**Understanding Biblical End Time Events**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Many desire to find out what the future holds for them and society in general. When it comes to Biblical prophecy many are attracted to the subject matter of end-times. However, in order to gain an accurate understanding of Biblical end-time prophecy we must begin with creation to establish a foundation to gain a correct understanding, interpretation, and application of Biblical prophecy.

Perhaps you have wondered about the origins of this world. How did it begin? Was it always in this present condition or was it better or perhaps worse? Is it heading for destruction or to a better state? Do we have to worry about the environment and the condition of the economy? Are we doomed to war and ultimate destruction? Is there any real hope? The Bible gives answers to these questions as well as to many other related ones. The Bible gives us the hope we all need for a healthy outlook for time and eternity. I see the future as bright as the promises of God. The world, mankind and the environment are not running uncontrolled to a destiny of oblivion. On the contrary, God is directing the affairs of His universe and will bring it to its ultimate state of glory. It is through this study that I want to focus our attention on the broad panorama of God’s eternal plan.

The design of this study is twofold. First, to gain an overall survey of God’s plan. Second, it is my objective for this study to be a thought-provoking stimulating tool in Bible study. It is my prayer that God will challenge and encourage you as you study His Word to more fully understand His glorious purpose (Romans 8:28).

As we begin, there are two schools of thought concerning origins, the Biblical position, which we will examine in some detail, and the evolutionary position in which arguments will be offered to refute it. The evolutionary position is two-pronged: atheistic evolution and theistic evolution. Both will be examined in this study. Other associated questions, such as, where did the dinosaurs come from, and where do they fit in Biblical chronology, will be discussed.

It follows that since God's creation was perfect at its beginning, the question might logically be asked, "What has happened to His creation?" Specifically, what has happened to the world the Apostle Peter speaks of as "then was" (II Peter 3:6)? Concerning this present world and its condition, no one would question that there is suffering, hate, death, crime, disease, injustice, and a multitude of problems that are beyond our ability to solve. Has God lost control? Is He powerless to intervene or is there some plan to this apparent madness? God has a plan for this apparent madness which is revealed in the Bible. So, we turn our attention to answer some of the questions concerning the origin of the universe, this present world, and the world to come as well as the ultimate destiny of mankind. Come with me on this amazing and exciting journey as we discover God’s wonderful plan.

The Scripture can be divided into three major divisions, as outlined by the Apostle Peter: The world that "then was", the world that "now is", and the world "yet to come". Our purpose is to examine briefly the events of these three worlds and to understand how they relate to each other and their progress in the fulfillment of the plan of God. From this survey we learn that God is calling a people to Himself. He has been calling from the time man first rebelled and will continue to do so until He presents the New Heaven and Earth in all its glory.

The third chapter of II Peter is the “launching pad” for this study. This chapter can be broken down into three divisions. The first division includes verses 5 and 6 which refer to "the world that then was" corresponding to Genesis 1:1-7:24. We will take a close look at "The World That Then Was". We need to understand "that world" in order to understand our present world and ultimately the world to come. This present world is completely different from the "World That Then Was". There are few comparisons between the two. "The heavens and earth which are now" (verse 7) is the second division beginning with Genesis 8:1 continuing through Revelation 20:15. As you can see, much of the Scripture covers this present world. The third division which we will consider is “The New Heavens and the New Earth mentioned” in verse 13. Revelation 21:1 through 22:21 gives the details concerning the "new heavens and new earth" home of the redeemed.

By way of background, both First and Second Peter were written by the Apostle Peter. This is the same person that denied Jesus three times. The same person that was restored; the same person to whom Jesus said, "Feed my sheep". The same person who preached on the day of Pentecost and the same person who, tradition has taught, was crucified upside down because he said he was not worthy to be crucified right-side-up since he had denied his Lord. There are other letters that he presumably wrote, but the Spirit of God did not inspire them to be included in the canon of Scripture. Peter does not write to any specific group but to all believers in general. Thus, these writings are referred to as general epistles.

Let's consider a brief exposition of the third chapter of II Peter in order to familiarize ourselves with Peter's thinking. Peter begins, "This second epistle (letter), beloved" notice how he addressed them. He calls them beloved. The Apostle John also used the term "beloved". This indicates the transformation that had occurred in the lives of these men. Peter was a rough man, a fisherman, a man of the world. Yet here, he speaks in very loving gentle terms, "beloved". John uses the same term, and yet Jesus spoke of John and his brother James as being “sons of thunder, wild men" (Mark 3:17). What a tremendous transformation Christ makes in the life of an individual. We see in Peter's writings that he was a very sensitive, loving, and caring individual. He continues, "I now write unto you" and states the purpose for which he is writing, "in both" (that is in both letters, First and Second Peter),"which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance". Consider the words "pure minds". Pure means to be uncluttered, that is free from contamination of erroneous thinking (logic, human rationale). Only Christians can have uncluttered minds that are free from this contamination. The idea contained in this passage is a clutter that fogs our thinking to the point that our process of analyzing facts cannot function correctly. Erroneous and false ideas seem to be intelligent and rational. Peter continues, "to stir up". That is to activate, to excite, or to stimulate "your pure minds by way of remembrance." What Peter writes is not new. These are truths that had already been taught by Jesus. They were passed from person to person, and from church to church, and many had already come to an understanding of them. Peter writes I want to bring these truths back to the forefront of your thinking, that is, to renew these truths again in our minds.

