from the wrath which is about to come upon the earth. These people are distinct from the church, and not to be confused with the Jewish believers in Jesus Christ who are part of His church. The sealing of the 144,000 is recorded in Revelation 7:1-8.

*1 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.
2 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, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.
4 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.*

5 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. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 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, 8 Of the tribe of Zebulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand, Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand,

(Revelation 7)

The next event John sees as part of the sixth seal (before the 7th seal which starts the wrath of God) is the great multitude in white robes before the throne:

9 After this I beheld, and, 10, 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; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

(Revelation 7)

This multitude is identified in verses 13 and 14:

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great persecution, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

(Revelation 7)

Please remember that this blood-washed, international gathering of humans who worship the Lamb (in other words, the church) are, (1) "before the throne and in front of the Lamb" and (2) have just come out of great persecution. Now, where is that throne on which sits the Lamb? Why, we have just read about that in Revelation 6: 12 to 14: the skies are rolled back like a scroll and the people of the world see in the skies the "face of Him that sitteth upon the throne".

NOW, remember all the verses that speak of the rapture and the many references to our rising to meet the Lord in the air. Our point is that in this sequence the church appears before the throne.

Note also that they have come out of great persecution, not the seven years referred to by Daniel and which others call "the tribulation" but out of a great persecution of the believers. Put all this in your memory bank to be recalled when we study another portion.

Although many Scriptures describe the rapture of the church linked to the appearance (epiphany) of Jesus in the skies, technically this portion does not describe the rapture itself, but the RESULT of the rapture, the church gathered unto Him around the throne.

We know, therefore, that the rapture occurs BEFORE the wrath of God begins (the seventh seal) but this portion by itself does not say when the rapture appears in the sequence we have been discussing.

Nor does this portion state when the persecution (out of which the church has come) occurs in the sequence.

In a sense, we have "two to carry", knowing the rapture is "post-persecution" and "pre-wrath". Other portions will soon help us insert these two events into the list, in complete harmony with that which we have been studying.

NOW, let us make a list of the sequence of events we have discovered in Revelation 6 and 7 clustered around the twin TimePosts of the signs in the sun and moon and the appearance of Jesus in the skies. It will include an event called "the great persecution" since the identification of the church included that but I do not ask you to accept its inclusion in the list until we study the fourth Scripture that describes the signs in the sun and moon.

All we know for sure at this point is that this great persecution PRECEDES the rapture, since the gathering before the throne came OUT OF this great persecution. Because I know what is coming in the fourth scripture in this series, I will list it first.

Here is the sequence:

- (a) The great persecution (exact location to be confirmed later).
- (b) The signs in the sun and moon.
- (c) The appearing of Jesus in the clouds (skies) visible to all on the earth.

- (d) The sealing of the 144,000.
- (e) The raptured church is before the throne secure with Jesus.
- (f) The wrath of God begins (the 7th seal).

We now have two lists, one of three events clustered around the TimePost of the abomination and this list of six events clustered about the twin TimePosts of the signs in the sun and moon and the appearing of Jesus in the skies. We are about to add other events in the sequence and this will connect the two lists.

(This chapter is continued on the next page.)

WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

PART IV

MATTHEW 24

In Matthew 24 Jesus is asked about coming events; let us read this tremendous portion of prophetic truth carefully, noting the sequence of events:

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:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall hew great signs and wonders; insomuch

*that,
ble, they shall*

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if it were possi-

deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the persecution 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; 30 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. 31 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)

The sequence of events begins with the TimePost of the abomination (the time post we identified in an earlier section). It is, once again, a bone fide TimePost, for Jesus says "When ye shall see...". This event is unmistakable for those who are watching. When we studied that TimePost in an earlier chapter, we found a three-event sequence in this order:

(a) The Spirit Page 41 terminates his

"restraining" which allows the antichrist (who is already in power) to proceed with a part of his program he has not been able to accomplish up to this point.

(b) The raising up in the temple of the "abomination that causes desolation", an event that will be widely publicized and will be well understood by believers who know their Bibles.

(c) The rapture, our "gathering unto Him".

As we said earlier, this is an ORDER of events; other events may come between these events but will not change the order. Jesus fills in some more events in the sequence of both Thessalonians and Revelation, and in so doing connects the two lists. We mentally put a star at the second event, the abomination, which is where Jesus begins his list.

Connected IMMEDIATELY to that event (the abomination) is a time of great danger so immediate that people in Judea should not return home to collect their belongings but flee immediately to the mountains. Jesus warns the people in Judea to flee to the mountains because there will be great persecution unequalled from the beginning of the world, never to be equaled again (directed against those who resist the power of the antichrist, both Jew and Christian).

THIS is the great persecution spoken of in Revelation 7. Since there is no greater persecution in history or prophecy, we believe this MUST be "the great" persecution. Therefore we believe that *Matthew 24:21* is a MATCH with *Revelation 7:14*.

We will soon be able to bring the Revelation list into the Thessalonians list...merging the two references to the abomination together, and the two references to the great persecution (Revelation and Matthew).

ture, we will be able to merge all three lists at that event (at least in the events that lead up to the rapture).

Jesus goes on to speak of false Christ's and false prophets performing signs and miracles and wonders. It is important that we not run after them, for when HE comes, He will be clearly seen even as lightning in the east is seen in the west, an obvious reference to His appearing in the clouds at the time of the rapture. Everyone will see Him...as taught in *Revelation 1 :7, Revelation 6:16, Acts 1 :11, etc.*

Please note that this verse does not teach the appearing of the Lord in the skies occurs at this point in the narrative; rather, it is a warning not to follow false Messiahs, for they have not made such an appearance in the skies.

The next item in the sequence as taught by Jesus is the signs in the sun and moon (v. 29) which corresponds with *Revelation 6:12, Joel 2:31 and Acts 2:20*. Now we can merge the three lists up to the TimePost of the signs in the sun and moon:

- (a) The Spirit terminates his "restraining" which allows the antichrist (who is already in power) to proceed with a part of his program he has not been able to accomplish up to this point.
- (b) The raising up in the temple of the "abomination that causes desolation", an event widely publicized and well understood.
- (c) The great persecution.
- (d) False messiahs.
- (e) The signs in the sun and moon.

ans, Acts and Joel are all describing the same sequence of events, and if Jesus is also, then the remainder of Matthew 24 will reinforce the sequence in the remainder of our list, perhaps adding some extra events between the ones we have listed...but NOT changing the sequence!

The remainder of our list is:

- (f) The appearing of Jesus in the clouds (skies) visible to all on earth.
- (g) Sealing of the 144,000
- (h) The raptured church is safe with Jesus.
- (i) The wrath of God begins (the 7th seal).

So, let us continue to study Matthew 24 to discover the events Jesus predicts. The next item in the sequence that Jesus describes is the appearing (epiphany) of Jesus in the clouds of the skies when all shall see Him and mourn, verse 30, again identical to the verses we have just studied from *Revelation 1:7*. So Jesus places these twin TimePosts (signs in the sun and moon and the appearance of Jesus in the skies) close together and in the same order as the other portions we have studied.

The next event described by Jesus is the rapture in verse 31. the gathering of the elect from all corners of the earth...this "gathering" we call the rapture. Remember, this raptured church has just gone through a time of great persecution according to both Revelation and Matthew, and in both places this persecution PRECEDES the rapture.

persecution" rapture is NOT the same as the "post-trib rapture" referred to by other prophecy teachers who call the entire seven years "the tribulation" (when Scripture never does).

We have also just read Jesus' teaching that the duration of the great persecution was shortened "for the elect's sake"; this persecution occurs between the "abomination TimePost" and the rapture; while its length of time is not long, its intensity is greater than ever there was in any persecution of the past.

Notice also that the elect ARE present during this persecution, for it is for their sake that the days are shortened!

There is another argument here that we should not fail to mention. IF this persecution is identical to the seven year tribulation (or the last 3 1/2 years), it CANNOT be shortened for the elects sake without causing Scripture to contradict itself.

There is significance in the mention of the trumpet in *Matthew 24:31*, for it "connects" other verses and reinforces the harmony in the Scripture with the sequence of events we are discovering. Let's first read the verse again:

*31 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)

The Scriptures help us to confirm the exact timing of the rapture (the return of Christ as far as the skies, not to the earth itself), differentiating it from the return of Christ to the earth by the repeated reference to the trumpet in connection with the rapture.

trumpet and the rapture in Scripture (noting that the sound of a trumpet is not mentioned in those portions that describe the return of Christ to the surface of the earth with the armies of heaven).

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,** and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
(1 Corinthians 15:52)*

15 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. 16 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:
(1 Thessalonians 4)*

*NIV = "according to the Lord's own words"

Note that Paul uses the phrase "according to the Lord's own words" (NIV) and "by the word of the Lord" (KJV); this must refer to *Matthew 24* where Jesus Himself refers to the trumpet sound.

(For the description of Jesus' return to the earth with the saints and the armies of heaven, a later event; see *Zechariah 14:4*, *Revelation 19:11-21*. At this time His feet touch the Mount of Olives, the mountain divides, the battle of Armageddon concludes, etc. You will note that there is no reference to a trumpet sound during this event and no reference to "every eye seeing Him".)

Let us review the full and obvious sequence of the events of this time period:

- (a) The Spirit terminates his "restraining" which allows the antichrist (who is already in power) to proceed with a part of his program he has not been able to accomplish up to this point.
- (b) The antichrist is "revealed" by the setting up of the abomination that causes desolation" in the temple.
- (c) The false prophets deceive many.
- (d) The great persecution of those who resist the antichrist's rule.
- (e) Earthquake, Signs in the sun and moon.
- (f) The appearing of Jesus in the clouds (skies).
- (g) People of earth hide in fear, every eye sees Him.
- (h) The rapture of the church.
- (i) The sealing of the 144,000.
- (j) The raptured church is secure, gathered around the throne.
- (k) The wrath of God begins.

By knowing what events precede the rapture and by knowing the event that follows the rapture, we have pinpointed the exact placing of the rapture in the sequence of events.

Next, we want to *firmly* establish the "PRE-WRATH" rapture, which contradicts the teaching that the rapture occurs at the end of the seven years (which is called "post-trib"). This "post-trib" teaching would place the rapture at the END of the series of 21 events in Revelation (*after* the 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 vials).

(This chapter is continued on the next page.)

CHAPTER THREE
WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

PART V

THE RAPTURE IS "PRE-WRATH"

We are satisfied that the rapture FOLLOWS the signing of the treaty, the revealing of the antichrist by setting up the abomination, the great persecution directed against those who resist the rule of the antichrist, signs in the sun, moon and stars and the appearing of Jesus in the clouds.

We now want to draw attention to the fact that the rapture occurs BEFORE the wrath of God descends on the earth.

