



Israel

Seven Years, Then...

Told Through Answering Two Questions

**A Study about Events Pertaining to
Israel and the Nations, During and
Beyond Daniel's Seventieth Week**

Arlen L. Chitwood

This book has to do with that future day when God once again begins to deal with Israel in a national respect relative to that which awaits the nation, when “time” during Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy resumes.

And this is dealt with from the standpoint of Christ’s response to two questions which His disciples asked, two days before His crucifixion, as seen in Matthew’s account of the Olivet Discourse (chs. 24, 25).

The Olivet Discourse begins with a Jewish section (Israel in the Tribulation and beyond [24:4-39]), then continues with a Christian section (Christians during but mainly beyond the present dispensation [24:40-25:30]).

(Properly understanding the preceding is dependent on properly understanding the contextual setting of the Olivet Discourse.

Refer to the foreword in this book.)

The Jewish section of the discourse in Matt. 24, following the disciples’ two questions in verse three, begins with Israel in the Tribulation, with Daniel’s Seventy-Week timepiece marking off time once again, following 2,000 years in stop mode. And events occurring during the final seven years of this prophecy are seen occurring in Matt. 24:4-26.

Verses four through eight cover the first half of this seven-year period, and verses nine through fourteen cover the second half.

Then verses fifteen through twenty six drop back and provide commentary for the second half, for events succinctly previously covered in verses nine through fourteen.

Christ’s return following this time, with attendant events, is then seen in verses twenty-seven through thirty-one.

This is then followed by the parable of the fig tree (vv. 32-36) and the days of Noah (vv. 37-39).

These together provide two complete word pictures — one parabolic, the other typical — of that which had previously been covered in verses four through thirty-one.

All of the preceding data is discussed and further developed in this book.

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**by
Arlen L. Chitwood**

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By the Same Author —

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BY FAITH
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I KNOW THY WORKS
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FOREWORD

Scripture is replete with information about the future of Israel, during and beyond the Tribulation. And the first thirty-nine verses of Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse (chs. 24, 25) form one of those numerous places.

The Olivet Discourse though is unique in one respect. It is unique because of its historical setting, as seen in the gospel accounts, continuing into Acts.

This lengthy account — in response to two questions from His disciples — was given at the end of Christ's ministry to Israel, two days before His crucifixion.

As well, the account was given at the conclusion of a number of other things which had occurred earlier that same day, *NOT ONLY* setting the stage for the account *BUT* providing information which is vitally necessary for a proper understanding of the account.

At the beginning of the day, as Christ traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem, He saw a fig tree along the way. Coming to the tree and *finding leaves ONLY, failing to see ANY fruit, He cursed the tree.*

The fruitless tree typified fruitless Israel, and the curse had to do with Israel in relation to the proffered kingdom, *which had been spurned, rejected. Israel had FAILED to bring forth fruit for the kingdom*, resulting in Christ's words and actions seen beginning with the cursing of this tree to the end of the Olivet Discourse account (Matt. 21:19-25:46).

(This curse had to do with *ONE* age, the age in view in the proclaimed message concerning the kingdom of the heavens — the Messianic Era.

Note Matt. 21:19 in this respect:

“And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever [*lit.*, ‘with respect to the age’]. And presently the fig tree withered away.”

Though Israel will bring forth fruit during the Messianic Era [in fact, *Israel will be VERY fruitful during this time*], *Israel will NOT, Israel CAN-NOT, bring forth fruit relative to the kingdom of the heavens*, which, as will be seen, was about to be taken from the nation.

Christ's actions in Matt. 21:19 [preceded by His actions in Matt. 13:1-35; 16:17-19] set the stage for His announcement in Matt. 21:43.)

Following the cursing of this fig tree — an announced curse upon Israel — Christ went into the city, dealt with the efforts of the chief priests and elders to discredit Him, and related the parable of the Householder and His vineyard.

THEN, immediately following this parable, reflecting back on the cursed, fruitless fig tree, Christ announced that the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to another nation, *a nation which, UNLIKE Israel, WOULD be fruitful* (Matt. 21:19-43).

Note Matt. 21:43 in this respect:

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Then a similar parable was given, covering the complete panorama of both that which had occurred and that which was about to occur (Matt. 22:1-14). This was followed by Christ's interaction with Israel's religious leaders, as they continued their attempts to find a way to entrap or entangle Him (Matt. 22:15-46).

This was then followed by Christ's lengthy discourse where He pronounced woe after woe on the Scribes and Pharisees because of that which they had done over the past three to three and one-half years.

And this discourse ends with Christ's announcement that the house of Israel would be left “desolate,” *with the nation NOT seeing Him again UNTIL they would say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”* (Matt. 23:1-39).

This is the setting for the disciples asking Christ two questions and His honoring the questions by relating that seen in the Olivet Discourse.

This book covers the first part of the discourse — the Jewish part, responding to the disciples two questions (Matt. 24:4-39).

A companion book, *Christians — After the Rapture*, picks up where this book leaves off, dealing with the next part of the discourse, the Christian part (Matt. 24:40-25:30).

And correctly understanding the setting for the Olivet Discourse, beginning with Matt. 21:19, will allow a person to correctly see and understand proper distinctions between these two parts of the discourse.

1

THE TIME, SIGN

Having to Do Solely with Israel, Yet Future

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the building of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [‘age’]?” (Matt. 24:1-3).

The Jewish section of the Olivet discourse (24:4-39) has been interpreted several different ways over the years. The three main schools of interpretation look upon the prophecy as:

- 1) *Having been fulfilled in the past.*
- 2) *Being fulfilled partly during the course of the present dispensation but mainly during and immediately following the Tribulation.*
- 3) *Being fulfilled in its entirety during and immediately following the Tribulation.*

Bible students viewing the prophecy as having been fulfilled in *the past* invariably refer to events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as completing the fulfillment.

A great deal of non-literal interpretation (spiritualizing) marks this view; and it should come as no surprise that the proponents of this or similar views are mainly from the amillennial school of interpretation, although some from the premillennial school can be found within this group as well.

Those viewing the prophecy as being fulfilled *partly during the course of the present dispensation but mainly during and immediately following the Tribulation*, on the basis of Luke 21:20-24, invariably see events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as being included; but the main emphasis, in their thinking, lies beyond this time. The main emphasis is upon events near the end of the age, which appear to set the stage for the Tribulation, and then to events during and immediately following the Tribulation.

Then, those viewing the prophecy as *completely future* see a reference by Christ *ONLY* to events during and immediately following the Tribulation.

Both of the latter two views, in one sense of the word, are somewhat similar in nature. Both view a reference to certain events during the Tribulation and during the time immediately following; and individuals adhering to the premillennial school of interpretation normally hold to one or the other.

Through a casual observation, one might be led to believe that there is really no appreciable difference in the latter two interpretative views usually held by premillennial students of the Word.

But this is NOT the case at all.

Part or all of verses four through fourteen are the verses in question as to the time of fulfillment, and the period into which the fulfillment of these verses is placed (either before or during the Tribulation) will affect interpretation *NOT ONLY* at this point in Scripture *BUT* at certain other points as well. And because of hermeneutical interpretative principles involved, the manner in which this section of Scripture is understood will either open or close the door to a correct understanding of a number of key passages of Scripture.

Thus, one's view of the time element involved in this section of Scripture is *NOT* something which should be taken lightly. And, as will be shown in this chapter and several subsequent chapters, the latter of the two views held by various premillennial interpreters, not the former, is the correct way to look upon verses four through fourteen.

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse actually has to do, *in its entirety, with events beyond the present dispensation, with events beyond the time in which God deals with the Church.* NO single event

in any part of this section of the Olivet Discourse has been fulfilled in the past; *NOR* is any event in any part of this section presently being fulfilled. Certain things *similar* to a number of events in this section of Scripture have transpired in the past and continue to transpire today (*cf.* vv. 4-7, 11, 12), *BUT NOT these specific events.*

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

It *MUST* be understood that events can begin to occur in the Jewish Section of the Olivet Discourse *ONLY during that future time when God ONCE AGAIN resumes His national dealings with Israel.*

Such dealings on the part of God await the coming Tribulation, and these dealings *NOT ONLY* cover all of this period *BUT* also move beyond Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, as God continues to deal with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27).

Attempting to see some of these events being fulfilled during the present time (the closing years of the present dispensation) — even though near the end of the age, immediately preceding the Tribulation — is *out of line* with the fact that God is *NOT* presently dealing with Israel as a nation.

In short, *this is a mistake of MAJOR proportions in hermeneutical interpretation* (that part of hermeneutics which would present a *clear distinction* between God's dealings with the Church and Israel within two separate dispensations).

Israel has been set aside, awaiting the calling out of a bride for God's Son (*cf.* Gen. 23-25). God *MUST* complete His purpose for the present dispensation *BEFORE* resuming His dealings with Israel. And the fulfillment of all parts of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse *MUST await that time.*

The Olivet Discourse was delivered by the Lord to His disciples immediately preceding the completion of the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy. And events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse *MUST occur* within and following the period of four hundred ninety years "determined" upon *the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem* to, in effect, bring about a *consummation of ALL things which MUST be brought to pass during Man's Day, preceding the Messianic Era* (Dan. 9:24).

From the beginning of Daniel's prophecy — “from the going forth of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem” (given by Artaxerxes [about 445 B.C.; cf. Neh. 2:1ff]) — *there was NO break* in the “determined” time *UNTIL* “Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25).

The chronometer ran uninterrupted until the climactic events surrounding Israel's rejection of her Messiah and the proffered kingdom of the heavens, leading into Calvary; and it was here, for the first time, that the chronometer marking off the full four hundred ninety years stopped. It stopped with Christ's crucifixion, at the end of the four hundred eighty-third year.

ONLY seven years remained to be fulfilled, and these seven years STILL await fulfillment today.

Insofar as Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is concerned, the beginning of the Messianic Era is no nearer today than it was when the chronometer stopped almost two thousand years ago.

Seven years remained THEN, and seven years STILL remain today.

During the interval, Israel has been set aside while God calls out a separate and distinct people — the “one new man” *in Christ* — to be the recipient of that which was offered to and rejected by Israel (the kingdom of the heavens).

And events during this time (present time) are dealt with in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40-25:30), *NOT in the Jewish section* (24:4-39).

Events in the Jewish section can begin to occur *ONLY when the chronometer marking off time in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks begins once again, fulfilling the last seven years of the prophecy.*

This period will begin, as foretold in Daniel's prophecy itself, when the man of sin makes his seven-year covenant with Israel (v. 27); and the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse will, beginning at this point, be rapidly fulfilled during an unbroken twenty-five hundred and ninety-five-day period (the seven-year Tribulation, twenty-five hundred twenty days [Daniel's Seventieth Week], plus seventy-five subsequent days [cf. Dan. 12:11-13]).

THEN, the Messianic Era will be ushered in.

(For additional information on Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, refer to Appendix III in this book.)

When Shall These Things Be?

Christ referred to His coming at the end of chapter twenty-three *ONLY* in connection with Israel's "desolation." But the larger scope of the disciples' question takes into account both *the desolation of the house of Israel* (23:38) and Christ's subsequent statement concerning *the destruction of the Temple* (24:1, 2). This is evident from their additional question which concerned *the sign of His coming and the end of the age*.

Nothing is said in chapter twenty-three or in the opening two verses of chapter twenty-four (dealing with the Temple) about Christ's coming in connection with the destruction of the Temple. But, within the scope of both questions in the next verse, in verse three, *the entire matter would have to be in view*. The disciples' questions would have to be looked upon as referring to *the Lord's coming in relation to both Israel's desolation and the destruction of the Temple*.

"When shall these things be" *can ONLY* refer to both *the time of the desolation and the time of the Temple's destruction*.

Since this is the case, some Bible students have questioned how Christ's response could refer *ONLY* to events during and following the Tribulation? After all, the house of Israel is *presently* in a desolate state and has been for almost two millennia. It was left in this condition by Christ at His first coming; and the Temple itself (along with the city of Jerusalem) was destroyed in 70 A.D.

Note first of all the announced "desolation" in Matt. 23:38. It is true that the house of Israel — which includes the people, the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land — *has been* in this condition for almost two millennia.

But it is also true that there is a more specific, announced "desolation" of the house of Israel which is *future* — *a desolation in connection with the prophecy, a desolation lying within the scope of time covered by Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy*. In this respect this "desolation" is associated *specifically with the Tribulation, during that future time when God resumes His national dealings with Israel*.

In Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse (21:5ff), reference is made to a desolation in connection with a future destruction of Jerusalem, and Luke places this desolation *in the Tribulation* (vv.

20-24; cf. Isa. 27:10; note “the abomination of desolation” in Matt. 24:15 [cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31]).

Luke 21:20-24 though, dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem, is usually looked upon by Bible students as referring to events occurring in 70 A.D. However, such an understanding of this passage *CANNOT* be correct for several reasons:

1) Certain things stated in this passage *CANNOT* be viewed as having occurred in 70 A.D. or in the years following. Reference is made to “the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (v. 22), and to Jerusalem, following its destruction, being “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (v. 24).

Neither of these can be associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. “All things...written” *were NOT* brought to pass at this time. Most of the great prophecies surrounding the Jewish people still await fulfillment today. And Jerusalem is *NOT* presently being trodden down of the Gentiles, even though the “times of the Gentiles” is still running its course.

Jerusalem is under Jewish control today; and although the Temple area within the city presently remains in possession of the Gentiles, the prophecy in Luke 21:24 *CANNOT* somehow relate to just this area *per se*, for the Temple area will come under Jewish control during the first part of the Tribulation, before the Times of the Gentiles ends.

This section in Luke’s gospel can refer *ONLY to a future destruction of Jerusalem* which will be associated with “the days of vengeance,” the fulfilling of “all things which are written,” and Jerusalem being “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (cf. Rev. 11:1, 2).

2) Comparing Matthew’s and Luke’s Olivet Discourse accounts, events in Matt. 24:15-22 *MUST* be looked upon as occurring *at the SAME time* as events in Luke 21:20-24.

(Note the sequence of events in parallel Scriptures in Matthew’s and Luke’s Olivet Discourse accounts [Matt. 24:3-14 and Luke 21:7-19; Matt. 24:15-22 and Luke 21:20-24; Matt. 24:23-31 and Luke 21:25-28; Matt. 24:32ff and Luke 21:29ff].)

The section in Matthew has to do with the man of sin entering into "the holy place," the Jewish people told to "flee into the mountains," and "great tribulation" throughout the land.

The section in Luke has to do with "Jerusalem compassed with armies," the Jews told to "flee to the mountains," "the days of vengeance," "great distress in the land," and Jerusalem being "trodden down of the Gentiles."

In other words, both writers describe certain events surrounding the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem (either *the Temple* or *the entire city*) which occur *at the SAME time*. Matthew describes one facet of the matter and Luke another.

Matthew's description begins by viewing *the Temple*, and Luke's description begins by viewing *the entire city*. Both accounts refer to events occurring at that future time when the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel and, in all his fury, turns upon the Jewish people.

Both accounts, thus, refer to events which begin in the middle of the Tribulation and cover *NOT ONLY* the last half of the Tribulation *BUT* also days immediately following.

Specific reference to Jerusalem being trodden down of the Gentiles during this time is given in Rev. 11:2:

"...and the holy city [Jerusalem] shall they tread under foot forty and two months [three and one-half years, the last half of the Tribulation, beginning with the parallel events in Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff]."

At the end of this period, Messiah will return, the Times of the Gentiles will end, and Jerusalem, through Divine intervention, will cease to be trodden under foot.

The reference to the "destruction" of the Temple in Matt. 24:1, 2 is in connection with the announced "desolation" in Matt. 23:38.

There is a *past desolation* of the house of Israel (extending into the present), and there is a *past destruction* of the Temple (70 A.D.); but the reference in the passage *can ONLY* be to a *future desolation* of the house of Israel in connection with a *future destruction* of the Temple (a destruction also in connec-

tion with a future destruction of Jerusalem). And the text in Luke 21:20 places the occurrence of this future “desolation” and “destruction” *DURING the Tribulation*.

Thus, Jesus, answering the disciples’ question concerning the time when these things would occur, refers them to events yet future, even today — *events which will occur DURING the coming Tribulation*.

A future destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, foretold in Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff, is synonymous with the destruction in view in Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (note: “...shall destroy *the city and the sanctuary*” [v. 26]).

The words closing verse twenty-six, “and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (KJV), should literally read, “and unto the end, wars and desolations are determined.”

“The end” is *the end of the full Seventy Weeks*, which corresponds to *the end of the Tribulation*; and the “desolations” have to do with *the house of Israel being left desolate at THIS time, NOT during the present day and time* (cf. Jer. 33:10; Ezek. 36:33-35; Dan. 8:13; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15).

Verse twenty-seven then goes on to refer to the entire seven-year Tribulation period, with specific emphasis upon the same thing as in verse twenty-six — the “abomination of desolation” performing his work, beginning in the middle of the Tribulation.

Once again the word “desolate” is used in this verse:

“...he shall make it *desolate* [referring to a future, further desolation of that which Christ had left desolate — both occurring within the scope of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy], even unto the consummation [the end of the Tribulation].”

Verse twenty-seven is a commentary on verse twenty-six, and vice versa. Also, these verses together constitute a commentary on the Olivet Discourse passages, and vice versa.

(Note that events revealed in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy occur *DURING time covered by the prophecy, NOT outside of this time* [as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.])

What Shall Be the Sign...?

The Lord responded in a very clear manner to the disciples' question concerning the "time" of the desolation of the house of Israel and the destruction of the Temple. The "abomination of *desolation*" (or, as in Daniel's prophecy, "the abomination that maketh *desolate*") would desecrate the Temple; and his armies would then destroy, *NOT ONLY* the Temple, *BUT* the entire city of Jerusalem.

The revealed "time" would thus be in the middle of the Tribulation, in the middle of Daniel's Seventieth Week. And staying completely within the framework of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, discounting the time that the chronometer marking off this period does not run (the entire present dispensation), the fulfillment of events to which Jesus referred would begin to occur three and one-half years after they were revealed.

Of equal clearness was the Lord's response to the disciples' second question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ['age']?" Christ led into the first question in verses four through fourteen, and He answered the question in a very specific manner in verses fifteen through twenty-two. He then led into the second question in a very similar manner beginning with verse twenty-three (*cf.* vv. 4-6; 23-26), and the question is specifically answered in verses twenty-seven through thirty-one.

Note verse thirty: "And *then* shall appear the *sign*..." In this respect, the entire Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse constitutes a response to the disciples' two questions. In each instance, Christ *first* presented material relevant to an understanding of the specific answers, and He *then* gave the specific answers.

The disciples' second question is often thought of in the form of two questions: "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" and "What shall be the sign of the end of the age?" Further, these are sometimes thought of in a disassociated sense. However, such *CANNOT* be the case in either instance. This is *ONE* question with *ONE* sign.

The question does have two parts, but these parts *CANNOT* be disassociated one from the other. The manner in which the question is worded *will NOT* allow the two parts to be understood in independent senses, and the Lord's answer to the question occurs

within this same framework as well. “Thy coming” and “the end of the age” are marked by *one sign*, and the Lord’s coming can only be regarded as occurring *in association with the end of the age*.

The *sign* of the Lord’s coming and the end of the age occurs *after the Tribulation, at the end of the time of desolation*.

Note the exact wording of verses twenty-nine and thirty:

“Immediately *after* the Tribulation of those days...*then* shall appear the sign...” This sign has to do with the “sun” and “moon” being darkened, the “stars” falling from heaven, and the “powers of the heavens” being shaken. Luke broadens this by referring to *signs* both in the heavens and upon the earth:

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26; cf. Joel 3:15, 16).

A reference to these events found in Heb. 12:26 reveals that God is going to shake both the heavens and the earth, bringing these events (these *signs*) to pass:

“Yet once more I shake not the earth only [as in the past at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:18)], but also heaven.”

(The shaking of the mount at Sinai during Moses’ day would foreshadow the unshakable kingdom of Christ shaking and destroying *ALL world kingdoms during Christ’s day* — seen occurring in Daniel at the time that the Stone strikes the image in its final form, at its feet [cf. Dan. 2:44, 45]; and the shaking of the heavens would refer to the shaking of powers in these kingdoms.

This shaking will cause the sun and moon to be darkened and the stars to be dislodged from their present courses [again, a reference to Gentile world powers]. And this shaking is seen in Scripture to result in utter governmental chaos upon the earth in that coming day.

All of the preceding is vividly described in the Book of Revelation through the breaking of the sixth seal [6:12-17], the sounding

of the seventh trumpet [10:1-7; 11:15-19], and the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial [16:17-21].

This is further described in Luke 21:25 through a reference to “the sea [pointing to the nations] and the waves roaring,” describing the previously mentioned “distress of nations with perplexity.”

For additional information on this subject, refer to Chs. XV, XVIII, XIX in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)

Thus, the answer to the disciples’ question concerning the sign of the Lord’s coming and the end of the age centers around that future time when God will shake the heavens and the earth (referring to God bringing about an end to Gentile world power), immediately preceding and following the completion of Daniel’s full Seventy Weeks.

THEN shall appear “the sign of the Son of man in heaven”; *THEN* shall “all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” And it will be *THEN, NOT BEFORE*, that Israel will say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:39).

(Note a parallel derived from teachings surrounding Heb. 12:26:

The past shaking of the earth occurred immediately before God made a covenant with Israel [the Mosaic covenant, old covenant], anticipating the nation’s establishment within a theocracy.

The future shaking of the earth and heaven will occur immediately before God makes another covenant with Israel [the new covenant], anticipating the nation’s reestablishment in the land within a restored theocracy [cf. Heb. 8:6-13].

In both instances, the shaking of Gentile world power would be in view, for in both instances Gentile world power was to be / will be destroyed, with a view to Israel then holding the sceptre within a theocracy.)

Christ or Antichrist

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43).

There is an axiom in Biblical study to the effect that if the *truth* is rejected over a long enough period of time, God will cause the

individual or individuals rejecting the truth to believe that which is *untrue* (cf. II Thess. 2:9-12).

For Israel, this time arrived when the Scribes and Pharisees *filled up "the measure" of their fathers* (Matt. 23:31-32). They were the children of those who had exhibited unbelief in Israel down through the years, and they held the dubious honor of being the ones who brought the entire matter to the point where the Lord could allow it to go no further. Israel, over a prolonged period, had rejected the truth; and the Scribes and Pharisees had caused the nation to bring the entire matter to a climax by rejecting the One Who is *very Truth Himself*, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the nation at this point was left to believe that which was *untrue*. *The nation was left desolate*, awaiting an individual who would be received by the Jewish people and subsequently bring about *a further desolation, a desolation having NO parallel in history*.

Israel had rejected *the true Christ*, and the nation was left to believe *the false Christ*. Israel had rejected *the Truth*, wherein deliverance could have been effected; and the nation was then left to receive *the Lie* (cf. John 8:44), wherein complete and total destruction, apart from Divine intervention, would await the nation (cf. Matt. 24:22). Israel *can ONLY* be looked upon as fitting within the scope of the principle revealed in II Thessalonians chapter two; and the outworking of this principle within Israel's national affairs *MUST* come to pass, which God will use to bring the nation to the place of repentance. *THIS is the reason* for the impending "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7).

This time of trouble (during which Israel will believe *the Lie*) will befall the Gentile nations as well (Luke 21:35), and the reason for this is very simple. Israel was the nation called into existence to be the channel through which the Gentile nations would be both reached and blessed. Israel was to be placed in her own land at the head of the nations as a kingdom of priests within a theocracy, and all the Gentile nations were to be reached by Israel with God's message and be blessed through Israel. The Gentile nations, in this fashion, were to enter into that which Israel had entered.

However, Israel, like Jonah, went in the wrong direction; and the impending "time of Jacob's trouble" awaiting Israel will be

the ultimate result. And the Gentile nations *MUST* also enter this time of trouble as well because of the existing relationship which God established between Israel and the nations.

This relationship demands that the nations enter into that which Israel enters. It was supposed to be *salvation and blessings*, and it one day will be so; *BUT a time of unparalleled trouble* awaits Israel first, and, resultingly, the nations as well. Israel and the nations *together MUST enter and pass through the coming Tribulation*.

(A note of interest within this line of thought is the fact that the relationship existing between Israel and the Church is *NOT at all* the same as the relationship existing between Israel and the nations.

The Church is an entirely separate, a distinct entity, an entirely separate “nation” [I Peter 2:9, 10]; and, unlike the Gentile nations, the Church, in this respect, *does NOT enter into that which Israel enters*. Again, hermeneutics would be involved in seeing a clear distinction between Israel, the Church, and the nations [cf. I Cor. 10:32; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:11-15].

Resultingly, the reason for the coming Tribulation *has NOTHING to do with the Church*; and the clear teaching of Scripture attests to the fact that the Church will be removed from the earth *BEFORE* the Tribulation begins [Rev. 1:10ff; 4:1, 2; 6:1ff].)

Satan’s climactic efforts to destroy Israel, preceding the overthrow and destruction of his kingdom, will revolve around the Antichrist. Satan will give to this false Christ that which he previously offered to the true Christ — “the kingdoms of the world [looked upon as *one world kingdom* in Rev. 11:15]” (Matt. 4:8, 9). Satan will give to this man “his power, and his seat [‘throne’], and great authority” (Rev. 13:2); and he will begin exercising this authority in all its fullness “in the midst of the week” (Dan. 9:27), in the middle of the Tribulation.

In this position, the one whom Israel will receive at the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, will, after three and one-half years, reveal his true colors and turn against Israel in all his fury. About *nine million Jews* will die, and about *one and one-half billion Gentiles* will suffer the same fate — all through *climactic efforts by Satan to destroy the ONE nation called into existence to be the channel through which ALL the nations of the earth would be reached and blessed*.

A remnant from Israel though will survive the Great Tribulation and the judgments occurring immediately following Christ's return (Ezek. 5:12; Zech. 13:8, 9), and so will most of the Gentiles (cf. Rev. 9:15-18; 13:15; 14:14-20). Israel *MUST* occupy the position for which the nation was called into existence; and Gentile nations *MUST* be present for Israel to occupy this position. "...the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29).

God *will NOT* change His mind concerning the reason He formed the nations and then called Israel into existence. Israel though (and resultingly the nations) *MUST* first have her part in the outworking of the principle set forth in II Thessalonians chapter two. *THEN*, Israel will realize her calling in relation to the nations of the earth.

Concluding Remarks:

The disciples' questions in Matt. 24:3 are *Jewish* in their entirety, and these questions are answered in *the Jewish section* of the Olivet Discourse. These questions relate to *the desolation of the house of Israel and the destruction of the Temple (expanded to the city of Jerusalem in Luke's account)*; and the Lord honored the questions by answering them within this same framework.

The entire matter was projected out into the coming Tribulation, a period through which Israel *MUST* pass because of the climactic events outlined in chapter twenty-three.

At the point of these climactic events, keeping within the axiom set forth in II Thessalonians chapter two, *Israel's destiny was SET*; and the Lord responded to the disciples' questions accordingly.

Of striking difference in the Jewish and Christian sections of the Olivet Discourse is *the presence of the period of Tribulation in the former and the absence of this period in the latter*. Events in the Jewish section occur, in their entirety, *WITHIN and immediately following the Tribulation*; and events in the Christian section occur, in their entirety, *WITHOUT the Tribulation and that subsequently occurring*.

There is a *TOTAL association with the Tribulation and subsequent events* on the one hand and a *TOTAL disassociation with the Tribulation and subsequent events* on the other hand.

This is as it MUST be. The revealed purpose for and hermeneutical principals surrounding the whole of the matter necessitate such.

2

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

The Beginning of Israel's Birth Pangs

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:4-8).

False Christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are ever in the news today.

But the reference in Matthew chapter twenty-four is *specifically* to events in days ahead, events during the Tribulation, with events today setting the stage for events which are about to occur, as revealed in the opening verses of the Olivet Discourse.

The end of the age is the matter at hand throughout these opening verses, in keeping with the disciples’ questions (v. 3); but the *sign* of the end of the age is not given until near the conclusion of the Jewish section of the discourse (vv. 29, 30).

“The end” in verse six is the same “end” referred to in verses thirteen and fourteen — *the end of the age*, or *the end of the Tribulation*. This is synonymous with “the end,” “the consummation,” in Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:26, 27).

Although verses four through eight describe events which will actually exist throughout the Tribulation, the specific reference is to events during *the first part of this period*.

Note verse six: "...but the end is not yet." The specific events described here *will occur at a time during the Tribulation which precedes the actual time of the end*.

Verses nine through fourteen then continue from this point and provide information *concerning additional events throughout the remainder of the Tribulation, with previously revealed events continuing*.

Note the concluding statement in this section: "...then shall the end come." Here we have *events which occur during the latter part of the Tribulation and lead up to the end of this period, the end of the age*.

Thus, verses four through eight depict *events which will occur during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation*; and verses nine through fourteen depict *additional events which will occur during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation*.

The expression "the beginning of sorrows" (v. 8), as will be shown, is peculiarly related to *Israel* during the Tribulation, pointing to climactic events which will occur both *in the middle* and *at the end* of this seven-year period. Verses four through eight carry one to *the time of the first of these two climactic events* (in the middle of the Tribulation), and verses nine through fourteen pick up at this point and carry one through to *the time of the second of these two climactic events* (at the end of the Tribulation).

Verses four through fourteen, thus, cover *major related events pertaining to Israel from the beginning to the end of the Tribulation*.

The ENTIRE scope of the matter is revealed in these verses, BUT with very little detail.

THEN, verses fifteen through twenty-six drop back and cover the same time period as verses nine through fourteen, providing additional details concerning *a number of events which will occur in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*.

(The reference to "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes" in v. 7b is in connection with *wars between nations* (vv. 6, 7a).

Wars of this nature result in "famines" and "pestilences" in various places, *but NOT in "earthquakes."*

The word “earthquakes” is a translation of a plural form of the Greek word *seismos*, which simply refers to a shaking, NOT to an earthquake *per se* [the English word “seismic,” meaning *shaking, tremors, agitation*, is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *seismos*]. The words “seismic” or *seismos* would refer to the shaking produced by an earthquake [or anything else that is being shaken], though not to the earthquake itself.

And, when *seismos* is used in Scripture, as in Matt. 24:7, that being referenced as being shaken *MUST* be derived from the context or through comparing Scripture with Scripture elsewhere.

And, through both the context and comparing Scripture with Scripture [e.g., Rev. 7:12-17, where the word *seismos* also appears], this shaking in Matt. 24:7 has to do, NOT with the earth, BUT with world kingdoms on the earth. It has to do with God, through His providential control of all things, bringing about *chaos within Gentile world powers*, particularly toward the end of the Tribulation [toward the end of Man’s Day, toward the end of the Times of the Gentiles].

For more information on *God one day shaking Gentile world powers* in this manner, refer to Chapter XV, “The Great Seismos,” in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)

The End Is Not Yet

Attention in the Olivet Discourse centers itself particularly on events beginning in the middle of the Tribulation and carrying through to the end. Very little attention is given in this discourse to events which will occur during the first half of the Tribulation.

And even in the five verses which do deal with this time (vv. 4-8), the main focus is still on climactic events which will occur in the middle, during the last half, and at the end of the Tribulation.

The word “sorrows” (v. 8) is the key word depicting this. “Sorrows” is a translation of the Greek word *odin*, and it is really not a good translation as we understand words today.

Odin has to do with “the travail” which a woman undergoes as she endures a time of labor immediately preceding the birth of a child; and the word “sorrows” carries too broad of a meaning in this respect. *Odin* could be better translated “birth-pangs” or “travail.”

The reference is to *Israel in this condition during and at the end of the Tribulation* (beginning in the first half).

And related Scripture clearly reveals that the terminus of the matter will occur at two points — one *in the middle* and the other *at the end* of the Tribulation. *Israel will give birth in the middle, and Israel will experience birth at the end.*

Isaiah 66:7, 8 refers to future times when Israel will both give birth and experience birth:

“Before she [Israel] travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.

Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”

Israel will first deliver “a man-child”; then, the nation itself will be “born at once.” But, though these verses in Isaiah refer to Israel bringing forth a man-child, the “travail” and “pain” associated with birth are connected *ONLY with the birth of the nation, NOT with the birth of the man-child.*

Revelation 12:1-5 then presents the other part of the matter pertaining to Israel’s travail. In these verses, the only birth in view is that of the “man-child,” occurring *before* the birth of the nation; and Israel is seen crying out while travailing in pain, awaiting the birth of this child.

Events in these verses do not move beyond this point. The subsequent birth of the nation, as in Isa. 66:8, is not in view at all.

Thus, related Scripture clearly reveals that Israel’s travail in Matt. 24:8 is associated with two events:

- 1) *The nation first giving birth* (Rev. 12:5).
- 2) *The nation then experiencing birth* (Isa. 66:7, 8).

There will *NOT ONLY* be a bringing forth by the one travailing in pain, *BUT* this same one will herself subsequently be brought forth. *The one giving birth will be the same one ultimately born.*

Daniel and Revelation

In the interpretation of particularly the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, the proper place which the Books of Daniel and

Revelation hold in Scripture *MUST* be recognized. These are companion volumes which deal largely with the same time period under discussion — *with events during and following the coming Tribulation*.