Verse 2 explains "that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of we the apostles of the Lord and Savior." With this one great sweeping statement the Apostle Peter embraces the entire Word of God. I want to excite your minds to remember the truths of the Word of God. "The prophets" he speaks of are those who wrote in the Old Testament, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets (English grouping). By the time the Church had come into existence, all 39 books of the Old Testament were generally referred to as the Prophets. Peter continues "and of the commandments of we the apostles", namely himself and the other Apostles, including the Apostle Paul which he is still waiting for us to respond to His invitation to come mentions by name later in this chapter. Thus, the broad, general context from which Peter writes is the entire Word of God (the Bible). His purpose in writing is to stimulate our thinking concerning the Word of God.

Verse 3, "Knowing this first (the very first important point) that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts." The phrase "in the last days" is referred to by some as the period of time just prior to the Lord's return, perhaps consisting of a few weeks, months, or a few years. However, "in the last days" refers to a much broader time period, beginning with the establishment of the Church on the day of Pentecost and concluding the events of Christ’s second coming kingdom. This is commonly referred to as the Church Age, the dispensation of grace or the age of grace. The events of this time period are the final events in human history before God intervenes with the return of His Son to this world personally and visibly.

During this period the Church is the focus of God's attention. It is His Bride and all preparations are made to unite His Bride with Himself. It is also a time of Grace. God's unmerited favor towards all mankind. His love, forgiveness, and invitation are extended to all to join His body, His Bride, the Church, by placing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has patiently waited and there will come a time when the invitation will be withdrawn. His Bride will be complete. Perhaps today you need to respond to God's love and trust Christ as your own personal Savior and Lord.

At the conclusion of this period of Grace, a time of rebellion by ungodly men and judgment will soon follow such as the world has never known. More on this later in this study.

"As in the days of Noah," Jesus warns, "so shall it be with the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:37). Comparisons can be made between the World That "Then Was" and with this present world. The age of grace in Noah's day was 120 years. So far, it has been approximately 2,000 years for us. Peter explains why the time has been so long. "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." These are words of great hope. We must respond while we can and not tread under foot His mercy, love and grace because the Scriptures warn, "His spirit shall not always strive with men” (Genesis 6:3). There will come a day that grace will cease.

Peter admonishes, "Knowing this first that there shall come, in the last days, scoffers walking after their own lusts." A scoffer is one who makes fun of with ridicule, to mock, to doubt, to hold in derision, openly and emphatically; to shout in disapproval and scorn, to sneer. Peter reveals that there will be those who will convey this attitude and live in such a manner consistent with their rejection of the certainty on Christ's return. They will exhibit the attitude "where is the promise of His coming". It is not that they were making fun of something they did not understand. On the contrary, they were familiar with the teaching of Christ's return, but they rejected it since they were "walking after their own lusts (illegal or forbidden desires)". The scoffers reject the idea of Christ's return since God has forbidden many of their desires. Because they desired to walk, (in their manner or pattern of life) in those forbidden areas, they were motivated to ridicule that which they knew in the depth of their hearts to be true.

They posed the argument, "Where is the promise of His coming?" It was a popular view in the days of the New Testament when the Messiah came, he would establish his kingdom, and overthrow any and all oppressors. They never saw the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. They never saw the ministry of Jesus in reconciliation of mankind to Himself So much was their anticipation for the coming of the Messiah that they missed the principal truth for which He was to come, to bring mankind back to Himself.

They were looking primarily for a political or social Messiah, they missed His redemptive work, which is worldwide in scope. "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”, Genesis 12:3b.

The early church had become accustomed to expecting His return momentarily. When He ascended into heaven, they expected that in perhaps a few days or weeks, maybe some months, certainly not many years, He would come again. Now a number of years had passed and many had begun to live according to their rebellious desires, which were contrary to God's commands, and thus were reasoning, "Where is this Jesus who is to come? Where is the fulfillment of His promise to return?" The truth of His return began to fall into ridicule and they reasoned, "For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." In those days the term "father" generally referred to the Old Testament patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc. Their reasoning, since the patriarchs had died, seemingly the world system was continuing in the same manner as it always had. They reasoned, "Everything continues just as it always has, and Jesus has not returned as He said He would”, thus implying He was not going to return.

Verse 5: "For this, they (scoffers) willingly are ignorant (without knowledge) that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that “then was”, being overflowed with water, perished." A closer look at verse 5 reveals "the scoffers are willingly ignorant". There are two types of ignorance as well as two types of unbelief. The first type of ignorance and unbelief is a lack of knowledge, that is having never heard or known. Therefore, one cannot believe because one has not heard or known. We cannot believe that which we have no knowledge of; the second type of ignorance and unbelief is willful. The truth is known, but it has not been accepted and thus they remain in a state of ignorance willingly.

The story is told of the man who did not believe in giraffes. He said, "there is no such thing as a giraffe. Giraffes don't exist".