There is a divine pattern established which we call "pre-wrath"; first the righteous are removed from danger and **immediately** the wrath descends on the unrighteous. Let us begin with *Luke 17:26-30*

26 And as It was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, UNTIL THE DAY that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But THE SAME DAY that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. (Luke 17)

Note the words "UNTIL THE DAY" in verse 27 (referring to Noah's flood) and the words "THE SAME DAY" in verse 29. As soon as Lot and his daughters were out of the city and safe, that very day the judgment fell.

NOW notice what Jesus said in His commentary on this review of Old Testament history: "Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed"! The removal of the church clears the way for the judgment to fall...immediately.

Note also *Genesis 7:11-13*:

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, THE SAME DAY were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 IN THE SELFSAME DAY entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; (Genesis 7)

Notice in the above portion that the rain began ON THE SELFSAME DAY that Noah and his family entered the ark. Indeed, once the people of God are safe there is no need to delay.

The deliverance of the righteous immediately before the wrath is an evidence of the hand of God in the situation, a witness to all. The unrighteous could see the open door of the ark for many years. Then, on the SAME DAY they saw the door shut, the rain began to fall.

The *combination* of those two events on the same day brought one obvious conclusion, the hand of God was involved in the order of events, it is too much to be a coincidence.

This "pre-wrath deliverance" pattern is used by Peter to emphasize the deliverance of the saints from the coming wrath:

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 THE LORD KNOWETH HOW TO DELIVER THE GODLY out of temptations, AND TO RESERVE THE UNJUST UNTO THE DAY OF JUDGMENT to be punished:
(2 Peter 2)

It is this same perspective that Paul describes in I Thessalonians 5:9-10:

9 For God hath NOT appointed US to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

(1 Thessalonians 5)

Verse 10 is an obvious reference to the rapture which Paul has been describing in 4:13 to 5:8, and this escape occurs when it does because "God hath NOT appointed US to wrath", Notice also I Thessalonians 1: 10:

*And to wait for his Son from heaven,
whom he raised from the dead, even
Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath
to come.*

(1 Thessalonians 1 :10)

First comes the appearance (epiphany) of Jesus in the sky, then the deliverance of the church, then the wrath of God. The rapture is PRE-wrath!

Revelation 14 repeats the sequence of events we saw in chapter 6. The sequence of events remains the same, beginning with the appearance of Jesus in the skies.

*And I looked, and behold a white
cloud, and upon the cloud one sat
like unto the Son of man, having
on his head a golden crown, and in
his hand a sharp sickle.*

(Revelation 14:14)

Verses 15 and 16 describe (we believe) the rapture of the church (the first harvest):

*15 And another angel came out of the
temple, crying with a loud voice to him
that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle,
and reap: for the time is come for thee
to reap; for the harvest of the earth is
ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud
thrust in his sickle on the earth; and
the earth was reaped.*

(Revelation 14)

And, verses 17 to 20 describe the wrath of God under the picture of the second harvest which ends up in the wine press of the wrath of God.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

(Revelation 14)

This last phrase is a reference to the battle of Armageddon, thus placing this second harvest, called "the wrath of God" after the rapture (at the close of the seven year period).

Now notice that in *Revelation 15*, which begins the description of the third set of seven events which completes the wrath of God (vs. 1), there is portrayed the raptured ones safely in heaven as the wrath is poured out upon the earth:

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

*2 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.
(Revelation 15)*

Notice that those gathered in heaven, safely protected from this outpouring of the wrath of God, are those who have TRIUMPHED OVER THE BEAST, his image, and his mark. This scene re-confirms the similar scene described in *Revelation 7:9-17* (those who have come out of great persecution and are present in heaven before the seven trumpets begin, which is the beginning of the wrath of God). In other words, the raptured church is STILL safe and secure.

This group (*Revelation 15:2*), described as being victorious over the beast, his image and the number of his name is the same group in Revelation chapter 7 which has come out of great persecution, and whom we identified earlier as the raptured church. We also showed from *Matthew 24*, that this great persecution comes immediately after the antichrist is positively identified through the abomination in the temple, immediately launching his attack upon the church. Therefore, the group in *Revelation 7 and 15* is the same group (the church) described in *Matthew 24: 15-21*, where is described the great persecution of the saints.

Once again we have confirmation that the rapture occurs AFTER the reign of the antichrist begins (thus not "pre-trib" or before the treaty beginning the seven year period), and BEFORE the wrath of God is poured out (thus not "post-trib").

It is unmistakable then, that the rapture is PRE-WRATH.

There is yet one more confirmation on the timing of the rapture...a seldom referred to Scripture that defines the first resurrection.

(This chapter is continued on the next page,)

PART VI

THE FIRST RESURRECTION & THE ROADBLOCKS

First, let's read the following Scripture (*Revelation 20:4-6*) paying special attention to verse 4:

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. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

(Revelation 20)

The _____ group that is described in these verses have triumphed over the antichrist's rule; this is clearly a reference to the great _____ persecution (they were beheaded by the antichrist).

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These people WILL BE PART OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION which occurs almost simultaneously with the rapture (*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17*) the dead in Christ shall rise

first and those saints alive at the time are raptured). If the church did NOT go through the first part of the reign of the antichrist, it could NOT be said of them that they had not worshipped the beast or his image or received his mark.

We have seen, over and over, the clear declaration of Scripture that the church *does* suffer persecution, and that this happens *after* the abomination is raised in the temple, and that the church is credited with resisting the reign of the antichrist, even listing details of that resistance (did not worship, did not accept the mark, etc.).

Then we have the clear statement of Scripture that these people who did resist the rule of the antichrist, who are gathered around the throne, were all part of the FIRST resurrection...by definition, the rapture!

The first resurrection INCLUDES those who have lived through the persecution of the church by the antichrist; therefore, the rapture cannot happen UNTIL the persecution by the antichrist has occurred.

Finally, we must state what has become obvious to us: there are a number of roadblocks in the way should we ever attempt to become "pre-trib", like so many evangelical leaders of our day (that is, to place the rapture before the beginning of the seven year treaty). Other roadblocks bar the way should we ever attempt to become "post-trib". Having taken the position we have (which we call "pre-wrath"), we are now hemmed in by Scripture (*THAT'S WHERE WE WANT TO BE I*), and movement forward or backward in time is blocked.

Here are the roadblocks.

There are three Page 57 in Matthew 24.

First, the words "immediately after the persecution of those days" (vs. 29) emphasizes that Jesus is describing a sequence of events as they happen. The second roadblock is the phrase "and then" in verse 30, and the third is the word "and" in verse 31. All of these clearly teach that a SEQUENCE OF EVENTS is being taught, disallowing any attempt to "scramble" the events to fit some other pattern.

The word "immediately" is important in realizing that this sequence of events is in rapid succession. We see a rapid fulfillment of each of these items, all packaged in the middle of the seven year period (events that occur AFTER the "abomination" and BEFORE the wrath of God begins). We believe the rapture takes place at the same time as Jesus' appearance in the skies.

There is no delay inferred in Scriptures that connect the Lord's return to the skies and the rapture of the church. For instance:

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*

Further, we know of no reputable prophecy scholar who separates (time-wise) the appearance of Jesus in the skies and the rapture; to identify the time of the one is to identify the time of the other.

ous meaning of these words in context will make it most difficult (we think impossible) to transport one item in the sequence from its listing to another location. Since the same sequence appears in Revelation, the Bible student determined to produce a "pre-trib rapture" is now obligated to show how that "desequencing" can be done without doing violence to the Scripture.

In other words, to defend the sequence of events contained in this study, we have only to quote Scripture; *Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17, Luke 21, II Thessalonians, Revelation*, etc.

We ACCEPT the literal, Biblical statement without change and without inventing additional prophetic items not found in Scripture (such as multiple resurrections totaling the rapture, etc.).

Those who have produced another sequence must explain their authority for changing the sequence. Simply *reading* Scripture and saying, "Here's what I believe" is a stronger argument than being forced to *explain* and *explain*. What a relief we have found in being able to simply *quote the text!*

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION at this point should be given to an ancient document of the early church, called The Didache. This church manual, dated between 50 and 100 AD, is considered to be written by those who knew the apostles.

After we completed the writing of this book, The Didache was brought to our attention because of the prophetic order of events that it contains identical to the order listed in this chapter: (a) false prophets and deceivers, (b) appearance of the last world ruler, (c) the abomination, the "fiery test" of believers, (d) the signs in the heavens, (e) the sound of a trumpet, (f) the resurrection of the saints, (g) the Lord returns with His saints

It appears the authors of The Didache did NOT believe in an imminent rapture (pre-trib.) but expected: (1) the antichrist to begin his reign (2) great persecution (3) the abomination and (4) signs in the sky all to precede the rapture.

(The conclusion of this chapter begins on the next page.)

PART VII

CONCLUSION TO THIS CHAPTER

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this study for those who live in the last days. If the reader is part of that generation which Jesus predicted would not pass away before all things are fulfilled (see chapter on TimePosts) and if we are to live perceptively and wisely in these times and if the church is to minister in special ways in these days...then understanding this chapter becomes enormously important

The application of this truth, the "bottom line", can be found in the last chapter of this book. The authors are in awe of what is coming and how we, (a) are to prepare for it and (b) fit into God's program.

Where is the church leadership who like the men of Issachar, understand the days in which they live, to know what (the church) should do? Where are the end time saints who, like Elijah and the 7000, will not bow the knee to Baal (or to the beast and his image) ?

Are you ready to make the commitment required to be followers of Jesus in the last days? Are you (and your congregation) ready for the END GAME of church history?

What tremendous times in which we live! What great responsibilities have fallen upon us ! What wisdom and carefulness needs to be exercised in these days!

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS-
LEADING UP TO THE RAPTURE

The jig saw is coming together nicely!

We have already explored the principle of the TimePosts and the placing of the rapture. So many pieces of the puzzle have fit together neatly and without using a theological hammer! But as one looks at the picture we have assembled so far, there are "holes", indicating that there are more pieces to be added to the parts we have put together.

In fact, there are a number of events that now can be placed "into context". In previous chapters we have concentrated only on those events that help us establish the TimePosts and locate the rapture.

It is time to add these other events.

First, we have assembled a harmony of the prophetic lesson that Jesus gave to the disciples, as recorded in *Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17 and Luke 21*. You will find this in Appendix A at the end of this book.

Be sure to spend some time with Appendix A; those who previewed this book expressed appreciation for this study aid.

Note the marvelous way in which the passages follow a uniform order of events, even the few verses we have included from the book of Revelation are in sequence as we follow the events.

The appendix confirms the "TimePost" study, confirms the timing of the rapture and adds other events in order. The chart at the end of this chapter merges the lists together.

In this chapter, however, we wish to put special emphasis on that series of events that occurs just prior to the rapture ...for it is *this* time period for which we are called by Scripture to prepare.

It is *this* time period that is best described as the "END GAME" for the church. It is for *this* ministry that we must be preparing ourselves and our church people.