It has already been demonstrated to some extent in Chapter I of this book how the Book of Daniel sheds an abundance of light on the opening portion of the Olivet Discourse (note verse fifteen in this respect: "...spoken of by Daniel the prophet...").

The same also holds true for the Book of Revelation, for no other book in Scripture deals so extensively with details surrounding events during the Tribulation than this book does (chs. 6-19a).

The Book of Daniel concerns itself with the kingdom of this world in four different stages, depicted by Nebuchadnezzar's image seen standing in Babylon. Space is given to different periods in history when this kingdom (the kingdom of Babylon) was under the control of different nations: *the Babylonians themselves*, then *the Medes and Persians*, and then *the Grecians* (cf. Dan. 2:31-33, 36-39; 7:1-6; 8:1-8, 20-22).

But most of the space given to the Babylonian kingdom in the Book of Daniel pertains *to that future time when this kingdom will come under the control of worldwide forces headed up by Antichrist during the Tribulation, followed by the utter destruction of the final form of the kingdom of Babylon*, "the kingdom of the world" in Rev. 11:15 (ASV; cf. Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45; 7:7-28; 8:9-14, 23-26; 9:26, 27; 11:21-45).

The Book of Revelation though *does NOT deal with the first three parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image, ONLY with the fourth part*. Beginning with chapter six and continuing through chapter nineteen, the kingdom of Antichrist is depicted from its beginning to its end.

This portion of Scripture opens by showing Antichrist focusing his attention on the throne through *going forth* "conquering, and to conquer" (6:1, 2). And, after three and one-half years, he is seen enthroned in all his power (13:1ff).

THEN, at the end of the full seven years, chapters fifteen and nineteen reveal the utter destruction of his kingdom. "The kingdom of the world" at that time will become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (ASV; cf. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Rev. 11:15).

Thus, it is only natural when studying the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse that continual reference be made to the Books

of Daniel and Revelation. These books deal with the same time period and provide a wealth of related, indispensable information.

The Man-Child

There are only three places in the New Testament where the word “travail” is used relative to Israel. The first two occurrences are in Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of the Olivet Discourse (parallel references), and the third is in Rev. 12:2, 4 (*odin* appears in the Greek text in both Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts, and *odino* [a cognate word, having the same meaning] appears in Rev. 12:2). All three of these references are in accounts having to do with Israel during the coming Tribulation (*cf.* Acts 2:24; Gal. 4:19, 27; I Thess. 5:3).

In Revelation chapter twelve though, unlike the Olivet Discourse accounts, specific reference is made to the birth of a child in connection with this travail. And the information in this complete account is such that when the Olivet Discourse passages are studied in conjunction with this portion of the Book of Revelation, these related Scriptures begin to open up to one’s understanding.

1) Contextual Interpretation

There is a common but erroneous interpretation of the travail and childbirth in Rev. 12:1-5 which associates this passage with Israel bringing forth Christ almost two thousand years ago.

This association is made largely on the basis of verse five:

“And she [Israel] brought forth a man-child, who was [‘is about to’] rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

This verse is looked upon as a reference to the birth, ascension, and coming reign of Christ, *with LITTLE attention given to the contextual place which the verse occupies in the Book of Revelation.*

Contextually, this verse CANNOT be understood as a reference to Christ — past or future. The contextual setting within the Book of Revelation is at a time during the Tribulation; and the birth of a son and his removal to God’s throne *will occur during THAT time, NOT during a time two thousand years prior to the events at hand.*

Such is evident from several observations surrounding information given in the verses immediately preceding and following verse five. Looking at the context, Rev. 12:3 refers to Satan and his system of world government at a time near the middle of the Tribulation. All seven heads will have been crowned when events at this point in the book occur, and the seventh head will be none other than the Antichrist himself (*cf.* Rev. 13:1, 2; 17:8-11).

This man will go forth at the beginning of the Tribulation, wearing a crown, “conquering, and to conquer” (6:2); but his being crowned at this time and also at a later time during the Tribulation are two entirely different matters.

The words appearing in the Greek text for “crown” in Rev. 6:2 and in Rev. 12:3; 13:1 are not the same. Two different words are used; and through the use of these words, two types of crowns are in view, depicting marked differences.

The first word is *stephanos* (6:2), referring to a “victor’s crown,” or a crown denoting certain types of “worth” or “valor”; and the second word is *diadema* (12:3; 13:1), referring to a crown denoting “regal authority” or “kingly power.” *There is NO such thing as an incumbent ruler wearing a stephanos; he MUST wear a diadema.*

(For additional information on the use of *stephanos* and *diadema* in the Greek N.T., refer to either the author’s book, *The Time of the End*, Chapter VII, or *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter XII.)

In Rev. 6:2, the Antichrist is seen wearing a *stephanos*, undoubtedly pointing to *his victory in conquest, anticipating regal power over the earth.*

But *THIS* crown *CANNOT* point to regal power of this nature. In fact, it shows just the opposite. The *stephanos* worn by Antichrist at this time shows that *he will NOT yet be in possession of worldwide dominion.*

But Rev. 12:3; 13:1, 2 show something quite different. In these verses, the Antichrist is seen in possession of a *diadema*, showing that he, at this later time, *will have attained the regal power which he had previously sought.* And the setting of Rev. 12:3, *with Israel in travail (vv. 2, 4), is following the time Antichrist ascends the throne as ruler over the entire earth. ALL seven heads of the Beast, in the person of the seventh head, are seen in possession of regal power at this point in the book (shown by the word diadema).*

Then, Rev. 12:4 refers to that future time when Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven onto the earth:

“And his [the great red dragon’s (Satan’s)] tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven [his angels (*cf.* Job 38:7; Dan. 8:10)], and did cast them to the earth.”

This casting out will be accomplished by “Michael and his angels” (vv. 7-9) and will occur shortly before the middle of the Tribulation. According to the latter part of verse four, Satan at that time will stand before Israel (who will be in “travail” and “ready to be delivered”) “for to devour her child” *as soon as it is born*.

Verse five then refers to the birth of the man-child and the child’s subsequent removal from the earth into heaven to escape Satan’s wrath. Satan at this point during the Tribulation will no longer have access to the heavens. Consequently, the child, once removed from the earth, will be out of his jurisdiction.

Satan will then turn in all his fury against Israel and seek, in one vain, climactic attempt, to utterly destroy this nation. This is the point in both Daniel’s prophecy and the Olivet Discourse accounts where the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and the Jews in Judaea are told to flee for their lives, with all possible haste, with only the clothes which they will have on their backs at that time.

They are told to flee into “the mountains” (Matt. 24:15, 16 [*world kingdoms, i.e., the nations; cf.* Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 21:20-24]), “the wilderness” (Rev. 12:6, 14-16 [*Gentile lands, as distinguished from the land of Israel; cf.* Ex. 19:1; Heb. 3:8, 17]).

With all this in view, note once again the contextual setting of Rev. 12:5. Verses three and four have to do with events *which will occur during the Tribulation, shortly before the middle*. All seven heads of the Beast will have been crowned at this point, with *diadems, something which CANNOT occur before a time near the middle of the Tribulation*.

Satan and his angels will then be cast out of heaven; and Satan will stand before Israel, who will be *in travail* (“ready to be delivered”), “for to devour her child” *as soon as it is born* (v. 4).

The child will, with Satan in this position, be brought forth and, apparently, be immediately removed from the earth (v. 5). Satan, failing in his attempt to destroy the man-child, will then

turn against the nation which gave birth to the child; and Israel, to escape his wrath, will flee into the surrounding Gentile nations, an event which will occur in the middle of the Tribulation.

Thus, events in verses three and four will occur shortly before the middle of the Tribulation, and events in verse six will occur in the middle itself. By no rational method of Scriptural interpretation can part of the events in verse five be moved back two thousand years in history. The birth of this child *MUST be looked upon as occurring during the coming Tribulation, near the middle, between events described in verses four and six.*

2) Structure of Revelation

The very nature of the way that the Book of Revelation is structured would also demand an interpretation of this nature. The book, through its own revealed format, is divided into three parts.

John was commanded:

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’]” (1:19).

“The things which thou hast seen” are given in chapter one. Chapters two and three have to do with “the things which are” (the present Christian dispensation, along with Christians appearing before the judgment seat [a continuing picture from chapter one])

And chapters four through twenty-two have to do with “the things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’ (after the things pertaining to the Christian dispensation and the subsequent judgment seat)].”

And *there can be NO mistake* concerning which point in the book this latter division occurs (or, for that matter, the former division also). The same two Greek words, *meta tauta* (translated “hereafter” in Rev. 1:19), are used in Rev. 4:1 (translated “After this” and “hereafter”). The words *meta tauta* should be translated “after these things” in all three instances, calling attention, in each instance, to the third part of the book.

Beyond Rev. 4:2, *ALL events occur after the present dispensation, either immediately preceding, during, or following the Tribulation.*

Chapters four and five depict events which will occur *immedi-*

ately preceding the Tribulation (following the removal of the Church), chapters six through the opening verses of chapter nineteen depict events which will occur *during or immediately following the Tribulation*, and the latter part of nineteen through chapter twenty-two depict events which will occur *following the Tribulation*.

The setting of Revelation chapter twelve is in *the third part of the book* (following the Christian dispensation), with events in the chapter occurring *during the Tribulation*. The context of Rev. 12:5 and the books own built in three-segment division *will NOT allow this verse to refer to the birth of Christ. It can ONLY refer to events during the Tribulation.*

3) Identity of the Man-Child

If Rev. 12:5 is not a reference to Christ, then who? What person will Israel yet bring forth who is destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron”? When all Scriptures bearing on the subject are taken into account, there can really be *ONLY one answer*; and the surprising thing, in the light of all the erroneous interpretation, is the fact that *the man-child is actually identified in Revelation chapter twelve itself.*

Note that language in this chapter is highly figurative: a “woman,” a “great red dragon,” “wings of a great eagle,” “water as a flood,” “the earth opened her mouth.”

The “woman” is not a literal woman, but *Israel*; the “great red dragon” is not a literal dragon, but *Satan*; and, within this same framework, the “man-child [*lit.*, ‘a son, a male’]” should not be looked upon as a literal man (as Christ), but...

The “woman” represents *a nation*. Could not the “man-child” represent a *segment* of that nation, *a first fruit of the nation preceding the birth of the nation itself*, referred to as “the remnant of her seed” in verse seventeen?

Actually, this is *the ONLY interpretation* which will fit the context and remain in line with all Scriptures bearing on the subject. This is also the interpretation which will open up verses four through fourteen of Matthew’s account of the Olivet Discourse, as well as parallel portions of Mark’s and Luke’s accounts.

When Christ was upon earth the first time He called and commissioned twelve disciples who, with Him, carried the gospel of the kingdom to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” over a period

of three and one-half years. To these twelve (Judas later being replaced), Christ promised the chief positions over Israel in the coming kingdom. They would be granted the privilege of sitting on “twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28).

Immediately preceding Christ’s return, during the Tribulation, one hundred forty-four thousand Jews will be called and commissioned to carry the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles throughout the earth (cf. Matt. 24:14).

These individuals will have a three and one-half-year ministry and evidently occupy comparable positions over the Gentiles in the coming kingdom to those which the twelve will occupy over Israel. These are the ones who, during the Tribulation, will “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” in Rev. 12:17 (a verse identifying the “man-child” from verse five).

And, as the twelve will occupy positions in the coming kingdom over those to whom they ministered, the one hundred forty-four thousand will occupy positions in the coming kingdom over those to whom they will minister. They (as Christ and overcoming Christians of the present dispensation) are “about to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (cf. Ps. 2:8, 9; Rev. 2:26, 27).

Recognizing that the “man-child” of Rev. 12:5 is synonymous with “the remnant of her [Israel’s] seed” in verse seventeen — the one hundred forty-four thousand who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles during the Tribulation — will explain why those who have “the testimony of Jesus Christ” are seen *in heaven* and called “a first fruit [singular in the Greek text, a corporate group] unto God and to the Lamb” in Rev. 14:1-5. They will have previously been removed from the earth to escape Satan’s wrath, and they will comprise “a first fruit” of the nation, anticipating “the main harvest” (the conversion of the entire nation) at the time of Christ’s return.

(Note that “a first fruit” and “the main harvest” are both intimately and inseparably associated with *Israel’s travail*.

“The beginning of sorrows [‘travail’]” will first result in *the birth of the man-child* [“a first fruit” out of the nation]. The travail will then continue throughout the last half of the Tribulation and reach its most intense stage immediately before *the birth of the entire nation* [“the main harvest”] at the conclusion of the Tribulation. *Israel’s travail will THEN be over.*)

4) *Parallels*

There are certain parallels surrounding *the birth and ministry of Christ* and *the birth and ministry of the man-child* which would appear to shed light on events in Rev. 12:5.

Christ, following His birth, was removed from the land of Israel and taken to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. Herod had no jurisdiction in Egypt. Then, at a later time, He was taken back to the land; and, the day came, when He began His public ministry, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for a period of about three and one-half years.

In similar fashion, following his birth, the man-child will be removed from the earth and be taken into heaven to escape Satan's wrath. Satan, at that time, will no longer have jurisdiction in the heavens. Then, at a later point in time, the man-child will be sent back to the earth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles for a period of about three and one-half years.

The length of time Christ spent in Egypt is unrevealed; but it could only have been relatively short, for He grew up beyond this time in the land of Israel. In like manner, the length of time that the man-child will spend in heaven is unrevealed; but it can only be relatively short, for the man-child — the one hundred forty-four thousand — is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles throughout the earth during the last half of the Tribulation.

It is altogether possible and seemingly very probable that the one hundred forty-four thousand will be taught the message they are to proclaim by Christ Himself during the time they spend in heaven.

Christ taught His twelve disciples the message which they proclaimed, and He also removed the Apostle Paul from evidently a place in the Arabian desert and then transported Paul into His presence in heaven in order to teach him the message which he was to proclaim throughout the Gentile world before sending him back to earth to proclaim this message (Matt. 5:1, 2; 10:5-42; II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:2, 3).

And, in like manner, those having "the testimony of Jesus Christ" during the Tribulation will have been removed into heaven, probably be taught by Christ, then be sent back to the earth with *a commission and a message*.

Comparing the Different Accounts

A further connecting link between the man-child and those who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom during the Tribulation can be derived by noting the presence or absence of certain parallel Scriptures in the Jewish sections of all three Olivet Discourse accounts (Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's), studying these sections after this fashion in the light of Revelation chapter twelve.

Israel's travail is mentioned in Matt. 24:8 and Mark 13:8, but there is no mention of this travail in the parallel section of Luke's account (21:8-19).

In like manner, Matthew and Mark both call attention to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10); but Luke, in his account, is completely silent concerning this event.

The connection between Israel's travail, the birth of the man-child, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth during the last half of the Tribulation is, of course, self-evident. The man-child, brought forth following Israel's travail, is the one who will proclaim this message; and the relationship between the three (travail, man-child, proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom) is further shown in the three Olivet Discourse accounts. *Matthew and Mark record BOTH Israel's travail and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, BUT Luke does NOT record EITHER of these events.*

WHY are *BOTH* Israel's travail and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom recorded in Matthew's and Mark's accounts *but NEITHER one* is recorded in Luke's account? The reason becomes self-evident once the connection between the two events is understood in its proper perspective.

Israel, in travail, brings forth the one who proclaims the gospel of the kingdom. The nation's travail and the proclamation of this message are, in this respect, so inseparably connected that one is not recorded in the Olivet Discourse accounts apart from the other.

Matthew and Mark record BOTH, for the inclusion of one *necessitates* the inclusion of the other; *but Luke does NOT record EITHER*, for the omission of one *necessitates* the omission of the other.

Things in Scripture, such as the preceding, are by Divine design. The Word of God is to be studied by comparing Scripture with Scripture (I Cor. 2:13; cf. John 5:39, 40). The best commentary on Scripture *has ALWAYS been, and will ALWAYS remain, "Scripture itself."*

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the One Who guides the Christian "into all truth"; and that which the Spirit uses in this respect — "*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*" — is that which He moved some forty different individuals over a period of about 1,500 years to record, *the God-Breathed Word* (cf. Ps. 12:6; 138:2; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).

Concluding Remarks:

Israel's travail, with birth following, is associated with the most severe and intense time of trouble that this world has ever seen or ever will see. The beginning of travail is associated with wars, famines, pestilences, and a shaking of governmental powers during the first part of the Tribulation, preceding the birth of the man-child (Matt. 24:7, 8; cf. Rev. 6:3-6); and this travail will reach its most intense state during the latter part of the Tribulation, the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:6, 7) — with events surrounding wars, famines, pestilences, and a sifting and shaking of governmental powers being brought to an apex — immediately preceding the birth of the nation itself (Matt. 24:9-13; cf. v. 22; Rev. 6:12-17).

(Somewhat of a parallel to this can be seen in modern times.

Israel, during the years of the Third Reich in Europe [1933-1945], passed through what is called the "Holocaust." Then, about three years later, an Israeli nation was born in the Middle East [1948].)

The present Israeli nation will one day pass through a period "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). The intensity of Israel's travail will be commensurate with the troublesome times; and the birth of the nation at the conclusion of this period will result in Israel subsequently finding herself in a completely antithetical position (as it were, an antithetical position commensurate with the travail).

Israel will be *restored, realize her calling, and be placed in a position wherein such a time of trouble can NEVER exist again.*

3

THEN...

Israel, During and Following the Tribulation

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

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

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:9-14).

Matthew 24:9-14 describes Israel’s condition and certain events pertaining to the nation, beginning in the middle and covering the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. Timewise, events in these verses are synonymous with events in the continuing twelve verses (vv. 15-26, furnishing commentary for the previous verses), and with events in Rev. 12:6, 13-17.

When the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel (in the middle of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy), the nation will, in an apparent almost immediate sense, *be delivered up for affliction*.

The mass killing of millions of Jews will then commence; and the Jewish people, at this time, as never before, will begin to be hated by ALL the nations of the earth (v. 9).

Jews themselves during this time, because of existing conditions, *will even begin to betray and hate one another; and false prophets will arise among the people, leading many astray* (vv. 10, 11; cf. Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).

Scripture relates the matter of internal turmoil among the Jewish people during this time *to their becoming lawless*. Their previous “love” for one another will, as a result, *grow cold, bringing about dire consequences* (v. 12). Betrayal of and hatred for one another, along with the work of false prophets (all among the people themselves), will produce a condition aiding the set goal of the enemy — *the utter destruction of Israel* (cf. Ps. 83:4).

And this evidently reveals another reason why “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (v. 22).

The general plight of the Jewish people during the last half of the Tribulation is given in these few, brief verses. And the statement is then made that *the one enduring to the end would be saved* (v. 13).

This *can ONLY have to do with physical deliverance out of the Tribulation*. Those Jews who survive the afflictions, mass killings, hatred by the Gentiles, and the lawlessness of their own people, will be physically delivered at the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

Concluding this part of the Olivet Discourse, reference is made to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.

This gospel will be proclaimed throughout the earth by one hundred forty-four thousand Jews during the time described by verses nine through thirteen. The ministry of these Jewish evangelists will thus occur during *the darkest hour of human history*. Their ministry will occur during the reign of Antichrist, amidst all the trouble, terror, and conflict within his kingdom; and it will occur during the time Satan makes his last, desperate attempt (preceding the Messianic Era) to destroy the nation of Israel.

Comparing Matthew and Revelation

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:4-39) has to do with events during the seven-year Tribulation, leading into and including the return of Christ and attendant events at the end of the Tribulation. The corresponding section in the Book of Revelation covers fourteen chapters (chs. 6-19a), and events in these chapters are arranged in a parallel fashion to the way events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse are arranged.

Note this section of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew’s gospel.

Verses four through fourteen provide a *brief summary* of events which cover the entire seven years of the Tribulation, and this summary concludes with the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.

Then, verses fifteen through twenty-six provide *additional details* concerning specific events which will occur *in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*, the same time covered by verses nine through fourteen; and these verses lead into events surrounding the return of Christ as revealed in verses twenty-seven through thirty-one.

In the Book of Revelation, the Tribulation begins with the opening two verses of chapter six, and judgments during and immediately following this seven-year period are revealed through the opening of the seven seals (6:1-17; 8:1), the sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2-9:21; 10:1-7; 11:15-19), and the pouring out of the seven vials (16:1-21).

The first six seals are opened in chapter six, and the judgments wrought through the opening of these seals provide an overview of events and judgments during the entire seven years of the Tribulation, as seen in Matt. 24:4-13. Then, note that at the end of this overall coverage in both Matthew and Revelation, the Spirit of God moved the two writers to record information relating to *the same thing* — *the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom* (v. 14).

In Matt. 24:14 a brief statement is given concerning the proclamation of this message; and corresponding Scripture clearly reveals that this ministry of the Word will be carried out by a “remnant” removed from the nation of Israel, the one hundred forty-four thousand of Rev. 14:1-5 (*ref.* Chapter II in this book).

It is this, as in Matthew’s gospel, which appears in what can only be the parallel section in the Book of Revelation. In Rev. 7:1ff, the one hundred forty-four thousand first come into view; and these verses immediately follow the opening of the first six seals, forming a perfect parallel between Matt. 24:4-14 and Revelation chapters six and seven.

As in Matthew’s gospel, so in the Book of Revelation — the emphasis is upon events which will occur *in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*, NOT during the first half.

In Revelation chapter six, the opening of the first seal (depicting the man of sin going forth “conquering, and to conquer”) is

the only part of the chapter which has to do with *events occurring during the first half of the Tribulation*. The remainder of the seal-judgments can *ONLY* point to events occurring either in *the middle, during the last half, or immediately following the Tribulation*.

And it is so with the remainder of that portion of the book dealing with judgments resulting from the breaking of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, or the pouring out of the vials.

Even in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Dan. 9:24-27, the emphasis is upon events occurring in *the middle and during the last half of the Seventieth Week, NOT upon events occurring during the first half*. Actually, the only event in this prophecy which will occur during the first half of the Seventieth Week is the ratifying of the covenant between the man of sin and Israel; and this same emphasis upon events occurring during *the middle and last half of the Week* carries over into Matt. 24:4-39 and Rev. 6:1ff.

The first half of the Tribulation, compared to the last half, will be a time of *relative peace*; but this *peace* will come to a *sudden end* when the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel.

This is what the opening of the second seal evidently refers to:

“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon [the same rider as on the white horse when the first seal was opened, but *now* revealed in his true color] to take *peace* from the earth...” (v. 4).

Then, the remainder of the seal-judgments describe conditions and events following this, occurring during and immediately following the last half of the Tribulation (vv. 5ff).

In the Book of Revelation, immediately following the opening of the first six seals, an entire chapter (ch. 7) is given over to the sealing of the one hundred forty-four thousand and the results of their ministry (paralleling events in Matt. 24:4-14). Beyond this parallel point in the Olivet Discourse, specific details are given concerning events occurring during the time covered by previous Scripture (that is, events in vv. 15-26 occur during the same time as events in vv. 9-14, providing additional commentary).

And it is the same in the Book of Revelation. Specific details are given concerning events occurring during the time covered

by previous Scripture (that is, events in chs. 8ff occur during the same time as certain events in chs. 6, 7, providing additional commentary). Then, in both the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation, the entire matter leads up to and includes the return of Christ with attendant events (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21).

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse is, in the preceding respect, *a little Apocalypse* — Matt. 24:4-13 corresponds to Rev. 6:1-17; Matt. 24:14 corresponds to Rev. 7:1-17; Matt. 24:15-26 corresponds to Rev. 6:3-19:6; and Matt. 24:27-31 corresponds to Rev. 19:11-21.

“Time” surrounding the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials is something that *MUST* be understood in its proper perspective if one is to grasp the issue at hand. The thought is not at all that once one seal has been opened, revealed events associated with that particular seal must come to pass before the next seal can be opened. No! Events covered by a particular seal can still be occurring during the time other seals are opened, or even during the time the trumpets are sounded or the corresponding vials of wrath are poured out.

It seems evident that many judgments revealed under the opening of these seals will overlap one another and extend throughout a large portion of the Tribulation, with some evidently still occurring when the last trumpet is sounded and the corresponding last vial is poured out, which will be following the Tribulation and Christ’s return.

The seven trumpet judgments form the judgments revealed when the seventh seal is broken; and the seven vial judgments correspond to the seven trumpet judgments, providing a further description of these judgments (*cf.* Rev. 8:1-10:7; 11:15-19; 16:1-21).

The sounding of the seventh trumpet and the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial bring matters to the same end.

Note Rev. 10:7; 11:15; 16:17:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [the angel with the seventh trumpet], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, ‘The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever’” (ASV).

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’”

The words, “It is done,” closing the statement concerning the pouring out of the seventh vial, are the translation of a perfect tense verb in the Greek text. The perfect tense refers to action completed in past time, with the results of that action existing during present time in a finished state.

At this point in the book, everything will have been brought to pass; and the mighty angel seen at this time in chapter ten can then act in the described manner — placing one foot on the land and the other on the sea (taking complete control of the earth), extending the opened scroll toward heaven (the seven-sealed scroll now unsealed, opened, showing that all the judgments have been completed), allowing the announcement by other “great voices” seen in Rev. 11:15:

“The kingdom of the world is become...”

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapters XVIII, XIX in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)

The One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand

The one hundred forty-four thousand Jews who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation will be saved during the first half, with the complete group having been saved preceding the middle of the Tribulation. This is what is referenced by *the birth of the man-child* at the mid-point of the Tribulation in Rev. 12:5. Then, *the birth of the entire nation*, “all Israel,” will occur at the end of the Tribulation (Isa. 66:8; cf. Rom. 11:26 [ref. Chapter II in this book]).

The one hundred forty-four thousand will apparently be saved through the ministry of the two witnesses in Revelation chapter eleven, whose ministry will span the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

Then, the nation itself will be saved at the end of the Tribulation by the personal appearing of Jesus Christ. They will “look

upon" the *One Whom they pierced* (Zech. 12:10).

And in the antitype of Joseph revealing himself to his brethren (Gen. 45:1ff), Christ revealing Himself to the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1ff), and Christ revealing Himself to the two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13ff), Christ will reveal Himself to the nation of Israel, resulting in a nation being "born at once" (*cf.* Isa. 66:7, 8; Zech. 12:10-14; 14:6).

The salvation of individuals comprising the one hundred forty-four thousand will evidently occur at different times throughout the first three and one half years of the Tribulation, with the last of these individuals being saved near the end of this time.

Israel is seen in travail throughout this time but does not give birth until near the middle of the Tribulation, after all of the one hundred forty-four thousand have been saved.

In this respect, the gestation period for the nation bringing forth the man-child will be about three and one-half years. And the last of the one hundred forty-four thousand being saved will bring the nation's pregnancy to full-term, with the birth of the man-child in Rev. 12:5 then taking place.

There are individuals today who teach that the Church must somehow have a part in the salvation of the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation. Such would be brought to pass in one of two ways:

- 1) By their conversion near the end of the present dispensation through Jewish evangelism (and their remaining behind at the time of the rapture).

- 2) Or, by Christians proclaiming the salvation message to the Jewish people near the end of this present dispensation so they will have it in their possession during the Tribulation (ultimately resulting in the salvation of the 144,000).

The teaching that the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation are to be saved during the present time is, of course, completely fallacious. A Jew saved today finds himself positionally "in Christ," a part of *the one new man*; and, in this standing, there is no distinction between saved Jews and saved Gentiles. They have *both relinquished their national identities* and will *both be removed together at the time of the rapture*, with *NO distinction made between the two*.

There can be no such thing as a saved Jew being left behind at the time of the rapture to go through the Tribulation, no more so than a saved Gentile being left behind at this time to go through the Tribulation.

Then, beyond that, the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation *are NOT* to be saved during the present dispensation anyway. They are to be saved *AFTER the Church has been removed, during the Tribulation.*

The entire matter is *Jewish and future*. It will be *THEN, NOT NOW, that Israel's travail and the resulting subsequent birth of a child occur.*

The teaching that Christians are to proclaim the salvation message to the Jewish people during the present time so that they will have it during the Tribulation, resulting in the salvation of the one hundred forty-four thousand, is a false form of Jewish evangelism. The whole concept behind any form of evangelism, to *the Jew or the Gentile*, is to proclaim the gospel message in view of people being saved during the present dispensation, *NOT* during the coming Tribulation.

To further complicate the matter insofar as man is concerned, there will be *EXACTLY* twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel who will be saved and form the man-child at that future time (the tribe of Manasseh replacing the tribe of Dan). *And Jews DON'T even know what tribe they are from today, much less Christians.* Their genealogical records were destroyed in 70 A.D.

But God knows; and when the time arrives, the necessary number from each of the tribes will be saved and called forth to form *a first fruit of the nation and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation.*

The Gospel of the Kingdom

The message which will be proclaimed to the Gentiles worldwide by the one hundred forty-four thousand during the Tribulation is called "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14). This will be a message for the unsaved, *which can ONLY be a salvation message with the coming kingdom in view.*

Scripture refers to the proclamation of the gospel of the king-

dom during only two brief periods — *one past, and the other future* (though the kingdom was in view at other times in God's message proclaimed to Israel [e.g., messages through the Prophets during the time of the O.T. theocracy, or the re-offer of the kingdom by the Apostles and others during the Acts period]).

The gospel of the kingdom *in past time* was proclaimed to Israel by John the Baptist, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy immediately preceding and during the time of Christ's earthly ministry (for about three and one-half years); and the gospel of the kingdom, at *a time yet future*, will be proclaimed to the Gentiles throughout the earth by one hundred forty-four thousand Jews during the Tribulation (for about three and one-half years).

The gospel of the kingdom proclaimed to Israel in the past was simply:

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7).

The message was directed *only* to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “The Gentiles,” and even “the Samaritans,” had no part in this message (Matt. 10:5, 6).

This was a message calling upon God's people to repent, with a view to the proffered kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom was “at hand [pointing to something ‘nigh’ or ‘near’]” for two reasons:

- 1) The King was present.
- 2) The Kingdom itself could have then been established had the nation heeded the message.

Israel though *did NOT repent*. The Scribes and Pharisees “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [‘before men,’ ‘in the presence of men’]” (Matt. 23:13). They *were NOT* going to enter the kingdom, and they did everything within their power to prevent the nation itself from entering. The Scribes and Pharisees were the ones directly responsible for Israel's rejection of the King and the Kingdom, terminating with the crucifixion of the King Himself.

The proffered kingdom (the kingdom of the heavens) was taken from Israel, with a view to an entirely separate and distinct “na-

tion” becoming the recipient of the associated heavenly promises and blessings previously offered to Israel.

And herein lies the reason why the Church was called into existence.

The kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). This is the “nation” in I Peter 2:9, comprised of Christians, an entirely separate and distinct creation and *the ONLY people presently in existence who are in a position to bring forth fruit* (II Cor. 5:17; cf. Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

The message presently being proclaimed to Christians relative to the coming kingdom though *is NOT* the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom of the heavens *is NOT* “at hand.” The King is *absent*, and the Kingdom *CANNOT* be established during the present time.

We are living during *a dispensation between two times*:

- 1) The time when the kingdom was “at hand” (Messiah was present and the kingdom could have been established).
- 2) The time when the kingdom *will once again* be “at hand” (the period immediately preceding Messiah’s reappearance to establish the kingdom).

The message which is to be proclaimed during the present time to those who are to have a part in the kingdom of the heavens is more properly called “the word of the kingdom” or “the gospel of the glory of Christ” (Matt. 13:19; II Cor. 4:3, 4; I Tim. 1:11, ASV).

This message is for *the saved ALONE* and has to do with *an inheritance in the future*; it has to do with *future positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom*; it has to do with *the salvation of the soul*, *NOT with the salvation which Christians presently possess*.

The gospel of the kingdom which is to be proclaimed to the Gentiles throughout the earth during the Tribulation will have to be first and foremost *a salvation message*, for the message will be directed to *the unsaved*. During those days, the kingdom, unlike today, will be “at hand”; and the message, though not the same as the message proclaimed to Israel in the past, can once again be called “the gospel of the kingdom.”

“Salvation” in the future proclamation of the gospel of the

kingdom to unsaved Gentiles will be *with a view NOT ONLY to eternal verities BUT also with a view to the kingdom being "at hand."*

The time during which the message will be proclaimed, the recipients of the message, and the name of the gospel would necessitate a conclusion of this nature.

Salvation with a view to the coming kingdom is *NOT a new thought or message at all*. In fact, this message has been around for almost six millenniums and *is really the ONLY type salvation message which should ever have been or should ever be proclaimed to man*.

Man was created with a view to the kingdom, with a view to ruling the kingdom (Gen. 1:26-28); his fall and subsequent salvation were because of and with a view to the kingdom (his fall, with a view to disqualifying the man to rule; and his salvation, with a view to placing man back in the position for which he had been created); then, Israel was brought into existence with a view to the kingdom (Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6); and individuals are being saved today with a view to the kingdom (I Thess. 2:12; Heb. 2:5, 10; I Peter 5:1-10).