His friends and his family would bring pictures of giraffes to prove to him they existed, but he would look at them and exclaim, "There is no such animal as a giraffe." Finally, one day the circus came to the city where he lived. A giraffe escaped and it so happened that it wandered onto his front yard and began munching the leaves of one of his trees. His neighbors hurriedly entered his house and said, "Come out here! You have to see this. There is a giraffe in your front yard." Reluctantly and with disgust the man got up from his chair, sauntered out onto the front porch, stood there looking at that giraffe, and responded, "Just as I thought, there is no such thing as a giraffe" and turned around and went back into the house. That is the concept that Peter speaks of in this passage, "willingly ignorant".

We have been told that the Bible is full of errors and that scientific evidence opposes the biblical position that God created the world, universe and all that is contained therein. It is argued, that the first seven chapters of Genesis are allegorical and not literal. The real truth however, is that those who hold to a humanistic view of evolution are "willingly ignorant" because there is more scientific evidence for creation than for the alternative. Some atheistic evolutionists are beginning to admit that they are going to have to rethink their evolutionary stand. Now, they are not willing to admit that God has created but, at least, they are now beginning to agree that the position that they have taught for so long will have to be revised. It is interesting to note the Scriptures never have to be updated. The Bible is as timely and accurate as the most recent discoveries.

Verse 5 describes "that by the Word of God (the Lord Jesus Christ, John 1:1-3) the heavens were of old" (old order). The heavens and the earth of an old order of the world that "Then Was" describes the earth standing out of the water and in the water. The creation process is being described in this passage. Two principal elements revealed in this passage of God's original creation of the old order are earth (land mass) and water. This phrasing is an indication that the earth, that is, the land mass, was separated from the water, collected together in one place. In the creative process, not only was the water parted so that the land (surface) came up through the water; but also, the water was separated above and below in order to form a canopy of water that circled the earth, thus forming a “sandwich” in which the atmosphere was between the water above and the water on the earth below.

The "world that then was" (the first world) "being overflowed with water perished". Peter points to the Noahic flood when he observes "overflowed with water”. Many scientists agree that there is no possible way that it could rain for forty days and forty nights under present conditions. But, in the "world that then was" it not only was a possibility, but it did occur. The evidence is overwhelming. It is interesting to note that many cultures and peoples throughout the world have some form of tradition about a worldwide flood. It is not the accurate biblical account, but at least it serves to confirm that at one time there was a flood that cataclysmically covered the entire earth. Peter proclaims that they perished.

"But the heavens and the earth which are now (this present world) by the same word of God, (referring to verse 5) are kept in store". "Kept in store" is the concept of being inventoried. The world is being inventoried for the purpose of giving an account, that is, "reserved" (tagged for a specific purpose). It is comparable to making a reservation at a restaurant. The table is being "reserved", being held in inventory for the specific purpose of the one making the reservation. This present world system is being reserved "unto fire against the day of judgment and the perdition (destruction) of ungodly men." The first world was destroyed by water and God promised that never again would He destroy the world by water. This present world is being held in reservation for the purpose of judgment by fire. Peter explains that the very elements will melt. This reservation is "against the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men". God will bring mankind to an inventoried accounting of his deeds, attitudes and intents of the heart. When a store manager takes inventory, all merchandise is counted. The manager goes to great lengths to make sure that nothing is missed and that the counting is accurate. Often, merchandise is grouped and lines placed on the floor, as well as fixtures numbered, to assure no mistakes will be made. Merchandise is recounted and double-checked for accuracy. In the same way, nothing and no one is going to escape the searching eye of God. The Scriptures teach all things are laid bare and open before Him of whom we must all give an account (Acts 17:30-31; Rev, 20:11-15). There shall be an accounting and destruction "of ungodly men". Ungodly, as it is used in this passage, is to be aggressively active against God and actively take every opportunity to advance the kingdom of Satan to the destruction and hindrance of the kingdom of God. All of humanity is to be brought into judgment or accounting, but Peter is particularly identifying those who are aggressively active against the cause of Christ. Those actively standing against God in their words, lifestyle, and attitude of heart will be brought into judgment.

Verse 8 continues, "But, beloved, be not ignorant (without knowledge) of one thing that one day is with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day." We must realize that the reason why the Lord did not return shortly after His ascension into Heaven was for the purpose of giving mankind time to repent. Peter states in verse 9 "that all should come to repentance".

Time, as we know it, is a created dimension. It is not eternal. It is not a part of God's essence. Time had a beginning and will ultimately blend into eternity. Even scientists theorize that time, as we know it, is relative to our own solar system and, according to some theories, if you travel far enough into the depths of the universe, time ceases to exist as we know it.

God lives in what is known as the eternal now, God never looks back to anything and he never looks forward to anything (Exodus 3:14). He experiences it constantly. God is not looking forward to learn anything and He is not looking back to learn from His experience. He knows everything all the time, constantly and absolutely. He lives in the constant now or in a constant presence. Peter indicates the Lord has given us this “time” for the purpose of repentance. The critics said that because He had not come, He could not come or that He was not able to fulfil His promise completely; but He will return at God's appointed time.