Let's remember that the prophetic puzzle we are putting together here is Daniel's 70th week, the last 7 years of this age before Jesus returns to defeat the antichrist with His armies at the battle of Armageddon and set up His millennial kingdom.

To fill in the holes in our puzzle we are going to start at the beginning of the 70th week and record systematically the events in order as they occur during this last 7 year period.

We will use the pieces that are already in place by the study of the TimePosts in the previous chapter. We will logically and scripturally fill in the holes in relation to the TimePosts already established.

To get our prophetic picture focused properly, let's back up a little bit to our first TimePost which is the event and the sign that *we are this generation* spoken of by Jesus.

The first TimePost was the Jews taking over Jerusalem which happened in 1967. This event must happen before the peace treaty can be signed which starts Daniel's 70th week. During this time period we also have the beginning of sorrows spoken of by Jesus (*Matthew 24:6-8*). At the time of this writing, Israel is in the process of peace talks in the Middle East with Syria and other Arab nations and has already completed agreements with the Palestinians, Egypt and Jordan. These peace talks could well lead up to the major 7 year peace treaty with the antichrist which will begin the 70th week (*Daniel 9:27*).

The next major piece of the puzzle (or our second TimePost) that we have to work with is the antichrist's revealing himself when he sets up the abomination that causes desolation in a wing of the temple (*Daniel 9:27*). This happens in the middle of the 70th week or 3 1/2 years after the peace treaty.

Because this will happen in a wing of the temple, we conclude that there must be a rebuilt temple where sacrifices are being offered sometime during the first 3 1/2 years of the treaty.

Knowing the situation in the Middle East, we assume the temple will be built after the treaty is made and will probably be one of the conditions of the treaty. To build one beforehand could well cause a war to break out or hamper the peace process. Also in this first 3 1/2 years before the abomination that causes desolation is set up we know from scripture (*Daniel 11:29-32; Daniel 11:40-45*) that this world ruler (the antichrist) will be fighting wars with Egypt (King of the South) and establishing his world rule over many nations before he turns against Israel.

The next event in our sequence that happens in this first 3 1/2 year period takes place in the spiritual realm. Before God deals with mankind on the earth, He first deals with Satan in the heavenly realm, *Revelation 12:7-9* tells us that there is war in heaven and Satan (the dragon) and his angels are cast down to the earth.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

(Revelation 12)

These scriptures are not referring to the original battle in heaven between Lucifer and the other angels when he wanted to overthrow God's throne. He is here referred to as Satan, the dragon, the devil, who leads the whole world astray. He is also referred to as the accuser of our brothers (in verse 10) a term which could not describe Lucifer in heaven before his expulsion from the throne room prior to the tempting of Eve in the garden of Eden.

We also know that this battle is just before the first 3 1/2 years of the treaty have expired because it states that he knows his time is short, he pursues the woman (nation of Israel) that gave birth to the male child (Jesus) and she is protected by God for 3 1/2 years (*Revelation 12:12-16*).

This coincides with the unmasking or revealing of the antichrist when he sets up the abomination in the temple and attacks the nation of Israel until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (*Daniel 9:27*), This time period from the abomination until the end is also 3 1/2 years (*Daniel 12:11*) which completes Daniel's 70th week. The very next chapter in Revelation (chapter 13) describes the appearing of the beast (antichrist) and his 3 1/2 year reign of terror, so the battle must take place before the first 3 1/2 years have expired.

It is this event, (war in heaven) that happens behind the scenes so to speak, initiated by God's sovereign will, that commences on the earth a short period of intense struggle for the souls of mankind. It is this short time period just before the rapture for which we are called by scripture to prepare.

Another very interesting event that transpires at this time (before our TimePost of the abomination) helps us to see the picture more clearly -- the appearance in Jerusalem of God's two witnesses (*Revelation 11:3*).

Scripture tells us they will prophesy and have great power to shut up the sky, turn the waters into blood, and strike the earth with every kind of plague for 3 1/2 years similar to the power Moses had at the time of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. We place the appearance of the two witnesses before the abomination because *Revelation 11:11-14* describes them being caught up to heaven just before the 7th trumpet is sounded. The seven trumpets and seven vials being poured out are God's judgment and wrath. These occur in succession DURING the last 3 1/2 years before the battle of Armageddon which ends the 70th week.

Since they are caught up to heaven before the second 3 1/2 year period is over and they have been prophesying for 3 1/2 years already, then we conclude that they must appear on the scene to begin their ministry before the second 3 1/2 year period starts or before the abomination is set up and the antichrist is revealed.

Let us now focus in on what is starting to happen. There is a war in the heavenly realm and Satan and his angels are cast down to the earth. The Bible says he knows his time is short and he is furious! Saints, there will then be a flood of demonic power resident on this earth such as has never been experienced before. This coincides with and is confirmed by what Jesus said in *Matthew 24:15-22*. Jesus is speaking here of a great persecution unequaled from the beginning of the world, at the time the abomination is set up.

In *Matthew 24:22* Jesus goes on to state this time period of persecution is so intense that God has chosen to shorten it for the sake of the elect (the Christians) or none would survive. (We believe that "the elect" refers to the Church since at this time Israel is being protected from the antichrist and the antichrist turns his attention to "those who hold to the testimony of Jesus". See *Revelation 12:13-17*)

Also because of this flood of demonic power unleashed on the earth, false christs and false prophets will appear (controlled by demonic power) performing great signs and miracles or lying signs and wonders to deceive even the elect (if that was possible). See *Matthew 24:23-24*.

The Apostle Paul describes this time period to Timothy as a time when people will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons (*1 Timothy 4:1*).

Remember saints, according to Scripture and our previous chapter on TimePosts and sequence of events, the rapture has not yet happened, but a flood of demonic power has been unleashed on the earth.

Isaiah 59:19 states that when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him. To counteract this flood of demonic power God has sent His two witnesses with great power.

This is also the Church's greatest hour, for this is the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh spoken of by Joel, and by Peter in the Book of Acts. This mighty demonstration of God's power and love, through the Church, will bring in the final harvest of souls on the earth before our Lord returns to deliver us from the wrath of God, which is about to be released on the earth. This confrontation between the forces of good and evil for the deliverance of God's people will be similar to the days of Moses and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, when Moses and Aaron waged a spiritual warfare of miracles and counter miracles with Pharaoh's sorcerers.

In a later appendix section we will show the scriptural basis for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end times. We will now continue to further establish this timing of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. To do this we must go ahead to our next major TimePosts previously established. The next TimePost that was established in our previous chapter is the sign of the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood. This was spoken of by Joel, by Peter in Acts, by Jesus in *Matthew 24*, and by John when describing the 6th seal in *Revelation 6:12-17*. Right after this event there is another TimePost described, the event of Jesus appearing in the skies when every eye sees Him.

This occurs immediately before the rapture of the Church and the resurrection of the Christian dead. These two TimePosts are so close together we have referred to them as twin TimePosts.

In our previous chapter we have shown that these twin TimePosts and the rapture occur after the TimePost of the abomination (which is followed immediately by the great persecution). Joel and Peter tell us there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the signs in the sun and moon and before the appearance of Jesus in the skies.

We believe the Holy Spirit is already being poured out in the earth in a measure, for indeed He was poured out on the day of Pentecost. Even today we see thousands of souls coming to Christ in the former Soviet Union and third world countries. But this outpouring which the Bible refers to as the latter rain will be greatly intensified to raise up a standard against the flood of demonic power which is unleashed on the earth when Satan is cast down. Scripture tells us this intense outpouring is before the sign in the sun, moon and stars and the appearance of Jesus in the skies. Now we will show that it starts when Satan is cast down.

Let's look again at *Revelation 12:7-11*:

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him, 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death,
(*Revelation 12*)

There is war and Satan is hurled down (verse 9), John goes on to state *then* I heard a voice in heaven say *now* have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God *and* the *authority* of His Christ *because* Satan has been hurled down, Then He says they (our brothers) overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, He also says they (the brothers) did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (A reference to the great persecution by the antichrist that occurs simultaneously with this great witness).

Then another warning to earth because the devil is cast down, because he knows his time is short and because he is furious. It would seem here that once the heavenly realms are cleansed of demonic activity by the defeat and casting down of Satan, the fullness of God's power and kingdom can flow freely to the Church. Paul stated in Ephesians that our battle is against the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, (*Ephesians 6:12*)

Daniel also tells us about the resistance of spiritual forces in the heavenly realms when the angel that was sent to answer Daniel's prayer revealed he had been detained by spiritual powers for 21 days (*Daniel 10:12-14*).

When the apostles came back to Jesus after He had sent them out, they were excited, like little children, claiming even the demons were subject unto them in His name. Jesus' reply was;

"I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy."

Are you starting to see the picture, saints? Not only is there a flood of demonic power unleashed on the surface of the earth, but also a flood (a pouring out) of God's power (latter rain) on the two witnesses and the Church. The forces of heaven *and* hell will be released on this earth in flood proportions at the same time, with the anointing of God on the Church at the time of false prophets and false christs with lying signs and wonders. At stake will be the souls of mankind for eternity. It will be black and white, with no grey areas. Those who seek truth will call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. Those who refuse to love the truth will be deceived and perish. (*2 Thessalonians 2:9-12*).

The war in heaven, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the two witnesses have all started during the first 3 1/2 years of the 70th week, before the antichrist is revealed by setting up the abomination in a wing of the temple.

Satan has just lost a major battle in the heavenly realms, he and his angels have been cast to the earth, he knows his time is short, he is furious, so he attacks God's chosen people, the nation of Israel. They flee and are protected by God for the last 3 1/2 years. He then turns his fury and anger on the Church, those who hold to the testimony of Jesus (*Revelation 12:7-17*). That's you and I, Christian!

Let us now read *Daniel 11:40-45* to see what is happening to the world ruler

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away (NIV = annihilate) many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Daniel 11

This ruler wants the whole world under his control, his power has corrupted him and pride has developed in his heart. He now desires to have the kingdoms of this world that Satan offered to Jesus Christ in the wilderness.

Christ refused Satan, but this man, the antichrist, will not. He will bow his knee to Satan and become the king Satan will use in *his* end game.

At this time satan is trying to control the world through the political, economical and financial support of those who desire a one world government (key leaders in North America, European Community, Japan, etc.) This is all being done under the auspices of world peace and global community "for the betterment of mankind."

We also foresee a resistance to this, however, from the Moslems and Communists, who have their own agenda of world control. The nations that desire a one world government are pawns of Satan and are in position for him to maneuver for *his* end game strategies.

At approximately the same time, Satan is cast down and filled with fury (just before the abomination is set up). Daniel tells us this world ruler is in a great rage and has set out to destroy and annihilate many. (*Daniel 11:40-45 NIV*).

It is now time for this world ruler to be revealed or unmasked as the lawless one, the antichrist. His armies will enter Israel, he will set up his headquarters at Jerusalem and he will set up "the abomination that causes desolation". He will receive power from Satan to accomplish Satan's agenda.