Thus, the apparent relationship of *salvation to the kingdom* during the Tribulation, through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, *should NOT* be thought of as something any different at all. *Man, regardless of whether he knows it or not, has ALWAYS been saved with a goal in view, which has ALWAYS been seen as the kingdom; and the matter will be NO different for individuals saved during the Tribulation.*

ALL is with a view to the kingdom.

Results of the Message

The results of the ministry of the one hundred forty-four thousand are given in Rev. 7:9-17 (*cf.* 6:9-11), immediately following the record of their being sealed (vv. 1-8). These verses though do not include *ALL* the results of the ministry of the Jewish evangelists. These verses refer *ONLY* to those slain for their testimony during the Tribulation. Multitudes of others who heed the message will survive those days and be alive when Christ returns.

Those slain for their testimony during that future time are described as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (v. 9). The Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation will have a ministry foreshadowed by Jonah's ministry when he, after the Word of the Lord came to him *the second* time, heeded God's command and went to Nineveh.

As a result, all Nineveh heard God's message and believed.

This though, in its fulfillment in the antitype, refers more specifically to the results of the ministry of *ALL Israel during the Millennium*. The entire nation, as Jonah, will heed God's command when it comes to them *the second* time and go forth as God's witness to the ends of the earth; and the results of the nation heeding God's command will be as seen in the type: *ALL Nineveh*, referring in the antitype to *ALL the Gentiles throughout the earth*.

But the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation, *a first fruit* out of the nation of Israel, will realize *a first fruit*, as it were, in the antitype of the prophecy of Jonah. *The main harvest* will then follow as the entire nation goes forth with God's message of salvation during the Millennium.

Saved Gentiles slain during the Tribulation are seen in heaven in Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 15:2-4; 20:4-6. The remainder of the saved Gentiles during this time will appear at the judgment of the nations following the Tribulation (Matt. 25:32-40). The ones slain are said to be *innumerable*, and the ones who live through the Tribulation will undoubtedly be *of similar numbers as well*.

The main harvest though, relative to all Israel in the antitype of Jonah and Nineveh, will be the unsaved Gentiles from the nations surviving the judgments of the Tribulation who will form the nations on earth at the beginning of the Millennium.

These Gentiles will then form the nucleus for a far greater population which will come into existence as time goes on during the Millennium, as Israel continues to carry God's message of salvation to the Gentile nations worldwide.

Both saved Gentiles slain for their testimony during the Tribulation (Rev. 20:4) and a segment of those surviving the Tribulation (those designated as "sheep" in Matt. 25:31-46), are seen to occupy *regal positions in the kingdom*. This is referred to in Rev. 20:4 as "they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years," and it is referred to in Matt. 25:34 as "inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world [referring back to the restoration of the material creation and the creation of man in Genesis chapter one].”

Thus, a central purpose for a *first fruit* out of the nation of Israel to proclaim God’s message during the Tribulation will be *the procurement of additional sons to rule in the kingdom*.

Then, those from the Gentile nations who survive the Tribulation (unsaved Gentiles) will populate the millennial earth, bringing to pass the fulfillment of God’s promises to both Israel and the Church.

Israel is to be placed at the head of the nations on the earth, with the nations being reached by and blessed through Israel; and Christians are to rule over the nations from a heavenly sphere as co-heirs with Christ.

Thus, the entire matter is for purposes which move even beyond the Millennium, during that time when all things will have been brought under subjection and the kingdom delivered up to God the Father (I Cor. 15:24-28).

And these purposes of God involve His dealings with three classes of individuals which will exist throughout time and eternity — Jews, Christians, and Gentiles — with regality extending beyond the new earth out into the universe itself (Rev. 22:1-5).

Concluding Remarks:

The time during which the one hundred forty-four thousand Jewish evangelists conduct their ministry will be during the reign of Antichrist. This will be the time when the mark of the Beast will be given and Beast-worship instituted. Apart from this “mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” no one will be able to “buy or sell” during those days; and refusal to participate in Beast-worship will carry the sentence of *death*.

It will also be during those days that innumerable Gentiles worldwide, from all nations, will heed the message carried by the Jewish evangelists. All who so heed this message will come under the sentence of death, for they will not only refuse the mark of the Beast and refuse to participate in Beast-worship, but they will bear a true witness concerning Jesus Christ.

The revealed form of death for the followers of Christ during the Tribulation will be *the guillotine* (Rev. 20:4), though this may simply be an expression used in Scripture referring to the numerous forms that death may take in that day. Followers of Christ will be slain for *their testimony*, which, in that day, can only be part and parcel with their refusal to participate in Beast-worship.

The situation will be somewhat similar (but far more intense) to conditions which existed among the followers of Christ in the Roman world during the first century.

In those days the Romans deified the emperor and participated in emperor-worship. Christians though worshipped the one true and living God, rejecting emperor-worship; and multitudes were slain for *the testimony which they held*.

Persecution in the Roman world under ten different emperors, viewing themselves as gods, occurred over a period of two and one-half centuries. The far more intense persecution of the followers of Christ during the Tribulation will occur under one world ruler over a period of three and one-half years, who will declare himself to be “God” (II Thess. 2:4), demanding worship as such.

This man, as the Roman emperors, will be deified (through his own actions and those of the False Prophet); and the persecution of the followers of Christ which began in the Roman world under Nero will be concluded during the last half of the Tribulation in a worldwide kingdom under the man of sin.

Numerous saved Gentiles from the Tribulation will realize an inheritance in the kingdom, both those slain and others who survive the Tribulation. And it will be *THEN* that the question asked by the Tribulation martyrs will be fully addressed:

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10).

The Beast and False Prophet will have previously been cast into the lake of fire, awaiting Satan and his angels, along with all of the unsaved dead extending all the way back to man's creation, being cast into the lake of fire one thousand years later (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15). And there they will reside, together, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

4

IN THE HOLY PLACE

Striking at the Heart of a Portending Theocracy

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand [‘standing’] in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).

Then...” (Matt. 24:15, 16a).

The Exodus of the Israelites under Moses about 1445 B.C. was followed by things entirely new in the camp of Israel. The people of Israel were called out of Egypt to go forth as *God’s firstborn son and exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy.*

BUT, before entering into this land and exercising these rights, certain preparatory steps had to be taken in the wilderness of Sinai.

The Israelites had to FIRST come into possession of two things:

- 1) *The Law.*
- 2) *The Tabernacle.*

Both the Law and the Tabernacle were associated with Israel placed in her covenanted land exercising the rights belonging to the firstborn, within a theocracy.

The Law consisted of rules and regulations governing the people of God as they exercised these rights; and the Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God among His people, forming the central place of worship within the theocracy for the kingdom of priests called out of Egypt.

The Israelites were to enter into the land and, as God’s firstborn son, *NOT ONLY* live under God’s revealed Law *BUT* exercise the rights of primogeniture; and, through so doing, the nations were *NOT ONLY* to be *ruled by Israel* (kingly aspect of the birthright) *BUT* the nations were to be *reached by and blessed through Israel* (priestly aspect of the birthright).

The Theocracy

God recognizes *Israel ALONE*, among all the nations, as *His firstborn*. In this respect, *Israel is NOT to be* “reckoned among the nations” (cf. Num. 23:9; Deut. 14:2).

Israel was called out of Egypt for particular purposes associated with the nation’s firstborn status and, resultingly, associated with the Gentile nations. *And God’s purpose surrounding Israel’s calling MUST be realized — if NOT in Biblical history, THEN in Biblical prophecy:*

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [‘without a change of mind’]” (Rom. 11:29).

God has NOT and He will NOT change His mind concerning the reason He called Israel into existence.

1) *A Beginning Under Moses, the Law, the Tabernacle*

In the wilderness of Sinai, during the first year following the Exodus, God equipped His people for the task at hand. *The Law* (with its rules and regulations) and the instructions for the *Tabernacle* (with its priestly ministry and worship) were given to Moses in the Mount. This was followed by the building of the Tabernacle and the preparation of the priests.

The work on the Tabernacle was completed a few days short of one year following the Israelite’s march toward the Red Sea and the subsequent departure from Egypt; and upon completion of this work, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:33, 34).

At this point in history, *a theocratic kingdom came into existence*. And with the Israelites in possession of the kingdom with its Glory, Laws, etc., *the nation was ready to enter the land and realize her calling before ever reaching Kadesh-Barnea*.

Later though, at Kadesh-Barnea, the Israelites failed to enter the land and occupy the position for which they had been called. They believed the negative report of ten of the twelve spies who had been sent into the land ahead of the nation, expressing unbelief in God’s promise concerning the nation and the land.

This was followed by the overthrow of an entire generation during the next thirty-eight and one-half years as God caused the

nation to wander in the wilderness, outside the land.

Then, following the death of Moses, under the leadership of Joshua, the second generation of Israelites entered the land, passing through the Jordan opposite Jericho. And this new generation, unlike the unbelieving prior generation at Kadesh-Barnea, was ready to *inhabit the land through conquest and realize the reason they had been called out of Egypt*.

However, even though the Israelites moved in and eventually inhabited the land (Joshua 21:43-45), they *did NOT* follow the Lord's command completely. They *did NOT* slay or drive out all of the inhabitants (Judges 1:19-33). This resulted in the Gentile nations in the land being *a thorn* in the side of Israel, with their gods becoming *a snare*, causing the Israelites to fall into idolatry time after time (Judges 2:1-4, 12-14; cf. I Kings 16:30-33).

During this time the Lord raised up judges to deliver the people. But, following each deliverance, the people, before long, would cease harkening to the judges. And continued unbelief and disobedience of this nature brought about *NOT ONLY* the Lord's anger *BUT* the Israelites' failure to realize to any extent the position in the land to which they had been called (Judges 2:16ff).

The unbelief and disobedience of the Israelites was the reason for such things as "famine" rather than "plenty" in the land during the days of Ruth (Ruth 1:1), and Israel's defeat at the hands of the Philistines at the time the ark of the covenant was taken by the enemy (I Sam. 4:1-22). This unbelief and disobedience eventually even led the people of Israel to reject the Lord's rule in the theocracy and desire a king to reign over them, "*like all the nations*."

The Lord acquiesced to their request (I Sam. 8:5-7). And Saul was anointed the first king over Israel. However, Saul did not follow the Lord's command concerning Amalek.

Saul had been instructed to "smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not..." But Saul spared "Agag the king of the Amalekites" and saved "the best" of certain animals belonging to the Amalekites "to sacrifice unto the Lord."

As a result, Saul, the first king over Israel, was rejected by the Lord; and David was anointed king in Saul's stead (I Sam. 9:17; 15:1-23; 16:13).

Then, the day eventually came when Saul was put down in battle and his crown taken and given to David (I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:1-10).

2) *The First Temple*

David, as he began his reign, sought to rectify what centuries of disobedience on the part of the Israelites had done. He followed the Lord God of Israel, he sought to unify the people, he had the ark of the covenant brought to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:1ff), and he sought to build a house for the ark (which would be the first Temple).

It did not fall David's lot though to build the Temple. This task awaited his successor — *his son, Solomon* (II Sam. 7:11-13), with *his greater Son, Jesus*, to ultimately build the Millennial Temple (Zech. 7:10-13).

David reigned over Israel for forty years, and this was followed by Solomon reigning for the same length of time. That which was begun by David during his reign carried over into the kingdom under Solomon, and *not only* was the Temple built during Solomon's reign (I Kings 6:1-8:11) *but* the kingdom reached heights previously unknown.

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding...

And Solomon's wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men...and his fame was in all nations round about” (I Kings 4:25, 29a, 30, 31).

Conditions of this nature though *did NOT* extend beyond the days of Solomon. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who succeeded him at the time of his death (I Kings 11:43), rejected the ways of his father; and a division in the kingdom resulted.

At this point there *not only* came into existence northern and southern segments of the kingdom *but* also more than one place of worship. Jeroboam, ruling in the northern segment of the kingdom, established places of worship at Bethel and Dan, seeking to prevent the people from returning to the Temple in Jerusalem. And, *not only* did he establish these new places of worship, *but* he introduced

idol worship and non-Levitical priestly ministry in these and other places, further destroying the unity of the nation (I Kings 12, 13).

A divided nation and sin in the camp continued *UNTIL* God eventually allowed the Assyrians to come down into the land in the eighth century B.C. and take the northern ten tribes into captivity and the Babylonians to come over into the land in the seventh century B.C. and take the southern two tribes into captivity.

The nation which had been called out of Egypt under Moses to dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and rule over all the Gentile nations within a theocracy, being a blessing to these nations, was removed from the land and scattered among and placed in subjection to the Gentiles.

Because of continued disobedience extending over centuries of time, rather than Israel being placed *at the head of the nations*, God's firstborn son was placed *at the tail of the nations*; and further, the blessings which were to come to all the Gentile nations through Israel *could NOT now be realized*. These blessings were associated *with Israel in the land within a theocracy, exercising the rights of the firstborn* (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

The Babylonian captivity, which began *the Times of the Gentiles* (a time extending down to the present day), also marked the end of the Old Testament theocracy — a theocracy extending back in time over eight and one-half centuries, going all the way back to the days of Moses. The Glory of the Lord had filled the Tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai during the days of Moses; and after the ark had been removed from the Tabernacle and placed in the "most holy place" in Solomon's Temple, the Glory of the Lord then filled the Temple (Ex. 40:16-38; I Kings 8:1-11).

The Glory remained in the Temple until a few years after Nebuchadnezzar's initial invasion of Jerusalem, occurring about 605 B.C. The Glory then departed the Temple (about 586 B.C.), and Jerusalem and the Temple were then destroyed (cf. II Kings 24, 25; Dan. 1:1, 2; Ezek. 10:4, 18; 11:23).

3) The Second Temple

Solomon's Temple, succeeding the Tabernacle as the dwelling place for the ark and the Glory of God, was in existence for slightly

more than four hundred years. Then, following the seventy-year Babylonian captivity, a second Temple was built by a remnant returning to the land under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1:1ff). This remnant returned about 535 B.C., but, due to problems among the inhabitants of the land, the Temple was not completed until about twenty years later (Ezra 4:1ff).

This was the Temple in existence when Christ was upon earth the first time (called “Herod’s Temple” at that time because of a complete rebuilding work which had begun during the reign of Herod the Great [Zerubbabel’s Temple, over the years, had fallen into a state of ruin]); and this was the same Temple destroyed, along with the city of Jerusalem, by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The Glory though did NOT return when the second Temple was completed by the remnant returning under Zerubbabel. Although God recognized this Temple as *His house* (for the shadow of regality still remained [cf. Matt. 21:13; 23:2]), there was NO theocracy as had previously existed. *The Times of the Gentiles* was running its predetermined course; and this period of time *had to be completed* before Israel could have a Temple with the Glory and corresponding theocracy restored.

Deity NEVER entered the Temple built by the remnant returning from the Babylonian captivity and destroyed almost six centuries later by the Romans. Christ, God manifested in the flesh, appeared more than once in outer portions of this Temple (Matt. 21:12; Luke 2:27), but NEVER in the Temple itself.

This is plainly shown by the use of two different Greek words for “Temple.” Christ appeared in the *hieron* (a word referring to the outer court, porches, or other structures subordinate to the Temple); but He *did NOT*, at any time, appear in the *naos* (the Temple itself).

4) Third and Fourth Temples

Solomon’s Temple and Zerubbabel’s Temple are only two of four Temples mentioned in Scripture. The others are the *Tribulation Temple* and the *Millennial Temple*.

Israel will rebuild the nation’s Temple at a time prior to the middle of the Tribulation, a Temple which will be destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem; and the Lord Himself will then build

the Millennial Temple when He returns (Dan. 9:27; II Thess. 2:4; Zech. 6:12, 13; Ezek. 40ff).

The Tribulation Temple, as Zerubbabel's Temple (though it also will contain no Glory) will be recognized by God as *His house* (Rev. 11:1). The same shadow of regality will still remain, with the restoration of the theocracy awaiting a future date. *The Times of the Gentiles* will still be in effect, and a Temple with the restored Glory and the corresponding restoration of the theocracy to Israel cannot occur during this time.

The entire matter of "restoration" awaits two things:

- 1) *The completion of the Times of the Gentiles.*
- 2) *The Lord Himself building the Temple, the Millennial Temple* (Ezek. 43:1-5; 44:4; cf. Hag. 2:9).

From the time of the construction of the Tabernacle during Moses' day to the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., about fifteen hundred years passed. And during that time, the people of Israel were only without the Tabernacle or the succeeding Temple for slightly less than one hundred years (discounting the time [about 100 years] that the ark of the covenant was separated from the Tabernacle and in the hands of the Philistines [I Sam 4:11; II Sam. 6:17]). The Jewish people were without their Temple during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and the succeeding time which it took the returning remnant to rebuild the Temple.

However, since 70 A.D., when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans under Titus, the people of Israel have been without a place for God to dwell among His people for over nineteen hundred years (though God did not dwell among his people from the time of the Babylonian captivity to 70 A.D.).

NEVER in the history of the nation, prior to the destruction of the second Temple, had generations of Jews come and gone without direct contact with either *the Tabernacle or the Temple*; and *UNTIL* the recent establishment of Israel as a nation in the land once again (on May 14, 1948), the issue of a *third Temple* could not even be raised. *ALL of this though is about to change. Israel is about to have a third Temple, and then a fourth.*

The Third Temple — How?

The question is not, “*Will* a third Temple be built?” The Word of God is clear on this matter. A Temple *WILL* exist in the land during the days of Antichrist, and his assuming power over the earth in the middle of the Tribulation is closely connected with action he will take concerning this Temple.

Antichrist will, at that time, *desecrate the Temple*; and he will subsequently *destroy the Temple* (reasons for his desecration and destruction of the Temple will be discussed later in this chapter).

The question concerning the building of a third Temple should thus be, “*How...?*,” or “*When...?*,” not “*Will...?*”

There are two major events which have occurred during modern times, with a third yet to occur, which can only be seen as progressively setting the stage for the rebuilding of the Temple:

1) *The first* was the establishment of the New State of Israel in 1948.

2) *The second* was the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem (the place of the Temple site) during the Six-Day War of 1967.

3) *The third* will be that day when the Temple site (a part of the Old City still controlled by the Moslems) will come under Jewish control once again.

During the battles which immediately followed Israel’s declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, the Old City of Jerusalem was lost to the Arabs; and the Jews were subsequently barred from this part of Jerusalem, with this situation persisting for the next twenty years; but during the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel captured certain portions of land previously controlled by the Arabs, and among these portions of land was *the coveted Old City of Jerusalem*.

And at the very point of conquest, the interest of the captors became focused on one thing in the Old City — *the Wailing Wall*, also called “the Western Wall.”

This wall was the *ONLY* visible surviving part of the second Temple, and it was *to this place* that the captors of the Old City wanted to go. And in many cases, because of unfamiliarity with the Old City, guides had to be employed to direct the troops to the Wailing Wall.

Then, as word began to spread, it was not long before government leaders, rabbis, and others began to enter the Old City for the express purpose of going to the Wailing Wall.

They came, stood before the wall, and wept; and during the days and years since, they have continued to come to pray and weep.

For the Jewish people, *there is presently NO place on earth like the Wailing Wall*. This is the closest that they can presently come to their Temple, the central place of a past theocracy and the central place of worship for the people ruling in the theocracy; and the entire matter dates all the way back to the days of Moses — almost three and one-half millenniums. *Thus, it is then NO wonder that they continue to frequent this place day after day after day, crying and weeping.*

But the Wailing Wall is still NOT enough. The Jewish people want that which the Wailing Wall only portends, calls to mind. They want their Temple once again, for they know that without the Temple there can be NO restoration of the kingdom and the accompanying Glory.

Unfortunately though, the Temple site, located just beyond the Wailing Wall, is seemingly occupied at the present time by *the Dome of the Rock*. And Jewish law prohibits the disturbance of any religious shrine in Israel (In keeping with this law, after the Israeli troops captured the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, Jewish authorities turned over responsibility of the Temple Mount to an Islamic charity).

To further complicate matters, the Dome of the Rock is not just any religious shrine. It dates all the way back to 691 A.D. and is *the third* most sacred site in the world for the followers of Islam (after Mecca and Medina).

The Dome of the Rock stands over the site from which Moslems believe Mohammed ascended (leaped) to heaven. And to even further complicate matters, the El Aksa Mosque, built after the Dome of the Rock, is also on the Temple Mount. Thus, even though the Jewish people control the Old City of Jerusalem, *they do NOT control the Temple Mount; and, under Jewish law, they are prohibited from disturbing Moslem structures on this site.*

Not only is this the case, *but* for Israel to disturb these structures under present conditions, especially the Dome of the Rock, would inflame the entire Moslem world.

Officials in Israel today, viewing this situation, state, “Anything

seen as a threat to the Dome of the Rock would be *highly provocative* to Moslems.” And the head of the Supreme Moslem Counsel in Jerusalem echoed the attitude of followers of Islam toward this place some years back when he stated, “The Moslems are *prepared to die for this place* [a statement actually referring to the Temple Mount, which would include land upon which both the Dome of the Rock and the El Aksa Mosque are built]”; and there are over one-half billion adherents to Islam worldwide today.

What then will transpire to allow Israel access to this site? If an answer can be provided, it would have to be within the framework of the covenant yet to be made between the man of sin and Israel.

Through breaking his covenant with Israel, this man will enter into the Holy of Holies and declare himself to be God (*cf.* Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:30-32; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 11:1, 2). In view of this, the ratifying of the covenant will likely involve a restoration of the Mosaic Economy, with its Temple and sacrificial system.

Accordingly, this man will evidently be the one to bring about a solution to the present dilemma in which the Jewish people find themselves. We know from Dan. 11:39 and Joel 3:2 that he will be instrumental in dividing the land (establishing borders) in the Middle East; and the Temple site, *the MOST important piece of real estate in all the land, could ONLY form the major part of the territory in view.*

To move beyond the preceding thoughts though is to move beyond information which Scripture provides. Things which we can know for certain are these:

1) A seemingly intractable situation *presently exists*, denying the Jews access to their Temple site.

2) The seemingly intractable situation *WILL one day be resolved, giving the Jews access to this site* (and this is one reason, among others, that Antichrist undoubtedly fits into the picture, *bringing about a resolution to the problem in that coming day*).

3) The Jews *WILL rebuild their Temple*, and, seemingly, it will have to be built where the Dome of the Rock now stands (*ref.* Shlomo Goren’s calculations in next section, bottom of p. 53, top of p. 54). *It MUST be built, as the two previous Temples, in the “place which the Lord shall choose”* (Deut. 12:10-14).

In 1903, Great Britain offered the Jewish people land for Zionist purposes in British East Africa. The Jewish people though *would NOT even consider such an offer*. They were interested in *ONE tract of land ALONE — the land in the Abrahamic covenant*.

In like manner, the Jewish people *would NEVER* consider building their Temple on any site other than where it has stood on two previous occasions. The Jews have an affinity for *a particular land insofar as the nation is concerned*, and they have the same affinity for *a particular place in that land insofar as the Temple is concerned*.

The Third Temple — When?

“We took an oath today, while capturing the city. On our blood we took an oath that we will never give it up, we will never leave this place. The Wailing Wall belongs to us. The holy place was our place first, our place and our God’s place. From here we do not move. Never! Never!”

— Gen. Shlomo Goren
(June 7, 1967)

After the Old City of Jerusalem fell to the Israeli troops during the Six Day War in June 1967, the commander of these troops stood at the Wailing Wall and announced, “None of us alive has ever seen or done anything so great as he has done today.”

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan stood at the Wailing Wall that day and vowed, “We have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to depart from it again.”

General Shlomo Goren, chief rabbi of the Israeli armed forces, stood at the Wailing Wall on that day and cried out, “We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic Era for the Jewish people...”

Why did a troop commander and the defense minister view the Wailing Wall after this fashion? Why did the chief rabbi of the Israeli armed forces associate Jewish possession of the Wailing Wall with the nearness of the Messianic Era? The answer is singular and very simple: *This site NOT ONLY reflects on a past Temple and theocracy BUT it also portends a future Temple and theocracy.*

From 1967 to 1994 (at the time of his death), Gen. Shlomo

Goren became a leading authority on the Temple Mount. A few years before he passed away, he called attention to a well-worn personal map of this Mount, dated June 21, 1967 (two weeks after the Israeli army captured the Old City). His calculations and recalculations of the area during about two decades led him to *ONLY one conclusion: A third Temple would have to be positioned in the same place as the Dome of the Rock*. When asked about how this could be brought to pass, his reply was simply, "It's a big problem."

The time when the third Temple will be built can be derived from Dan. 8:13, 14:

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed [220 days (7 months, 10 days) short of the full 2,520 days (7 years)]."

According to these verses, there will be "two thousand and three hundred days" from the point when sacrifices begin in the rebuilt Temple to the end of the Tribulation. This would place the beginning of sacrifices in the rebuilt Temple in the eighth month of the first year of the Tribulation.

Thus, Dan. 8:13, 14 places the building of the Temple during the first seven or eight months of the Tribulation. This fact fits perfectly with the covenant to be made between Antichrist and Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation, as well as the fact that the Jewish people will be offering sacrifices in a rebuilt Temple three and one-half years later.

Desecration of the Temple

Why, when breaking his covenant with Israel, will the first recorded act of the Antichrist be a desecration of the Holy of Holies in the rebuilt Temple? The answer is obvious if one understands the connection of *the Temple* with *theocracy* and Israel's status as *God's firstborn son*. The Temple is the dwelling place of God as He

resides in the midst of His people and rules through His people in the theocracy. And *the ONLY people* which God has ever placed or ever will place on this earth in such a position are *the Jewish people*.

Israel ALONE is God's firstborn among the nations, and *the Temple* is God's dwelling place among His people as they exercise the rights belonging to the firstborn.

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. 9:4).

The Temple figures prominently in Antichrist's actions in the Book of Daniel (8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), in Matthew's and Mark's accounts of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14 [note that Luke, in his account, records the destruction of Jerusalem at this same time rather than the desecration of the Temple]), in the mention of Antichrist in the Pauline epistles (II Thess. 2:4), and in the Book of Revelation (11:1, 2). The significant feature in all these passages, save the account in the Book of Revelation, is Antichrist desecrating "the holy place."

This is the event given in Scripture to mark the breaking of his covenant with Israel and the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This man is going to enter into the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple (the place where God dwelt in Solomon's Temple during the Old Testament theocracy) and announce that "he is God." The covenant will then be null and void, and the Great Tribulation will begin.

Note what this man will, in actuality, be doing by this act. He will be striking at *the very heart of the theocracy* and *the very position which Israel occupies as firstborn* (even though the theocracy will not then be in existence, allowing Israel to exercise the rights of the firstborn).

This man will be the world ruler under Satan, and he will seek to squelch the ONLY rule which could EVER interfere with his by three acts:

- 1) *By destroying the central place for this rule (the Temple).*
- 2) *By destroying the city from which this rule would emanate (Jerusalem).*
- 3) *By destroying the people who, directly under God, would administer this rule (the Jewish people).*

This is the reason that the Jews are told to “flee” for their lives when they see this man “standing in the holy place” (Matt. 24:16ff).

He is going to desecrate the Temple (Dan. 9:27), *THEN* destroy both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:26; Luke 21:20-24), and *THEN* seek to eliminate the Jewish people from the face of the earth (cf. Matt. 24:16-22; Rev. 12:13-17).

And the *ONLY* thing which will stand in his way, apart from God’s providential protection of His people, is “time”:

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake [Israel’s sake] those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:22).

Concluding Remarks:

Israel’s destiny insofar as *the Temple, the theocracy*, and the nation’s *position with respect to the Gentile nations* is concerned was set when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees.

God’s promise to Abraham pertaining to *the land and blessings* (Gen. 12:1-3) anticipated God’s statement to Moses pertaining to *Israel’s firstborn status* (Ex. 4:22, 23; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6).

And the entire matter anticipates that day, in the coming age, when Israel will occupy the position for which the nation was called out of Egypt under Moses.

Israel though *MUST first* pass through the “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

Israel *MUST first* see a third Temple stand in the land, one which will house *NO* Glory, with there accordingly being *NO* theocracy.

Israel *MUST first* experience the full end of the “desolation” in Dan. 9:27 and Matt. 23:38, which includes *the Jewish people, the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel*.

ONLY THEN will Messiah return, build the Temple Himself, and restore the nation within a theocracy.

ONLY THEN will Israel realize her position as *firstborn among the nations*.

5

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Israel Awaiting the Last of the Hamans, Hitlers

“Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:16-22).

Biblical prophecy, as it pertains to the Jewish people and to the surrounding Gentile nations, is centered mainly around events which will occur *shortly before, at the time of, and immediately following the return of Israel’s Messiah.*

Biblical prophecy, in this respect, centers itself mainly around God’s future dealings with the Jewish people, along with the final form of Gentile world power.

The persecution of the Jewish people by Gentile powers under Antichrist during the last half of Daniel’s Seventieth Week is a subject appearing extensively throughout both Old and New Testament prophecy. Beginning with the writings of Moses in the Book of Genesis and terminating with the writings of John in the Book of Revelation, Scripture is replete with information pertaining to Israel in the Great Tribulation during the days of Antichrist.

And Scripture is also replete with information concerning how the whole of the matter will turn out at the time of Christ's return following the Tribulation.

Beginning with Moses

Biblical prophecy pertaining to Israel actually begins in the opening chapters of Genesis, long before the nation was brought into existence. This early beginning can be seen in a type-antitype treatment of the experiences of Cain and Abel, in Gen. 4:1ff (reflecting back on that seen in the previous chapter — man's fall and God's revealed way of redemption).

1) *Cain and Abel*

Cain, *the firstborn*, rejected God's way, ultimately resulting in his rising up against Abel and slaying him.

Four thousand years later, Israel, *the firstborn*, rejected God's way, ultimately resulting in the nation rising up against Christ and slaying Him.

In each instance it was one brother slaying the other brother. The blood of Abel cried out to the Lord "from the ground," but *the blood of Christ* speaks "better things than that of Abel" (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24).

Cain's subsequent experiences typify the subsequent experiences of *Israel*. Cain became "a fugitive [*a wanderer*]" and a vagabond in the earth," *with every man's hand turned against him*.

The history of Israel since the crucifixion of Christ has been marked by the same circumstances. Israel has been *a wanderer* and *a vagabond* (cf. Deut. 28:25), with *anti-Semitism* following the *Jewish people wherever they have gone*.

The ultimate realization of the matter though awaits the Great Tribulation. It will be during that future time and immediately following that the words of Gen. 4:14, 15 will find their complete fulfillment in the nation of Israel and the Gentile nations.

God, at the beginning, stated unequivocally:

"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gen. 4:15).

Transferring this over into the antitype and looking at the outworking of the principle set forth in Gen. 12:3 — “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” — that which will befall the nations coming out of the Great Tribulation has already been prerecorded. God is going to “make a full end of all the nations” where the Israelites have been driven (Jer. 46:28).

The contextual setting of this passage reveals that these are nations within the kingdom of Antichrist, *a worldwide kingdom, which will include ALL the nations of the earth*. Anti-Semitism in that day will break out on an unprecedented, worldwide scale; and God, at the end of the Tribulation, will deal with the nations accordingly, in complete accord with Gen. 4:15; 12:3.

(Note three things relative to God dealing with the Gentiles following His Son’s return at the end of the Tribulation:

1) The judgment of saved Gentiles coming out of the Great Tribulation in Matt. 25:31-46 — saved out of the anti-Semitic nations of the end time — *will be on the basis of their treatment of the Jewish people during the time immediately preceding*.

2) The anti-Semitic Gentile armies under Antichrist *will THEN be brought into the land of Israel to be destroyed* [cf. Ezek. 38, 39; Joel 2:1-11, 20; 3:2-16].

3) And all surviving Gentile nations *will THEN go into the Millennium, to be reached by and blessed through Israel, with the welfare throughout this time still dependent on their attitude toward and treatment of the Jewish people* [Isa. 62:1ff; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-21].)

2) Noah and the Flood

Leaving the experiences of Cain and Abel, one can move on to the experiences of Noah during and beyond the Flood to see another facet of the experiences of Israel during and beyond the Great Tribulation.

Noah passed safely through the Flood, as Israel will pass safely through the Great Tribulation (cf. Gen. 7:1ff; Isa. 26:20, 21).

Then, beyond the Flood there was a new beginning, with human government placed in the hands of man (Gen. 8:20-9:6).

And this is *EXACTLY* as it will be yet future. After Israel passes safely through the Great Tribulation, government by man will

then be the issue at hand.

The association of *the Flood* during Noah's day with *the Great Tribulation* yet future is clearly drawn in Scripture:

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man...

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back" (Luke 17:26, 31).

The reference in verse thirty-one is to the same time described in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, disclosing events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation (Matt. 24:17, 18; cf. vv. 37-39).

3) Joseph and His Brethren

Then, the experiences of Joseph's brethren during and following a time of famine set forth in type another view of Israel during and following the Great Tribulation.

Joseph's brethren, during the famine, found themselves in such dire straits that *they had NO place to turn BUT to Joseph*.

Joseph provided deliverance from the famine; and following Joseph revealing himself to his brethren, Joseph's brethren went forth with the message that he was "alive" and "governor over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 41:54-45:26).