Verse 9, "slack" is to be negligent, careless, remiss or sluggish to fulfill His promise to return, even to the point of inability to keep His promise. The critics were proclaiming, "Jesus is not going to come because He is having a hard time getting the events of the world in proper order to fulfill His promise." The critics were implying Jesus was powerless, thus, less than God. Peter answers the question why Jesus is not slack, "But is long-suffering (patient) to us" to the whole world. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". God is not willing that any should be lost. May we respond to His grace, love, mercy, and patience while there is yet time.

Repentance is to change one's mind. This is often a radical and diametrical change. To illustrate repentance, one travels north and turns completely around and travels south. A diametrical 180-degree change in direction. Before one comes to Christ, one is living the way, philosophy, and values of this world. Then one comes face to face with Christ, sees the truth and makes a diametrical 180-degree turn-around in their thinking. Before, one did not think in favorable terms of Christ and perhaps was even openly antagonistic (Romans 3:11-12) toward Him, but now, Christ is embraced completely. One turns his back on the world and embraces Christ, loving Him with their whole heart.

Verse 10, Peter continues, "but the day of the Lord", referring to that period of time which begins at the conclusion of the church age and extends through the Great White Throne judgement. This is the Day of God. It is the final stage of preparation for the new heavens and earth.

Verse 10, "But the day of the Lord (other passages "Day of God" II Peter 3:12) will come".... How? "As a thief in the night". For the last 175 years, approximately, we have had a proliferation of date setters, more so in the last 30 years. They tell us the Lord is coming back at such-and-such a time on such-and-such a day. We have a natural desire to know the specifics of the future. But our trust must always be in God and His wisdom. Date setting causes the integrity of the return of Christ to be challenged when the dates set fail to produce His return. When the predicted dates fail, this adds integrity to those who question "where is the promise of His coming?" Let us go no further in our predictions than the Scripture reveals. There are no hidden formulas for us to discover or secret revelation that needs to be revealed. Rather, we are to live daily in the expectation of His return. The fact is, Scripture tells us the specific time of His coming is unknown to man. Jesus said "No man knows the day nor the hour. The angels in heaven do not know" Jesus said, "I do not know." Only the Father knows the time Jesus will return. Peter declares “He shall come as a thief in the night.” A thief certainly does not advertise when he is going to strike. The same principle applies to the Lord's return. This event will occur unexpectedly and without warning to the unsaved (I Thessalonians 5:4) At the same time, Scripture also tells us there will be signs. When these signs appear, we know the time of His return is near; but these signs deal in generalities not specific dates. Certainly, many things are beginning to happen that point to His soon return, such as the proliferation of evil and ungodliness. But to say whether it is going to take place next week, next month, next year, today or in ten years or maybe in 100 years, we cannot make that prediction. The Apostle Peter makes it very clear that the Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly. He describes one event in the broad panorama of events in the Day of the Lord, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Probably this will take place just preceding the Great White Throne Judgment and after the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. Peter is not referring to events that will take place when the Church is raptured. He is not speaking of events during the Tribulation period (70th week). He is not speaking about events when Jesus literally, physically comes to this earth, and Peter is not speaking about anything that will happen during the 1,000 years of Jesus rule upon the earth. But rather, Peter is speaking about those things that will occur, perhaps, simultaneously with the Great White Throne Judgement and the revelation of the new heavens and earth.

Three heavens are mentioned in the Bible. The first heaven is atmospheric; the second heaven is the universe and, the third heaven mentioned in Scripture is the dwelling place of God. The events of the Day of the Lord will involve the whole universe, not just the immediate solar system but the entire universe, "they shall pass away” (be removed from the scene completely). There will be no residue nor remnant remaining. The world that "now is", the heavens and the earth mentioned in verse 7, shall pass away and then Peter adds with a "great noise". Literally this phrase comes from a Greek word having reference to an archer in the Olympic Games. The archer draws the arrow back in his bow. When he lets it fly, the arrow makes a whizzing, whooshing noise. Peter indicates "the heavens", including the earth, pass away with a whooshing rush. It carries with it the idea of great speed. And the elements, earth (landmass), water, wind and fire will melt (dissolve). It is the concept of melting down (breaking down) and dissolving completely with fervent heat. Peter probably had in mind a blast furnace of that day in which gold, silver, bronze or iron was smelted. That probably was the hottest thing he knew of in his day. Peter declares, "The earth"...that is the planet and the works therein...."shall be burned up (consumed)."

The question is often posed concerning aliens or life forms on other planets in distant galaxies.

It seems rather hard to conceive that there is not some sort of life form eons of light years away. Our galaxy, of which our solar system is a part, known as the Milky Way, is 230 million light years in diameter. This is only one galaxy among countless galaxies found in the universe.

However, the Scriptures put the earth at the center of God's creation. It places the sun, moon, and stars in the background and there is no hint in Scripture there are other life forms anywhere in the universe. Presently, science has not been able to verify the existence of life apart from our own planet. Space probes and satellites have discovered nothing. All that has been reported from these efforts is vast uninhabited planets, satellites, and stars. It appears that we are indeed alone in the material universe.