Let us remember that this event (setting up the abomination in the temple) is the one and only unmistakable evidence that this man IS the antichrist. In the past, prophecy students have identified various powerful men as the antichrist (Mussolini, Hitler, the Pope, to name a few). There will always be speculation and various candidates "will be nominated" by Christians from now to the end. One of them WILL be the antichrist and we will know FOR SURE when he raises the abomination in the temple.

Let us read *Revelation 13:1-10* to see the events that transpire at this time.

1 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. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the

Dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" 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. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 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. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

(Revelation 13)

Notice that it is the dragon (Satan) that gives the beast (antichrist) his power, his throne and his great authority; the people worship Satan and the antichrist because of it. It also states in verse 7 that the antichrist was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. Let's remember, the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the Church and the two witnesses are in Jerusalem with great power from God for miracles and prophesying. What are they prophesying?

Revelation 19:20 tells us that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. They, along with the Church, will be warning the earth about the coming of Jesus. Their message will be confirmed by great signs and wonders; no one will have an excuse before God to worship the devil and the antichrist.

Christians are a direct threat to Satan and the antichrist and therefore will be persecuted at this time; some will even be put to death. This fact may be hard for our North American minds to grasp, but persecution is already a reality in many nations of the world today. This will be the time period of the greatest persecution the earth has ever seen, as described by Jesus. (*Matthew 24: 15-26*).

Jesus also refers to this time period in a more general sense in *Matthew 24:9-14* (see appendix of gospel parallels). Jesus states this time period of persecution will be so great that many professing Christians will turn away from the faith and even betray each other (probably to the governing officials who are seeking out the Christians to persecute them).

We can now understand why God has not raptured the Church. This intense end times ministry is not a job for baby Christians who could easily be deceived or who will not have the faith to stand for Jesus.

No, this is the time for Elijah (one of the two witnesses) and those courageous and mature Christians in whom is the spirit of "the 7000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal" to engage the forces of evil in this, *the church's finest hour*.

This is all in keeping with the character of God and with the history of the Church. Christians have *always* been expected to die for their faith, to give a strong witness concerning the coming of Jesus...not to be raptured *out of* difficult circumstances.

Revelation 20:4-6 tells us what is in store for these courageous saints who are killed because of their testimony for Jesus and their resistance to the antichrist. They will come to life at the first resurrection (*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17* the dead in Christ shall rise first). This happens just before the rapture and they will reign with Christ for 1000 years during the millennium after the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God. This again is a clear Biblical statement that the rapture occurs after this time of great persecution during the reign of the antichrist.

The antichrist is not acting alone in his reign of terror; at this time. He is joined by the false prophet. Please read *Revelation 13:11-18*. Because he is described as having two horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon, we assume he is a religious leader sold out to Satan. This is why the Bible refers to him as the false prophet (*Revelation 19:20*).

He also is given great demonic power and authority to kill anyone who does not worship the beast (the antichrist) or receive his mark.

During this time period of great persecution, the 5th seal has been opened by Jesus (*Revelation 6:9-11*).

The souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and their testimony refers to the past martyrs who have died for their faith. They ask the Lord how long it will be before He avenges their blood and judges the inhabitants of the earth. This is in reference to God's judgment and wrath that will be poured out on the earth (which happens when the 7th seal is opened). They are told to wait until the number of saints that are yet to be martyred, as they were, is completed. This will happen during this time of persecution by the antichrist and the false prophet.

(The first four seals have already been opened and their events, peace being taken from the earth, great inflation, and death by sword, famine, plague and beasts of the field coincide with the beginning of birth pains spoken of by Jesus in *Matthew 24:4-8*. These things continue on from the beginning of sorrows on into Daniel's 70th week.)

Now we come to the opening of the 6th seal (*Revelation 6:12-17*).

We have discussed the events of the 6th seal at length in a previous chapter on TimePosts so it will suffice to only list them here. The 6th seal is opened and we have a great earthquake.

Then we have our next TimePost, the sun being darkened and the moon turning blood red, spoken of by Joel, by Peter in Acts, and by Jesus in Matthew 24. Then the stars in the sky fall.

At the time of the writing of this book we were able to witness the planet Jupiter being struck by a number of meteors. One piece was described as being 6 miles across and traveling at the speed of 120,000 miles per hour. It was stated that if a meteor only 3 miles across landed in the Gulf of Mexico at that speed it would cause a wave 3 miles high. It was estimated when that wave hit shore it would still be 1500 feet high and totally flood 2 or 3 states.

Jesus, talking about this TimePost in *Luke 21:25-28*, states that on the earth nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and the tossing of the sea. Men will faint in terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world. After this event there is an appearance of Jesus in the skies when every eye will see Him. It is at this time that the 144,000 Jews are sealed to protect them from the wrath of God which is about to come on the earth (*Revelation 7:1-8*).

This happens during the 6th seal after the persecution of the saints (the 5th seal). No Scripture says the 144,000 are preaching the gospel. At this point the Church is raptured, (the door to the ark is closed and there are no more salvations). There is no need to preach the gospel of the kingdom any more.

The living church is safely raptured, the dead in Christ have risen and the 144,000 have been sealed. It is now time to open the 7th seal which begins the wrath of God (the seven trumpets and the seven vials), *Revelation 8:1-11; 19*. The 7th seal is opened, there is silence in heaven for half an hour, and the first 6 trumpets are sounded in order with the accompanying judgments brought on the earth. During these judgments there is no repentance by the people left on the earth (*Revelation 9:20-21*).

Just before the 7th trumpet is sounded (*Revelation 7:10* and onward) the two witnesses are caught up to heaven (*Revelation 11:7-13*). Then the 7th trumpet is sounded (*Revelation 11:13-19*) and the seven last plagues are about to start.

Chapters 12 to 14 of Revelation are information chapters and so to follow our sequence of events we go from chapter 11 and the 7th trumpet to chapters 15 and 16 where the 7 vials or plagues are recorded.

Before the plagues are released on the earth, John is shown the raptured Church (those who had been victorious over the antichrist) is at this time already safely in heaven (*Revelation 15:1-4*). The seven last plagues are then poured out as recorded in Revelation 15 and 16. The next event that takes place is the marriage supper of the lamb (*Revelation 19:1-9*). (Revelation chapters 17 and 18 are also informational chapters).

We now come to the last event to take place in Daniel's 70th week, the battle of Armageddon.

Jesus comes down to the earth with the armies of heaven; the antichrist and the false prophet are captured and thrown into the Lake of Fire and the armies of the nations that are gathered around Jerusalem are conquered (*Revelation 19:11-21*).

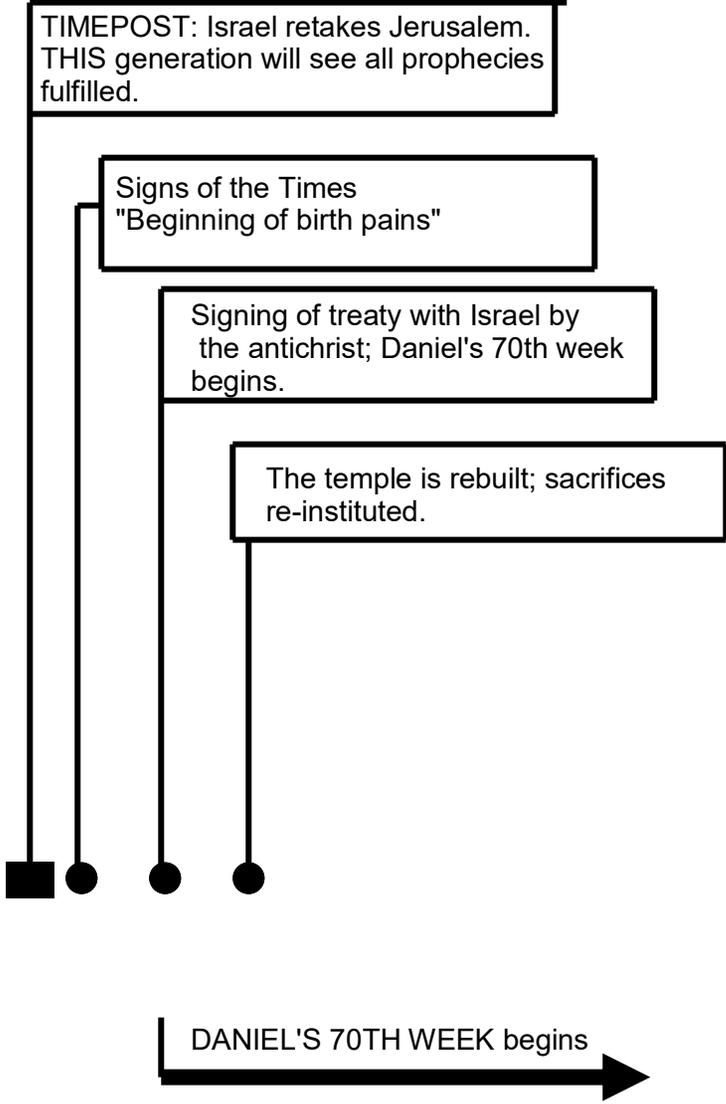
Daniel's image of the empires has been struck upon the feet, and is crushed to powder to be replaced by the "boulder kingdom" that grows into a mountain that fills the whole earth (Daniel 2). His kingdom has come! His will shall be done upon the earth as it is in heaven!

This ends Daniel's 70th week. Jesus now sets up His millennial kingdom and stays to rule this earth in righteousness for 1000 years. The saints reign with Him during this time (*Revelation 20:1-6*).

We have followed various sequences of events, from Daniel, from the gospels, from Thessalonians, from Revelation, etc. As we have noted, NONE of these lists changes the order of any events found in other lists; new details and events are introduced, but the sequence of events is never changed.

SO...before we come to the very important concluding section of this book, let us gather together all the events we have discussed and place them in order.

Every prophecy teacher has a chart, and we have been asked to prepare one as well. (See next pages.)



Michael and his angels invade the sky region; Satan & demons cast down into the earth.