The brethren of Jesus, as the brethren of Joseph, will pass through the identical experiences.

During a time of famine, the Great Tribulation, *they will have NO place to turn BUT to Jesus* (although they will NOT know Him, as the brethren of Joseph *did NOT know him*). Deliverance will be effected, Jesus will reveal Himself to His brethren (*EXACTLY as in the type*), and (*also EXACTLY as in the type*) the brethren of Jesus will then go forth with the message that He is "alive" and "governor over the entire earth" ("Egypt" is always a type of *the world* in Scripture).

4) Exodus

Moving beyond Genesis, the entire Book of Exodus constitutes one complete, comprehensive type concerning Israel yet future,

during and following the Great Tribulation.

The book begins with the Israelites under subjection to an Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt and terminates with the Israelites delivered from Egypt and in possession of *the old covenant, the Tabernacle, and the Glory*.

Thus will it be in the antitype yet future.

The Israelites will find themselves scattered throughout the earth in subjection to another Assyrian ruler, the Antichrist. Deliverance will be effected through the One greater than Moses, and the Israelites will subsequently find themselves in possession of *the new covenant, the Temple* (Millennial Temple), and *the Glory* (restored).

The Israelites subjugated by the Assyrian in Egypt during the days of Moses sets forth that portion of the type pointing to the coming Great Tribulation.

The Israelites cried out to God for deliverance:

“And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them” (Ex. 2:24, 25).

Thus will it be yet future. As the Israelites cried out to God during a time of trouble in the type, they will do the same during a time of trouble in the antitype; and as deliverance was effected in the type, so will deliverance be effected in the antitype; and as Israel was delivered for a purpose under Moses, the nation will be delivered for the same purpose under Christ.

The old covenant, the Tabernacle, and the Glory were all connected with Israel's status as *God's firstborn son*.

A theocratic kingdom was brought into existence during Moses' day, and *this SAME kingdom* will be restored yet future through Israel coming into possession of *the new covenant, the Millennial Temple, and the Glory*.

As *the bush* (typifying “Israel”) burned during Moses' day without being consumed (Ex. 3:2), so has *the same bush* been burning throughout the centuries since that time without being consumed.

The persecution under the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt was *ONLY* the beginning of persecution after persecution.

But the most intense persecution of all will occur during the Great Tribulation. This is the time when *the fire* seeking to consume *the bush* will seemingly burn out of control.

Note though very carefully the words of Ex. 3:4: "God called unto him [Moses] *out of the midst of the bush...*"

And it was the same at a later time during Daniel's day as during Moses' day, when God was *in the midst of the fire with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah* (Dan. 3:23-27).

The fire *had NO* power over the bush in Exodus or the three Hebrews in Daniel, even though during Daniel's day the furnace was heated "*seven times more than it was wont to be heated*" (v. 19).

The matter continues the SAME today, and it will be the SAME during the Great Tribulation.

The type has been SET, and it MUST occur in the antitype after EXACTLY the same previously set manner.

5) Comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual

The preceding, drawn mainly from the first two books of Moses, has only touched upon the rich supply of material available in the Old Testament concerning Israel and the nation's national future.

The Old Testament is one continuous revelation concerning Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46), and a revelation concerning Christ *MUST* always be interwoven within a revelation concerning Israel and/or the Church. This is the manner in which the Old Testament has been written, and the Old Testament *MUST* be studied after the manner in which it has been structured.

The Old Testament is filled with history, and God has interwoven *throughout this history* innumerable types in order to teach His people great spiritual truths concerning the antitype.

Actually, *ALL historic events in the Old Testament form types.*

"All these things were our examples ['happened as types for us'], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples ['typically,' 'as types']: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world ['the ages'] are come" (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

These things occurred *under God's sovereign control of ALL things in order that He might have these recorded experiences to draw upon to later teach His people deep spiritual truths*. There is **NO** such thing as haphazard experiences within the framework of God's plans and purposes.

Man, in possession of God's Revelation, **MUST** recognize "how" and "why" this Revelation was written.

He **MUST** also recognize that an understanding of this Revelation necessitates "spiritual discernment" (I Cor. 2:14; cf. John 16:13-16).

Such discernment comes about simply by the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself revealing to the believer that which He moved "holy men of God" to record in time past (II Peter 1:21).

Any Scripture, such as the text at hand from Matt. 24:16-22, **MUST** be understood by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual"; and it is the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself Who brings things to light after this fashion, as the believer studies and meditates on the Word (I Cor. 2:13).

When Ye See...Flee...

The warning which Jesus gave in Matt. 24:15ff is for the Jews in the land of Israel when the Great Tribulation begins. It will be during those days that Israel, as a recognized nation in the Middle East, will cease to exist.

When Antichrist turns against Israel, the nation will fall in an inconceivably swift fashion; and the very fate of the continuance of the Jews as a people on earth will then seemingly lie in his hands.

(Note that God, *in the midst of the bush*, will allow this to occur, just as He allowed the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities to occur, the events of the Romans under Titus in 70 A.D. to occur, etc.

BUT, God will NOT remove Himself from the bush.)

The Jewish people are told to flee into "the mountains" (Matt. 24:15, 16 [*world kingdoms, i.e., the nations; cf. Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 21:20-24*]), "the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6, 14-16 [*Gentile lands, as distinguished from the land of Israel; cf. Ex. 19:1; Heb. 3:8, 17*]).

Those who do not escape will either be killed or sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world. And along with this will be the destruction of both the rebuilt Temple and the city of Jerusalem (cf. Dan. 9:26; Joel 3:6-8; Zech. 13:8, 9; Luke 21:20-24).

It should be clearly understood that the destruction in Dan. 9:26 and Luke 21:20-24 has to do with events during the coming Tribulation, *NOT* with events in 70 A.D. as is often taught.

The destruction seen in Dan. 9:26 *MUST occur within the scope of time covered by the Seventy Weeks* and, contextually, is seen in connection with Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel in verse twenty-seven. Both the text and context in Luke 21:20-24 show that this section also has to do with *the SAME time* as Dan. 9:26 — the coming Tribulation rather than with events in 70 A.D.

(All events seen in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy *MUST occur during time covered by the prophecy, NOT outside this time*, as the destruction by the Romans under Titus in 70 A.D.)

One thing which often leads to the erroneous conclusion that Dan. 9:26 has to do with the destruction by Titus and his Roman legions in 70 A.D. is the association of the fourth part of Daniel's image (the "legs of iron" and the "feet part of iron and part of clay") with *Rome*. The "legs of iron" are said to refer to *the Roman Empire in history*, with the "feet part of iron and part of clay" referring to *a revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation*.

Under this teaching, the kingdom of Antichrist will be *a Roman kingdom*. And a supposed reference is seen in the prophecy which extends from Titus in 70 A.D. to Antichrist yet future through the expression, "the people of the prince that shall come" [v. 26 (i.e., a supposed reference to *the Romans* in both history and prophecy)].

This expression though is *an idiom*, referring to *the future prince himself* (note Dan. 7:18, 27 where this same type expression is used and explained).

This is one reason some Bible teachers take such an interest in the European Common Market. They are looking for ten nations to arise in the latter days within the territory covered by the old Roman Empire, ultimately forming a ten-kingdom revived Roman Empire under Antichrist.

Any teaching surrounding a revived Roman Empire though *has NO scriptural basis whatsoever, simply because the Roman Empire in history had NOTHING to do with fulfilling prophecy concerning the "legs of iron" on Daniel's image.*

NOR will the kingdom of Antichrist be made up of a ten-kingdom European confederacy. His kingdom will be a Middle East kingdom, centered in Babylon; and his ten-kingdom confederacy will evidently be comprised of Middle East nations, forming his worldwide power base.

Daniel's image was seen *STANDING in Babylon. This image depicts a Babylonian kingdom under different nations extending over centuries of time. The past rulers ALL reigned over a world kingdom from Babylon during the Times of the Gentiles.*

When the Times of the Gentiles began about 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar's power emanated from Babylon.

When the Medes and Persians came in and took the kingdom in 536 B.C., the reign from Babylon continued.

Then, when the Grecians under Alexander the Great came in and took the kingdom in 330 B.C., the center of world power remained in Babylon.

Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., and his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. Following this, the kingdom of Babylon gradually faded from view as a world power, *NOT to be seen again as a center of world power UNTIL the days of Antichrist.*

And he too, as his predecessors, *WILL reign from Babylon.* This is what necessitates Babylon being restored in the latter days as a center of world power and commerce, as seen in Scripture (cf. Isa. 13:19, 20; 14:4; Jer. 50:1ff; 51:1ff).

The Roman Empire, although the next world power following the decline of the Babylonian kingdom, *had NO connection with Babylon.* The center of power for the Roman Empire was Rome.

And to fit within the scope of Daniel's image, this center would have had to be in *Babylon.* Since it was *NOT, the Roman Empire CAN-NOT possibly fit within the framework of events in the Book of Daniel.*

One should note very carefully that *Daniel identifies ALL four parts of the image (cf. Dan. 2:31-45; 7:3-8); and there is NO allusion whatsoever to the Roman Empire.*

It is clear from Daniel chapter eight (vv. 8-14, 21-25) that it is the kingdom of Antichrist which follows the Greco-Babylonian kingdom in both Dan. 2:40-43 and Dan. 7:7, 8, 19-26.

Antichrist will march into Jerusalem as *the last king of Babylon*, the one whom Nimrod, *the first king of Babylon*, typified millenniums before (cf. Gen. 10:8-10).

He will seek to do that which no one has ever been able to accomplish — *the utter, complete destruction of the Jewish people* — and he will then come under the sentence of Gen. 4:15; 12:3. The outworking of the principles set forth in these verses *MUST* be realized — *blessings or curses, depending on one's attitude toward and treatment of the Jewish people* — and they will be realized three and one-half years later when this man's kingdom lies in ruins.

The Stone "cut out without hands" is going to smite *the image at the feet* (Dan. 2:34). *The image will be destroyed, ground to powder*; and *the Stone* will become "a great mountain," covering the entire earth (Dan. 2:35, 44, 45).

The reference is to the destruction of the final form of the kingdom of Antichrist by Christ (the "Stone" *smiting the image at the feet*), with the kingdom of Christ ("a great mountain") then becoming the worldwide kingdom upon earth (cf. Isa. 2:1-4).

Troubled Waters

Israel is in the land today awaiting Antichrist. By no stretch of the imagination though is the nation in the land in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the regathering of Israel in the latter days (e.g., the vision of *the valley of dry bones* in Ezek. 37:1ff).

A remnant has returned to the land under a Zionistic movement. And a remnant of this nature *MUST* be present in the land near the end of the age in order for numerous Biblical prophecies to be fulfilled (e.g., the ratifying of the covenant in Dan. 9:27, or the events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse).

But the return of a remnant under a Zionistic movement, forming an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, *has NOTHING to do with the prophesied regathering of Israel in either the Old or New Testament Scriptures.*

The present remnant in the land, constituting the nation of Israel, has returned in *unbelief*; this remnant has returned *before the time that Scripture prophesies the nation will, or even can, return*; and this remnant *ONLY includes a part of world Jewry* (presently about two-fifths).

Israel's restoration, as prophesied in the Old Testament, occurs *AFTER the Tribulation, AFTER the completion of Daniel's full Seventy Weeks; this restoration occurs AFTER Israel's Messiah returns, under His personal supervision.*

Israel, at this time, will return to the land *in belief, NOT in unbelief*; and this restoration will involve *resurrected Old Testament saints as well as those Jews surviving the Great Tribulation and being saved by the personal appearance of Christ at the end of the Tribulation.* It will be a restoration of "the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. 36:24-28; 37:1-28; 39:25-29; Dan. 12:1, 2).

(For additional information on the preceding refer to the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*)

Events surrounding Israel's presence in the land today are much like events surrounding Jonah's presence on the ship headed for Tarshish in Jonah 1:3ff.

Jonah had been instructed to carry the message of the One True and Living God to the Gentile city of Nineveh, but he refused and headed in the opposite direction.

With Jonah on board the ship headed for Tarshish, a great storm arose on the Mediterranean Sea. And the storm became so intense that the men on the ship were afraid that the ship was about to be destroyed. Jonah, though, was down inside the hold of the ship asleep (1:3-5).

The reason for the storm was then revealed: *Jonah, out of the Lord's will, was on board the ship* (1:6-10). The only solution to bring about a calm was then revealed by Jonah himself. He *MUST* be removed from the ship by being cast into the sea (1:11, 12). And, *ONLY* when this was done did the sea cease raging (1:13-15).

1) "The sea" in Scripture has a peculiar reference to *the Gentile nations* (cf. Rev. 13:1; Dan. 8:8, 9).

2) "Jonah, out of the sea, on board the ship," can only typify *Israel removed from the Gentile nations, dwelling in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

3) "The storm on the sea," resulting from Jonah's presence on the ship, can only point to *resulting turmoil among the Gentile nations.*

And here is the revealed, underlying main reason that turmoil exists on an unprecedented scale among the nations of the earth today, particularly those nations in the Middle East.

Jonah, out of the Lord's will, was on board the ship. That is to say, Israel, out of the Lord's will, is in the land.

And the trouble among nations today rises to the same intensity as the storm on the Mediterranean Sea during Jonah's day:

"...there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken" (1:4).

The nations of the earth today, in turmoil, as the raging sea during Jonah's day — with the matter centered in the Middle East — continue trying to find solutions to existing problems. But the matter is *completely OUT of their hands.*

The nations have NO understanding of the basics of the existing problems; and even if they did, *there would be NOTHING whatsoever which they could do to bring about any type lasting resolution (cf. Hosea 5:15-6:2).*

God, in His sovereign control of all matters, has allowed a remnant to return to the land of Israel in order to bring about concluding events during Man's Day and usher in the Day of the Lord. With this remnant *in the land, OUT of the Lord's will*, the principle set forth in the first chapter of Jonah *MUST be in force.*

The sea MUST rage; that is, the Gentile nations MUST be in turmoil. And this is EXACTLY what is happening, something which the nations do NOT understand at all.

How long will this turmoil among the nations continue?

The answer is quite obvious: *so long as Israel is in the land, OUT of the Lord's will.*

Thus, don't look for peace among the nations during the present time, during Man's Day. *It's NOT going to occur.* In fact, just the opposite will occur, with matters only continuing to get worse and worse.

The sea MUST rage. The prophets HAVE spoken. And Israel is going to occupy her present position right on into the Tribulation, with *the nations continuing — in a deteriorating manner — in their present state of unrest and turmoil, as they VAINLY seek to solve existing problems.*

This is the primary reason why *wars, rumors of wars, and nation rising against nation* (Matt. 24:6, 7) will mark conditions during even the early years of the Tribulation.

These are conditions which exist today, will exist when the Tribulation begins, and will continue unchanged during the first half of the Tribulation. Israel will remain in her present state until the middle of the Tribulation, *necessitating a continuance of the principle set forth in the first chapter of Jonah.*

The Antichrist, by removing Israel from the land in the middle of the Tribulation, will bring *an END* to the principle presently in operation.

But the waters *are NOT* going to become calm, as when Jonah was cast into the sea. In fact, because of Antichrist's subsequent actions — Seeking to do away with, utterly destroy, the Jewish people — *just the opposite will occur.*

The sea will really begin to rage at that time, for another Biblical principle will come into operation:

"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain [Israel], vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gen. 4:15).

Or, as in the words of Gen. 12:3:

"I will...curse him that curseth thee."

Note the word "sevenfold" in Gen. 4:15. "Seven" is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view.* "Complete judgment" is involved. It has to do with making "a full end of all the nations" (Jer. 46:28).

The epitaph and the reason for this epitaph have thus been pre-written upon the kingdom of Antichrist at a time before it even exists:

"Fallen because of this man's destructive, ill-treatment of God's firstborn son, Israel."

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book on Jonah, titled, *O Sleeper! Arise, Call!*)

Except Those Days Should Be Shortened

Because of Antichrist's anti-Semitic actions, which will involve genocide itself, there will be a time of trouble "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And Scripture depicts conditions on the earth becoming in such turmoil during this time that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:21, 22).

This man will seek to accomplish that which all his predecessors, dating back to the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt during Moses' day, failed to accomplish.

He will seek to bring about what men have called "the final solution to the Jewish problem." He will be instrumental in not only destroying the present existing nation of Israel in the Middle East but also in eradicating two-thirds of the world's Jewish population (over 9,000,000 by today's count [Zech. 13:8, 9]); and he will do this mainly in the short space covered by the last half of the Tribulation, along with the days immediately following, immediately following Christ's return.

Men under Hitler, Heydrich, Eichmann, *et al.* in the Third Reich during the years 1939-1945 killed 6,000,000 Jews in Europe, seeking to produce a Jew-free Europe. This killing occurred on such a mass scale that giant crematoriums had to be constructed to dispose of the bodies.

The Antichrist will be instrumental in slaying over 9,000,000 Jews in less than half that time. And he will accomplish this feat during a time when the carnage among the Gentile nations will become inconceivable, for multiplied millions, extending into

billions, of Gentiles will die worldwide during this time as well.

Revelation 6:8 reveals that one-fourth of the earth's population will die during this time (about two billion by today's count). This is how tumultuous *the sea* will become after Antichrist makes his final move against Israel.

The turmoil resulting from Antichrist's anti-Semitic, genocidal activities on a worldwide scale is the reason that no flesh on the face of the earth would be saved apart from those days being shortened. *A complete destruction of this nature, apart from Divine intervention, is the way God has seen fit to reveal the intensity of the holocaust which this man will bring upon the world.*

God though will intervene, and for "the elect's sake [Israel's sake]" those days will be shortened.

Part and parcel with the preceding, the most intense part of the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll will evidently occur *during the climactic part of these judgments, particularly when the fifth and sixth trumpets sound [fifth and sixth vials are poured out (further descriptions of the same judgments)]*.

And these judgments will occur *with Christ present on earth, immediately prior to the destruction of Gentile world power* [Armageddon, the seventh trumpet and vial judgments, bringing matters to an end (cf. Joel 3:15, 16; Matt. 24:29-31; Rev. 6:12-17)].

Note *the intensity* of these climactic judgments in Rev. 9:1-21. And this is evidently where judgmental conditions will reach an apex, *necessitating a shortening of the days for mankind's very survival* [Matt. 24:22].

The 2,520 days comprising the seven-year Tribulation CANNOT be shortened, *for this number is unchangeably set* [though God, if He so desired, could still work with time in this respect [time is relative, not constant (shortening time, but still completing 2,520 days)]].

But, there is a *five-month period in Rev. 9:5, 10 which is NOT unchangeably set* [time following the 2,520 days, time given for the judgments of the fifth trumpet to occur]. As well, unless these days were cut short, this five-month period would evidently extend beyond the seventy-five-day period at the end of Daniel, which it seemingly can't do.

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Acts Period*, Chapter XII, "Continuing in Revelation," pp. 177-181.)

Concluding Remarks:

The Jewish people and the world at large are about to pass through a time of trouble *which has NO parallel in history*; and conditions during this time will rapidly deteriorate into a state *portending the very destruction of mankind itself*.

The cause of the matter can be laid directly to *anti-Semitism and the outworking of the principles set forth in Gen. 4:15; 12:3*.

Anti-Semitism on an unprecedented scale will correspondingly result in trouble in the kingdom of the perpetrator on *NOT ONLY a corresponding unprecedented scale BUT on a far more intense unprecedented scale* (cf. Hosea 8:7).

And the end of the matter will be:

- 1) *God's intervention "for the elect's [Israel's] sake."*
- 2) *God's "sevenfold" vengeance upon the kingdom of Anti-christ.*

6

FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS

"If They Speak Not According to This Word..."

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

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

Behold, I have told you before.

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". (Matt. 24:23-26).

When Christ was on earth the first time, *rejection* rather than acceptance marked His ministry. The Scribes and Pharisees, Israel's main religious leaders, saw to that. They followed Christ in His ministry, seeking, at every turn, to counter His message and the signs which He was performing. And, through this means, they "shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men ['before men,' 'in the presence of men,' *i.e.*, in the presence of those in Israel]" (cf. Matt. 12:9ff; 15:1ff; 16:1ff; 23:1ff).

Because of the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ, looking two centuries ahead through His statement in John 5:43, called the Jewish people's attention to where *this rejection would ultimately lead*:

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

And this person, to one day appear to the Jewish people — evident from that stated in this verse and this man's revealed actions — *will appear in a similar Messianic respect to the way Christ appeared, though a completely false respect*. He, in this manner,

will evidently be the one to deceive the Jewish people through providing a way for them to rebuild their Temple on the Temple Mount, with a reinstituted Mosaic Economy. These things, from all indication, will form the heart of the covenant which this man makes with Israel, seen in the manner in which, three and one-half years later, he breaks this covenant (*ref.* Chapter IV in this book).

At that time, he will enter into and desecrate the Holy Place, cause the sacrifices associated with the rebuilt Temple to cease, and declare himself to be God.

And when he breaks the covenant which he will have previously made with “many” in the nation, revealing himself in his true colors, he will seek to *cut Israel off* “from being a nation; that the name of ‘Israel’ may be *no more in remembrance*” (Ps. 83:4).

The sequence of events beginning in the latter part of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, has to do with Israel in the last half of the Tribulation. According to Matt. 24:23-26, “false Christs, and false prophets,” will appear during this time, continuing from their appearance during the first half of the Tribulation (v. 5); and, just as the Antichrist and his False Prophet (Rev. 13:1, 11) will have appeared in *a deceptive, Messianic manner at the beginning of the Tribulation*, these “false Christs, and false prophets” will subsequently appear in a similar deceptive manner and seek to *further deceive the Jewish people*.

These false Christs and false prophets will appear at *an appropriate time for deception*, for Israel will seemingly be at the mercy of Antichrist, *who will show no mercy*. The nation in this position will be in *dire straights, in desperate need of help, and undoubtedly in a very vulnerable position*. And it will be during these days that the Jewish people will be brought *to the end of themselves, to the place where they will have no recourse other than to cry out to the God of their fathers for deliverance from their affliction* (Ex. 2:23).

It will be prior to the time God answers their cry (Ex. 2:24, 25; 3:7-10) that the false Christs and false prophets of Matt. 24:23-26 appear. These false Christs and false prophets will support their pseudo claim through a manifestation of “great signs and wonders” (v. 24). Such were the credentials of the true messengers to Israel during and following (for about twenty-nine more years)

the time Christ was upon earth the first time, and such will be the credentials of the false messengers to Israel during the days immediately preceding Christ's return yet future.

"Great signs and wonders," manifested by "false Christs, and false prophets," will thus form part of the strategy which Satan will use in his efforts to destroy Israel during the Great Tribulation.

The test for false prophets is given in Deuteronomy chapters thirteen and eighteen. False prophets deceive individuals, as revealed in these chapters, through "a sign or a wonder" *which comes to pass* (a supernatural manifestation of power which comes to pass *through demonic powers, NOT through the power of the Spirit*).

And the object of the sign or wonder manifested by false prophets is to deceive and draw individuals away from the One True and Living God, causing them to follow after "other gods" (13:1, 2).

During the Great Tribulation, Satan, already having deceived the Jewish people through Antichrist and his False Prophet, will seek to further deceive them through *signs and wonders manifested by false Christs and false prophets*, trying to draw them away after "other gods [demons]"; and the entire matter will be brought to pass with an ultimate, planned purpose and goal in view — *the utter destruction of Israel*.

Signs, Wonders, Miracles

A proper understanding of signs, wonders, and miracles can be derived *ONLY through viewing the matter in its correct Biblical perspective, beginning in the Old Testament*. There's *NOTHING* in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament, and governing principles set forth in the Old Testament *MUST* be followed in New Testament interpretation.

1) Manifestations in Different Periods

One thing which is almost completely overlooked in the matter of signs, wonders, and miracles is the fact that miraculous works of this nature, where individuals were/will be empowered by God to perform them, *appear very sparingly in Scripture*. As one moves through the whole of Scripture, he will find *only four periods in both*

history and prophecy where individuals were given or will be given power to perform miraculous, supernatural works, seen as *signs*. And within these *four periods* one will find only a *small minority* of individuals so empowered.

Throughout all of the Old Testament God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles *ONLY on two occasions*; and *ONLY a total of five individuals* received such power.

In each instance there was a definite purpose for the manifestation of these miraculous works, and in each instance there was a definite beginning and a definite ending of the miraculous works.

a) *First Period*

The first period in Old Testament history where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles began immediately preceding the Exodus during the days of Moses, after about 2,500 years of human history had elapsed. God empowered Moses, Aaron, and Joshua to perform supernatural signs — the first time, according to the Biblical record, that man had been so empowered (cf. Ex. 4:1-9, 29-31; Num. 14:11; Josh. 24:17; Ps. 78:42, 43).

And these supernatural signs began in a sudden fashion and were terminated just as suddenly as they had begun.

The nation of Israel was led out of Egypt under Moses *to realize the rights of primogeniture in the land of Canaan*, a theocratic kingdom was brought into existence in the wilderness of Sinai, and Joshua (following the wilderness wanderings and the death of Moses) led the Israelites into the land of Canaan, with the same theocracy in view.

Once in the land they were to be established at the head of the nations within a theocracy, with the Gentile nations being reached by and blessed through Israel.

This first period of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture occurred completely within the scope of these events, within the lifetime of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. In this respect, it should be carefully noted that the first appearance of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture had to do with two things:

1) *ISRAEL* (the signs were for *the people of Israel*; it is *the Jewish people who require a sign* [I Cor. 1:22]).

2) *The KINGDOM* (the signs had to do with Israel in relation to the theocracy).

The supernatural manifestation of signs during Moses, Aaron, and Joshua's day appeared in connection with the Exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt under Moses and the entrance of the Israelites into and the conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua. And, as previously noted, *these signs had to do with ISRAEL in relation to the THEOCRACY.*

Thus, *a first mention principle* pertaining to signs, wonders, and miracles was established at this point in Scripture. *And ANY true manifestation of a sign* (the event itself) — seen as “a wonder,” with the power behind the sign described by the word “miracle [Gk., *dunamis*, ‘power’]” — *at ANY place beyond this in Scripture, would have to be in line with that seen at the beginning.*

The sign would have to be a supernatural event, brought about by Divine power, designed to capture the attention of individuals as something marvelous, a wonder.

And this supernatural event, *the sign, would ALWAYS have two things in view, else it could NOT be a true Biblical sign. It would ALWAYS have “Israel” and “the kingdom” in view. BOTH MUST be present, in view, for the supernatural event to be seen as a true Biblical sign.*

b) *Second Period*

The second period in Old Testament history where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles occurred about five centuries later during a time of apostasy in Israel.

Elijah and his successor Elisha received power to perform miraculous works, seen as *signs* (cf. I Kings 17:1-24; 18:25-46; II Kings 2:9; 4:1ff; 5:1ff; 6:1ff). These signs were designed to draw attention to God's two prophets and the message which they carried during this time. And, as in the first period, so in the second period — these miraculous works were terminated just as suddenly as they had begun. And they occurred within the lifetime of both Elijah and Elisha, not before, not after.

Once again it should be carefully noted that these miraculous works had to do with *Israel and the kingdom*. This is the *ONLY* way

that they could have been manifested by God's true prophets, for a *first-mention principle* to this effect had previously been established. God, during the days of Elijah and Elisha, was providing the Jewish people with a final opportunity to reverse the path which the nation had taken within the theocracy.

However, as in prior years, the people continued within the same status seen in Isa. 6:9, 10, quoted by Jesus in Matt. 13:14, 15:

“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, ‘By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them’.”

And, because of the people's continued unbelief and disobedience, God later allowed the Assyrians and the Babylonians to uproot His people and carry them away captive into Gentile lands.

The preceding two periods constitute *the ONLY times in ALL of Old Testament history where men were empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles.*

There were other times when miraculous events occurred (such as the deliverance of the three Hebrew men cast into the fiery furnace, the deliverance of Daniel who had been cast into the lion's den, or the deliverance of Jonah from the place of death [Dan. 3:20-27; 6:16-23; Jonah 2:1-10]), *but these were NOT miracles performed by individuals. These were miracles performed by God on behalf of His people.*

c) *Third Period*

The next period in Scripture where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles occurred during and following the days Christ was upon earth, recorded in the New Testament.

Christ called His twelve disciples and “gave them power” to perform certain miraculous works, to be seen and understood by the Jewish people as *signs* (Matt. 10:1-8; cf. Matt. 12:38; John 20:30, 31). Later He “appointed other seventy” and gave them

similar powers (Luke 10:1-9). The miraculous works emanating from these powers — *signs* — constituted the *credentials of the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom*.

These signs were in evidence during both the several years of Christ's earthly ministry and the continued ministry of the Apostles during about the first three decades of the Church's existence. They were in evidence so long as the offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel — from 30 A.D. to about 62 A.D., during both the offer of the kingdom to Israel (during Christ's earthly ministry, seen in the four gospels) and during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (during the ministry of the Apostles, seen throughout the Acts period).

There was a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles throughout both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (throughout the gospels and the Book of Acts) unlike anything seen in the previous almost fifteen centuries of Jewish history.

But the day came when this offer was withdrawn; and signs, wonders, and miracles, which had to do with *the Jewish people and the kingdom*, correspondingly ceased. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed a few years later (70 A.D.), and the Jews in the land were subsequently uprooted from this land and scattered throughout the nations of the earth.

The entire sequence of events surrounding the third period of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture began with the proffered kingdom of the heavens by Israel's Messiah, and it was concluded following a continued offer of the kingdom after Messiah's return to heaven.

From beginning to end, the matter was Jewish and had to do with the kingdom.

d) Fourth Period

The next and last manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles is future and will occur during and immediately following the Tribulation. It will occur at a time *AFTER* God has resumed His national dealings with Israel.

BOTH the nation of Israel and the kingdom will once AGAIN be in view; and, correspondingly — because God will be dealing with the Jewish people in relation to the theocracy once AGAIN — signs, wonders, and miracles can accompany the message (e.g., the ministry of God's two

witnesses during the Tribulation [Rev. 11:3-6] and events in connection with Christ's return and the revelation of Himself to the Jewish people immediately following the Tribulation [cf. Ex. 1-9, 29-31; Matt. 24:30]).

And as well during this time there will be *a counter manifestation of miraculous works by false prophets* (Matt. 24:23-26; Rev. 13:11-15).

e) *The Full Realization and Manifestation...*

Then, the full realization and manifestation of all things foreshadowed by all the signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture — dating all the way back to the days of Moses and Joshua — *will be realized by Israel during the Messianic Era.*

(E.g., the supernatural healing of an individual in the sign showed that which God would do for the entire nation in the Messianic Era; and the supernatural provision for an individual or group of individuals in the sign showed that which God would, as well, do for the entire nation in the Messianic Era, etc.)

A converted Jewish nation will be restored to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Israel will occupy her proper place in the land with respect to the Gentile nations.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing..." (Isa. 35:5, 6a).

Scriptural manifestations of signs, wonders, and miracles are relegated to certain specific periods in history and prophecy. These miraculous works, from their beginning during Moses and Joshua's day to their final realization and manifestation during the coming age, have to do with *Israel and the kingdom.*

(This is *the key* to understanding signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture. With this key, one can safely navigate through the pages of Scripture where signs, wonders, and miracles are dealt with; apart from this key, in these same areas of Scripture, one will forever be lost in a sea of misinterpretation, with tragic results often following in one's spiritual life.)

2) Manifestations Today

Since signs, wonders, and miracles emanating from God in either history or prophecy are peculiarly related to *Israel and the kingdom*, it is evident that such would be completely out of place in Christendom today. *Israel* has been set aside, awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25, 26); and *the kingdom* is being held in abeyance. Thus, *ANY* manifestation of miraculous works in Christian circles today *can be NEITHER a continuation of NOR a restoration of the signs, wonders, and miracles evident NOT ONLY during apostolic times BUT also during Old Testament days as well.*

These supernatural powers were *for times past* (during the days of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Christ, and the disciples), and they are reserved *for times yet future* (during the days of God’s witnesses in the Tribulation. Then, that foreshadowed by these supernatural powers will be realized during the coming day when Christ will be upon earth once again [Rev. 11:5, 6; Isa. 35:1-6]).

Consequently, *ANY* individual, group of individuals, or segment of Christendom in the world today purporting to exercise these powers *are NOT following Biblical guidelines at all.*

Such individuals, from a Scriptural standpoint, *are NOT at all exercising gifts which they claim to be exercising.*

Manifestations of supernatural powers in the world today are no indication that the ones exhibiting these powers are from God. Something which is often overlooked completely is the fact that Satan possesses supernatural powers which can be exhibited through man. Such were in evidence during the first period of miraculous works in Scripture, as they will be during the last period of Man’s Day, immediately preceding the Messianic Era (cf. Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; Matt. 24:23-26; Rev. 13:11-18).

Scripture associates *the working of Satan* with “all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:9, 10); and *his efforts through the manifestations of such powers are ALWAYS directed toward one goal—to deceive.*

Efforts to effect his goal through *deception* mark Satan’s introduction into affairs of the human race, establishing a *first-mention principle* which, as any first-mention principle, *remains constant throughout Scripture* (Gen. 3:1-7; Eph. 4:14; I Tim. 2:14; Rev. 13:13, 14).