Verse 11 makes this observation, "seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner (character) of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation" . . . or lifestyle, manner of living.... "and godliness".

Peter continues by asking the question, verse 12, "looking for and hastening (earnestly desiring) unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" He gives the answer to this question, which was typical of the style of writing in those days designed to stimulate one's thinking. What are we going to do in light of this truth? Are we going to live Godly and holy lives? Intellectually we accept the concept of the return of the Lord. But, as far as the truth of Christ's return actually getting hold of our lives and motivating us to live for Him, it has not had much impact. Sometimes our lifestyle seems to say yes, God is coming back sometime, but we do not know when, so why concern ourselves with it. Peter is emphasizing that in light of His coming, we should be living holy and Godly lives. The purpose for this is pointed out, "looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God" or the day of the Lord. Then he repeats the warning about the destruction of the present heavens and the earth. He puts an emphasis on our living holy and Godly lives. God is calling out a remnant of people unto Himself from each generation. When, as His witnesses, we live holy and godly lives, we become instruments in His hand to complete the job of fulfilling His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men. By our living holy and Godly lives, we are fulfilling God's timetable in preparation for Christ's return and Kingdom. Ultimately, God is performing the work through us, His Church, and He will set the stage for the Day of the Lord, His return. As we are faithful, we become His instrument in fulfilling His plan of the Ages.

Verse 13, Peter continues, "Nevertheless".... even in light of this truth...."we (believers) according to His (the Lord's) "promise look for new heavens and a new earth." We are not looking for the renovation of this world. We are not looking for Him to make the social changes necessary for this world to become a comfortable place for us to live free from sin and its curse. An observation in the life of Jesus, He never majored in dealing with the social issues of His day to change them. He did not try to correct all the injustices, faults, failures, errors, unfairness, and wrongs that were present when He walked among us. Rather, His mission was to call a people out from this present world. It is from His mission that we get the word church, which means in the original language "called out ones".

Christians are called out first to be separate from the world by living holy and godly lives. Second, to be called literally out of this world to be in His presence forever (new heaven and earth).

Other illustrations throughout the Scripture reveal that we are pilgrims in this present world. Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. At that time, he was probably one of the world's wealthiest men if not, very close to it. God called him from a life of comfort, his family, friends and everybody that he knew and led him to wander around in the wilderness, as a nomad. God led his descendants, the nation of Israel, to live as nomads. This is a picture for the Church. This world is not our final home. Our priority is not to make ourselves comfortable in this world system; but rather, to look forward to our place of permanent abode; “A city whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

He challenges, "Nevertheless”. We are not looking for this present world. It is passing away. According to His promise we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth. Consider the word "new". God is not going to paint up, fix up, or polish up this old world. He is not going to buy, so to speak, an old house out in the country and refurbish or restore it. The word "new” carries with it the idea of a completely new creation, brand new, never having been used before; no used merchandise or "hand-me-downs”. That is what Abraham looked for, according to the writer of Hebrews. He states, "Nevertheless, Abraham looked for a city that had foundations whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10)". That city he was looking for is the New Jerusalem, the capital city of the new heavens and the new earth. A characteristic of this new heavens and earth is listed in verse 13, "wherein dwelleth righteousness” or holiness. All the injustices, problems, and corruption of this present world will not be present there, nor can it ever be.

Verse 14, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things"...he emphasizes this now...."be diligent (actively, aggressively, purposefully) that you may be found of him"....that is the Lord, three things. . . "in peace, without spot, and blameless" to be "found of Him in peace" not to become enamored with all the cares of this world. It seems that many have to deal with the tension and pressure of the rat race every day. Our society keeps pushing us to produce more and more. This concept of peace is based upon the person of God and our focus on Him. It is a state of calm and contentment. If we focus on Him, we have peace because He is peace. Our rest is in Him who is the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). “Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:” (Isaiah 26:3).

Peter emphasizes "without spot" referring to our moral and ethical purity. We are to stand pure in a world that is spotted with moral corruption. We are not to become tainted with this world's sins. The believer is to be spotless as a white robe or a white tunic, on that robe there is to be no spot. Our lives are to be lives of purity reflecting the very image of God. When a Christian falls into sin, very quickly the sin is seen by the world. The world can sin and it is hardly even noticed. But because a Christian has a testimony of walking with Christ, when sin comes into our lives, it is readily seen by the world like a spot on a white robe. Peter is concerned about this spot. The believer is to live without "spot" and "blameless" (a legal term "without chargeable offense"). In other words, our lives are to be holy, pure, moral, and ethical, standing before God in the world in such a way that nobody can justly accuse us of sin. There is never to be a chargeable offense for the believer. In this manner, we are to order our lives by the power of the Spirit of Christ. We are not perfect, but living victorious lives. Verse 15, "And account (or consider) that the longsuffering (or patience) of our Lord is salvation;" to those who will come to Jesus as a result of the testimony of our holy and Godly life. How many times do we hinder those from coming into the Kingdom of God by the spots in our lives, by the offenses that we can be charged with? The greatest compliment a Christian can ever receive is that they live what they believe. May we be such a people that many will come to Christ because of our pure lives.