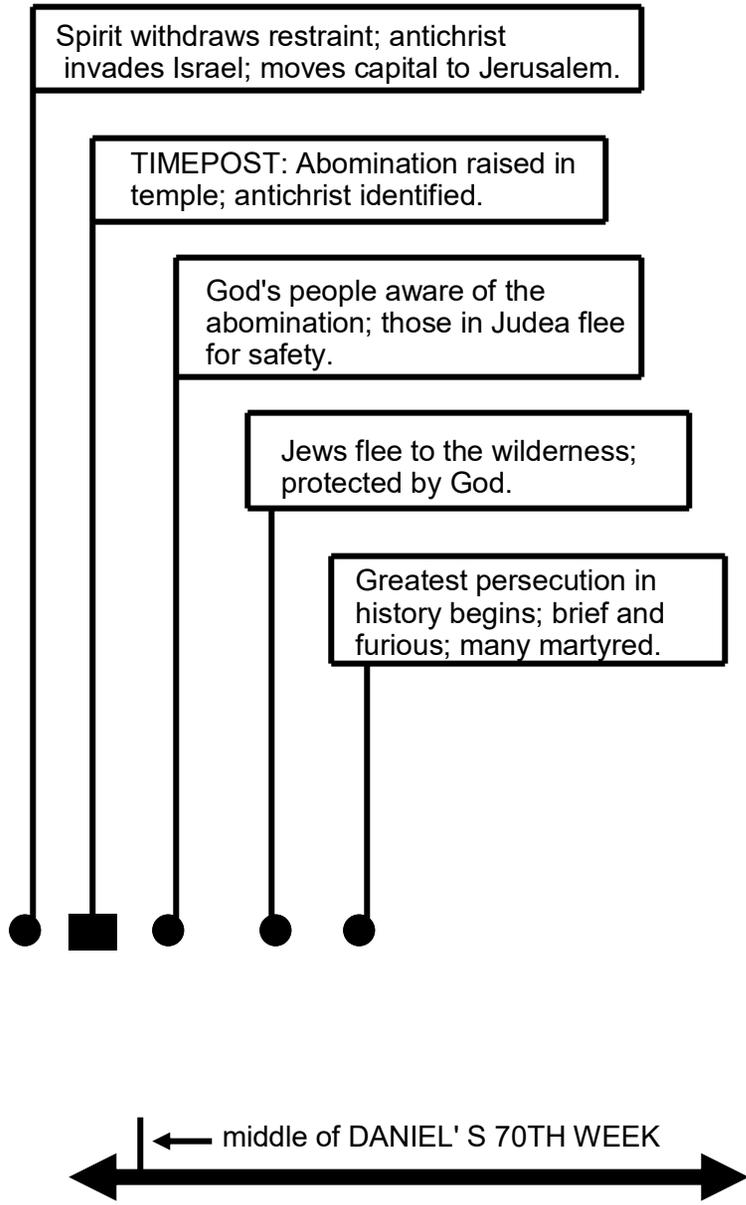
Two witnesses appear with miraculous powers.

False prophets with Satanic miraculous powers, false doctrines.

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church; miraculous powers.

Gospel of the kingdom preached ill all the world.

← DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK continues (first half) →



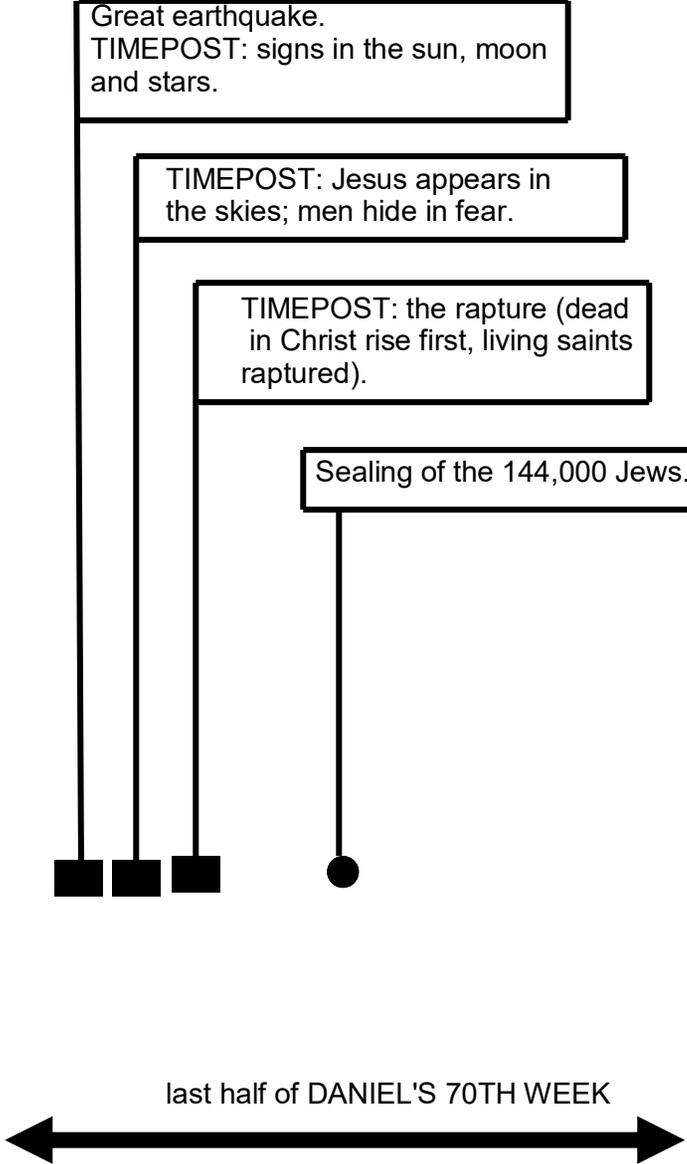
Great earthquake.
TIMEPOST: signs in the sun, moon
and stars.

TIMEPOST: Jesus appears in
the skies; men hide in fear.

TIMEPOST: the rapture (dead
in Christ rise first, living saints
raptured).

Sealing of the 144,000 Jews.

last half of DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK

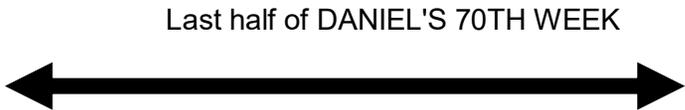


The wrath of God begins, seven trumpets & seven vials; great tragedies on earth.

Two witnesses are slain; bodies lie in Jerusalem 3.5 days; rise from dead; raptured.

Marriage supper of the Lamb; church is wed to Christ.

Nations gather at Armageddon to battle against Christ, angels, church.



Last half of DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK

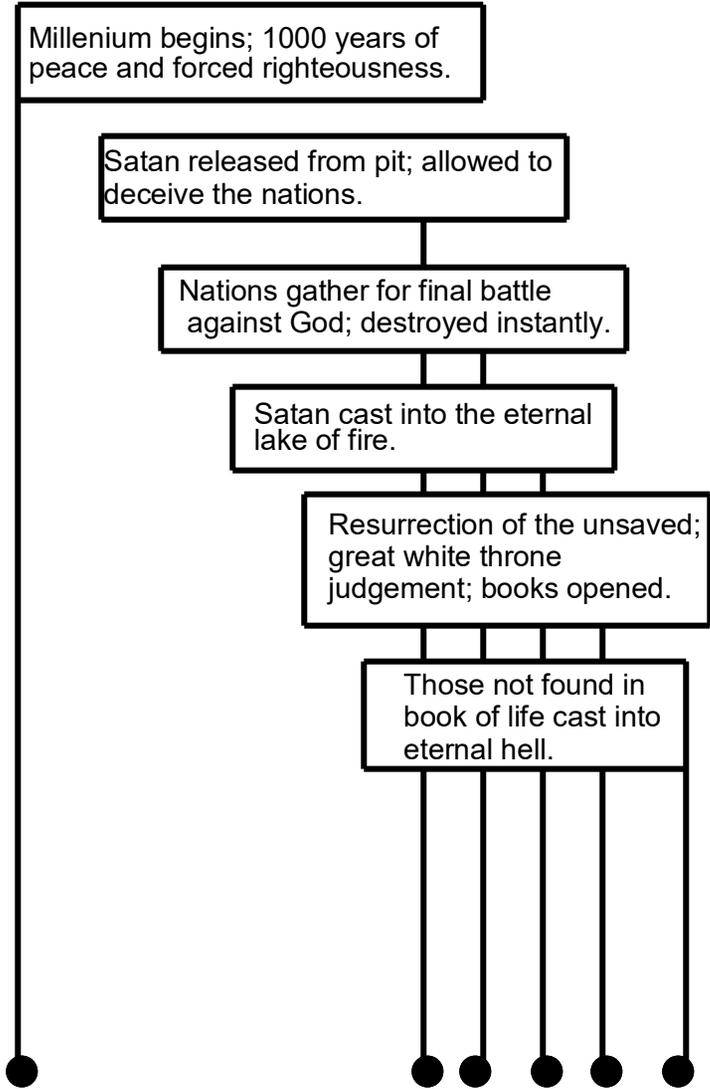
Jesus, church, angels descend to Mount of Olives; mountain splits in two.

Jesus' armies defeat nations at Armageddon; blood flows to the bridles of the horses.

Antichrist and false prophet cast into the lake of fire.

Satan is cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years.





THE MILLENIUM

City of gold descends from heaven (the new Jerusalem).

The Eternal kingdom begins.



THE ETERNAL KINGDOM



CHAPTER FIVE
SO...NOW WHAT ?

PART I

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

So...now that we know the timing of the rapture (its place in the sequence of events, not the day and the hour)...and now that we know the prophetic events between now and the rapture... what should we do in our churches and in our homes?

Here is where the rubber meets the road. We set out to be modern "men of Issachar" who understand the times in which we live, to know what the church should do in these last days. The very first question that must be answered has to do with whether we have the courage to make a commitment adequate to the task.

Before ever we contemplate the program of the church there is a preliminary event to be experienced in the personal life of individual Christians...both pastors and people.

Indeed, bringing people to understand and make this commitment is the **FIRST** order of business for Christian leadership. Once Christian leaders have educated their people about the information in the previous chapters of this book, they are obligated to ask their listeners for a response to this truth.

To bring this required commitment into focus, let us engage in a little Bible study, a study that will bring us to solemnly address the facts that are staring us in the face and that demand a response...a response by those Christians who belong to "this generation that will not pass until all things are fulfilled", who are called upon to participate in the church's finest hour, the **END GAME** of the church!

ELIJAH, THE LAST DAYS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SEVEN THOUSAND

The Bible study contained in this section is not for the faint of heart! It is intensely Biblical, concludes with "pure Scripture" and is AWESOME in its content! When we first followed this line of Biblical study, we were literally taken aback by the severity of its message. We asked ourselves, "Can this really be?" That was answered with a resounding "yes" as we simply re-read the verses we had studied. Join us now in that study.

We will begin with a brief review of past Biblical days that mirror this last days scenario...so that we will arrive at today's required commitment with the benefit of the example and encouragement of those who have gone before and shown us the way.

We begin with Elijah and his courage in the face of the persecution of Ahab and Jezebel.

In *1 Kings 19* Elijah has just seen great miracles performed in his ministry, even the slaying of all the priests of Baal. But the government of the day (King Ahab and Queen Jezebel) declared Elijah to be the nation's "most wanted man", with execution as the only logical outcome.