With these things in mind, one should be able to easily ascer-

tain that signs, wonders, and miracles, as exhibited at any point in history through a supernatural work emanating from God, *do NOT belong in the Church today at all. Any present manifestation would NOT be in keeping with what Scripture teaches in both history and prophecy concerning these miraculous works.*

Within a true Biblical perspective, *signs, wonder, and miracles, as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts (or in I Corinthians, written during the Acts period), CANNOT presently exist in Christendom today.*

It would be *Biblically impossible for miraculous signs to exist in the Church today.* Consequently, viewing all aspects of the matter, a present exhibition of miraculous signs in the Church would, of necessity, have to be looked upon *ONLY one way: a Satanic deception.*

We're living very near the end of the present dispensation, at a time when the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 is doing its most damaging work. This is also the time when there is an ever-increasing interest among Christians from all denominations in miraculous works — seen in Scripture as *signs* — which is really another way of referring to the interest of Christians today being aligned more with pseudo spirituality than with true spirituality, which is part and parcel with the destructive leavening process presently occurring.

(The preceding is not to say that Christians are doing this in an overt, understanding manner. Rather, as will become clear from Matt. 7:21-23 [discussed later in this chapter], this emanates mainly from *Biblical ignorance regarding the correct place signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in Scripture.*

Never in the history of the Church has there been more Biblical study aids and helps available on the one hand but more Biblical ignorance among Christians on the other; and, as well, never in the history of the Church has there been a time quite like today in regard to *deception*, a time when Christians need to possess a knowledge of the Word of God like never before, though few do.

Accordingly, a Christian today, to avoid being caught up in that which is occurring on almost every hand, *has ONLY one recourse available — a knowledge of the Word of God. IF he possesses this knowledge, he CAN both know what's happening and know how to avoid deception; IF he doesn't possess this knowledge, he NOT ONLY CAN'T know what's happening BUT finds himself in a position where he is ripe for deception.)*

Insofar as Satan's deceptive work within the Church is concerned, he has evidently reserved a final, false manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles to be used as a trump-card; and, insofar as Israel is concerned, Satan will also conclude his dealings with the nation the same way, by using miraculous works — "great signs and wonders," manifested by "false Christs, and false prophets" during the Tribulation.

Why would Satan place such a high premium on miraculous works for his deceptive means? The answer is obvious:

These miraculous works formed *the credentials of the true messengers of God, and they were used in relation to a kingdom*. Satan is the "god of this world ['age']," the one who rules over the present kingdom (cf. Luke 4:5, 6; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 13:2). *He is the great counterfeiter*, and within this framework he has his messengers (who appear as "ministers of righteousness" [II Cor. 11:15]) going forth manifesting *that which appears to be the credentials of the true messengers of God*; and these credentials are used, as were the true credentials by God's messengers in the past, *in relation to a kingdom*.

But now the matter is in relation to the kingdom under Satan. Satan's aspiration, bringing about his fall, was seeking to be "like the most High" (Isa. 14:14). This remains his aspiration today, and this is reflected in *miraculous works in relation to a kingdom*. The "god of this age" is counterfeiting the work of the "most High" in this realm, and he is deceiving multitudes within Christendom.

a) Matthew 7:21-23

In view of that which is presently occurring on an ever-increasing scale in Christendom, note the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:21-23:

"Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say unto me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works?'

And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [lawlessness]'."

To properly understand this section in Matthew's gospel, it should be clearly understood that eternal verities are *NOT* in view at all. *NO* man will ever stand before the Lord to be judged relative to his eternal destiny. *One's eternal destiny will ALWAYS be a closed matter prior to the time he enters into any future judgment* (John 3:18).

ALL judgment (whether of the saved or the unsaved) will be on the basis of *works*, and if man could ever be brought into judgment where the issue dealt with his eternal destiny, two impossible situations would exist:

1) Man's works would occupy a place within a realm into which *such works CANNOT enter* (into man's presently possessed salvation, an impossibility).

2) *And the finished work of Christ would have to come under judgment* (for man's salvation, in its entirety, is based on that which Christ has done on our behalf).

The subject at hand in Matt. 7:21-23 is *entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens*. The "kingdom of the heavens" is an expression referring to *the rule of the heavens over the earth*. The realm of this kingdom is presently occupied by Satan and his angels (*cf.* Eph. 1:20, 21; 3:9, 10; 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9); and the whole of the kingdom, as it relates to the earth and the rule by man upon the earth, is presently, as well, under the control and rule of Satan and his angels (Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21).

During the coming age though, the heavenly realm of the kingdom will be occupied by Christ and His co-heirs; and the whole of the kingdom, as it relates to the earth and the rule of man upon the earth, will, in that day as well, be under the control and rule of Christ and His co-heirs (*cf.* Dan. 4:17, 25, 26; 7:18-27).

Thus, the matter in Matt. 7:21-23 simply has to do with occupying or being denied a position as co-heir with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom during the coming age.

And, in this respect, following Christ's statement in Matt. 21:43, when the kingdom (the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, that part of the kingdom which had been offered to and had been rejected by Israel) was taken from Israel, that seen in Matt. 7:21-

23 can pertain only to the subsequent recipients of the offer of the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, to those in Matt. 21:43 who would be allowed to bring forth fruit for the kingdom, *to Christians alone* (cf. I Peter 2:9, 10).

To show the complete scope of the matter, note two things:

1) Unsaved individuals *CANNOT* be in view in the passage, for a person is in *NO* position to be judged relative to entrance into the kingdom *UNTIL after he has been saved*.

Then, aside from the preceding, *the unsaved will have already been judged relative to their eternal destiny* (John 3:18).

2) Further, *Israel can NO longer be in view*, for this passage is dealing with “the kingdom of the heavens,” that part of the kingdom which was taken from Israel, that part of the kingdom which is presently being offered to Christians.

Thus, the judgment in view, depicted by Matt. 7:21-23, can, during the present day and time, *relate ONLY to Christians; it can ONLY have to do with the future judgment of Christians*, which will have to do with decisions and determinations rendered at *the judgment seat of Christ at the end of this present dispensation*.

The main thing to be noted about this passage though is the fact that Christ will be dealing with individuals who had previously been involved in *miraculous works, promulgated in the name of the Lord; and these individuals will be denied entrance into the kingdom on the basis of their involvement in these works*.

A question is asked in verse twenty-two (broken down into three parts in the KJV, but actually one question with three parts), and the negative used with this question in the Greek text (*ou*, expecting a “yes” answer, or a “positive” response) indicates that those involved in these works, those asking the question, expected the Lord to acknowledge that *these works had been done under His power and direction*. However, at a time too late, the truth concerning the matter is revealed through *a negative response from the Lord*.

The Lord’s response at this time indicates that *He will have had NOTHING to do with these miraculous works*, which He is seen viewing in a *very negative sense* by associating them with “lawlessness”

(Gk., *anomia*, which should properly be understood and translated as “lawlessness” rather than “iniquity”).

Why, at the judgment seat of Christ, will the Lord look upon Christian involvement in miraculous works after such a fashion as described in Matt. 7:21-23? The answer is quite simple:

Such involvement is *participation in affairs of a kingdom diametrically opposed to the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Satan*; it is consorting with the enemy and actually participating in the working of Satan as he seeks to counterfeit the work of Christ, adding to the leavening process which he began very early in the dispensation.

(The whole overall thought of the coming kingdom of Christ to replace the present kingdom of Satan is something which occupies the Lord’s attention *far more* than many today may be led to believe. After all, this is *the reason* for man’s very existence, *the reason* for the events of Calvary [providing redemption, allowing man to one day occupy the position for which he had been created], *the direction* toward which everything in Scripture moves, and *the goal* which will one day be reached.

And God is *NOT* going to look lightly upon man moving in a contrary manner to His revealed plans and purposes surrounding this goal, particularly when man consorts with the enemy and seeks to promote the very kingdom of Satan itself.)

Issues of the judgment seat will involve *faithfulness to one’s calling, with the coming kingdom of Christ in view*; and Christians producing works after the fashion described in Matt. 7:22 *are NOT ONLY involved in a realm completely outside the scope of their calling BUT they are producing works which have to do with the present kingdom, NOT works associated with the coming kingdom.*

In that coming day, Christ is going to say to Christians who had involved themselves in these miraculous works:

“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [‘lawlessness’]” (v. 23).

This is a “relative” statement pertaining to the matter at hand. (Note that even if eternal verities were in view, the statement would still have to be “relative,” for God is *omniscient, knowing every person and all things.*) Christ will *NOT* know these individuals relative to:

1) *Their works* (the Lord will have had *NOTHING* to do with their works).

2) *Entrance into the kingdom* (they will be *DENIED* positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom).

Further, the miraculous signs which they call to His attention in that day will be referred to by Christ Himself as “lawless works.”

b) *Course and Goal*

It is apparent that two things have paved the way for the swift, widespread acceptance of signs, wonders, and miracles within Christendom during the closing days of the present dispensation:

1) *The deadness of the mainline Churches* (note the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:14-21, depicting the Church as it will exist immediately prior to Christ’s return: “...thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”).

2) *The Biblical ignorance of Christians in these Churches* (a condition produced by the failure of pastor-teachers, over the years, to fulfill their calling). And Christians in Churches of this nature, *NOT knowing the Word of God, are ripe for deception.*

Those exhibiting and advocating miraculous works appeal to Christians across all denominational lines through presenting what appears to be *a living, active, vibrant experience to replace the deadness.* The matter is often promoted as “a renewal” *which the Lord is effecting among His people during the closing days of this dispensation; and literally millions of Christians have been caught up in this false ideology.*

The Church being “renewed” during the closing days of this dispensation is, of course, *NOT the Biblical picture at all.* Scripture presents the dispensation ending with *an apostate Church, NOT a renewed Church* (Rev. 3:14-21). “Renewal” would be reversing the leavening process in Matt. 13:33, or effecting a reversion of the tree back to a mustard bush in Matt. 13:31, 32.

Those within this movement though reinterpret these (and other) Scriptures to fit within the framework of their own ideology.

Thus, the movement’s leaders, through a misinterpretation of Scripture, are actually trying to carry matters in a direction

contrary to the way Scripture states things will go; and through this means *the Christians' attention is being drawn from the truth of Scripture into error promoted by the multitudes.*

A high premium within the movement is also placed on *experience* (in connection with miraculous works), with *a supposed closeness to God being derived through such experiences.* This alone should cause individuals to stop and think, for during millenniums of time, pagan religions, infiltrated by demons, have incorporated into their activities *experiences in connection with miraculous works of the same type which have been brought over into Christendom today.*

Within these pagan religions, demons work on human emotions through such things as dances or music, leading their votaries into dramatic, ecstatic experiences. Such experiences move one into feeling a closeness with Deity; and the more dramatic the experiences, the more in touch with God the person believes himself to be. *The goal is a feeling of euphoria within this state.*

In what direction is the present working of Satan, which will continue right on into the Tribulation after the Church is gone, actually moving? What is the goal, apart from a present deception of Christians, which will carry over into a deception of Israel during the Tribulation?

The answer, according to Scripture, is very simple: Satan's work is about to move *full circle.* Organized false religion had its beginning in Babylon during the days of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1ff), and it will have its end in Babylon during the days of Antichrist (Rev. 17:1ff). "Nimrod," *the first king of Babylon,* is a type of "Antichrist," *the last king of Babylon.*

These were and remain Satan's false systems, *demons exercise control, and supernatural powers are exhibited through men and women by these demons.* The entire system will reach its greatest height during the coming Tribulation, immediately prior to its destruction; and it will, at that time, once again be centered back in Babylon.

(Satan's present work in this respect appears to be centered in two realms:

- 1) Efforts to disrupt the Spirit's primary work during the present dispensation — *calling out a bride for God's Son.*

2) Efforts to prepare a fertile ground for conditions which will exist when the Tribulation begins, when he will launch his final and most intense onslaught against Israel.

Satan's revealed, ultimate goal is *the utter and complete destruction of the nation of Israel*, something which should come under serious consideration by Christians caught up in the working of Satan during the closing days of the present dispensation.

Needless to say, *God does not take kindly to ill-treatment extended to His Sons, whether His firstborn son Jesus or His firstborn Son Israel.*)

Deception During the Tribulation

The ones manifesting signs, wonders, and miracles in Christendom today are not, by large, the unsaved, *but Christians themselves*. That is, *Satan has deceived multitudes of Christians, who are, in turn, deceiving other Christians* (note once again the manner in which the question is asked in Matt. 7:22).

And such deception will apparently be wrought after the same fashion during the coming Tribulation. It will not be Gentiles going to Israel as "false Christs, and false prophets," but mainly, if not completely, *apostate Jews going to Israel after this fashion*.

Note that Antichrist will have a False Prophet, who will evidently be *a Jew*. This man will arise from *the land* (the land of Israel), while the Antichrist will arise from *the sea* (a Gentile land [Rev. 13:1, 11]).

And deception of the Jewish people during the Tribulation will be effected mainly through this man, who, through his deceptive ways, will evidently pave the way for numerous "false Christs, and false prophets" to arise in the midst of the Jewish people.

("Earth" in Rev. 13:11 is a translation of the word *ge* in the Greek text, which can be understood and translated as either "earth" or "land." *Context* is the determining factor concerning how this word is to be understood and translated.

The references to both "sea" and "earth ['land']" in vv. 1, 11 are references to *location*. The "sea" is a reference to *the Gentile nations*, and the Greek word *ge* can only be understood in the same sense, referring to other than the Gentile nations, to *the land of Israel* [the only place on

earth separate from the sea; if the word *ge* is understood and translated “earth” in v. 11, that would include the sea, which would not make sense contextually].)

Deception, according to Matt. 24:26, will involve *false reports* concerning the appearance of Israel’s Messiah. The Jewish people will be given hope where there is no hope. They will be told that their Messiah, the One Who can effect deliverance, is in a certain place (the “desert,” the “secret chambers”). And the warning to Israel in this passage is to beware of anyone who comes with this type message, for Messiah’s return will not be in this manner at all.

Rather, *the return of Israel’s Messiah will be sudden; it will be clearly visible for all to behold; it will result in deliverance for Israel; and it will be followed by destruction for Israel’s enemies* (Matt. 24:27-31; cf. Isa. 27:13; Ezek. 38:1ff, 39:1ff; Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff).

Thus, *false reports* by “false Christs, and false prophets,” who manifest “great signs and wonders,” will form a major part of Satan’s overall, final plan to destroy Israel during the Great Tribulation. Satan will *know* that his time is short; he will *know* that exactly three and one-half years will transpire from the time Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel until the time Christ returns. And during this relatively brief period *he will hold NOTHING back as he zeroes in on his primary target — the nation of Israel.*

Concluding Remarks:

Within the confines of the lukewarm Laodicean Church during the closing days of the present dispensation, *Christians have only one recourse to avoid being engulfed, after some fashion, in the final stages of the working of the leaven — a knowledge of the Word of God. No substitute or alternate exists.*

The same one recourse will also be available for Israel during the Great Tribulation. NOT ONLY has Israel been warned concerning *the time and manner* of the appearance of false Christs and false prophets *BUT* Israel has also been given information concerning *the time and manner* of the appearance of the true Messiah. And God will have His witnesses on earth during that coming day to bear a true testimony to Israel concerning these things (Rev. 11:3ff).

7

THE LORD'S RETURN

To Bring About the End Seen from the Beginning

“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.

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

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

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:27-31).

In verses twenty-seven through thirty-one, the Jewish section of the Olivet discourse deals with Christ's return and attendant events. Christ will return *immediately after the Great Tribulation*; and His return will be accompanied by *a great shaking and decimation of governmental powers on earth*, depicted in verse twenty-nine by a darkening of the sun and moon (signifying the main governing powers) and the stars falling from heaven (signifying lesser governmental powers).

And this great shaking of governmental powers will occur in connection with “the sign of the Son of man in heaven,” when He appears “with his mighty angels” in “power and great glory” (cf. Joel 2:1, 10; 3:15, 16; Hag. 2:21, 22; Matt. 24:3, 29, 30; Luke 21:7, 25, 26; II Thess. 1:7; Heb. 12:26; Rev. 7:12-17).

(For additional information on the symbolism used in verse twenty-nine — *a shaking* of “the powers of the heavens,” referring to *a decimation of Gentile powers on earth at the end of the Tribulation* — refer to Chapter XV, “The Great Seismos,” in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.

Also see Chapter II in this book.)

Christ’s return will occur at the full end of the “seventy weeks” *determined* upon the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24). This is a four-hundred-ninety-year period of time, and the Great Tribulation will constitute the concluding three and one-half years of this time, concluding the Jewish dispensation during Man’s Day and bringing an end to Man’s 6,000-year Day.

Antichrist will rule the earth during these climactic three and one-half years, and a time of such *unparalleled trouble* will exist within his kingdom at the end of this time that the Lord will have *to shorten those days* in order to prevent the very destruction of mankind itself (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Christ’s return will, thus, be at a time when chaotic conditions of this nature exist (vv. 29, 30).

Manner, Time of His Return

False Christs and false prophets appearing to Israel during the reign of Antichrist will seek, through a manifestation of “great signs and wonders,” to mislead the people of God concerning the appearance of their Messiah. They will proclaim such things as, “Behold, he is in the desert,” or “Behold, he is in the secret chambers” (vv. 23-26).

These false messages will be proclaimed during the darkest hour of Israeli history; and these messages will form part of Satan’s strategy as he, through the man of sin, seeks to destroy the nation of Israel during this time (*cf.* II Thess. 2:9).

The manner of Christ’s return though is revealed to be just the opposite of that which will be proclaimed by the false Christs and false prophets. Christ is not going to return in some secret manner or to some secret out of the way place. He is going to return in *an open, visible manner for all to behold*:

"Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

To show a contrast between that which is false and that which is true surrounding His return, Christ, in verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight, called attention to two things:

1) His return will be *as the lightning which appears in the east and shines unto the west.*

2) His return will be *as the eagles being attracted to the carcass of a slain animal or an individual.*

Both of these together show *the time, the suddenness, the openness, and that which will occur at the time of His return.*

1) As the Lightning

Lightning appears *suddenly and flashes across the sky for all to behold.* Apart from atmospheric conditions being conducive, there is no forewarning for lightning.

And Christ chose this natural phenomenon to describe the nature of His return. When conditions are as foretold — *as the days of Noah and as the days of Lot* (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30) — Christ, as is the manner with lightning, *will appear without warning.* His appearance *will be sudden, it will be open, and it will be clearly visible for all to see.*

Christ's return is not likened to lightning which flashes across just any part of the sky, but it is likened to lightning *seen in the east which flashes into the western part of the sky.*

The significance of this is seen in the movement of storm systems. Aside from that part of the earth near the equator and the poles, storm systems track *from west to east* (this movement is reversed near the equator and the poles, which is why hurricanes, which form in the equatorial zone, move *from east to west* and then tend to slowly swing around and veer in *a more easterly direction* once they begin moving north into latitudes out of the equatorial zone).

The Middle East though, where Scripture was written, lies between the equatorial and polar zones, and *the west to east* movement of storm systems would be in view; and lightning flashing

from east to west, as in the text, *MUST* be understood in the light of the movement of storm systems in that part of the world.

Lightning seen *in the west would signal an approaching storm*. From the vantage point of the observer, the time element involved would be *preceding the storm*. The opposite though would be true concerning lightning seen *in the east*. *The storm would be moving away*; and from the vantage point of the observer, the time element would be *following the storm*.

Christ will return “*immediately after the tribulation of those days...*” He will appear *suddenly*, and He will appear *immediately after the storm*, as *lightning* that “*cometh out of the east, and shinneth even unto the west.*”

And the thought of *deliverance for Israel*, for the nation’s sake, would be in view.

For the Gentile nations though, *the storm will NOT be over at this point in time*. Rather, the storm will still be raging, about to reach its most intense stage — “the great day of His wrath” (Rev. 6:17). And the storm for the nations *will continue UNTIL Christ treads the winepress at what is often called the battle of Armageddon*.

2) The Eagles and the Carcass

Matt. 24:28, associating Christ’s return with eagles hovering over a carcass, is often interpreted as a reference to *the battle of Armageddon* following Christ’s return (cf. Rev. 19:17-21).

It is true that the end result of that which is referred to in this verse has to do with this battle, *BUT* the contextual setting has to do with *the manner of Christ’s return* rather than with *Christ subsequently treading the winepress*.

Christ’s return being likened to eagles hovering over a carcass, as the previous reference to lightning, also has to do with the fact that Christ is not going to return back to this earth and appear in some out of the way place (e.g., as mentioned in the text, “desert,” or “secret chambers”).

Rather, He is going to *return and appear openly* among those who are corrupting the earth, with a view to bringing such corruption to an end. As the eagles devour a corrupting carcass, so will the Lord do away with corruption in that day (cf. Ps. 18:8).

Christ's return being likened to eagles hovering over a carcass is simply another way of saying the same thing, by way of introduction, to that seen in the next verse, in verse twenty-nine — the decimation and destruction of Gentile world power, depicted in verse twenty-eight as *the corrupting force on earth which MUST be done away with*.

Corruption in the kingdom of Antichrist at the time of the Lord's return will be centered in Babylon, and an end to this corruption will be effected through *the Stone smiting the image*, as revealed in Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45.

This foreshadows Christ (depicted by the Stone) *suddenly* appearing and destroying the final form of the kingdom of Babylon under Antichrist (depicted by the final form of the image).

Note that Christ will destroy Gentile world power by striking the image at its feet, showing that the final form of the image (the final form of Gentile world power, centered in Babylon) will then be in existence; but it *will NOT* be the feet, part of iron and part of clay, *ALONE* which will be destroyed in that day.

The Stone, "cut out of the mountain without hands," through striking the image at its feet, *will break the complete image into pieces*; for "the iron [the legs, and a part of the feet], the clay [the other part of the feet], the brass [the belly and thighs], the silver [the breast and arms], and the gold [the head]" *will all be "broken to pieces together"* — *broken into such fine pieces that the wind is seen carrying the remains of the complete image away like chaff* (pointing to both *the full end and the ultimate worth of Gentile world power* [Dan. 2:35, 45]).

Thus, the final form of the image is seen incorporating *ALL that previously existed in the Babylonian kingdom*, dating all the way back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar (that part of the kingdom depicted by *the head of gold*); and the destruction of Babylon in its final form is seen as *a destruction of NOT ONLY that which will then exist BUT also ALL which had previously existed* — *that depicted by the entire image, from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay*.

The image covers *the entire Times of the Gentiles* — from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay. This period began about 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first came against Jerusalem and began to carry away Jewish captives into Babylon.

Then, *the first major change* in the governmental administration in Babylon during the Times of the Gentiles occurred when the Medes and the Persians came against Babylon and *conquered the city* in 536 B.C.

The next major change occurred when the Grecians under Alexander the Great came against Babylon and *conquered the city* in 330 B.C.

And *the next major change*, as it pertains to Babylon, is yet future and will occur *after Antichrist establishes his headquarters in Babylon*. *This time though Babylon will NOT be conquered; rather, this time Babylon will be destroyed in a sudden and complete manner, NEVER to rise again.*

Note that *Babylon has never been destroyed during the Times of the Gentiles*. It has been conquered several times, and it simply faded from view as a world power after its four-way division among four of Alexander the Great's generals following his death in 323 B.C.

Its destruction, as prophesied numerous places in Scripture, awaits *the final form of the image — the final form of the Babylonian kingdom, which will exist during the reign of Antichrist*. It will be during this man's reign that *the complete image* will be destroyed, *in complete accord* with references such as Isa. 13:19, 20; Jer. 50:39, 40; 51:7-9, 37, 58-64.

(A destruction of the complete image in its final form is necessary for the simple reason that *NO destruction of any part of the image has ever occurred in history*.

Thus, NOTHING short of a destruction of the complete image will suffice; NOTHING associated with Gentile world power — from beginning to end — can remain and co-exist with the kingdom of Christ.)

Yet Once More

"Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. 12:26; cf. Hag. 2:5-7, 21, 22).

Numerous metaphors and various types of symbolic language are used throughout Scripture in the whole overall thought surrounding that depicted by the eagles being gathered in connec-

tion with *a carcass, or the sun and moon being darkened, the stars falling from heaven*, and “the powers of the heavens being shaken” in Matt. 24:28, 29. This is presented more than one way in the Olivet Discourse and in numerous related ways in other parts of Scripture elsewhere.

For example, note several sections of Scripture from the Books of Isaiah and Joel:

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine...

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord, and in the day of his fierce anger” (Isa. 13:9, 10, 13).

“The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the hosts of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth” (Isa. 24:19-21).

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness...

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 2:1, 2a; 3:14-16).

Events surrounding Christ's return, both immediately before and immediately following His return, are depicted by a darkening of the sun and moon, with the stars withdrawing their shining and falling from heaven (together depicting the decimation and destruction of Gentile world power).

And the whole of the matter subsequently being brought to a grand climax is described through an additional means, by "a great earthquake ['a great shaking'], such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake ['so mighty a shaking'], and so great" (Rev. 16:17-19).

To further describe this time, there will be such turmoil within the government of the earth in that day that "men's hearts" *will be failing* "them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (cf. Ps. 18:7, 8; Isa. 2:17-21; Matt. 24:28, 29; Luke 21:25, 26; Rev. 16:10).

Then, to even further describe this time, the "cities of the nations" *are seen falling*, with "every mountain and island...moved out of their places" (depicting the finality of the matter at the time Gentile world power is destroyed, *at the time the Stone smites the image at the feet, with the image completely destroyed and the wind carrying it away as chaff* [Rev. 6:14; 16:18, 19]).

(Note that *a shaking of Gentile world power* is in view in sections of Scripture such as Matt. 24:7, 29; Mark 13:8, 24, 25; Luke 21:11, 26; Rev. 6:12-14; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18-20, *NOT earthquakes*. The Greek word *seismos* ['shaking'] is used in all of these passages, referring mainly to *a shaking of heavenly bodies* [the sun, moon, and stars] — "the powers of the heavens" [cf. Dan. 4:26].

Refer to information at the top of page 92 in this chapter.)

Darkness, Light in Egypt

Drawing from the type in the Book of Exodus — Moses returning to the Jewish people in Egypt, followed by subsequent events surrounding both the Jewish people and the kingdom of the Assyrian of that day — numerous things can be seen regarding Christ's future return to the Jewish people, followed by subsequent events surrounding both the Jewish people and the kingdom of

the Assyrian in that coming day.

Darkness covered the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt immediately preceding the death of the firstborn (Ex. 10:21-23; 11:1ff), foreshadowing the darkness which will cover the kingdom of the Assyrian immediately preceding the death of the firstborn yet future (Rev. 16:10-17).

(In the account from Exodus, Paschal lambs died in the stead of the firstborn in every family throughout the nation; and, in an equal respect, the Jewish people forming the nation, through slaying the Paschal lambs and applying the blood, could ONLY have given rise to a lamb dying for the entire nation, for God's firstborn son, with the blood properly applied in both individual and national respects.

In the account yet future, the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God, has died in the stead of the firstborn, which would include not only every single Israelite but the nation as a whole, God's firstborn son. Israel slew the Lamb almost 2,000 years ago, but the Jewish people, comprising the nation, have yet to apply the blood.)

The darkness which the Lord brought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt is described in Scripture as a "thick darkness ['dense, deep darkness']" of such a nature, apparently so completely void of light, that *it could actually be felt* (Ex. 10:21, 22). And it will be *NO different* in the future kingdom of the Assyrian.

Joel 2:2 and Zeph. 1:15 record the same words in the Hebrew text as used in Ex. 10:22 to describe the darkness during that coming day, associated with the destruction of the kingdom of the future Assyrian.

Also, when darkness covered the land in the past kingdom of the Assyrian, the children of Israel had "light" where they dwelled, pointing to conditions which will surround the nation of Israel in relation to the restoration of the nation which will be saved out of the Tribulation (both physically and spiritually) and the subsequent restoration of the theocracy.

The darkness wrought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt was connected with God's judgment upon this kingdom. The firstborn was about to die, NOT ONLY in an individual respect BUT in a national respect as well.

God recognized *Israel, NOT Egypt, as His firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23); and for Israel to realize the *rights* within this firstborn status, *the sceptre had to pass FROM Egypt TO Israel. Such necessitated the destruction of Egypt as a world power.*

And this destruction occurred in the Red Sea, following Israel's safe passage through the sea. Why could Israel pass safely through the Red Sea but not so with the military power of Egypt? The answer is simple. It had to do with the previous death of the firstborn, whether experienced vicariously or personally.

With the Israelites, it was the former (experiencing the death of the firstborn vicariously). The firstborn had died, and he was to be buried (in the sea, in the place of death). But once in the sea, death could not hold the Israelites, for the firstborn had already died, *both individually and nationally.*

Thus, the sea — the place of death — had NO power over the Jewish people, and they subsequently found themselves NOT ONLY out of the sea BUT out of Egypt, on the eastern banks of the sea.

BUT, for the Egyptians, it was the latter (experiencing the death of the firstborn personally). They *could NOT* safely pass through the sea, for, though the firstborn in the family had previously died, *there was NO vicarious death; there was NO individual or national vicarious death of the firstborn, as in Israel's case* (actually, in a national sense, there *COULDN'T* be a vicarious death for the firstborn, for *the nation of Egypt was NOT God's firstborn son*). *Thus, the sea — the place of death — had complete control over the Egyptians.*

They went down into the place of death and remained there, apart from any thought or hope of every rising out of this place.

And, *AS* it occurred in the type, *SO* will it occur in the antitype. *The type has been SET, and it CANNOT be broken.*

The destruction of the power of Egypt, foreshadows the destruction of Gentile world power yet future. After the kingdom of the Assyrian of that day had been shaken to its knees, *this kingdom was destroyed, NEVER to rise again.*

And thus will it be with Gentile world power yet future.

The Jewish people though, in the type, are seen standing triumphant, out of Egypt, on the eastern banks of the sea, with the land in the Abrahamic covenant and a theocracy lying before them.

And *EXACTLY* the same thing is seen in the antitype. The Jewish people, in that future day, will be removed from a worldwide dispersion and will, as it were, *stand triumphant on the eastern banks of the sea, with a restoration to the land in a restored theocracy lying before them.*

Darkness, Light in the World today

Darkness covered the entire land for the last three hours Christ hung on the Cross at Golgotha. Then, immediately after Christ died, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:45-51).

God judged sin in the person of His Son at Golgotha during a time of *darkness*. He "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

God's Firstborn Son died in the antitype of all the Paschal lambs slain in Ex. 12:1ff, a substitutionary death to rectify the sin problem surrounding the firstborn in the human race.

The firstborn is under the sentence of death (Ex. 12:12; cf. Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27), but this death can now be realized through the One Who has died in man's stead (Ex. 12:3-13, 21-23; cf. I Cor. 5:7).

And, through believing, Christ's substitutionary death is reckoned to man's account. The person becomes *a new creation* "in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17). God removes "the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

Then, moving beyond the point of man's salvation through faith in the One Who died in his stead, *it MUST be recognized that this salvation is for a purpose*; and that purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. Individuals are saved today with a view to their reigning as *co-regents* with Christ in His kingdom. God is taking an entire dispensation to call out the rulers for the coming age. He is presently extending to Christians an invitation to occupy positions of power and authority with His Son during the coming day when He reigns over the earth.

And the shaking of the material creation immediately after Christ died reflects on *the very reason He died* — to redeem that which Adam forfeited in the fall, which has to do with *man's rule over the earth*. This shaking of the earth reflected on the same

thing as the shaking of the mount at Sinai during Moses' day (Ex. 19:18). The shaking in both instances looked out ahead to the great shaking and destruction of Gentile world power at the end of Man's Day, allowing God's firstborn Sons to realize the reason for man's creation in the beginning.

And, inseparably associated with the preceding, the graves of many Old Testament saints were opened at the time God shook the earth following the death of His Son, with these Old Testament saints being raised from the dead and coming out of their graves following Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27:52, 53).

(Note that the graves of these Old Testament saints *were opened to allow them to come out*, exactly as seen in the resurrection of Lazarus in John chapter eleven. This would indicate that they, exactly as Lazarus, came out of their graves *in natural bodies of flesh, blood, and bone*, both pointing to the future resurrection of Old Testament saints *in natural bodies at the end of the Tribulation, following the great seismos, the great shaking*.

In contrast, note the resurrection of Christ, when *a great shaking occurred as well* [Matt. 28:1-6]. The stone was rolled away, but not to let Christ out. The stone was rolled away to let others in to see that He was already out. Death could not hold the One Who had previously said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" [John 11:25; cf. Acts 2:24].

Christ [as Christians one day will be as well] was raised in a different type body, referred to in I Cor. 15:44 as "a spiritual body" — *the same body of flesh and bone, but with the life-giving, animating principle being the Spirit, not the blood [the blood carries oxygen from the lungs throughout the cells of a natural body; the Spirit, the very Breath which produces and sustains spiritual life today, performs this function in the spiritual body]*. And, as well, the spiritual body has capabilities not seen in the natural body — e.g., movement from place to place at will [cf. Luke 24:13-15, 36-40; Acts 1:9; 9:3-5].)