Peter refers to the Apostle Paul in support of his teaching, "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;" Peter states that the Apostle Paul is teaching the very same truths that he is. You have already read his letters and I am just reaffirming what Paul already said.

Verse 16, "as also in all his".... the Apostle Paul's Epistles. "Speaking in them of these things".... the very things that Peter has spoken of..."in which are some things hard to understand which they that are unlearned and stable wrest".... or twist ..."as they do also other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." Peter acknowledges that some of the truths the Apostle Paul has written concerning the second coming of Christ were difficult to understand. The reason why they are so difficult to understand is the truths were still being revealed in Peter's day. Even with the completed revelation of the Word of God there are still areas of His Word where good and godly individuals differ. By and by we shall all know as the Scripture says "even as we are known" (I Cor. 13:12) by Him.

Peter refers to those, who because they were uneducated in the truth of God were unstable in their education and twisted the Scriptures. It seems that in the past, generally, more Christians knew and understood the Scriptures more fully than now. Our society does not have time to study the Bible. Currently, the average sermon on Sunday morning runs about 20 minutes. Christian publications have moved from an emphasis on the teaching of the Word of God to experience oriented themes. This sets the stage, just as it did in Peter’s day, for error to take root and to grow rampant. Peter speaks of those who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction.

Two observations: those who are indeed Christians who know the Lord but through their ignorance of the Word of God, twist the Scripture so that the truth is distorted or even destroyed altogether, the destruction that he refers to is the destruction of hindering their own spiritual growth and maturity as well as that of those whom they influence. If the individual is not a Christian but only appears to be a Christian or even for that matter out and out defies the truth of the Christian faith, that individual who twists the Scriptures closes the door to truth in their life so they cannot come to know the Lord as well as hindering others from coming to Christ. They blind their own eyes to the truth that can save them.

Verse 17, the Apostle Peter encourages the believers "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before," (had heard the truth before) "beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." In other words, listening to the error that is propagated by those who are in opposition to Christ can hinder a believer and remove him from a steadfast foundation of faith, to be tossed about, to become unstable in his walk with the Lord. Error has robbed many of their joy and surefootedness in the truth of God's Word. It has led to spiritual defeat and discouragement for others.

The evolutionist loves to propagate his theory, which is the hoax of this century. Evolution has not been proven and cannot be proven. Often, we are intimidated by those who seemingly have very good credentials as they present their humanistic evolutionary views. The real fact is that as believers, creationists, we have nothing to apologize for. The scientific, geologic, and archaeologic evidences all support the biblical position when properly understood. The evolutionist has no concrete evidence for their position. They stand on shifting sand.

Here is a truism. Anything that's propagated long enough will be accepted as true regardless of the facts. That is the strength of evolution. It is taught in our public-school system, in our colleges and universities, and, sad to say, it is taught in many Christian colleges, universities, as well as seminaries, under the false assumption that it must be true because so many believe it. If so, many hold it to be true, then it has to be true becomes the unspoken agreement. But, challenge the theory with fact, and it soon becomes evident the evolutionist does not have a leg to stand on. The evidence for their position is remarkably lacking.

Verse 18, the Apostle Peter challenges that our alternative to being intimidated by the error of the wicked is "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen" so be it. How are we going to grow...."in grace", God's unmerited favor? And by what means...."by knowledge", true facts (knowledge of God's word). Peter urges, "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ". As believers, the most important thing that we can do is to saturate ourselves with what God says. Then, when the challenge from the world comes, we can stand. Not simply standing because we are bigoted in our position and closed to the truth, but because we know what the truth is and we have become convinced of it. The Scripture encourages us to "be ready always to give a reason for the hope that lies within us" (I Peter 3:15).

**Creation - The world that “then was” Antediluvian world**

**Origins**

Genesis 1:1 reads, "In the beginning God created..." a positive statement. On the other hand, the evolutionist proclaims, "In the beginning was nothing from which all matter and life forms sprang." Origins have always been a sticky problem for the evolutionist. Some evolutionists theorize that certain things are "eternal", an example being some unknown gases, perhaps hydrogen or some unknown combination of gas floating in the black nothingness of space for eons of time; at some unknown time, a change took place within the gases. As a result, "bang", something came into existence that began to evolve or change over the course of billions of years. Others theorize that there was nothing and then, “bang", something came into existence which began to evolve. Our present evolutionary chain is still in a process of change which is so subtle, they argue that it cannot be observed or detected.

There are two categories of evolution. Atheistic evolution which rejects all concept of God whatsoever and theistic evolution which accepts the premise of the existence of God, but He is considered to be far removed from our world with little interest in it. Theistic evolution is an attempt to reconcile the "supposed" scientific evidence of evolution with the Bible. Simplified theistic evolutionist's position basically states: In the beginning God created using the means and method of evolution to create our world. The Scriptures are twisted, as Peter has indicated, to accommodate the evolutionary view. For example, in Genesis 1:1 and 2 a "gap" of undetermined time is offered as a possible explanation for the fossil data. God created the heavens and the earth, verse 1 and verse 2, the earth was without form and void, indicating some cataclysmic disaster occurred to the previous creation of thousands or millions of years. It is during this intervening time that much of evolution occurred. Others hold to a "day-age” view. Each creation day is of an undetermined period of time, thousands or perhaps millions of years in which God, by the process of evolution, produced our world.