Elijah fled to Mount Horeb where he took refuge in a cave. A conversation then took place between Elijah and the Lord, and it went like this:

14 And he said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; AND I EVEN I ONLY, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." 15 And the LORD said unto him...18 Yet I HAVE LEFT ME

SEVEN THOUSAND in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

1 Kings 19

Now, think on this carefully. There were 7000 who had not bowed to Baal, nor kissed his image...and, (1) God knew how many there were, (2) God (therefore) knew who they were, (3) he numbered the faithful according to their refusal to bow or to kiss the image of Baal, and, (4) it was important to God that they had not done so. In the words "I have left me..." we have the declaration that this is "God's group" ...and they numbered 7000.

Perhaps some pragmatic, "enlightened" Israelites of that day said to themselves. "Well, we Jews all know that this idol is nothing but a piece of stone and amounts to nothing. In our hearts we do not worship this thing, but if it saves my life to bow and to kiss it, then I'll do it; God knows that in my heart I don't believe in this heathen religion". These "pragmatic Israelites" were NOT numbered in God's 7000 !

Now let us move to another part of Old Testament history, and find there others who belong in the company of Elijah's 7000. The three Hebrew children who did not bow to Nebuchadnezzar's idol were dear to the heart of God. They, too, could have "pragmatized" their way into bowing to the idol without meaning anything by it, but the commandment of their God was written in their hearts:

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...

Exodus 20

God's ABSOLUTE command should *never* be "pragmatized".

Did God see their courage? Did He know that they were about to be thrown into the furnace? Did it matter to God? YES, YES, YES! He met them in the midst of the fire and delivered them; the heathen king himself saw the fourth person, "like the son of God". God knows; God appreciates; it DOES matter!

Now to the last days, the antichrist, the abomination in the temple, the image of the beast and the mark that is placed on the hand or forehead. Remember the sequence of events. The abomination is raised in the temple, those who are in Judea and who heed the advice of Jesus flee immediately, not even returning home for supplies. There follows immediately a persecution of the Christians that is more severe than any in history. When one reads Foxe's Book of Martyrs, one is led to say, "How can anything ever be worse than this?" Yet there is one more persecution that will outrank any before it. The duration of this persecution is not long...for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened...but it will be intense.

The pressure is on...really on! "Bow! Take the name or number on hand or forehead...or you won't be able to buy or to sell. Do as we say or we'll decapitate you !"

There will be around the world, many courageous and principled Christians who will NOT bow, who will NOT accept the mark of the beast...whatever the cost! They belong in the company of Elijah and the 7000, and with the three Hebrew children of Daniel's day. They are members of God's "END GAME 7000".

We are convinced this mark will not be subtle, not of the sort that will lead someone to accept it without knowing the consequence. It will not be a Social Security Number or Social Insurance Number assigned by government without the voluntary acceptance of the individual. There will be some action needed on the part of the individual citizen to cooperate with this event.

Many martyrs of the past were told, "Deny Christ or die"; some were ordered to spit on the cross or die; some were told to worship Caesar or die. Likewise, this last days test will involve a clear act of the will with full knowledge of its import.

One would think that any modern ruler would avoid the forehead or the right hand as the location chosen for his mark, in order to avoid the accusation of his being the evil final ruler predicted in the Bible. To the contrary, this evil king will not believe prophetic Scripture's description of his defeat; he will be deceived by Satan into thinking he is invincible. He will DEFY the power of God by deliberately choosing the forehead and the right hand for the very purpose of forcing the followers of God into identifying themselves by refusing to take the mark. If he allowed people to take the mark on their ankle, millions of Christians might accept, correctly assuming this is not the prophesied event. The antichrist does not want compromise...he wants CONFRONTATION, to expose those who have an unbending loyalty to his archrival, Jesus Christ.

Just as the 7000 clearly chose NOT to bow to Baal nor to kiss his image, regardless of the consequences, so this will be a matter of clear choice. it will become clear why we believe this as we review the following Scriptures.

There are VERY IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES in this regard. We are now going to travel, time wise, beyond that greatest persecution, past the appearance of the Lord in the skies, past the rapture and see the raptured church around the throne, and the description of this great gathering:

13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great persecution, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 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. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 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.*

Revelation 7

At this point we note they have come out of great persecution; the privations of the past (hunger, thirst, tears) exist no more for them, They are comforted, privileged and secure.

We go now to another view of this same raptured church:

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.

Revelation 15:2

God knows who they are, these courageous and faithful believers of the end times who refused to worship the beast and the image, who refused to accept his mark...and it MATTERS to Him!

IT MATTERS TO GOD!

The question begs to be asked: Are there none there who DID accept the mark of the beast and who DID worship his image? Did no one who cooperated with the antichrist make it to heaven? Apparently not.

Now let's look at another view of the raptured church:

And! 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, NEI.. THER HAD RECEIVED HIS MARK UPON THEIR FOREHEADS, OR IN THEIR HANDS; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years,
(Revelation 20:4)

GOD KNOWS those who are faithful unto death, who have NOT worshipped the beast or his image, who have NOT received his mark. Let us say it again:

IT DOES MATTER TO GOD!

We close this chapter section with a portion from Hebrews 11 and the words of a great hymn of the past, no longer fashionable in our day of pleasant choruses but very timely for the days that are coming:

32 And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 36 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 11

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Hebrews 12

Who is on the Lord's side, Who will serve the King?
Who will join His army, Truth and courage bring?
Who will leave the world's side, Who will face the foe?
Who is on the Lord's side, Who for Him will go?

By Thy grand redemption, In Thy strength divine,
We are on the LORD'S side! Saviour, WE are thine!

Fierce will be the conflict, Strong will be the foe,
But the King's own army, None can overthrow.
'Round His standard gath'ring, Vict'ry is secure,
For His truth unchanging Makes the triumph sure.
Joyfully enlisting, In Thy strength divine,
WE are on the LORD'S side, Saviour, WE are Thine!

CHAPTER FIVE
SO...NOW WHAT ?

PART II

**THE CHURCH'S
END GAME MINISTRY**

Those church leaders who are convinced we are facing the END GAME of the church will find a growing determination to obey those Scriptures that are addressed to the church of the last days. The conviction grows firmer and stronger: the church MUST obey! As the forces that will bring the antichrist to power gather in the backrooms of governments and economic centres, so must the local church prepare itself for coming events.

BOTH sides in this coming conflict must prepare themselves for war. Do not think, during these days of the centralizing of power and the placement of tools to totally control the private affairs of each citizen, that the church has no need to prepare!

The Scriptures are NOT optional. God's word is not polite suggestions, but commands with a built-in accountability!

MAJOR MINISTRY NUMBER ONE

FIRST, let us contemplate a day that is coming soon and which Scripture clearly predicts. On that day the LAST person will be converted and the church will be complete. The door of the church is shut, as was the door of the ark, and "time (to repent) shall be no more". The bride of Christ is ready.

On that day, literally millions upon millions of people living upon the earth will have lost their opportunity to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever".

When tragedy occurs (an airplane crash kills 300...an earthquake kills 2000...a famine kills 50,000) it is front page news and the "top story" on the eleven o'clock TV news and it ought to be. Yet every one of those people would die eventually anyway. It is the SIMULTANEOUS death of so many that gives it the right to be called a tragedy.

And so it is with the souls of men and women, boys and girls. A. B. Simpson wrote a hymn describing "a hundred thousand souls a day" going into a Christless eternity. Today, with our larger population, that number would be much higher. But what shall we say of a day when the ENTIRE UNSAVED WORLD will see the door of eternal salvation closed? In a single day the multitudes will be beyond the reach of Christ's invitation to come and be a part of His heavenly kingdom!

Jesus Himself said His return would be like the days of Noah. There came a day when Noah's preaching of 120 years ended and the ark was complete. All that would ever enter the ark were now inside and THE DOOR WAS SHUT by the hand of Almighty God. That very day the rains began to fall.

The last days, declares Jesus, will be like the days of Noah.

Now, the local church of the last days, engaged in the END GAME strategy, will be moved within their souls to spread the gospel with an urgency born of a sense of that soon approaching day, combined with a compassion for the lost. The great commission will take on increasing importance and urgency.

But there is a quandary: the last days will be characterized by social decay, hedonism and rebellion. If the church is now compelled to increase its outreach...what results will there be and what kind of effort is in order?

Interestingly enough, Ezekiel had just that same commission.

He was sent to Babylon with a message for the wayward Israelites and was TOLD BY GOD that he would have no converts! They were hard-hearted and would not receive his message.

Ezekiel went to Babylon and sat by the river for seven days ...and said nothing. Well, what's the use? If there won't be any converts, why bother? Then there came the word of the Lord in a most stern manner:

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but THOU HAS DELIVERED THY SOUL.

Ezekiel 3:18,19

What a clear statement of principle! THIS is what the Psalmist meant when he prayed, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness." THIS is what Paul meant when he said, "I am free from the blood of all men."

WHETHER OUR SOCIETY WILL LISTEN OR NOT, we **must** deliver the message...or face judgment with their blood upon our hands!

Consider with us the principle which we call "moving the responsibility along", We start with the leadership of the local church... where the responsibility lies at the beginning.

We agree with Dr. A. W, Tozer that the church is the only place where the sheep expect the shepherd to give birth to the lambs! We agree that the **WHOLE CONGREGATION** has an obligation to witness to the whole community.

BUT...unless the church leadership lays the tracks on which the congregation can run, the responsibility continues to rest squarely on the leadership. **BUT** if the leadership sets up a program for witnessing that enables the congregants to witness, they have **MOVED THE RESPONSIBILITY** from the leadership to the congregation.

Now, if the congregation does **NOT** take advantage of the training and the tools, and does **NOT** get the gospel into the community, then the responsibility remains upon them. They have been told what to do; they have been shown how to do it. They are now responsible before God for the blood of the lost.

BUT.. if the people take up the challenge and take the gospel into the community, they **MOVE THE RESPONSIBILITY ALONG** to the people of the community. Now the community members are responsible.

Why else would God have Noah preach for 120 years while the ark was preparing? God knew that only eight souls (Noah and his family) would enter the ark. Why then all this fruitless preaching? Because God wanted to **MOVE THE RESPONSIBILITY ALONG!** Those who died in the flood had no excuse. The truth was available to them.

THAT is where God wants the responsibility to be! Why else would He have sent Ezekiel to Babylon? God wants His messengers to give to the lost the **OPPORTUNJTY** to respond to the gospel.

This aspect of evangelism, moving the responsibility along, is an essential concept for the church of the last days. In a time of spiritual decline and hardness of heart, we must make the individuals of the community responsible for their own fate.

There is one more consideration to this ministry of evangelism in the last days. The compassion of Christ that constrains us is not satisfied with *only* moving the responsibility along, not content *only* to deliver our souls from bloodguiltiness; we groan within ourselves in sympathetic vibration with the Holy Spirit, crying out "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked...why will you die?"

Thus our second goal is to see as many respond to the gospel as possible. THIS leads us to be as effective as possible in our evangelism.. .to train ourselves to witness... to locate the best evangelism tools...to do the job in spiritual power and evident compassion for the lost... to rescue as many as we can.