The resurrection of individuals immediately after Christ was raised, *following a time of darkness and a shaking of the earth, can ONLY form a first fruit of the future resurrection of Old Testament saints*. This future resurrection, the main harvest, will also occur following *a time of darkness and a shaking of the material creation*, allowing God's firstborn son, Israel, to occupy the nation's proper place on the earth in the theocracy (Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:1, 2; cf. Ezek. 39:21-29).

Israel Regathered, Restored

Christ, at His first coming, appeared in two related fashions, seen in John 1:11:

“He came unto his own [neuter in the Greek text, referring to *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in the Greek text, referring to *His Own people, the people of Israel*] received him not.”

Christ, born “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2), came unto the things associated with His kingship, offered an heirship in these things to His Own people, the Jewish people; but they rejected both that which was offered and the One making the offer.

This resulted in Christ subsequently leaving the house of Israel *desolate* (Matt. 23:38), with a *further desolation* to be effected during the Tribulation by the one who will one day come “in his own name,” whom the Jewish people will receive (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43).

But the long night will not last forever. The time is coming when a new day will dawn, when “the Sun of righteousness” will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2).

In the day, when Messiah appears the second time to His Own things and His Own people — when the Jewish people “look upon” the One “whom they...pierced” — *there will be acceptance, NOT rejection*. A nation will be “born at once” (Isa. 66:8), and Christ will then send His angels forth (those accompanying Christ at the time of His return) with “a great sound of a trumpet,” and *they will regather the dispersed Jewish people back to the land*.

The Jewish people will be regathered “from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” God will regather them “from all the nations” where they have been scattered (Deut. 30:1-3). He will send forth His angels who will be “fishers” and “hunters” in that day; and “they shall fish for them...and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks” (Jer. 16:14-16).

And if any Israelites have been driven out even into “the outmost parts of heaven” (an all-encompassing statement, as in Rev. 5:3 — “in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth”), the angels of God will find them (Deut. 30:4).

Before the Jewish people enter the land though, God is going to deal with them in judgment; and He is going to make a new covenant with the nation (Ezek. 20:33-38; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13). This judgment and the ratifying of this covenant will possibly occur in the wilderness of Sinai, the same place that the old covenant was made with Israel.

And the new covenant will be established with the people of Israel for *the same purpose that the old covenant was established — rules and regulations governing the people of God within the theocracy* (Ex. 19:5, 6). God will make a new covenant with His people in view of *the theocracy being restored to the nation*.

The nation of Israel is to be placed in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob under a new covenant within a restored theocracy. And, dwelling in the land in this position, Israel is to realize the rights of primogeniture.

God's firstborn son will then be the ruling nation on earth and will be the channel through which all the Gentile nations will be reached with God's message and be blessed. *NOTHING short of this will satisfy the requirements of Scripture concerning Israel's national future and the national future of the surrounding Gentile nations.*

Concluding Remarks:

Events on this earth are about to move full circle. The story of the Israelites in the brickyards of Egypt under bondage to an Assyrian ruler during the days of Moses is about to be repeated. The wrath of the Assyrian in the latter days though will be *FAR, FAR worse* than during Moses' day (Matt. 24:21, 22), for Satan will know that his time is rapidly running out.

God called Israel into existence for definite, specific purposes; and these purposes *MUST be realized*.

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance ['without a change of mind']" (Rom. 11:29).

God is NOT going to change His mind concerning the reason He called Israel into existence. God, in that coming day, will deliver Israel from the hand of the Assyrian; and He will then establish Israel in her rightful place with respect to the nation's calling.

8

THE FIG TREE

The Entire Nation, in or out of the Land

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [He] is near, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. 24:32-36).

The Jewish section of the Olivet discourse begins with *Israel in the Tribulation* and involves God’s terminal dealings surrounding Israel during Man’s Day, with everything moving toward *Israel being restored to her rightful place in relation to the theocracy and the surrounding Gentile nations*.

Then, the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse closes with the parable of the fig tree and a reference to the days of Noah, *both referring to events pertaining to Israel during the Tribulation*.

And though both are dealing with Israel, matters are approached after a different fashion than seen in the preceding verses. But, as in the preceding verses, *the direction toward which everything moves is the same*.

There is a common but false interpretation of the Olivet Discourse which attempts to place the occurrence of some events depicted in the Jewish section of this discourse during the present dispensation, preceding that time when God removes the Church and once again begins to deal with Israel, completing the last seven years of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy.

This, as seen in previous chapters in this book (particularly in Chapter I), is a mistake in hermeneutics. This type understanding and interpretation of the passage seeks to present a beginning of God's national dealings with Israel at a time near the end of the present dispensation, while God is dealing with the Church, during the time when Israel has been set aside, allowing the Spirit of God to call out a bride for God's Son.

God works with *SET times which He Himself has established*. And seeing God dealing with Israel on a national basis near the end of the present dispensation, before the dispensation has run its course, is *to see God begin dealing with Israel before the arrival of the time which He had previously established and set aside*.

God is *NOT* going to begin dealing with Israel *UNTIL it is time for Him to begin dealing with Israel*. And the time in which He will resume His dealings with Israel is clearly revealed in Scripture.

God's concluding dealings with Israel during the present age, ending Man's Day, *await time during the Seventieth and last Week of Daniel's prophecy — which CANNOT be brought to pass UNTIL the present dispensation has run its course*.

(Some Bible students might seek to see a validity for God beginning His dealing with Israel in a national respect, as seen in the Olivet Discourse, before the present dispensation is over, on the basis of the fact that He continued dealing with Israel in a similar respect for some three decades after the dispensation began [from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.].

One problem with this type thinking has to do with the situation, then and now; the situation between 33 A.D. and 62 A.D. was not the same at all as the situation is now.

In 33 A.D., after the kingdom had been taken from Israel and a new creation had been called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, *a generation of saved Jews remained on the scene*.

This was the generation to which the kingdom had originally been offered during Christ's earthly ministry; and the kingdom was re-offered to *this generation of saved Jews* for about the next three decades, until this generation began to die off, leaving *a generation of unsaved Jews* on the scene [for now salvation was effected through *the death and shed blood of the rejected Paschal Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ*, not through *the death and shed blood of the previously accepted paschal lambs, which had typified and*

pointed forward to Christ [or reflected back upon Christ (Rev. 13:8)]. Thus, the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, of necessity, was closed.

During the period from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D., this message, as seen in Rom. 1:16, was “to the Jew first [those comprising *this saved generation of Jews*], and also to the Greek [those comprising *the one new man, the new creation ‘in Christ,’* which was taken mainly from the Gentiles].” Israel was given priority during this time simply *because of the nation’s identity within God’s economy* [which had allowed both the original offer and the re-offer to be extended].

A situation of any related nature to the preceding simply won’t exist near or at the end of the present dispensation. Aside from that, *the main problem* surrounding the thought of God dealing with Israel on a national basis near the end of the present dispensation, in a similar nature to the way He dealt with Israel for about three decades at the beginning of the dispensation, would be *the clear teaching of Scripture itself*. Scripture is quite clear concerning *the time* in which God will turn back to Israel and begin dealing with this nation once again.

God’s national dealings with Israel will occur *ONLY AFTER the present dispensation is over, AFTER He completes His dealings with the Church, and AFTER time during Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy begins*. This is the manner in which God has established the matter throughout the Prophets and at any other place where Scripture deals with that future time when God will resume His national dealings with Israel.

Just as surely as God will complete His dealings with and remove the Church *before the Tribulation begins* [which will comprise the last seven years of the previous dispensation, the dispensation in which God dealt with Israel], *He will NOT begin His dealings with Israel on a national basis UNTIL He has completed His work with the Church during the present dispensation*.

To see God dealing with Israel in a national respect before He completes His work with the Church during the present dispensation [any part of the nation — *e.g.*, the remnant in the land today, forming the nation of Israel], or to see God dealing with the Church during the Tribulation [any part of the Church], is a mistake in Biblical hermeneutics.

The hermeneutical mistake is made through stepping outside the scope of the meaning of the word “dispensation” in Scripture.

This word, a translation from the Greek word, *oikonomia* [a compound word which has to do with the *management of household affairs* (*oikos*, ‘house,’ and *nemo*, ‘to manage’)]. “A dispensation,” by the simple

definition of the word itself, has to do with *God's management and dealings with household servants* [a work occurring during *time*, though *time* is not part of the meaning of the word, *oikonomia*, "dispensation"].

During the present time, God is dealing with one group of household servants, *the Church*. *Israel*, comprising another group of household servants, has been set aside, allowing God to deal with a different group of household servants for the length of time covered by the present dispensation. And once God has completed His dealings with one group of household servants during the present dispensation, He will then turn back to Israel and deal with another group of household servants, completing the last seven years of the past dispensation.

But God *will NOT* deal with both during either the closing days of the present dispensation or during the last seven years of the past dispensation [Daniel's Seventieth Week, the Tribulation].

That is to say, God *will NOT* deal with Israel in a national respect during the closing days of the present dispensation, during which time He is dealing with the Church; *NOR* will God deal with the Church during the coming Tribulation, during which time He will be dealing with Israel.

Thus, any thought of Christians [any Christians, faithful or unfaithful] entering into any part of the Tribulation [a widespread teaching in Christendom today] is immediately seen to be fallacious on dispensational grounds alone.

And, aside from the previous, when dealing with that which the future holds for Christians at the end of the present dispensation, Scripture always clearly presents Christians [all Christians] being removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.)

Thoughts that part of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse has a beginning fulfillment during the closing days of the present dispensation concern mainly the opening verses (all or part of the events seen in vv. 4-14, depending on the interpreter).

Then, this whole overall thought of a beginning fulfillment occurring during the closing days of the present dispensation is usually carried over into the parable of the fig tree in verses thirty-two through thirty-six by these same interpreters.

An attempt is made to relate the budding of the fig tree to Israel becoming a recognized nation once again on May 14, 1948, with many Bible students seeing this as the beginning of God's promised restoration of His people from a worldwide dispersion.

This may sound good, and it may appear to be in complete accord with that seen in the Olivet Discourse, along with Biblical prophecy surrounding God's promises concerning the restoration of His people. *BUT*, this type understanding of the matter is *NOT ONLY* incorrect any way that it is viewed *BUT* such an understanding of the parable of the fig tree and God's promises concerning Israel's restoration only adds to an already existing confusion concerning Biblical prophecy as it pertains to Israel and the nations.

(For additional information concerning why the present restoration of a remnant to the land during modern times [though about 6,000,000 strong, some two-fifths of the world's Jewish population] can be *NEITHER* a beginning *NOR* a partial fulfillment of God's many restoration promises to Israel throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, refer to the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again.*)

The Fig Tree — a Metaphor

"Trees" are used in Scripture to symbolize *national powers*.

In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, "trees" are seen as representative of *nations* which sought to elect a king to reign over them. Daniel 4:10-12 refers to the vision of "a tree in the midst of the earth," which is revealed to represent *the kingdom of Babylon* (vv. 20-22).

And the Lord used trees on more than one occasion during His earthly ministry within this same framework in order to teach His disciples great spiritual truths concerning the Church, Israel, and the Gentile nations.

He referred to the "mustard seed" which germinated, experienced an unnatural growth, and became *a tree*. He later referred to "the fig tree" on several occasions, and on one of these occasions He referred to "all the trees" in conjunction with *the fig tree* (Matt. 13:31, 32; 21:19, 20; 24:32; Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21; 13:28; Luke 13:6-9; 21:29).

The manner in which the Lord used "the fig tree" in Matt. 21:19, 20 and Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21 (see also Luke 13:6-9) clearly reveals that He was referring to *Israel*. Contextually, even apart from an understanding of how God had previously used "the fig

tree” in the Old Testament Scriptures as a reference to *Israel*, no other conclusion can be drawn.

And His subsequent use of “the fig tree” in the Olivet Discourse accounts *MUST* be understood in this same sense, for “the fig tree” *had NOT ONLY* previously been singled out to represent *Israel* (in line with the fact that “trees” are used in Scripture to represent *nations*) *BUT* the textual setting and things stated about “the fig tree” in the Olivet Discourse accounts preclude any other interpretation.

In this same light, “all the trees” in Luke 21:29 would have to be a reference to *ALL the Gentile nations*.

Though there are several references in the Old Testament to the use of “the fig tree” to represent *Israel* (e.g., Hosea 9:10; Micah 4:4; Hab. 3:17), the Book of Joel contains the most extensive use, clearly and unmistakably associating “the fig tree” with *Israel*.

This book deals with the complete Times of the Gentiles (ch. 1), but more extensively with the Times of the Gentiles being brought to an end, followed by Israel (“the fig tree” [1:7, 12; 2:22]) occupying her proper place in relation to the nations (“all the trees of the field” [1:12]) in a restored theocracy.

The Book of Joel contains an abundance of metaphors and symbolism. And this type use of language *MUST* be recognized when studying through the book.

In fact, God, throughout His Word, has an affinity for the use of this type language, a type language used more commonly in the East (where Scripture was written) than in the West.

The book begins by calling attention to four types of locusts — together, showing *the complete destructive power of the locust* — which are used to symbolize *the complete destructive power of a Gentile nation* (in this case, the kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar), which, itself, is symbolized by *the destruction which a lion with its powerful teeth and jaws can produce* (1:4-6).

In the preceding respect, the writer uses two metaphors (the destructive powers of both *the locust and the lion* [vv. 4, 6]) to describe the same thing, that seen in the next verse, in verse seven — the destruction which the Lord allowed *a Gentile nation* to wreak upon the nation of Israel:

“He [the Gentile nation (v. 6)] hath laid my vine waste, and barked [‘fragmented,’ ‘broken’] my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white [the bark missing from the branches, descriptive of the chewing work of locusts].”

Not only is reference made to “my fig tree,” but a previous, introductory reference is made to “my vine.” This is the translation of a Hebrew parallelism, something seen quite often in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. That is to say, a statement is made, then the same statement is repeated another way.

“My vine” is mentioned first. The vine had been laid waste by the destructive power of the Gentile nation referred to in the previous verse, and there can be no possible mistake concerning the identity of the nation referenced by “my vine” and that which is referred to by this sequence of events through the use of metaphors and symbolism.

The entire picture was presented earlier in Isa. 5:1-13, preceding both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (occurring about 722 and 605 B.C. respectively), with “the vineyard of the Lord of hosts” specifically said to be *the house of Israel, and the men of Judah* (a reference to both the northern and southern kingdoms in this case — *the whole house of Israel* [v. 7]).

And, in the same passage, because of the nation’s failure to bring forth the type fruit which the vineyard was supposed to produce, the Lord not only took away His protection, but He allowed Gentile nations to come into the land and take His people captive.

Then to further explain “my vine [*i.e., the whole house of Israel*]” being *laid waste in this manner* in Joel 1:4-7a, the writer goes on to refer to *EXACTLY the same thing* under the symbolism of “my fig tree,” completing the Hebrew parallelism (v. 7b).

Further down in the chapter (v. 12), there is a reference to “the vine” and “the fig tree” again, followed by a reference to “all the trees of the field” (a reference to the surrounding nations — the same nations seen through the symbolic use of “all the trees” in Luke 21:29, 30). And, in this verse, because of that which happened to the fig tree, to Israel, the surrounding nations are seen suffering *a similar fate*.

(In relation to the surrounding Gentile nations, Israel had been called into existence as the nation through which God would *NOT ONLY* reach the Gentile nations with His message *BUT* the nation through which He would bless the Gentile nations as well.

BUT, with Israel removed from the position which the nation had been called to occupy, *the Gentile nations, from a spiritual standpoint, could rise no higher than Israel. The nations, from a spiritual standpoint, could ONLY occupy a position in keeping with the position in which God had placed Israel.*)

But Joel doesn't end his prophecy at this point. Rather, the main part of the prophecy has to do with that coming day when God will restore His vine, His fig tree. And, with the restoration of the fig tree, the trees in the field would be dealt with accordingly, through Israel fulfilling her calling, reaching the nations with God's message and the nations being blessed through Israel (something seen also in Luke 21:29, 30, *when NOT ONLY the fig tree shoots forth BUT ALL the trees as well, verses which MUST be studied and understood in the light of Joel's prophecy*).

(As "all the trees," from a spiritual standpoint, *could NOT* occupy a position above the broken, fragmented position occupied by "the fig tree," the opposite concerning "all the trees" would be true when "the fig tree" is one day allowed to *shoot forth*.

WHEN this occurs, *THEN* "all the trees" *can shoot forth*. *THEN*, *ALL* the Gentile nations can be reached by and blessed through Israel.)

Note how this condition relative to "the vine" and "the fig tree" — which, collectively, will result in blessings for "all the trees," seen in Luke 21:29, 30 — is dealt with in Joel once the Lord steps back into the picture and completes His dealings with Israel, with the Messianic Era in view:

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength...

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:21, 22, 27).

The Fig Tree — Cursed

Christ, at His first coming, appeared in two related fashions, seen in John 1:11:

“He came unto his own [neuter in the Greek text, referring to *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in the Greek text, referring to *His Own people, the people of Israel*] received him not.”

His Own things to which He came had to do with those things rightfully belonging to the One “born King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2): the throne of David, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc. He offered that which pertained to *His Own things* to *His Own people* (the nation of Israel), and He was rejected.

As a consequence, Israel was, in turn, rejected. God set Israel aside while He called out a separate and distinct “nation,” comprised of those who were neither Jew nor Gentile, to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.

Matt. 21:1-11 records the account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as Israel’s King in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9. This was the final, climactic offer of *His Own things* to *His Own people*. And the continued rejection by the “chief priests and scribes” (v. 15) brought about the cursing of the fig tree (vv. 18, 19), the utterance of two parables pertaining to Israel and their unbelief (vv. 28-42), and the announcement that the kingdom which had been offered to and rejected by the Jewish people would be taken from them and given to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (v. 43).

Note the place which the cursing of the fig tree occupies in this sequence of events. It appears *immediately after* Christ’s final, climactic rejection by Israel and *immediately before* Christ announced that the “kingdom of God [*i.e.*, that part of the kingdom which had been offered to the nation — ‘the kingdom of the heavens’]” would be taken from Israel.

Understood contextually, the symbolism involved in the cursing of the fig tree becomes a relatively simple matter to ascertain. Christ came to the fig tree seeking fruit and found none (*EXACTLY* as seen when God came to His vineyard in Isa. 5:1-7 and found no fruit, a section of Scripture alluded to in Matt. 21:33ff which

related to Israel's fruitless condition at Christ's first coming).

A curse was then pronounced upon the tree (in relation to the tree bearing fruit):

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever [*lit.*, 'henceforward with respect to the age,' referring to the coming age, the Messianic Era]. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21:18, 19).

(Note that this curse relative to the nation bearing fruit was in relation to the proffered kingdom, *the kingdom of the heavens*. In relation to the rejected kingdom in Matt. 21:18, 19, Christ's previous words in Matt. 12:31, 32 would, of necessity, have to apply.

In these verses, "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [attributing to Satan the power through which Christ was performing miraculous signs]" *would NOT* be forgiven Israel's religious leaders [something seen extending to the nation at large in subsequent verses and the next chapter] "neither in this world, neither in the world to come [*lit.*, 'neither in this age (Man's 6,000-year Day), nor in the one about to come (the age about to come, the Lord's Day, the 1,000-year Messianic Era)']."

The same thing is in view relative to fruit bearing in Matt. 21:18, 19. Fruit bearing in these verses has to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*. And "the fig tree," *Israel*, will *NOT* bear fruit relative to this facet of the kingdom even during the Messianic Era — during the same time seen in Matt. 12:32, which covers *NOT* just Man's Day *BUT* the future Lord's Day as well.

In that future day though Israel will bear fruit. In fact, Israel will be very fruitful in that day, *just not in relation to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.*)

Christ came to Israel seeking fruit, found *NONE*, and Israel was set aside for a dispensation. "The fig tree," *Israel*, is to bear *NO* fruit during the present dispensation; *NOR* is Israel to bear fruit during the last seven years of the past dispensation — during the coming Tribulation, when *time* during the seven concluding years of this past dispensation will be fulfilled.

Israel is presently under a curse in this respect and will remain

in this status (relative to fruit bearing) until the Messianic Era.

But even during the Messianic Era, Israel's fruit bearing will be limited to the earthly sphere of the kingdom.

And in this respect, *AFTER* Israel has been restored, fruit will appear on the tree. In fact, restored *Israel will be VERY fruitful* (note *Sarah*, who was barren [Gen. 23:1, 2], and *Keturah*, who was very fruitful [Gen. 25:1, 2], within the overall framework of the typological teachings drawn from Gen. 21-25).

(For information on the typological teachings drawn from Gen. 21-25, refer to the author's book, *Search for the Bride*. This book has to do mainly with events in ch. 24 but covers the overall scope of events in chs. 21-25.)

The fig tree which Christ cursed had *leaves ONLY*. Mark, in his account, adds a statement not found in Matthew's gospel: "...for the time of figs was not yet" (Mark 11:13). It was not time for fruit to appear on either the tree which Christ cursed or the nation which the tree represented. It was too early in the season for the fig tree to bear fruit (although "leaves" portended *fruit*, for the appearance of fruit normally preceded or accompanied the appearance of leaves — a peculiarity of the fig tree); and, in this same respect, it was too early in God's septenary arrangement of time for Israel to bear fruit, though the nation will one day bear fruit.

The Fig Tree — Tender Branch, Leaves

Though the fig tree is cursed for the duration of the present dispensation, the tree, near the end of the age, is to reappear as it was seen in Matt. 21:19 prior to being cursed — *with leaves, but NO fruit*.

This will occur prior to the time that the curse is lifted, the Glory is restored, and fruit correspondingly appears on the tree. *The reappearance of the fig tree, possessing leaves ONLY, is THE SIGN which Scripture provides to show that the end of the age is very near.*

This is something though which will occur ONLY AFTER God resumes His national dealings with Israel — during the Tribulation — NOT something occurring near the end of the present dispensation.

Accordingly, the fig tree reappearing with leaves only has NOTHING

to do with the present existence of a Jewish nation in the Middle East, during the closing days of the present dispensation.

And this same thing would be true EVEN during the Tribulation, when God will have resumed His national dealings with Israel and the fig tree is seen with leaves once again.

It's *NOT* just the Jews comprising the nation in the Middle East which are in view. Rather, *THE WHOLE* of world Jewry is in view, with most of the Jews still scattered among the nations — *the same ones in view when the fig tree was cursed*, which can't possibly be limited to Jews in the land of Israel almost 2,000 years ago.

The Jews in the land today — comprising the present nation of Israel, as it is recognized by other nations — are there in *unbelief*. And it is this present nation which will be there during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation. This nation will then be uprooted (in the middle of the Tribulation) and driven back out among the Gentile nations. One-tenth of those presently in the land will be slain, with the remainder driven back out among the nations with the rest of world Jewry (Isa. 5:9-13; Matt. 24:15, 16; Rev. 12:6, 14).

And with that in mind, two things *MUST* be understood about the reappearance of the fig tree with leaves.

1) The fig tree has to do with *the whole house of Israel*, which, since the days of Moses, *has NEVER ceased to have both a national and racial existence*. The national existence may not be recognized by man between about 605 B.C. and 535 B.C. and between 70 A.D. and 1948 A.D., but nonetheless it has always existed throughout the Times of the Gentiles, always including *the whole house of Israel*, *NOT* just a remnant in the land returning from the days of the Babylonian captivity, or the remnant in the land under a Zionist movement today.

Possessing a national existence *does NOT* necessarily involve being separated from the rest of the nations and occupying a separate land. The Church has always possessed a national existence (I Peter 2:9, 10), separate from either Israel or the Gentile nations; and those comprising the Church have always been found scattered among these nations, without a present land of their own.

(The land belonging to Christians though is *in the heavens*, presently occupied by Satan and his angels. Thus, Christians *CANNOT* occupy a land during the present time, *ONLY* during that future day after Satan and his angels have been cast out.)

2) The fig tree with leaves will exist *throughout the seven years of the Tribulation*, *NOT* just during the first three and one-half years while a Jewish nation exists in the Middle East (note that a Jewish nation *will NOT* exist in the Middle East during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation, *though the fig tree with leaves will remain in existence*).

In this respect, the existence or non-existence of a Jewish nation in the Middle East during modern times really *has NOTHING* to do with the matter seen in Matt. 24:32-36, for, again, *the whole house of Israel* is in view — *EXACTLY as seen in the cursing of the fig tree in Matt. 21:18, 19 — NOT just the remnant in the land*.

Israel will be in travail throughout the entire seven years of the Tribulation (*cf.* Isa. 66:7, 8; Matt. 24:8; Rev. 12:1, 2), the birth of the nation will be about to occur, leaves will appear on the tree (anticipating fruit), and Satan will know these things.

Thus, he, through the man of sin, will use and maximize every resource at hand, as he turns his attention toward *ONE goal: the final solution to the Jewish problem — the complete and utter destruction of the nation of Israel, beginning with the remnant in the land and then continuing with the Jews dispersed among the nations worldwide*.

“Birth pangs” though portend *birth*, “leaves” portend *fruit*, and *God’s promises to Israel will NOT fail*. Though the nation will have to pass through its darkest hour, the dawn will arrive:

“The Sun of righteousness” shall “arise with healing in his wings...”
(Mal. 4:2).

In Matt. 24:33, when those during the Tribulation “see all these things” (things surrounding the fig tree with leaves in conjunction with the things seen back in previous verses, things which will occur during the Tribulation [vv.4-26, 32-36]), those on earth in that day, particularly the Jewish people, can know that Israel’s Messiah is “even at the doors.”

And the “generation” which sees these things come to pass during the Tribulation will not pass off the scene “till all these things be fulfilled” (v. 34).

The word translated “generation” in this verse (Gk., *genea*) could be understood in the sense of either “race” or “generation.” It is used both ways in Scripture.

If the former (“race”), the word would refer to *the indestructibility of the nation of Israel*; if the latter (“generation”), it would refer to *the same generation which saw the beginning will see the end*.

And since only seven years are involved from beginning to end, the former understanding of the word would evidently be the way in which the word is to be understood, *i.e.*, a reference to *Israel’s indestructibility* (cf. Isa. 54:17; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:20-26).

As well, this understanding of the word *genea* would be more in keeping with the overall scope of events seen in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, with Satan in this section of Scripture, seen attempting, through every means at his disposal, to eradicate the nation of Israel from off the face of the earth.

That Day and Hour

Christians, through the signs of the times, can know the nearness of the Lord’s return; and the Lord has seen fit to supply His people with an abundance of information in this realm.

Christians though cannot know the day nor the hour. These specifics are reserved for the “Father only” (cf. Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32).

Within this framework, some Christians have been disturbed by the way Mark 13:32 reads (Matt. 24:36 also reads this same way in several of the better Greek manuscripts and is so translated in most later English versions [ref. ASV, NASB, NIV]):

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son, but the Father.*”

The way that this verse reads in the English text has left some with the thought that even Christ Himself did not know the day

and hour of His return, which, of course, would reflect negatively upon His deity.

Seeing this problem, some expositors have attempted to call attention to self-imposed limitations in connection with Christ's incarnation and appearance "in the likeness of sinful flesh" on the earth. Though viewing the matter after this fashion may seemingly solve the problem (though, in reality, it produces far more problems than it solves), the text actually relates something quite different.

Correctly translated, the text is really a direct allusion to the deity of Christ, showing to the ones being addressed that *He was EXACTLY Who He claimed to be.*

Matthew 24:36 also teaches the same truth with the addition of the words, "neither the Son," for the Greek manuscripts containing these words read the same way as the Greek text of Mark 13:32.

The Greek words *ei me*, appearing in and translated "but" in both Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, are the key to a correct understanding of these passages. And possibly the best comments on the matter were those given years ago by Archbishop Trench as he was expounding on the words *ei me* in Mark 13:32:

"The late Archbishop Trench, one of the greatest authorities on words, when lecturing to a London college, called attention to the fact that in the last part of this verse ['but the Father'], the two Greek words *ei me*, translated 'but,' really mean 'if not.' The Greek word *ei* means 'if,' and the Greek word *me* means 'not.' He called attention to the fact that any good Greek Concordance would reveal the same.

Archbishop Trench understood this verse to mean, 'If I were not God as well as man, even I would not know the day nor the hour.'

Thus, Mark 13:32 correctly translated would read:

'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son if not the Father.'

In other words, Jesus says that if He were not the Father He would not know. We have the same truth in John 9:33 with the same two Greek words, *ei me*, translated, 'if not' — 'If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.'"

— *Selected Writings of A. Edwin Wilson*

Thus, Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, rather than showing self-imposed limitations of the Son (the attempted explanation used in some Christian circles), or a non-deity status of the Son (as claimed by certain cults), are two of the most straightforward verses in the New Testament bearing witness to the Son's true identity.

He is one with the Father, possessing the same attributes. If He were not God, He would NOT know the day and hour of His return; but He is God, and He consequently DOES know.

Concluding Remarks:

The appearance of the fig tree with leaves once again will portend *that which can ONLY follow* — the appearance of fruit on the tree, the appearance of Israel bearing fruit.

Israel though *MUST first* pass through the nation's greatest time of suffering, the Great Tribulation. *THEN*, the nation will realize a calling which has been delayed for millennia. *The Glory and the theocracy will be restored, and fruit will appear on the tree.*

1) Fig Leaves in Genesis

The fig tree with leaves *only*, representing Israel in the same condition, should be understood in the light of the first mention of fig leaves in Scripture, for a first-mention principle regarding fig leaves — which remains unchanged throughout the remainder of Scripture — is seen in this opening part of Scripture.

Adam and Eve, following the fall, suddenly found themselves in a naked condition and tried to cover their nakedness with *fig-leaf aprons* (Gen. 3:7). It is evident that *the fig-leaf aprons* constituted their efforts to replace *a covering of Glory* which they lost at the time Adam, as the federal head of the human race about to descend from his lions, partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God is clothed "with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104:2), and man was created in the "image" and "likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Man, at the time of his creation, *could ONLY have been enswathed in a covering of Glory*, which had to do with the presence of God at all times. This covering was lost at the time of the fall, *separating man from God*, revealing the primary meaning of the word "death" — *i.e., separation from God* (cf. Gen. 2:17).

(Two different words are used for “naked” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:25; 3:7. The latter word, used in ch. 3, following the fall [*geyrom*], has to do with *utter, complete nakedness*. But something different is seen with the word used in ch. 2 before the fall [*garom*].

The word used before the fall could refer to *a man partially clothed, though viewed as naked because of the way he was partially clothed* — e.g., possessing an inner garment but not an outer garment.

Adam and Eve, before the fall, possessed *coverings of Glory* [the inner garments] but not the regal outer garments which they had been created to ultimately wear. *They were “naked” in this respect.*

Then, following the fall, with their loss of the coverings of Glory, with their *complete nakedness*, *they were in NO position to wear regal garments.*

Thus, the thought of *redemption* enters into the picture at this point in Scripture [latter part of ch. 3, continuing into ch. 4]. And *redemption* is seen to be for *ONE central purpose* — *in order that man might be placed back in a position where he can one day wear regal garments, ultimately occupying the position for which he had been created in the beginning.*)

From the point Adam sinned until the present time there has existed in Scripture what could be called “the fallen image,” a condition wrought through Adam’s fall, which will one day be rectified.

(Note Rom. 3:23 in this same respect:

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

It is not “eternal salvation” that *man comes short of* in this verse. Rather, it is “the glory of God” [see also Rom. 5:2].

This Glory was lost through “sin” in the past; and this is the manner in which conditions continue today.)

This fact will also reveal what is wrong with man’s body of “flesh” today. “Flesh” is presently spoken of as *sinful*. We read about the “works of the flesh” as opposed to the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-23; cf. Rom. 8:8; 13:14; Eph. 2:3), or about Christ coming to this earth in “the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

There is really *NOTHING* wrong with *flesh* per se. Man was created with a body of flesh, and redeemed man will possess a body of flesh throughout not only time (the millennial age) but eternity (the ages beyond).

The problem exists where there is a *body of flesh WITHOUT the covering of Glory*, a problem which *has NOT* always existed in the past and *will NOT* always exist in the future.

Christ coming in “the likeness of sinful flesh” is a reference to His appearance on this earth *WITHOUT the covering of Glory*

And except for the brief appearance after a different fashion on the Mount in Matt. 17:1-8, He lived on this earth and died at Golgotha apart from this covering. He was stripped of His garments, exposing the uncovered flesh, and arrayed as a mock King immediately preceding Calvary.

As He stood there in this array, *apart from His Glory*, He was spat upon, mocked, and smitten with a reed (representing a sceptre, which had been placed in His hand). He was then stripped of His garments again at Golgotha, exposing the uncovered flesh, bearing the sins of the world “in his own body” (Matt. 27:27-31; John 19:23; I Peter 2:24).

The ignominy and shame of these experiences cry out for the same scenes which witnessed His sufferings and humiliation to also witness His Glory and exaltation.