Evolutionists fail to address adequately the moral nature of man. The evolutionist does not answer the question why man has a moral nature. All cultures, and societies have a system of right and wrong, that is, a moral order. It may be different from the biblical position, but nevertheless it is a system of moral accountability. The moral nature of man defies the theory of evolution as the moral nature suddenly appears with the inception of man. There are no transitional forms that can account for the development of the moral nature of man.

Evolution fails to satisfactorily answer the question of origin. How did it all begin? Some evolutionists, as has been previously stated, begin with the speculation that unknown gases, space, and time existed. At some unknown time, evolution began its upward progress. Their argument defies logic. First, we do not know that time, space, or gases existed. If so, why and what triggered their evolution? Out of nothing came something which began to evolve. It boggles the mind to consider such a concept. With logic (little or no scientific evidence) the evolutionist rejects the creationist who begins with "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). Having done so, the evolutionist must answer the obvious question "How did it all begin? Where did we come from and how did we arrive at our present state of existence? There has to be an answer. The evolutionist needs time, a lot of time, to explain our existence. Currently, the timetable is pushed back 10 to 12 billion years. There are two reasons why they must do this. One is the great amount of time needed to account for transitional life forms necessary for evolution to occur. The transitional process is unobservable due to the great amount of time needed. Two, they are faced with the problem of origins. Since the evolutionist cannot satisfactorily answer the question of origins, it becomes easier to push origins further back into antiquity. None of these theories or arguments can be demonstrated or proven. In fact, there is no evidence that any of their arguments ever took place, no matter how great the time frame, 7,10,12 billion years.

The atheistic evolutionist proposes there was nothing or perhaps some gases. Then, over a period of billions of years, our present world evolved into its present state. This evolutionary process continues at a rate so slow it cannot be detected. It is necessary for the evolutionist, whether theistic or atheistic, to add hundreds of millions of years of time in order to provide for transitions from one species to another as well as provide time for their development to their present state. The fossil record does not give any evidence or support for transitional life forms. However, some evolutionists argue that there were times in ancient history in which evolutionary change took place so fast that fossils did not have time to form. It sounds plausible but again, there is no evidence to support this view.

The evolutionist proposes a relatively small model or scale. Within this model or scale certain changes or activity can be observed, however small. The conclusion is then drawn that basically the same rate of change continues for millions of years, yea billions of years, except for certain periods of rapid change. First, the only thing proven by this model is that change takes place. Change has been proven to occur at a certain rate for the duration of the model only. Two, it has not proven that this change takes place at the same rate excepting for the varied rate from time to time over millions or billions of years. It could have been faster or slower, for shorter or longer periods of time, or not at all. The evolutionist makes an assumption that the same rate of change has occurred uniformly for ages. Three, the evolutionist also assumes that this change will occur at the same rate into the future. Their conclusion is little more than speculation or wishful thinking.

Applying the principle of evolution to a house, the house exists so, how did it get here? It had to have a builder or it evolved. In the beginning, bang! One grain of sand sprang into being. Millions of years pass and this grain of sand begins to multiply and mutate by the millions. Unexplainably the grains of sand become organized. Grains of sand group together and become stones and bricks. Other grains of sand become mortar. Millions of years pass, bricks, stone and mortar unite, change and transform into a wall. Some of those walls mutate and combine to form buildings. Ultimately, some will become extinct. We conclude this is foolish. But this is exactly what the evolutionist asks us to accept concerning the existence of the universe.

As convincing as the evolutionist’s views may seem, solid evidence speaks to the contrary. Evolution violates the first law of thermodynamics. The principle of thermo-dynamics is accepted by most scientists, evolutionary or creationist. The law of thermodynamics has been demonstrated thousands of times. It states, matter or energy cannot be created nor destroyed but changed. To illustrate, water can be transformed from a liquid to a solid to a gas but it cannot be created and cannot be destroyed, only changed.

Evolution violates the second law of thermodynamics which states that everything is wearing out in our universe, in the process of change, energy is lost contributing to the wearing out or running down of the universe. The evolutionist believes that the material universe is advancing and expanding. Yet, it is observed that the universe is indeed running down or wearing out contrary to the evolutionist's thinking.

The evolutionist supposed that man has been on earth for tens of thousands of years. Archeological evidence seems to support the view that man has been on this planet for no more than ten thousand years. Before that time, there is no record of his existence, there is nothing, simply nothing. This is a difficulty for the evolutionist since they need so much time for transitional life forms to evolve.

Currently, there are a number of dating methods, such as, Carbon 14 and others. It is believed that Carbon deteriorates at a certain measurable rate. If an object loses a certain amount of carbon in a controlled time frame, then it is assumed that the rate of loss will be the same for a greater time frame. Depending on the amount of carbon an object has remaining, the age of that object can be determined. This sounds foolproof except for the problem of varying rates of carbon loss. Present dating methods have been shown to be inaccurate after a few years. Erratic readings are not uncommon with the various dating systems, artifacts with a proven date often give false readings. We can only conclude that this method for dating is flawed and we cannot rely on it for accuracy. Presently, there is no method of dating antiquity that is entirely accurate.