Before we leave the subject of evangelism, consider the ultimate context in which this END GAME evangelism takes place. In a previous chapter we described the coming revival in a final, fierce, toe to toe struggle against Satan and his followers. Satan has been cast down to the earth; knowing that his time is short, he viciously persecutes the now courageous church. Two mighty witnesses will preach and perform miracles in Jerusalem and the whole world will see them. A mighty ingathering of souls will increase the church just before the rapture...and all the seed that has previously been planted has the potential to spring up to eternal life!

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalm 126:6

That, friends, is God's word. We sow in faith!

THE SECOND MAJOR MINISTRY

The SECOND strategic ministry of the church of the last days is in response to clear predictions of Scripture; let the reader contemplate the following collection of Scriptures, and the "anti-dote" becomes obvious. Please notice the words in capitals.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall DEPART FROM THE FAITH, giving heed to SEDUCING SPIRITS, and DOCTRINES OF DEVILS; speaking LIES in hypocrisy...

1 Timothy 4:1-2

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, DECEIVING, and BEING DECEIVED

2 Timothy 3:13

3 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; 4 And they shall TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, and shall be turned unto FABLES

2 Timothy 4

For there shall arise false Christs, and FALSE PROPHETS, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall DECEIVE the very elect.

Matthew 24:24

For false Christs and FALSE PROPHETS shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to SEDUCE, if it were possible, even the elect.

Mark 13:22

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because MANY FALSE PROPHETS are gone out into the world. "and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come..."

1 John 4

Well, have we been warned enough about the doctrinal deceptions and errors that there will be in the last days?

I taught a 16-lesson course on prophecy in my home some years ago. Just before teaching the final lesson, I asked the group if they could sum up in a sentence the most important lesson they had drawn from the series. The first person to respond said, "The Christians of the last days MUST be people of the Book!" There was instant agreement from all in the room. Her discernment was perfect, and she said it so eloquently. I repeat..."The Christians of the last days MUST be people of the book !"

In the church world today there are many people who have been drawn into charismatic circles of influence. Some of these people did not have a strong Biblical foundation to build upon; some were unstable to begin with. Then, when they were exposed to intense encounters with spiritual forces, they acted overzealously and in strange ways at times. This has caused division in the Body of Christ and at times driven people away from the Lord.

There is coming a time of *intense* spiritual warfare on earth. Simultaneously there will be revival and persecution, false prophets and true, miracle workers with both divine and satanic power, doctrines of devils and Holy Spirit empowered witnesses. If current circumstances have brought confusion to some, how much worse will it be when God pours out His Spirit in full measure in the last days.

We MUST have a solid Bible foundation and be mature in the Lord if we are going to be able to serve Him properly in the last days.

Never before in church history has the ministry of Bible teaching been more important or more strategic.

"ELIJAH'S END GAME 7000" must be very well taught in the doctrines of Scripture with special emphasis on prophetic Scripture. Apologetics must be part of the curriculum as well.

This teaching must be Bible content oriented. The teaching needed in the last days at the local church level will not be the high tech clergy training of modern Bible colleges with their liberal arts, psychology and philosophy. It is not scholarship and commentary that is needed; it is Scripture and Bible content that will hold back the forces of evil deception and strengthen the saints. The old Bible institute curriculum that trained pastors and missionaries who manned pulpits and mission stations for a century will be the mainstay of the church of the last days. Once more, we contextualize this endtime ministry. It is vitally needed at the very time average Christians are in love with the spirit of the age and are "dull of hearing". During the very time the church needs teachers in training as never before, there is a decided lack of interest in proper doctrinal study. So this ministry, like evangelism, will have its "move the responsibility along" aspect as well. It is the obligation of the church leadership to make this teaching available, or the responsibility will rest upon the leadership.

If the leadership does its duty and the people do not respond, the responsibility rests upon them. They are accountable for what they know and for what they *could have known*.

When the rapid growth of the church occurs in the final ingathering of souls during the revival just before the rapture ...given the very strong influences of false teachers with their evil doctrines...given the intense persecution that will face the new believers with martyrdom choices...there MUST be an army of well taught, well grounded Bible teachers to minister in the last days...and we must be preparing for that ministry NOW.

So...let us teach and train that minority of committed Christians who see the vision of the last days...and our graduates will play an increasingly important and strategic part in the program of God as we come closer to the end.

Before we proceed to the final section of this chapter, we select only one Scripture to conclude this discussion on teaching in the last days. It is the "constitution" of the Christian education program of the local church. It is NOT optional. It is the instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the church, through the Apostle Paul:

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4

Page 102 *14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men) and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grown up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

Ephesians 4

Read it again friend; that's GOD talking. It is true for the church in any age, but it takes on additional significance as we approach the END GAME of the church.

Now we proceed to the final section of this chapter dealing with the administration aspect of the church of the last days.

CHAPTER FIVE

PART III

GETTING OUR ACT TOGETHER

There are two Scriptures to think upon as we enter this section, for it deals both with administration of the local church AND wise decision making by heads of families, Think on these verses:

A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 22:3

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8

This section is directed to the prudent, the sober and the vigilant who prepare for the events that are coming in both their churches and their homes.

Protecting our leaders.

A Bible college president and I discussed the plight of a certain pastor suffering a breakdown because of the hostile treatment he received by his parishioners. The president said, "Modern pastoral ministry is all-out warfare, isn't it ?"

One pastor, suffering from burnout, was told by his doctor to find a pastoral counselor to help him get his bearings again. He approached six different senior pastors in whom he had confidence, and never got to share why he came to see them! Every one of them began to dump their troubles on him...every one was "on the edge" of a collapse himself.

That first pastor never did find a counsellor to help him through his problems.

A new organization has been formed to deal with "clergy abuse" and they are finding evangelical denominations are the worst offenders.

The leadership of the local church (and its spiritual members) *must* realize, as the end approaches, we *are* in all out war. "and the leadership of the church is the primary target. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of rebellious church people to assist the enemy in his work.

A famous general in the U.S. civil war stated that he always posted a ring of troops around his tent because he preferred that "the first shot of the next battle NOT be fired in my tent!" That general was wiser than most church leaders today.

It is time we "put a ring of defenders" around the leadership of the local church, recognizing the intensity of the battle to come and the vulnerability of our leaders once the enemy attacks. Those Christian warriors must be both defensive and offensive. Let me illustrate.

A teenage couple that falls into premarital temptation is quickly censured and disciplined in most churches. But a church gossip can continue for many years without ever a reprimand. (Well, who wants to become one of his or her targets ?) Let me describe an imaginary incident to illustrate my point.

A church gossip spreads a lie about the pastor; the elders and others get very upset about this apparent failing in their preacher. So, a committee is formed to go to see the pastor about the matter; he defends himself successfully, proving the accusations to be false. The committee is satisfied, and tells the church that everything is OK. Case closed, right? That's the way it is in most churches.

Have you noticed that no church committee then goes to see the gossip to require an accounting for spreading lies? The gossip is now free to target another church leader or go on to the next false accusation against the preacher.

While many Christians are playing church, Satan and his forces are playing for keeps. While pastors are conscientiously trying to lead the church in right pathways, others are playing "kill the quarterback".

The church of the last days must be on a "war footing". Do you know who the REAL false accuser of the brethren is? That's one of Satan's titles in the book of Revelation. Shall we allow carnal church members to freely carry on Satan's work within the church? The growing list of pastoral casualties indicates a major problem in the church that MUST be dealt with! We will have to get back to Bible discipline in the church if we are to be ready for the END GAME of the church.

In a time of war, one of the successful strategies is to infiltrate the enemy camp with spies and saboteurs. One of the greatest adjustments of the church leaders of the last days will be to awaken from our love, love, love dream world and admit that some in the church are working against us! Take three minutes and read the book of Jude!

CONCLUSION

Tell me, friend, what are you and your church practicing? Is your life style and your church program an evidence of the kind of commitment God requires of His servants in the last days...or are we practicing the lifestyle of the Laodicean church?

When the crunch comes and the persecution is on, the church will need leadership that is courageous and uniquely prepared. Those who have spent their Christian years in a marshmallow, go with the flow lifestyle will not inspire courage in new believers who are converted under fire.

Where is the church that is preparing its people for this ministry and for this heroic determination of soul? Where is the denomination that is calling its constituency to remember the saints of the past who were faithful unto death, and reminding them our turn is coming? And where are the individual Christians who are saying, "Sign me up as one of the descendants of the 7000 who did not bow the knee to Baal, who did not kiss his image. I belong in their company, for I am determined NOT to cooperate with the forces of antichrist that are accumulating power today !"

There is an old hymn that has fallen into disuse in our day of modern hymn books and overheads. It may yet come back into style. Read it carefully won't you?

*Lo the conflict of the ages
is upon us today.
And the armies are assembling
all in battle array.
Are YOU number'd with the faithful,
one of God's loyal few.
Who have sworn Him full allegiance?
Can He count upon YOU?*

*Have YOUR eyes caught the vision?
Have YOUR hearts felt the thrill?
To the call of the Master,
Do YOU answer, "I will"?
For the conflict of the ages,
Told by prophets and by sages
In its fury is upon us,
Is upon us TODAY!*

*See the church of God awakening,
And with glorious zest
She is laying on her altars
Now her noblest and best;
Toward the final consummation
We are hastening on,
And the time for loyal service
Will forever be gone.*

*Have YOUR eyes caught the vision?
Have YOUR hearts felt the thrill?
To the call of the Master,
Do YOU answer, "I will"?
For the conflict of the ages,
Told by prophets and by sages
In its fury is upon us,
Is upon us TODAY!*

ARE YOU READY FOR JESUS' RETURN?

Dear Reader:

If you have never made a personal commitment to Jesus, then we would like to quote what Jesus Himself said about this time period you have just read about.

32 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened, 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away, 34 Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap., 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Luke 21

Jesus exhorts you to be careful, to be on watch and to pray so that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, There is one thing we know for sure about prophecy: It will come to pass, whether people believe it or not. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My Word will never pass away."

There is only one way to escape the wrath of God. That way is through Jesus. To ensure your eternal salvation, we encourage you to say the following prayer from your heart, in all seriousness and honesty:

'Dear Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that You sent Your Son Jesus to die for my sins. I repent of my sins and I accept His sacrifice on my behalf now. Lord Jesus, I ask You to come into my life and to forgive my sins; I make You the Lord of my life and I purpose to live for You from this day forward. Amen'

Now, dear Saint, start reading your Bible, find a good, Bible believing church to belong to and please write us to inform us of your decision for Jesus.

The Authors.

APPENDIX A

**HARMONIZING THE GOSPEL
ACCOUNTS OF
JESUS' LESSON ON PROPHECY**

AND

THE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

=====

**INTRODUCTION TO THIS
CHRONOLOGY**

There are four chapters in the gospels that give an extended or an abbreviated account of Jesus' lesson to the disciples in answer to their request for prophetic teaching. We have added a few verses from Revelation to show the same order of events repeated there.