2) Fig Leaves in the Gospel Accounts

Now, what do these things have in common with *the fig tree* being cursed by Christ at the termination of His earthly ministry? What does the mention of *fig leaves* in connection with the fall of Adam have to do with Israel typified by *a fig tree with leaves ONLY*?

First, note the reason for Adam’s creation. Adam was created to supplant Satan as the ruler over this earth, and Eve was removed from Adam’s body to reign as consort queen with him (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:21-25). Satan, through sin, had been disqualified as the earth’s ruler (Isa. 14:13, 14); and an entirely new creation, created in the image and likeness of God, was brought on the scene to hold the sceptre.

However, Satan knowing this, brought about the First Adam’s fall and his resulting disqualification to assume the position for which he had been created. Thus, Satan continued to reign, even though disqualified to do so.

This reveals a principle of Biblical government. An incumbent, even though disqualified and rejected by God, continues to hold his divinely appointed office *until* he is actually replaced, which requires the one replacing him to not only be present but to also be ready to ascend the throne (note *Saul and David* in this respect, or the antitype, *Satan and Christ*).

Second, note the reason that Israel was brought into existence and established in the position of God's "firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22, 23). Israel, *a special creation* of God (Isa. 43:1), was called out of Egypt under Moses *to exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was to be the ruling nation on earth and the nation through which ALL of the Gentile nations would be reached and blessed* (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5, 6).

(Israel, as Abraham's seed, was also made the repository for *heavenly promises and blessings* [Gen. 14:18, 19; 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:12-14]. These promises and blessings though were taken from the nation following the cursing of the fig tree [Matt. 21:18, 19, 43] and are presently being offered to a separate and distinct nation, which is comprised of individuals who are neither Jew nor Gentile [cf. I Peter 2:9, 10; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-15].

But *the earthly promises and blessings* — which *were NOT* in view at Christ's first coming, which *were NOT* in view in the kingdom offered to Israel — will one day be entered into and experienced by the nation. These promises and blessings, having to do with the kingdom covenanted to David [cf. II Sam. 7:5-17; Ezek. 37:21-28; Luke 1:31-33], *can NEVER be taken from the nation.*)

In connection with Israel's calling, *the Glory* which man lost at the time of the fall was, after a fashion, restored to man at Mt. Sinai. Rather than *this Glory* abiding directly with man as preceding the fall though, an earthly tabernacle, patterned after an existing tabernacle in the heavens, was constructed to house *the Glory*.

Two things become evident at this point in Scripture:

1) No restoration of this aspect of Edenic conditions — man enswathed in a covering of Glory — can exist as long as man resides in a body of death.

2) The Glory is inseparably associated with man's rule over the earth.

The day came though, centuries later, because of continued disobedience, when this *Glory* was taken from Israel. About nineteen years after Nebuchadnezzar began carrying away Jewish captives into Babylon, God removed His *Glory*; *and this Glory will NOT be restored UNTIL that time when God places Israel under a new covenant and the nation occupies the position portended by the Glory.*

Between these two times the nation can rise NO higher in relation to regality than Adam following the fall — possessing NOTHING more than fig leaves at the very most.

Third, note that the cursing of the fig tree was a miraculous work. It was actually one-of-a-kind among miracles which Christ performed during His earthly ministry. All Christ's other miraculous works dealt with *deliverance*, but this one dealt with *judgment*.

And miraculous works performed by Christ (or for that matter, miraculous works performed by individuals anywhere else in Scripture [ref. Chapter VI in this book]) *were ALL peculiarly related to both Israel and the theocracy.*

Now, tying all of this together, one should be able to clearly see that *ALL these things are intimately associated with the government of the earth.*

Adam was created to rule and reign. But, because of sin, *the enswathment of Glory* (that which covered Adam's and Eve's bodies before the fall, associated with God's presence) had departed; and *NOTHING was left but fig leaves.*

It was the same with Israel. Israel had been brought into existence — a special creation (Isa. 43:1) — *to be the ruling nation within a theocracy.* But, because of sin (continued disobedience, over centuries of time), *the Glory* (the presence of God among His people, dwelling in the tabernacle and later the temple) had departed; and *NOTHING was left but fig leaves.*

The time when the Glory will be restored and fruit will reside on the tree is yet future. It will occur WHEN man is brought back into a realization of that which was lost in Adam being regained during the coming age in Christ, the second Man, the last Adam.

9

THE DAYS OF NOAH

The Dark Night, THEN, Above the Mountains...

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).

(The parable of the fig tree and a brief summation of the days of Noah conclude the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, capsulating, in a concluding manner, all which precedes in the discourse.

The budding of the fig tree shows not only the status of Israel during the Tribulation but portends fruit about to appear on the tree, the nation about to bear fruit.

And that which *the days of Noah* foreshadow will be brought to pass at the same time as the budding of the fig tree, with events which occur at the end of and following the Flood foreshadowing that which the budding of the fig tree portends — *Israel ultimately occupying the nation’s God-ordained place and bearing fruit.*

Then, all of this is detailed in a somewhat succinct manner in the preceding verses of the discourse.

This chapter, dealing with “The Days of Noah,” will approach the overall subject as presented by Scripture from two standpoints:

1. The Biblical account of events preceding, during, and following the Flood during Noah’s day, from a typical standpoint.
2. The mechanics of the Flood itself [particularly the meteorology and hydrology involved].

And it will become evident that things about the mechanics of the Flood *are not ONLY* vitally necessary to help explain the typical teachings surrounding the Flood *BUT* will also shed light upon two other parts of Scripture:

- 1) Events which occurred during the restoration of the material creation in Genesis chapter one.
- 2) Events which will occur during “the times of restitution [‘restoration’] of all things” yet future, seen in Acts 3:21.

The whole of Scripture is tied together in this manner, beginning in the Book of Genesis and concluding in the Book of Revelation.)

Evident from that stated in Matt. 24:38, 39, the people during Noah’s day were going about their everyday activities, completely oblivious to the destruction which was about to occur.

And, with conditions existing at the time of the beginning of the Flood during the days of Noah foreshadowing conditions which will exist at the beginning of the Tribulation during the days of the Son of Man, it is evident that these same conditions will prevail on earth immediately preceding Christ’s return for the Church, for the Tribulation will begin shortly thereafter.

And one only needs to have some knowledge of conditions during the days of Noah to look around at the world in which we live today and know that the world of that past day aptly describes the world as it exists during the present time.

People in the world today (the unsaved, and most Christians as well) are going about their everyday activities, completely oblivious to that which is about to occur — Christians being removed to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and the world, shortly thereafter, finding itself in the Tribulation.

And conditions in this respect will continue unchanged, with both Christians and the world at large *busily engaged in normal pursuits of life, UNTIL...*

The world *CANNOT* be expected to follow any other course. “The whole world lieth in wickedness [‘in the wicked one’]” (I John 5:19). *Satan* is “the god of this world [‘age’],” and “all the gods of the nations are idols [*lit.*, ‘nothing,’ as compared to the one true and living God; the translators of the Septuagint used the Greek

word *daimonia*, referring to ‘demons’]” (II Cor. 4:4; Ps. 96:5).

The world, enmeshed in humanism — with its goals, aims, ambitions, and aspirations — is following this type approach to all things in life. Thus, it is only natural for the world to pursue a pattern of life as given in the text.

But matters for Christians *should be completely different*. Too often though there is seemingly little to no difference between Christians and those in the world, with Christians today increasingly finding themselves being caught up in the humanistic ways and practices of the world.

This is nothing new in today’s world though. This type thing has been occurring throughout the present dispensation, for the past two millenniums.

There though is one difference in today’s world. *This type thing is presently occurring on a scale NOT heretofore seen in Christendom.*

Note the admonition of Scripture in I John 2:15-17 regarding Christians and their relationship to the world:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever [*lit.*, ‘abideth with respect to the age,’ an allusion to the Messianic Era].”

With reference to the days of Noah, along with the previous parable of the budding of the fig tree, a number of things are certain. And, in view of the times in which we live — very near the end of the dispensation, any way one looks upon the matter — the time for the occurrence of things seen throughout the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse are *very near at hand*:

1) God is about to conclude His dealings with the Church during the present dispensation.

2) God is about to once again deal with Israel, concluding the last seven years of the previous dispensation, fulfilling Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

3) Things are about to rapidly change upon the earth, in a very negative respect — changes wrought by Antichrist when he appears on the scene.

4) Christ will return following these changes being brought to an apex, changes of such a nature that *except for Christ's intervention in man's affairs once again, no flesh would survive.*

5) Then, following Christ's return, numerous changes will once again occur, though this time the changes will be just the opposite — changes wrought by Christ.

That's what the parable of the budding of the fig tree and the days of Noah, concluding the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, have to do with. Both together carry a person through a time of unparalleled trouble about to come upon the earth (seen in previous verses). But both, as well, look out to that future day when the Son of Man will return as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (also seen in previous verses) and — through numerous subsequent events at the time of His return, followed by 1,000 years of judging — *straightens the whole matter out.*

Two Worldwide Floods

The Flood during Noah's day is *not* the first worldwide Flood seen in Scripture. Rather, the opening verses of Genesis provide an account of the first worldwide Flood and God's restoration of the material creation following this Flood. The Flood in these opening verses of Genesis, in chapter one, occurred during days preceding man's time on earth, with the restoration occurring immediately preceding man's creation.

Then, Genesis chapters seven and eight, having to do with events occurring over sixteen centuries later, recount the second worldwide Flood seen in Scripture, the Flood during Noah's day.

There is *a new beginning* following the Flood in Genesis chapter one, and there is *another new beginning* following the Flood during Noah's day in Genesis chapter eight. And the manner in which God subsequently wrought a restoration of the ruined material creation in chapter eight is *the SAME manner in which He had previously wrought a restoration of the ruined material creation in chapter one.*

This *MUST* be the case, for *an unchangeable pattern* concerning

how God restores a ruined creation was established at the beginning, as seen in the first chapter.

In Gen. 1:2, God used *raging waters* (the thought conveyed by the Hebrew word *tehom*, translated “deep”) to destroy the pre-Adamic earth following Satan’s attempt to *elevate his throne* to a position above his God-appointed position.

And in Gen. 7:11ff, God used *EXACTLY* the same means to destroy those upon the earth following Satan’s attempt to corrupt the human race through the cohabitation of “the sons of God [angels within Satan’s kingdom]” with “the daughters of men [female offspring from the lineage of Adam]” (Gen. 6:1-4).

(For additional information on the cohabitation of “the sons of God” with “the daughters of men,” refer to Chapter V, “In Those Days...Also After That” in the author’s book, *Jude*)

Particulars surrounding the way in which God brought about the pre-Adamic Flood and resulting destruction are not given in Scripture. The simple statement is made concerning existing conditions at the time of the Flood — *raging waters covering a darkened earth* — and aside from commentary such as II Peter 3:5, 6 (which provides little more in the way of particulars), God has seen fit to leave the matter unrevealed.

However, God did provide revelation concerning how He went about restoring this ruined earth for man, prior to man’s creation. He devoted almost an entire chapter to details surrounding this restoration, for an evident reason (Gen. 1:2b-25).

But revelation surrounding the Noachian Flood is quite different. God saw fit to provide numerous particulars concerning both the way in which He brought this Flood about and the way in which He effected restoration following the Flood. Part of chapter seven is devoted to the former (vv. 11-24), and part of chapter eight, along with Ps. 104:5-9, is devoted to the latter (vv. 1-14).

(*The destruction* produced by water during Noah’s day, the same as seen in chapter one, will be dealt with first [pp. 130=133a]; then, *the restoration* seen during Noah’s day, set alongside and/or compared with the restoration in chapter one, will subsequently be dealt with [pp. 133b-140a].)

Destruction by the Flood During Noah's Day

The waters which flooded the earth during Noah's day came from two sources — *from above the atmosphere* and *from below the earth's surface* (Gen. 7:11). During the restoration of the earth following the previous Flood in Gen. 1:2, God, on the second day of His restorative work, had placed the waters which *He later used to flood the earth once again* in two locations — *above the atmosphere* and *below the atmosphere* (Gen. 1:6-8), with the waters below the atmosphere placed both upon and below the earth's surface.

(The waters above the atmosphere evidently existed in the form of *a vapor canopy surrounding the earth*. Significant amounts of water in a liquid form would have affected light coming from the sun [*ref.* "Concluding Thoughts", pp. 141-146]. And the amount of water content which God placed above the atmosphere could only have been a tremendous amount [evident by the amount of rainfall at the time of the Flood].)

When God flooded the earth a second time, during Noah's day, He broke open "the fountains of the great deep" and opened "the windows of heaven [*i.e.*, 'the floodgates of heaven']" (7:11).

Subterranean waters began to gush up, and *torrential rain* (the central meaning of the Hebrew word translated "rain" in Gen. 7:12 [*geshem*], as distinguished from a different word for rain used back in v. 4 [*matar*]) began to fall through the atmosphere from the opened floodgates above the atmosphere (which could only have resulted from the vapor canopy condensing).

From the account given in Genesis, this continued unchanged for forty days and nights. Then, at the end of this time, the highest mountain peak on earth was covered to a depth of "fifteen cubits [about twenty-five feet]" (7:12-20).

And, except for the eight individuals and the animals in the ark:

"...all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (7:21, 22).

The subterranean waters though didn't cease gushing up at the end of forty days; nor did the torrential rain cease coming down from above at this time. Rather, *both continued, with NO revealed change, for another one hundred and ten days* (7:24-8:2).

It was ONLY after a full one hundred and fifty days that the subterranean waters ceased gushing up and the torrential rain ceased coming down (the same word for "rain" is used in the Hebrew text for rainfall during both the first forty days [7:12] and the additional one hundred and ten days [8:2], which, as previously noted, refers more particularly to *torrential rain*).

In this respect, what *could ONLY* have been *vast quantities of water* continuing to come up from below and down from above for an additional one hundred and ten days *could ONLY* have significantly added to the depth of the water which had already accumulated and completely covered the earth at the end of the first forty days. And, from the time involved, possibly almost three times as much water accumulated on the earth's surface during the additional one hundred ten days as had initially accumulated during the first forty days.

Thus, *at the end of the FULL one hundred and fifty days, the water level could ONLY have been far above that seen at the end of forty days*, when the highest mountain peak on earth was covered to a depth of about twenty-five feet. The water depth one hundred ten days later would undoubtedly have been at least hundreds, possibly thousands, of feet above the highest point on earth; we're not told.

(Note that the topography of the antediluvian earth was quite different than that which exists today. Mountain peaks in the antediluvian world *could ONLY* have been considerably lower, for reasons which become evident when one views Scripture dealing with how God restored the earth following the Flood.

God's restoration following both the Flood preceding man's creation in Genesis chapter one and the Flood during Noah's day in chapter eight involved *the movement of water from one place to another, allowing dry land to appear* [cf. Gen. 1:9, 10; 8:5-14], with the water moved to different places in each instance.

Restoration following the Flood which preceded man's creation in chapter one occurred through God placing part of the water above the

atmosphere and part below the atmosphere, both on the surface and below the surface of the earth [1:2, 6, 7].

Restoration following the Flood during Noah's day in chapter eight occurred through God raising portions of the land beneath the water [ultimately forming mountainous or high terrain] and lowering other portions of the land [forming mainly ocean basins], with water moving from the land being raised to the land being lowered, as seen in Ps 104:5-9:

"He established the earth upon its foundation,
So that it will not totter ['move out of its place'] forever and
ever.

Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment;
The waters were standing above the mountains.
At Thy rebuke they fled;
At the sound of Thy thunder they turned away.
The mountains rose; the valleys sank down
To the place which Thou didst establish for them.
Thou didst set a boundary that they may not pass over;
That they may not return to cover the earth" (NASB).

Part of the water flooding the earth had come from subterranean sources. It appears evident though that this subterranean supply of water was left on the surface of the earth at the time of the restoration following the Flood, for only about three percent of the earth's total water supply lies in subterranean sources today. The remainder, about ninety-seven percent, lies on the surface of the earth, mainly in the oceans. And it is evident that none of this water was placed back in the heavens above the atmosphere, for it is *not* there today.

[These figures — three percent, leaving ninety-seven percent — are derived from The U.S. Geological Survey's records from past years. The accuracy could be somewhat open to question; though, with today's technology, the figures are probably fairly accurate.]

Then, concerning the antediluvian mountains, how high would they have been for water to have covered all of them at the end of the first forty days of the Flood? We can know that vast changes in the earth's topography began to occur at the end of the full one hundred fifty days, immediately following the time that God closed the flood-gates of heaven and stopped the subterranean waters from coming up.

But, the elevation of antediluvian topography, no one knows; nor can they know, for there is no data to work with.)

Thus, *at the end of the first forty days of the Flood*, the ark rested, floated, on a shoreless ocean, with the water level about twenty-five feet above the highest point on earth. And the ark continued floating on a shoreless ocean, with subterranean waters continuing to gush up from below the earth's surface and torrential rain continuing to fall from the supply of water above the atmosphere *for another one hundred and ten days*, which could only have progressively raised the water level higher and higher.

ONLY at the end of the full one hundred and fifty days did God step in and close both the floodgates of heaven and the fountains of the deep (8:2). Apparently all of the water above the atmosphere had fallen (for, again, none remains there today), though that would not appear to be the case with the water below the earth's surface (for, as previously noted, about three percent of the earth's total water supply can be found below the earth's surface today).

God apparently waited until the entire supply of water above the atmosphere had been depleted, which required one hundred and fifty days of torrential rainfall. Then He closed both the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters.

Restoration Following the Flood

On the one hundred fiftieth day of the Flood, when God stepped in and put a stop to matters (*cf.* 7:11; 8:1-4), Scripture locates the ark in relation to a place on the land beneath the water by stating:

"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat" (8:4).

OR, is the preceding REALLY what Scripture states?

This is the way that all of the widely-used English translations read, which have seemingly followed one another in the translation of this verse. But how could this be correct if the water level continued to rise for a total of *one hundred and fifty days* in the manner previously seen, which, *from a Scriptural standpoint, is really the ONLY possible way to view the matter?*

This fact should have caught the attention of at least some of

the translators, for the Hebrew word translated “upon” (*al*) in this verse *can also be understood and translated* as “over” or “above.” For example, it is translated “over” in the opening verse of this same chapter (“pass *over* the earth”), or it is translated “above” back in chapter one (“fly *above* the earth” [v. 20]).

This Hebrew word has to be understood *contextually*. And in Gen. 8:4, as is evident from the context introducing this verse (and even more evident from the verses following), *the translation should be “above” or “over,” NOT “upon.”*

That is, at the end of one hundred and fifty days, when the supply of water above the atmosphere had evidently been depleted and God stepped in and closed both the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters, *Gen. 8:4 locates the ark in relation to a point on the earth beneath the waters, below the ark. This verse locates the ark in relation to the Ararat mountain range* (a range which stretches from modern-day Turkey eastward into Armenia).

And that this is the correct way to view Gen. 8:4 is a simple matter to illustrate, not only from Scripture preceding the verse (as has already been shown) but from Scripture following the verse as well.

Genesis 8:1, 3, 5 clearly reveals that God *NOT ONLY* closed the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters at the end of one hundred and fifty days *BUT* that He also began a restorative work at this same time.

Immediately following the Flood waters reaching their highest level on the one hundred and fiftieth day, these waters began to recede. And it took about five and one-half months for the level to drop completely, though almost two more months were required after that for the face of the earth to become dry (cf. 8:1-4, 13, 14).

If the ark had come to rest on a mountain peak in the Ararat range on the day that God closed both sources of the Flood waters and began His restorative work, resulting in the waters continually receding, it could NOT have been too many days before dry land appeared around the ark.

But this *DIDN'T* happen. It wasn't until almost two and one-half months had passed that *the tops of the mountains began to appear above the waters* (8:5).

Then, after another forty days had elapsed, Noah sent forth a dove, which found “no rest for the sole of her foot” (8:6-9).

That is to say, almost four months after the waters began to recede, *there was NO dry land around the ark*, though seven days later, when Noah sent the dove forth again, the dove *did find dry land within flying distance of the ark* (8:10, 11).

Where did the ark finally come to rest following the Flood?

We’re NOT told. From the way that the text reads though — Noah having to wait for about two months after the waters had completely subsided for the face of the earth to become dry — the ark apparently came to rest in an unrevealed place in the lowlands.

Also, it could *possibly* be stated that the ark’s resting place would be somewhere west of where the city of Babylon was built two generations following the end of the Flood, for, to arrive at this location, those who built Babylon migrated *eastward* to a plain in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:5-10; 11:1ff). This would only be a *possibility* though, for there could have been a migration of people to locations away from the vicinity of where the ark came to rest during time covering two generations (note that the direction of migration in Gen. 11:2 should be translated “eastward” rather than “from the east,” as in the KJV [ref. NASB, NIV]).

What difference though does all of this make, and why spend this time showing an incorrect translation and understanding of Gen. 8:4? Actually, it makes *a great deal of difference*, for if an individual follows the incorrect translation and understanding of Gen. 8:4, the door is closed to tremendous Biblical truths *which can be seen in verses one through four ONLY by viewing verse four correctly.*

1) Paralleling Two New Beginnings

As previously seen, Gen. 1:2 and Gen. 8:1 have to do with *introductory information concerning new beginnings following two different Floods*, one pre-Adamic, and the other post-Adamic. This parallel though is usually missed through following the English translation of Gen. 8:1 and *NOT understanding that the latter MUST follow that previously established in the former.*

The Hebrew word *Ruach* appears in both verses. In Gen. 1:2, this word is translated “Spirit”; but in Gen. 8:1, this word has

been translated “wind” and separated from the same parallel thought seen in *how God begins His restorative work in this respect*, as established back in Gen. 1:2.

(“Wind” or “breath” can be correct translations of *Ruach*, if the context permits [as “wind” or “breath” can also be seen at times as correct translations of *Pneuma*, the corresponding word in the Greek N.T., usually translated “Spirit”]. But there is *NOTHING* in the context of Gen. 8:1 which would suggest understanding *Ruach* as “wind.”

The word *Ruach* is only used five times between Gen. 1:2 and 8:1 [3:8; 6:3, 17; 7:15, 22]. The last three usages have been translated and should be understood as “breath.” And the other two should probably be understood and translated in a similar manner as well [note, the numerous times *Ruach* is translated and understood as “breath” in Ezek. 37:5-10].)

The movement of God’s *Ruach* over the face of the waters in both Gen. 1:2 and Gen. 8:1 *MUST* be understood the same way in both instances, for the pattern concerning how God begins His restorative work involving a ruined creation *was revealed and set in an unchangeable manner in Gen. 1:2*.

Thus, *the beginning of God’s subsequent restorative work in Gen. 8:1 MUST be viewed EXACTLY the same way. The Spirit of God or the Breath of God (which produces life [cf. Gen. 2:7]) MUST be seen moving upon or across the face of the waters in both instances.*

(In relation to God’s breath providing life, as introduced in Gen. 2:7 [establishing a First-Mention Principle, which *can NEVER change*], note ruined man today — another ruined creation, ruined following the restoration of the ruined material creation in Gen. 1:2ff.

How does God go about restoring ruined man, who is “dead in trespasses and sins” [Eph. 2:1]? The answer is seen in these two passages in Genesis [1:2; 8:1]; and *the means which God uses to restore ruined man, as seen in these two passages of Scripture, can NEVER change.*

The Spirit of God moves upon the ruined creation. The Spirit breathes life into the one having no life, and man passes “from death unto life” [John 5:24]. Everything is accomplished entirely through Divine intervention.

Ruined man today is JUST as powerless to bring himself out of his ruined state as was the ruined material creation in both Genesis chapters one and eight.

Had God NOT acted in Genesis chapters one and eight, the earth would still be covered by water today and would forever remain covered by water, apart from Divine intervention at some future time.

Had God NOT acted at Calvary, in the person of His Son, ruined man would forever be left in his present condition — “dead in trespasses and sins.”

And should the Spirit of God NOT act today, on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary — breathing life into the one who has no life — man could NEVER pass “from death unto life.” Man could NEVER move out of his ruined state simply because there is ONLY one revealed way that God restores a ruined creation, and it is either accomplished through God’s revealed way OR there is NO restoration [Acts 4:12].)

Scripture *MUST* be understood and interpreted in the light of Scripture. And, understanding Gen. 8:1 in the light of and in the same respect as previously seen in Gen. 1:2 becomes *vital* necessary to properly understand that which is in view in verse four, where another corrected translation is necessary.

2) Over the Mountains of Ararat

At the end of the Flood, after the utter destruction which had affected “all in whose nostrils was the breath of life,” save those on the ark, Noah and his family found themselves *at a location above* “the mountains of Ararat.”

Then, on this same day, the Spirit of God set about to effect restoration, *EXACTLY* as previously seen in Genesis chapter one. And also, *EXACTLY* as previously seen in chapter one, this restoration was *for purposes surrounding regality*.

Regality in Genesis chapter one is shown through a direct statement regarding the reason for man’s creation: “...let them have dominion [or, ‘...let them rule’]” (vv. 26, 28). The Hebrew word translated “dominion” in these two verses is *radah*, the same word translated “rule” in Ps. 110:2, where Christ will rule as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek during the coming day of His power (v. 4; cf. Gen. 14:18ff; Heb. 5-7).

Regality in Genesis chapter eight though is shown through a different fashion than in chapter one. “A mountain” in Scripture signifies *a kingdom*. And at the end of the Flood (foreshadowing

the end of the coming Tribulation), those in the ark (foreshadowing the nation of Israel in that day) found themselves *resting in a place of safety ABOVE the mountains of Ararat* (foreshadowing the nation of Israel in that coming day, *resting in a place of safety ABOVE ALL the kingdoms of the world, NO LONGER the tail, BUT elevated to the head*).

The name “Ararat” itself, a transliterated Hebrew word, comes from a root word which means *holy ground*. And this is *EXACTLY* where Israel will find herself once the nation has been restored to the land in that coming day.

(The word “holy” is used numerous times throughout Scripture in relation to God. And the same word is used numerous times as well in relation to different things as they pertain to the Jewish people — the people themselves, Jerusalem, the Temple, and the land as a whole [cf. Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; Ps. 2:6; 11:4; 65:4; 78:41; Zeph. 2:12; 3:11].

The word “holy” carries the thought of set apart [unto the Lord]. This is the only way in which the word can be used relative to inanimate objects; and this same meaning would still apply when used relative to the people of Israel, though it could extend beyond this into the thought of *purity* [which is actually an extension of the thought of being set apart].)

The entire earth is referred to in Scripture as “the holy mountain of God [i.e., ‘the set apart kingdom of God’]” (Ezek. 28:14).

However, Satan, *the ruler over this kingdom*, because of his aspirations to extend his rule beyond that which God had appointed him to occupy, introduced corruption, resulting in his kingdom being reduced to a ruined state.

Later, after the kingdom had been restored and man had been created *to rule the kingdom in the stead of Satan*, man’s fall resulted in the same thing. Corruption was reintroduced into the kingdom, and this corruption affected both man and the material creation.

Then, later yet, the nation of Israel was brought into existence and called forth, as *a set apart people, to rule in a set apart land, within a theocracy*.

But the Lord’s name, the people, the Temple, and the land were all later *polluted, defiled, profaned* through a continued disobedience

of God's people (cf. Num. 35:33, 34; Ps. 79:1; Ezek. 14:11; 20:43; 23:38; 36:20; Hosea 5:3; 6:10).

And Israel, the wife of Jehovah, climaxed the nation's disobedience *by taking up unholy alliances with the surrounding Gentile nations* — something which God had forbidden in no uncertain terms (cf. Num. 23:9; Deut. 7:1-6). *And these alliances were viewed in Scripture as harlotry on Israel's part* (cf. Jer. 3:1-4; Ezek. 16:2, 28, 29).

The day came when Israel's cup of iniquity became full (cf. Gen. 15:16), and *God drove His adulterous wife out among her Gentile lovers to effect repentance through persecution at the hands of her lovers, which is EXACTLY where Israel is seen in the world today.*

Israel today is seen as *"the great whore," residing among her Gentile lovers.* And because of this, Israel is presently seen associated with both *Babylon and Jerusalem*, but only with *Jerusalem* in the respect that *Jerusalem, during this time, is seen associated with Sodom and Egypt* (Rev. 11:8; 17:1-7, 18).

(For a discussion of Revelation chapters eleven, twelve, and seventeen through the first part of nineteen in the preceding respect, refer to the author's book, *Mystery of the Woman*, or to Chapters XXI, XXVII, and XXVIII in the author's book, *The Time of the End*.)

The day is coming though when all of this will change. Israel, through the judgments of the Tribulation, will be brought to the place of repentance. This will be followed by *the harlot being cleansed and restored to her rightful place in a cleansed land, within a theocracy.*

Then, that foreshadowed by Gen. 8:4 — Noah and his family *resting ABOVE the mountains of Ararat* — will be realized. Gentile world power will have been *destroyed* (typified by the *destruction* occurring during the Flood). And Israel, in that coming day, will find herself *at rest, placed ABOVE ALL the kingdoms of the world, in a holy place* (cf. Zech. 14:9, 20, 21).

This is EXACTLY what is also seen in Rev. 12:1b and Rev. 17:18b.

A woman is seen in chapter twelve as the one possessing "a crown of twelve stars," with the number "twelve" signifying *governmental perfection.*

Then, allowing Scripture to continue interpreting itself, a harlot

is seen in chapter seventeen as “the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth” (literal translation from the Greek text in v. 18b).

That seen in both Rev. 12:1b and 17:18b points to that which awaits Israel *following her cleansing* (Rev. 17:16, 17; 19:3). That is to say, *Israel, also seen as God’s firstborn son (Ex. 4:22, 23), holds this regal position today but CANNOT exercise this position UNTIL AFTER the nation has been cleansed.*

And the fact that *Israel will one day be cleansed and ultimately exercise this position* was all foretold back in Gen. 8:4.

3) Shem, Ham, Japheth

Genesis chapter nine then adds to a developing Old Testament word picture. Among Noah’s three sons following the Flood, *ONLY one — Shem — was blessed and said to have a God* (v. 26). And from Shem descended Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, his twelve sons, and the nation of Israel.

Since Shem is *the ONLY one stated to have been blessed and to have a God*, in order for the other two sons to have received spiritual blessings, they would have had to go to Shem — something stated in the text in relation to Japheth through his having to dwell in the tents of Shem (v. 27).

This is *the SAME position* which Shem’s descendant, Abraham, held in relation to the nations; and this is *the SAME position* which the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob have held, continue to hold today, and will always hold relative to the nations. If the nations are to be blessed, *it MUST be accomplished through the means which God has decreed — through Abraham and his seed, through Isaac and Jacob* (Gen. 12:1-3).

That’s the importance seen in the Noachian Flood and that which occurred following the Flood. And that’s the importance seen in the vast amount of space which God has provided in His Word surrounding that which the Flood foreshadows.

Israel *MUST* be brought to the place of repentance. *ONLY THEN* can that foreshadowed in Gen. 8:4; 9:26, 27 be realized, *with blessings flowing from a restored people, in a restored city and land, out to the nations of the earth.*

Concluding Thoughts (Meteorology and Hydrology):

(The remainder of this chapter has to do with meteorology and hydrology, dealing centrally with the mechanics of how both acted together in relation to the Noachian Flood.

After writing this material, I asked a long-time friend with a graduate degree in meteorology and some thirty years work in his field above his degree work [with the National Weather Service] to review the chapter in general and the following part of the chapter in particular. His comments involved the following part of the chapter only, though they would reflect on some previous parts of the chapter as well.

These comments may be helpful to some readers. Thus, with this man's permission, I have included them at the end of the material [as "End Notes"], with superscript numbers in the text showing the different places to which these end notes refer.)

A basic understanding of meteorology and hydrology, as different things in these two sciences pertain to that which occurred during the Noachian Flood (and even the previous Flood in Genesis chapter one), will help one to understand that which God brought to pass at this time. And, along with this is "the times of restitution ['restoration'] of all things" in Acts 3:21, which fits into the overall scope of the matter as well.

First, meteorological conditions, as we know them today, did not exist prior to the time of the Flood during Noah's day. Prior to this time, with what was evidently a vapor canopy enveloping the earth, above the atmosphere,¹ the entire earth could only have existed in a greenhouse-type setting (though not in a true greenhouse-type setting, for air masses moved about [Gen. 3:8 — translate "cool" as "breeze," evidently associated with *God's breath*; Heb., *Ruach*]). Temperatures would have been fairly uniform throughout the earth, with no polar caps covered with ice, as we know them today.²

And this accounts for man during modern times finding such things as the remains of vast quantities of tropical vegetation and tropical animals encased in ice in the Arctic regions.

With this near-greenhouse-type setting, meteorological conditions could only have been quite different from those existing on the earth today — a condition which lasted for over sixteen centuries, from the creation of Adam to the Flood during Noah's

day, ten generations later.