Notice how consistently all the verses listed below follow in sequence. The ONLY verses not in sequence are those in which Jesus Himself interrupts the sequence (by saying "before all these things...", etc.). Even the verses from Revelation are in sequence.

(Abbreviations used below: Mt. ∴ Matthew; Mk. ∴ Mark; Lk. ∴ Luke; Av. ∴ Revelation)

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PROPHECY OF THE TEMPLE STONES

Mt. 24:1,2; Mk. 13:1,2; Lk. 21:5,6

Jesus sparks the disciples, curiosity on prophetic matters by

this comment. (This prophecy was literally fulfilled in 70 A. D. see " note below on the chronological placement of this event.)

DISCIPLES ASK JESUS TO TEACH THEM PROPHECY

Mt 24:3; Mk. 13:3,4; Lk. 21:7

—in response to His comment about the temple stones. Notice the multiple questions, and Jesus' multiple answers.

JESUS' REJECTION AND SUFFERING

Lk. 17:25

In the midst of relating coming events, Jesus says..."BUT FIRST...", "causing this verse to rise to the top of the list chronologically.

EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

Lk. 21 :12-20

Similarly, the words "But before all these..." causes these verses to move to the beginning of the list of prophesied events.

Here is described the church during the book of Acts and the invasion of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

*Jesus' prophecy about the temple stones is fulfilled here, when literally every stone was taken down as people searched for the gold of the temple that had melted in the burning of the city and had run down between the stones.

FIRST INSTRUCTIONS TO FLEE FOR SAFETY

Lk. 21 :21-23

Here is the first of three similar sections instructing people to flee for their lives, this time those in Judaea at the time of the invasion of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

(Similar instructions will be given by Jesus for those in similar circumstances in the last days.)

JEWS SCATTERED AMONG THE NATIONS... JERUSALEM UNDER GENTILE CONTROL

Lk. 21 :24

...a condition that will last for centuries. The retaking of Jerusalem by the Jews will signal the beginning of the last days. See note ** below indicating when this time period ends.

Mt. 24:4,5; Mk. 13:5,6; Lk. 21 :8

False prophets and messiahs will be a regular feature during this centuries long period.

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

Mt. 24:6,7a; Mk. 13:7,8a; Lk. 21 :9,10; Rv. 6:4

Nations and kingdoms at war, a constant circumstance during the centuries of Israel's dispersion.

FAMINES, EARTHQUAKES, TRAGEDIES

Mt 24:7b,8; Mk. 13:8b; Lk. 21 :11; Rv. 6:6-8

...all reported in the 11 o'clock news. 11's not the end times it's just the BEGINNING of sorrows! ("You ain't seen nothin' yet")

CHURCH HISTORY: MARTYRDOM AND WORLD MISSIONS

Mt 24:9-14; Mk. 13:9-13

A church's eye view of the centuries, everything from persecution to false cults, from global missions to treachery and backsliding.

Another hint as to the end of this period and the beginning of the end...the gospel preached in all the world.

** At this time this centuries long period comes to a close, signaled by the retaking of Jerusalem by the Jews (1967 was the FIRST time the Jews controlled the city since Jesus spoke these words).

Events occurring at this time but not mentioned by Jesus: the final world ruler comes to power, makes a 7 year treaty with Israel involving the temple, Jewish sacrifices are renewed.

THE ABOMINATION IN THE TEMPLE

Mt 24:15; Mk. 13:14a

...a MAJOR event to watch for...it signals a rapid series of events of critical importance to the church and the world

INSTRUCTION TO THOSE IN JUDEA
WHEN THE ABOMINATION APPEARS

Mt. 24:16-20; Mk, 13:14b-18

This is the second time Jesus gives instructions to those whose lives are in danger (a third is coming). If you are in Judea when the news of the blasphemy in the temple by the antichrist occurs, run for your lives, because this is the beginning of the...

GREATEST PERSECUTION OF GOD'S
PEOPLE IN THE HISTORY OF
THE WORLD

Mt. 24:21-22; Mk. 13: 19-20; Av. 6:9-11

It will be brief, but intense...exceeding the brutality of any previous time of human suffering.

STRONG WARNING TO BEWARE OF
FALSE MESSIAHS

Mt. 24:23-26; Mk. 13:21-23; Lk. 17:22,23

The times are right for an expectancy of the Messiah...and for impostors to make their claims, with power to do signs and wonders. Don't be fooled...and don't go travelling, chasing rumors, for the reason given below.

THE REASON NOT TO GO LOOKING
FOR THE MESSIAH

Mt. 24:27,28; Lk. 17:24

When the true Messiah DOES appear, He (Jesus) will appear in the skies, visible to all ,..and He will gather His own" Don't go looking for Him, He will find YOU. His people will gather around Him like eagles around a carcass.

SIGNS IN THE SUN, MOON AND STARS

Mt 24:29; Mk. 13:24,25; Lk. 21:25,26; Rv. 6:12,13

The fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel as quoted by Peter at Pentecost. It signals the end of the intense persecution of the saints"

JESUS APPEARS IN THE SKIES CLOUDS, POWER AND GLORY!

Mt 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk" 21:27,28; Rv. 6: 14,16

This is why Jesus' followers are not fooled by false Messiahs...they are looking for THIS event, and the church now knows that the rapture is about to occur.

AT LAST.. .THE RAPTURE!

Mt. 24:31; Mk. 13:27; Rv. 7:9-15

The angels gather the church together from all parts of the earth and heaven, meeting the Lord in the skies.

THE FIG-TREE PARABLE: SIGNS OF THE TIMES FOR THE WATCHERS

Mt 24:32,34; Mk. 13:28-30; Lk. 21 :29-32

Just like you can tell summer is coming when the fig tree starts to bud...so when you see all the things mentioned above *begin* to happen, then you know the end is coming. Jesus gave two signals of the beginning of the end: the gospel is preached globally, and the Jews control Jerusalem.

PROPHECY IS CERTAIN!
THE TIMING IS SECRET

Mt. 24:35-36; Mk. 13:31,32; Lk, 21 :33

HERE'S WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE ON
THE DAY OF THE RAPTURE, WHEN
THE JUDGEMENT BEGINS

Mt. 24:37-41; Lk. 17:26-30; 34-36

The general population thinks it is a day like any other day. But as they go about their daily routine, they are interrupted by two events: (1) the rapture occurs, separating individuals who are working together, etc., the Christians are taken in the rapture, the others are left and (2) the judgment of God begins immediately.

SURVIVORS TO FLEE FOR SAFETY...
IF THEY CAN!

Lk. 17:31..33

And here is the third set of instructions given to people by Jesus to flee for their lives...this time not just those in Judea. Material possessions are to be abandoned. Since the church is now with Jesus in the skies, this advice is for those left behind, Jews and Gentiles.

TAKEN WHERE, LORD?

Lk. 17:37

One is left, the other is taken...where? Like eagles gathered around a carcass, so the saints will be gathered around our Lord in the skies.

FINAL WORDS ABOUT ATTITUDES
AND ACTIONS AS WE WAIT FOR
THE LAST DAYS

Mt 24:42-49; Mk. 13:33-37; Lk 21 :34-"36

Watch...so you are not surprised by events you have been warned about-surprise for sleepers, not watchers.

Be faithful servants, always ready to give an account.

Watch...know your prophetic Scripture.

Watch...know the events that signal the end.

Watch...be aware of events going on around you.

Watch...pray...be faithful.

AND DON'T FORGET THAT THERE
ARE TWO ETERNAL DESTINIES

Mt. 24:50-51; Rv. 21:8

Tragic events on this earth are indeed coming, but far, far worse is the eternal tragedy of those who reject the Lord of love, truth and justice, and who choose greed, pleasure and hypocrisy. Beware of the eternal punishment to come.

APPENDIX B

ELIJAH, THE LAST DAYS, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE SEVEN THOUSAND

There are a number of Scriptures that refer to Elijah's reappearance in the last days as one of the two witnesses, say many students of Bible prophecy, Let us review those Scriptures as a basis for proposing the name "ELIJAH'S END GAME 7000".

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Malachi 4:5

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

Matthew 11:14

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, 12 But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed, likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Matthew 17

11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things;

And how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught. 13 But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Mark 9

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Luke 1:17

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No...And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizes thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither the prophet?

John 1:25

2...Know ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 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.

Romans 11

Because many students of the prophetic Scriptures agree that Elijah is one of the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation (the fulfillment of the prophecy that Elijah will appear again before the end), let us include this portion from Revelation.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 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. 6 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. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make War against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8 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. 9 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. 10 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. 11 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. 12 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. 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

(Revelation 11)

APPENDIX C

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS

The prophet Joel spoke of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days.

28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

(Joel 2)

We know that this time period of the last days includes the end of the Church Age because in the very next verses (chapter 3:1,2) he states "in those days and in that time,,"

1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Joel 3

This is a reference to the Battle of Armageddon, the end of Daniel's 70th week.

The Holy Spirit was first poured out in a mighty manifestation of power on the Church by God on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter quotes Joel's prophecy to the people to explain what is happening,

Through study of the word, however, we discover in the prophetic scriptures the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Church Age is only a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

Throughout scripture the earth is likened unto a field which is owned by God and the people on the earth are His harvest of souls. In an earlier chapter, the rapture of the Church was described in Revelation as a harvest of the earth.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Revelation 14:15

The apostle James in his epistle exhorts the people to be patient for the Lord's coming.

*7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husband man waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,
James 5*

He compares the Lord to a husbandman (a farmer) waiting for the precious fruit of the earth (harvest).

The harvest will not come, however, until the early rain and the latter rain falls. In Palestine the early rain came in the autumn at seed time when they sowed their wheat. This was necessary to supply sufficient water to get the crop started, then it would grow on its own. The latter rain came in the spring time just before harvest. It was necessary to bring the crop to full maturity so it could ripen and be harvested. According to Deuteronomy 11: 14 these rains were sent by God.

Because the Holy Spirit is comparing the harvest of the earth, and the two rains necessary to bring it in, to a harvest of souls in the last days, we know there must also be two spiritual rains (outpourings) of the Holy Spirit.

The first one came on the day of Pentecost to get the Church started and the final one will be just before the rapture to bring in the harvest of souls to end the Church Age. This coincides perfectly then with our study of the events of the last days.

To further confirm this we look at what Hosea had to say about the Lord's coming.

1 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth

Hosea 6

Hosea states the Lord will come unto us as the latter and the former rain. The prophet Zechariah speaking of the end times also instructs the people to pray for rain in the day of the latter rain, (Zechariah 10:1-2.)

We conclude from these scriptures there is still another outpouring of the Holy Spirit (a spiritual rain) to come before the final harvest of the earth.