During this time there were no weather systems of the nature seen today (high and low pressure areas, frontal zones, developing thunderstorms, etc.). The whole of the earth's present weather system was set in motion at a time in the past, with this system and the motion of this system both introduced and sustained by two things:

1) *First, by the sun producing an uneven heating of the earth's surface.*

2) *Then, forces produced by the rotation of the earth governing the movement of air masses resulting from the sun's uneven heating of the earth's surface.*

Remove the first, *the uneven heating of the earth's surface*, and there would be no air masses of the nature under discussion for the forces produced by the rotation of the earth to move (i.e., different pressure systems, frontal zones, etc.). Apart from the first, *the uneven heating of the earth's surface*, the complete worldwide weather system, as it exists today, would change completely.³

One will search in vain for any mention of "rain" falling during the period extending from Adam to Noah. There was no uneven heating of the earth's surface — something necessary to produce conditions which would lift air to higher altitudes, cooling the air until it reached its condensation point, at which time the water vapor in the atmosphere would condense and fall back to the earth as some type precipitation (rain, snow, etc.). Apart from this sequence, which begins with the sun producing an uneven heating of the earth's surface, resulting in conditions which will lift the air (convection, frontal zones, air masses moved over mountainous terrain), there can be no rain or any other type precipitation.⁴

These conditions did not exist in the antediluvian world. Thus, there was no "rain" (Gen. 2:5). Rather, God provided for "a mist from the earth" to ascend and "water the whole face of the ground" (Gen. 2:6).

Also during this time, with harmful rays of the sun evidently being filtered out by the vapor canopy above the atmosphere (along with a probable difference in atmospheric pressure from that which exists today, due to the presence of the vapor canopy

above the atmosphere), man lived for hundreds of years and could beget children during at least much of this time (e.g., Noah begetting sons at the age of five hundred in Gen. 5:32). The average life-span of man during this time, covering the ten generations from Adam to Noah (excluding Enoch, who was translated), was *nine hundred twelve years*.⁵

But once the vapor canopy had been removed, allowing the sun's rays to come through unfiltered (with a probable change in atmospheric pressure on earth as well, due to the loss of the vapor canopy above the atmosphere), *man's longevity was cut in half almost immediately* (Shem, 600 years; Shem's son Arphaxad, 438 years; Arphaxad's son Salah, 433 years). Going on two more generations beyond Salah, *man's longevity was cut almost in half again* (Peleg and his son Reu, both 239 years; Rue's son Serug, 230 years).

And by the time of Abraham, three generations beyond Serug, ten generations beyond Noah (350 years from the Flood to the birth of Abraham) — with a continued, progressive genetic deterioration within man — *the length of time man lived was down to between one and two hundred years* (Abraham, 137 years; Isaac, 180 years; Jacob, 147 years; Joseph, 110 years). And man today fares worse yet.

Once the waters above the atmosphere had all fallen through the opened floodgates of heaven, doing away with the greenhouse-type conditions which had previously existed on earth, meteorological conditions as we know them today came into existence.

An uneven heating of the earth's surface by the sun — something which had not heretofore existed because of the vapor canopy surrounding the earth — set all of it in motion.⁶

At this time, Noah and his family were in the ark above the Ararat mountain range, floating on a deep, shoreless ocean. And, apart from any lapse of time (on the 150th day, after God had closed the floodgates of heaven and had stopped the subterranean waters from coming up), He immediately began a restorative work. He immediately began to raise and lower different land masses, causing different bodies of water to move from one point to another.

Some Bible students knowing or understanding that which Scripture has to say about God restoring the earth in Gen. 1, causing dry land to reappear above the waters, often give little

thought to “how” this was brought to pass in Gen. 8.

Ignoring that stated in Ps. 104:5-9, some think in terms of *an evaporation of the water over time*, which, of course, is not feasible at all. Water doesn't simply evaporate and then just disappear.

Rather, the evaporation of water saturates the atmosphere, and the atmosphere can only hold so much water content before it becomes completely saturated (depending on the pressure and temperature of the air being saturated).⁷

The atmosphere (regardless of the pressure and temperature) can actually hold *very little water content before it becomes completely saturated* (an amount equivalent, at the most, to just several inches removed from a given body of water into a given part of the atmosphere).⁸ Then, once the atmosphere has become completely saturated, the evaporated water (now in vapor form) will, at some point in time, condense and fall back to the earth in the form of rain, snow, etc.

This is the type water cycle existing on earth today — moving evaporated water from the oceans and lakes over land areas, with this water vapor later condensing, falling back to the earth, and eventually finding its way back to the oceans and lakes via rivers, etc.

In short, had God not acted following His closing the floodgates of heaven and the subterranean sources which had produced the waters flooding the earth, evaporation over millenniums of time would *NEVER* have lowered that water level more than just several inches. Apart from any of that water seeping into the ground or escaping into space, a continuous hydrological cycle would have been going on for the entire time — from Noah's day to the present day (over forty-three hundred years) — lowering the water level several inches by evaporation and then bringing it back to the same level again as this water vapor condensed in the atmosphere and fell back upon a shoreless ocean as precipitation.⁹

The manner in which God restored the earth in Genesis chapter eight (though not a restoration to Edenic conditions, as in chapter one) will explain numerous things (*e.g.*, the water-ravaged western United States, particularly the Grand Canyon [evidently formed by water rushing toward the Pacific basin from the Rocky Mountain area as the former was being lowered and the latter was

being raised], or the tangled skeletal remains of dinosaurs buried beneath what are today dry river beds in northwestern Colorado [at Dinosaur National Monument], among other places).

But, during “the times of restitution [‘restoration’] of all things” — when the Messianic Era is ushered in — God is going to reverse all of this. The vast quantities of water which once existed above the atmosphere are going to be placed back up there. Meteorological conditions will change accordingly, Edenic conditions will once again exist, and man will once again live for centuries.

In fact, man in that coming day will live for the duration of the Millennium, in a natural body, moving right on into the eternal ages in this same type body.

When Adam was created, he was created in *an undying, natural body, designed and created by God to exist forever*. And man is going to one day be brought back into that state.

— End Notes —

¹The nature of the water substance in the “waters above the atmosphere” has always intrigued me. There may have been some combination of liquid water along with a deep layer of saturated vapor which completely removed UV wavelengths from the light reaching the surface of the earth. Water vapor is transparent to UV radiation, whereas nearly all UV radiation is absorbed by pure water 40-50 meters in depth. Maybe there was enough liquid depth to remove harmful UV radiation and to support currents of water that distributed heat energy in the waters above the atmosphere.

²There would have had to be temperature variations to support breezes since pressure equals density times gas constant times temperature (K). If the temperature and density were constant, the pressure would have to be constant. Without a pressure gradient, there would be no wind. Obviously there would be solar radiation differences from the polar regions to the equatorial regions, and the earth must have been rotating since night and day occurred before the Flood.

Much of the energy distribution must have occurred in the water substance above the atmosphere with most of the radiation reaching the earth in the infrared range from the water substance. There would, then, have been only weak temperature gradients, supporting relatively

weak flow on the surface of the earth.

With the rotation of the earth, the temperature differences probably would have been concentrated in the central latitudes, as is the case today. Rotation rate of the earth and the strength of the coriolis coefficient [forces produced by the rotation of the earth] are unknown. The rotation rate likely was altered when the waters above the atmosphere were drained. Variation in the coriolis parameter would affect the strength of winds around any pressure systems that did develop.

³ Well stated. The only reason we have weather is to compensate for the uneven distribution of solar radiation on the earth. With the large volume of water substance above the earth before the Flood, much of the solar imbalance likely was removed by the water layer, regardless of its phase.

⁴ Note also that instability to support things like thunderstorms requires a temperature decrease with height. If much of the heating of the earth's surface was coming from the large volume of water substance at the top of the atmosphere at that time, the atmosphere below the water layer probably was very stable.

As such, things like thunderstorms as we know them would not have been possible. If there were some kind of forced ascent with areas of low pressure or frontal boundaries, there probably would have been dense fog and heavy drizzle or light rain. Maybe this forced lifting and shallow water droplet formation constituted the "mist from the ground." It is possible that God had ordained something completely different like a sprinkler system from the vast reservoir of water below the ground. I don't know...

⁵ See the previous note about UV penetration in water (end note 1).

⁶ With the loss of the water substance aloft, UV A and UV B radiation would have reached the earth's surface, much as occurs today.

⁷ Absolutely right. Evaporation could not have removed the huge volume of water from the Flood. Regardless of the pressure and temperature, the water molecules condensing on the surface of the liquid and the water molecules achieving enough energy to escape the liquid bonds are in balance at saturation.

⁸ In the current atmosphere, condensing all of the water vapor would cover the earth with just over an inch of liquid water. In the tropics, precipitable water may reach values of three inches or so.

⁹ The water would have had to escape to space or return to the subterranean reservoir.

APPENDIX I

AT THE FOREFRONT

The Kingdom Which He Had Gone Away to Receive

EVERYTHING surrounding Christ's return is seen having to do with the KINGDOM which He had gone away to receive.

When Christ returns, between the time His feet touch the Mount of Olives and the time He and His co-heirs ascend the throne and reign (Zech. 14:4, 9), numerous things, of necessity, will have to occur.

At the time Christ returns, Satan will still be in power, with Antichrist seated on His throne; an unconverted Israel, which Satan will still be seeking to destroy, will still be scattered among the nations; and the Gentiles, saved mainly as a result of the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangels, who survived the Tribulation, will still be scattered throughout the nations of the earth as well.

Christ will deal with Israel first, relative to conversion, repentance, and restoration to the land, as well as calling the nation before Him in Judgment

And EVERYTHING will be with a view to the KINGDOM.

Then the incumbent powers *MUST* be removed from their positions, which is what is seen in Rev. 19:17-20:3 (allowing Christ and His co-heirs to take the sceptre and reign).

The Beast and false prophet will be dealt with first (19:20), the armies of the Beast (led by the kings of the earth [19:21]) will then be dealt with, and then Satan himself (which can only include his angels as well) will be dealt with (20:1-3).

Christ will then deal with the saved Gentiles, both those surviving the Tribulation in Matt. 25:31-46 and those having been slain during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17; 20:4-6).

And His dealings with these Gentiles, as His dealings with the Jews, will be *with a view to the KINGDOM.*

One Thing

In short, again, *EVERYTHING* surrounding Christ's return will have *ONE thing at the forefront: the KINGDOM which He had gone away to receive.*

Gentile nations, comprised of unsaved Gentiles surviving the judgments of the Tribulation, will enter into the Millennium and populate the millennial earth. And *NOT ONLY* will they enter into this time in natural bodies, capable of procreation, *BUT* atmospheric conditions will once again be of a nature that man can, as in the antediluvian world of Noah's day, live for hundreds of years, even for the entire duration of the Millennium, in a natural body.

Thus, the population of the earth, over time, *can ONLY increase, evidently dramatically.*

(The common thought and teaching that only saved Gentiles will enter into the Millennium is based on a misunderstanding of Matt. 25:31-46, attempting to make this section of Scripture teach a judgment of all the Gentiles at the time of Christ's return, both the saved and the unsaved.

This though *is NOT* what Matt. 25:31-46 or any other section of Scripture teaches. The millennial earth, at the very beginning, will evidently be populated by unsaved Gentiles, forming nations, occupying different geographical locations throughout the earth.)

Israel will be placed at the head of the nations here on earth, with the Jewish people realizing their calling. A converted Jewish nation *will NOT ONLY* rule over the Gentile nations *BUT* will send the evangels out, worldwide, to reach the Gentiles with God's message; and God will bless the nations through Israel (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 43:7-11; Jonah 1:2ff).

(As the 144,000 of Rev. 7, 12, 14 will begin carrying God's message to Gentiles worldwide during the last half of the Tribulation [forming a first fruit of the nation], the entire nation will continue this task during the Millennium [forming the main harvest].)

Then, in the heavens, Christ and His co-heirs will rule the

nations as well, which will evidently be through representatives here on earth. And this could possibly be accomplished through the saved Gentiles seen on Christ's right hand in Matt. 25:34-40, who realize an inheritance in the kingdom.

Present Kingdom, Coming Kingdom

The present kingdom under Satan is structured after the preceding fashion. Powerful angels in Satan's kingdom rule from a heavenly sphere through men in corresponding positions of power here on earth (Dan. 10:12-20). In this passage from Daniel, there is both a "prince of the kingdom of Persia" and "kings of Persia" (evidently lesser rulers under the prince) in the heavens, which would correspond to both the main ruler and lesser rulers under him who ruled over the Persian kingdom here on earth.

Governmental power and authority originates in the heavens — "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26b) — and progresses from rulers in the heavens through rulers on the earth.

Governmental powers throughout the Gentile nations possess corresponding governmental powers in Satan's kingdom in the heavens in this fashion. Powers in the heavens rule through these corresponding powers on the earth. Or, to turn that around, the powers on earth govern under these corresponding powers in the heavens.

This is the manner in which the government of the earth is presently structured, which is also the same manner in which the government of the earth — all of the Gentile nations — will be structured yet future, though under Christ and His co-heirs rather than Satan and his angels.

There is *ONE exception* to the present structure — the government of the nation of Israel, for Israel is *NOT to be* "reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9).

Israel, though possessing a government of the same type, with powers in the heavens ruling through powers on earth (it *MUST*, for "the heavens do rule"), rules separate from powers in Satan's kingdom. Israel's ruling angel in this respect is

Michael (with evidently a contingent of angelic rulers under him), separate from Satan's kingdom (Dan. 10:21).

And, as previously noted, the coming kingdom of Christ *can ONLY* be established *after the SAME fashion*, with Christ and His co-heirs ruling from heavenly places through corresponding powers among the nations here on earth. This though would be over the Gentile nations alone (note that overcoming Christians have been promised power over the nations, *NOT over Israel* [Rev. 2:26, 27]).

The twelve apostles would seem to be the lone exception, having been promised power over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:27-29).

And, since other rulers over Israel will be needed in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, these positions may very well be filled by Old Testament saints who qualified to rule from the heavens, or believing Jews during the offer and re-offer of the kingdom (the gospels and Acts), prior to this part of the kingdom being taken from Israel (*cf.* Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29; Acts 3:47; 4:4; 5:14; Heb. 11:8-16).

APPENDIX II

TIMES OF THE GENTILES

*As Set Forth in the Book of Daniel
Emphasis on the Last Seven Years*

Daniel, in the overall scope of his book, deals with *the Jewish people in relation to the Times of the Gentiles, with a particular emphasis on that which will occur during the final seven years of this time, extending into the subsequent seventy-five days.* And the book also goes on to relate that which will occur once *the Times of the Gentiles has run its course.*

The final seven years of the Times of the Gentiles, where Daniel places the emphasis, are singled out in Daniel's prophecy as *the final week of the Seventy-Week prophecy.* Then, immediately following the end of this time would be *events leading into the Messianic Era (during the seventy-five days) and events within the 1000-year Messianic Era.*

(In Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27), sixty-nine have been fulfilled, and one remains to be fulfilled.

For information on this prophecy, refer to Appendix III in this book.

The subsequent seventy-five days are referenced in Dan. 12:11-13.)

The Times of the Gentiles, succinctly defined, is *that period of time when Israel finds the sceptre removed from her hand and placed in the hands of the Gentile nations.*

The Times of the Gentiles *began* with the Babylonian captivity about 605 B.C., when the southern two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) began to be uprooted from their land and transported captive to Babylon (the Jewish people being uprooted from their land and being taken captive to Babylon in this manner occurred in three stages, lasting about nineteen years, until about 586 B.C.).

The northern ten tribes had previously been carried away captive by the Assyrians, over one hundred years before (beginning about 722 B.C.). And an uprooting of the southern two tribes completed the dispersion of the Jewish people, bringing an end to the theocracy.

The Times of the Gentiles will *end* following the Jewish people being brought to the place of repentance. And this will occur by the Jewish people being brought to the end of themselves through judgments during the coming Tribulation, during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, during the time covered by Rev. 6-19a.

The Jewish people, following their repentance and acceptance of the nation's Messiah, will *THEN* be gathered out of the nations and be restored to a healed land.

THEN, Gentile world power will be destroyed, the sceptre will be taken from the hands of the nations, and it will be given back to Israel, within a restored theocracy.

Daniel deals with *the Times of the Gentiles SOLELY* in relation to *Babylon*. Gentile world power is seen centered in Babylon at the beginning, for several subsequent centuries during, and at the end of this time.

Introduced in Daniel

The Times of the Gentiles is introduced in Daniel through a dream. God had placed the dream in Nebuchadnezzar's mind, and God then revealed the dream and the interpretation to Daniel, who made both known to the king.

The dream is given in Dan. 2:31-35, and the interpretation follows in Dan. 2:37-45. The dream had to do with "a great image" seen standing in Babylon, consisting of four parts, *representing four periods of the Babylonian kingdom during the Times of the Gentiles*:

1) *The head of gold*, representing the kingdom under Nebuchadnezzar and any successors prior to its conquest by the Medo-Persian Empire (abt. 605-538 B.C.).

2) *The breast and arms of silver*, representing the kingdom under the Medes and the Persians prior to its conquest by the Grecian Empire (abt. 538-330 B.C.).

3) *The belly and thighs of brass*, representing the kingdom under Greece (abt. 330-323 B.C.; then, following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. and a four-way division of the kingdom, the kingdom of Babylon gradually faded from view

as a world power).

4) *The legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay*, representing the kingdom under Antichrist (Daniel's Seventieth Week, yet future, with Babylon re-emerging as the center of world power).

The dream involved God's revelation to man concerning the Times of the Gentiles, *FROM beginning TO end, with a particular emphasis on the end, the last seven years* (e.g., more space is given to the fourth part of the image in chapter two than to all the other three parts combined; and the same thing is seen in other parts of the book when the whole of the kingdom is in view [cf. chs. 7, 8, 11]).

God gave the dream about the "great image" through the Gentile world ruler of that day (2:1ff). God then revealed both the dream and the interpretation to a Hebrew prophet (2:19-23), in complete accord with a unchangeable principle, seen in Ps. 147:19, 20:

"He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

He hath not so dealt with any nation [Gentile]: and as for his judgments, they [the Gentiles] have not known them. Praise ye the Lord."

Or note Rom. 3:1, 2 in this same respect:

"What advantage then hath the Jew...?

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

God simply does not reveal His Word through Gentiles. Though God had caused a Gentile king to dream, it took a Jewish prophet to make the dream known and to reveal the interpretation.

There is no such thing as God, in past time, using a Gentile to author a book in Scripture (note, for example, the fallacious teaching that Luke was a Gentile, which would have had God revealing His Word in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts to a Gentile).

That would be out of line with God's clear statement from the Psalms, or from Romans.

Beginning and End

Gentile world power is seen existing in Babylon for almost three hundred years at the beginning, but it is seen existing in Babylon for only seven years at the end.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king in Babylon at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles, and Antichrist will be the king in Babylon at the end of this time.

Babylon was the world power when the southern two tribes were carried away captive, and the Israelites were, accordingly, taken to Babylon. *Assyria* had been the world power when the northern ten tribes had previously been carried away captive, and those removed from the land at this time had, accordingly, been taken to Assyria. But, following this time, Babylon had conquered the Assyrian empire.

Thus, it is only natural that the Times of the Gentiles in Scripture would have a peculiar relationship to *Babylon*. This period of time *began* with a world kingdom in Babylon, it *continued* for almost three hundred years with a world kingdom in Babylon, and it will *end* with a world kingdom in Babylon.

This is how Daniel presents matters in his book.

The Last Seven years

This is also why Israel in her *harlotry* is seen directly associated with *Babylon* in the Book of Revelation. This book, as it has to do with Israel (chs. 6-19a), relates God's dealings with this nation during the last seven years of the Times of the Gentiles, *when Babylon reappears as the main power among the Gentile nations*.

And Israel, scattered among the nations, will find herself in the same position as seen at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles — *dwelling within a Babylonian kingdom and committing harlotry with this kingdom*, which is **EXACTLY** the way Revelation chapters seventeen through the opening verses of chapter nineteen present matters.

(For a more detailed discussion of *Israel's harlotry*, refer to the author's book, *Mystery of the Woman*.

Also, note that Daniel's image presents matters as if the Babylonian power represented by the fourth part of the image [the future kingdom under Antichrist] immediately follows, in time, that seen represented by the third part of the image [the kingdom under Greece]. However, there is a break in time lasting over two millenniums between these two parts of the kingdom, which is not seen in the prophecy.

This may seem strange to the Western way of viewing material of this nature, but not so with those in the East. Those in the East are interested in *the next important event, not in the time which might intervene between two events*. And Scripture, humanly speaking, is an Eastern book.

Franz Delitzsch, a Hebrew scholar from past years, put the matter in these words: "Prophecy sees together what history unrolls as separate."

This same thing can be seen in Daniel's vision of the "four great beasts" in chapter seven and the interpretation of the vision in chapter eight. These four great beasts simply present another picture of the four parts of the image in chapter two, with added details provided in the interpretation.

And, as in chapter two, the complete prophecy presents matters as if there were no break in time between any of the four parts, though the same break in time exists between the third and fourth parts as exists between the third and fourth parts of the image.

Examples of this same thing can be seen in other parts of Scripture as well. This is simply a peculiarity of the way Scripture is structured, which is seen at the very beginning, in the opening two verses of Scripture.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" [Gen. 1:1, 2].

Scripture presents all of the events in these two verses together, as if no break in time exists. But, in reality, two breaks in time exist — a break between the two verses, and another break between the second and third clauses in verse two.

Note another similar example in Isa. 9:6. Over two millenniums lie between the first sentence and the remainder of the

verse, though Scripture places all of these events together, as if no break in time exists:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Or, another example would be Isa. 61:1, 2:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound:

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.”

Christ, in the synagogue in Nazareth, read most of this passage from a scroll; but He stopped with the words, “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then, after rolling the scroll up and handing it to the minister, He sat down. And the eyes of all those in the synagogue were fastened upon Him when He said,

“This day is this Scripture fulfilled [*lit.*, ‘This day this Scripture has been fulfilled’ (Greek perfect tense, pointing to a fulfillment in past time, with the matter existing during present time in that finished state)] in your ears” [Luke 4:16-21].

Christ stopped reading at this point in the passage because the remainder had to do with events which would occur at the time of His second coming. But note how the whole of the matter has been placed together in the two verses.

And understanding the manner in which Scripture is structured in this respect is vitally necessary when studying Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy.

The complete prophecy, covering four hundred ninety years, appears to be fulfilled without a break in time throughout any part of the prophecy. But a break in time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks has to be recognized [for evident reasons]. And this break has already lasted almost two millenniums.)

APPENDIX III

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

A Decreed, Unchangeable Number of Years

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

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

And after threescore and two weeks [‘threescore and two sevens’] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself [*lit.*, ‘and shall have nothing’]: 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 [*lit.*, ‘and unto the end war and desolations are determined’].

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [‘one seven’]: and in the midst of the week [‘the seven’] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [*lit.*, ‘upon the desolator’ (the one who confirms and then breaks the covenant, the Antichrist)]” (Dan. 9:24-27).

The word “week” or “weeks” in this prophecy is an English rendering of the Hebrew word, *shabua*, which is a septenary number and could be better rendered “seven” or “sevens.” Therefore, this is the terminology which will be used in this chapter.

The word *Shabua* is used two places in the Book of Daniel — in 9:24-27 and a couple of verses later in 10:2, 3. The word itself *does NOT* designate the length of the seven. The length (days, years, etc.) *MUST* be determined from the text and/or context.

In chapter nine, the prophecy consisting of seventy sevens is an end result of Daniel's prayer concerning Israel's captivity in Babylon. Daniel had understood from Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity in Babylon would last *seventy years* (v. 2; cf. Jer. 25:11, 12), he knew that this time was about up, and he had sought the Lord's face through "prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

He had confessed over and over the sins of the people, which had resulted in their captivity (vv. 3-19; cf. Lev. 26:33-35, 40-42; II Chron. 7:14; Jer. 29:10-14). And while Daniel was presenting himself before the Lord in this manner, the angel Gabriel (who had been sent at the very beginning of his prayer and supplication) appeared to him, making known to Daniel that he was there to provide more "skill and understanding" surrounding the matter Daniel had been praying about (vv. 20-23). Then, to bring this to pass, Gabriel made known to Daniel the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens (vv. 24-27).

"Years" are in view in the context of the prophecy — *the seventy-year captivity in Babylon from Jeremiah's prophecy* that Daniel had been praying about. Thus, it *would ONLY be natural* to continue this thought and understand the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens as *sevens of years*.

This would be in contrast to the only other place in the Book of Daniel where the Hebrew word *shabua* appears, in 10:2, 3. In these two verses, the *shabua* is specifically stated to be *sevens of days*. The Hebrew text has the word for "days" (*yom*) following the word *shabua*, letting the reader know that the sevens in view here are different than the sevens in the immediately preceding section (9:24-27).

(Most English translations [e.g., KJV, ASV, NASB] use "weeks" to translate *shabua* in both places in Daniel, probably causing an element of confusion, for the context in one shows that sevens of years are in view, and the text in the other shows that sevens of days are in view.

The NIV translators took a different approach, using "sevens" in chapter nine but "weeks" in chapter ten.)

In short, the angel Gabriel made known to Daniel that it was not just *ten sevens* (70 years) but *seventy sevens* (490 years) that the Jewish people would have to remain in Gentile lands before being reestablished in their own land, with that seen introduced at the

beginning of the prophecy then brought to pass — “to finish the transgression...” (v. 24b).

(The seventy years spent in Babylon, *in one respect*, foreshadow a much longer period of time during which the land from which the Jewish people had been uprooted would, of necessity, lie fallow and realize her Sabbaths. The land would need to lie fallow for *seventy Sabbath years*, something necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Law [Lev. 25:3-5; 26:33-35; cf. II Chron. 36:20, 21]. And, with a Sabbath year occurring only once every seven years, this would require seven times seventy years — four hundred ninety years.

This is what the angel Gabriel made known to Daniel through the prophecy in Dan. 9:24-27. A remnant would be allowed to return at the end of seventy years. But the return of the entire nation and the restoration of the theocracy would have to await the complete fulfillment of the four hundred ninety years.

Then, *in another respect*, according to Jeremiah’s prophecy, the Israelites had spent *the complete time removed from their land, in Gentile lands, which God had specified [seventy years — a complete period of time (7X10, both numbers showing completeness)]*. Also, according to Jeremiah’s prophecy [Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10-14], concerning God visiting and restoring the Jewish people at the end of these seventy years, *the entire nation could have returned at this time had national repentance occurred*.

But the nation, by large, at the end of these seventy years had settled down in Babylon and *remained unrepentant*. Thus, any continued restoration of the nation beyond a returning remnant — with repentance shown by a remnant of the people [*e.g.*, Dan. 9:1-19] — did not occur at this time.

And another period of time during which Israel would have to remain in Gentile lands was revealed — *NOT just seventy years this time BUT intensified by SEVEN [7X70], four hundred ninety years*. The time during which the Jewish people would remain dispersed among the nations was increased in *EXACT accordance with God’s warning previously revealed through Moses* [Lev. 26:14-21].

Something very similar to the seemingly paradoxical overall scope of the preceding was seen almost six hundred years later. This occurred in connection with the Jewish people very near the end of the four hundred ninety years, during the offer and re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, contingent on national repentance [as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts].

In one respect, had national repentance occurred, the kingdom would have been restored to Israel at the full end of Daniel's prophecy [with time in *the last "seven"* (seventieth week) of the prophecy being brought to completion]. But, *in another respect*, the kingdom *could NOT* have been restored to Israel at this time; time in the prophecy, of necessity, had to stop *one "seven"* short of completion [e.g., only 4,000 of the 6,000 years in the septenary arrangement of time during Man's Day, introduced in Gen. 1:1-2:3, had expired; and the 2,000-year dispensation in which God would deal with the Church — seen, for example, in Gen. 24 — *MUST yet occur*.]

Also, between the end of the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the Israelites in Babylon and the beginning of Daniel's prophecy of the four hundred ninety years, bringing matters surrounding the dispersion of the Jewish people to a close, there is another break in time. Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years ended about 535 B.C., but Daniel's prophecy concerning the four hundred ninety years did not begin until about 444 B.C.

The prophecy of the Seventy Sevens begins with "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (v. 25a), and that command, according to Nehemiah chapters one and two was issued by the Persian king, Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, which, according to secular history, was 445 or 444 B.C.

(There are earlier decrees in Ezra, issued by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes [1:1, 2; 4:1-5, 11-24; 6:1-5, 14, 15; 7:11, 20, 27], which had to do with the Temple. But the decree by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah is *the ONLY decree* issued which had to do with the city itself, which the prophecy in Daniel specifically singles out [2:1ff]. And this is *the ONLY decree* which fits the chronology of the prophecy in Daniel; *and it fits this chronology EXACTLY, to the day*.)

FROM the issuing of the decree by Artaxerxes "to restore and to build Jerusalem" *UNTIL* the time Israel's Messiah appeared (cf. Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1ff) would be sixty-nine sevens (483 years), and at the end of this time Israel's Messiah would be "cut off" (vv. 25, 26a).

(The Hebrew word translated "cut off," *karath*, is used many times in the O.T. referring to the death of individuals [e.g., Lev. 7:20, 25, 27;

Num. 19:13, 20]. And it is apparent that this is the manner in which the word is used relative to Israel's Messiah in Dan. 9:26a.

To see and understand how the time from Artaxerxes' decree to Christ's crucifixion is *EXACTLY* 483 years [using 444 B.C. and 33 A.D. respectively], note these figures: $444 + 33 = 477$ years. But these are years of 365 days per year [or 366 days every fourth year], and Scripture uses a 360-day year [*cf.* Gen. 7:11, 24; 8:3, 4; Dan. 7:25; Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:14; 13:5].

Conversion to time seen in Daniel's prophecy is quite simple: 477×365.25 [.25 added for leap years] = 174,224 days; then, divide 174,224 by 360, which gives 483.96 years. But bear in mind that only parts of the first and last years are to be used, which, if the correct beginning and ending dates within their corresponding years were known and used would leave *EXACTLY* 483 years [444 B.C. and 33 A.D.].

Thus, the Jewish people at the time of Christ's first appearance could have looked at Daniel's prophecy and Artaxerxes' decree and *NOT ONLY* have known *that their Messiah would be in their midst in 33 A.D. BUT ALSO* that they would slay their Messiah that year.

Christ was the Paschal Lamb, this Lamb was given to Israel, *ONLY* Israel could slay this Lamb, and knowledgeable Jews *would have known that*. In fact, a knowledgeable Jew *could have known the EXACT day and time Israel would slay their Messiah in 33 A.D., for he would have known the EXACT day and time when Israel would slay the paschal lambs.*)

Then, according to Daniel's prophecy, the Messianic Era would be ushered in seven years following Messiah's death [*cf.* vv. 24, 26].

But, of course, this didn't happen. Instead, God stopped the clock, so to speak, at the time Israel crucified her Messiah; and the last seven years await a future fulfillment.

The break in time occurs in the middle of verse twenty-six, between Messiah's death and the appearance of "the people of the prince," who will destroy "the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount]."

"The people of the prince" is a Hebrew idiom referring to *the prince himself* (*cf.* Dan. 7:18, 27 where this same expression is used).

(Note that this destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary *can ONLY* refer to a future destruction, *NOT* to the past destruction in 70 A.D., as often taught [*cf.* Matt. 24:15-23; Luke 21:20-24; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 11:1, 2]. Events in the prophecy *MUST* occur during time covered by the prophecy itself.)

This destroying prince is the man who will have made the seven-year covenant “with many” in Israel, marking the beginning of the last seven years of Daniel’s prophecy (v. 27). This is the man seen riding forth on a white horse in the Book of Revelation when the first seal is broken, “conquering, and to conquer” (6:1, 2). And, as *the ratifying of this covenant will mark the beginning of the seventieth seven in the Book of Daniel, the breaking of the first seal of the scroll will mark the beginning of this period in the Book of Revelation.*

(Some have sought to see the antecedent of the pronoun “he” in Dan. 9:27 [the one who makes the covenant with many in Israel] referring back to *the Messiah* Who was to be slain rather than to *the prince* that would come in v. 26. Grammatically, either could conceivably be the antecedent. However, “the prince” is the nearer antecedent, and the rules of grammar always favor the nearer as the antecedent in cases of this nature, unless, of course, something in the passage clearly shows that it isn’t.

In this case though, such doesn’t exist. In fact, the passage clearly shows just the opposite, that “Messiah” couldn’t possibly be the antecedent [e.g., Israel’s Messiah didn’t make a covenant with His people at the time of His first coming; and the Jewish sacrifices didn’t stop until the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D..])

When this future prince appears and makes his covenant “with many” in Israel, the Jewish people, in accordance with time in the prophecy, will be placed in the position of *having just crucified their Messiah*. The crucifixion occurred at the very end of and closed out the sixty-ninth seven. The Jewish people, timewise in relation to the prophecy, will then be living at the very beginning of the seventieth and last seven.

Time for them will be *EXACTLY as if Christ had just been taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb, awaiting resurrection. And God will deal with the Jewish people accordingly (cf. Matt. 23:37-39).*

Daniel’s prophecy is *about to be fulfilled, with the third day, referenced through events at the beginning of the prophecy, about to dawn. And on this day, the opposite of Christ occupying space on a cross or in a tomb will be in view. On this day, all of God’s firstborn Sons — Christ, Israel, and the Church — will be raised up to live in His sight.*

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