Evidence of permanent mutation needs to be demonstrated by the evolutionist for his theory to be plausible. Currently, there is no evidence of permanent mutation in nature. Permanent mutation is essential for evolution to take place. It appears that everything reproduces after its kind as the Bible states. One can achieve a mutation for a generation but cannot achieve a permanent mutation. For example, crossing a horse and a donkey produces a mule, but the generation stops. The mule is sterile. To get another mule, you have to cross another horse and another donkey. Permanent mutation has to occur in order to move from the simple to the complex as the evolutionist argues.

Evolution cannot adequately explain why there is order in the universe. Look into a microscope, you will observe order. Look into a telescope, you will observe order. Throughout our entire universe order prevails. The universe is like a gigantic clock. Everything is precisely synchronized. If you vary it a little, the whole thing is thrown out of kilter. If that were to happen, the universe would destroy itself. For example, if the earth varies, just a few degrees on its axis, we would either be hurled out into space and freeze or be thrust into the sun and roast. Everything around us demonstrates that there is a mind behind the universe. Evolution uses such terms as natural selection, but even natural selection would logically have to be a random chance at some point. Yet, our universe defies the reasoning of random chance. Even some of the most atheistic scientists are willing to admit there is some kind of intelligence behind the universe. They are not willing to call that intelligence God, but some admit, however, that there is some kind of intelligent order to our universe.

The fossil record demonstrates a sudden outburst of life. Above the fossil record there is evidence of abundant life forms. Below the fossil record there is none simply nothing. Life suddenly bursts forth. From the fossil record, life began no more than 10,000 years ago. The fossils that have been found reveal a development that would require, according to the evolutionary scale, a million and a half years to produce, which means they would be found in developmental and transitional forms below the present fossil strata, but they are not there. The geological column verifies the biblical account which speaks of a sudden outburst of life.

The evolutionist cannot produce transitional life forms. They have constructed an elaborate evolutionary model, but there are thousands of missing links to this model. Using the alphabet as an example of the evolutionary model. It would look something like this - A through Z, A B ... F... .I ...N..Q..R.T..W..Z. Presently, the missing links have never been found, what's more, they will not be found, because they do not exist. The archaeologist and geologist cannot find any, even though they have tried. The evolutionary model, thus constructed, becomes its own worst enemy. There is no evidence that transitional life forms exist — none. This supports the position of the Scripture which affirms "after its kind".

The universe is deteriorating. The evolutionist knows that it is deteriorating. All known scientific investigation to date verifies that the universe is deteriorating. However, evolutionists proclaim just the opposite, our universe is becoming more complex and sophisticated, moving from the simplest life forms to the more complex. In reality, the universe started with the complex and is moving toward destruction by deterioration and disintegration. This is the result of the curse of sin. The running down and deterioration of the universe is supported by the second law of thermodynamics.

The quoting of each evolutionist's unproven theories in support of their own work is a common practice used by evolutionists. Placing their theories in the context of intellectualism gives credibility to their work, as well as intimidating those who would dare question their "authority".

All known facts of the geological column substantiate the biblical account of creation, in spite of the fact the evolutionists use the geological column to try to prove their theories. It is not facts of the geological column that are in dispute, but the interpretation of those facts. When the geological column is properly understood, it does not support the evolutionist, but rather, the biblical account of creation.

Evolution is a theory, an idea, or “hypothesis" which, by scientific means or by any other means, is unproven. Nevertheless, the evolutionary theory is taught as fact in violation of true intellectual and scientific disciplines.

Now consider the question, why the concept of evolution, if evolution really is not as factual as proclaimed? Why did evolutionary concepts come into existence? Since we are here there has to be a reason for why we are here. There are two basic explanations for the existence of the universe, the world and man. God either created them or we evolved. The evolutionist rejects the idea that God created. The reason the evolutionist rejects the creation account given in Scripture can be summed up in one word, accountability. Mankind does not want to be held accountable. If God created us, then we are accountable to Him. By nature we do not want to be accountable to anyone. I am not responsible to anyone, especially God, is the prevailing attitude among many. Since we do not want to be responsible to God, we have to explain our existence. Out of their need to explain our existence, evolution was born. Evolution has its roots in the Greek and Roman cultures. Its modem counterpart dates back about 200 years.

The theistic evolutionist wants to believe in God, have faith in Him, but considering all the supposed evidence that the evolutionist poses, evolution has to be dealt with. The problem is this: since I want to believe that God exists and yet I cannot answer the evolutionary arguments, I have to come to some kind of compromise. That compromise is theistic evolution. In essence, theistic evolution believes that God used evolution as the means for His creative acts.

Among those who are theistic evolutionists as well as some Bible believers, there are a number of theories as to origins. The following is a brief description of the varying views. Some are more biblically based than others.

The gap theory states that there is an implied gap of an indefinite but vast expanse of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 during which time the geological ages occurred — the ages in which God created the dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures. Evolution is usually placed in this gap. God created the heavens and the earth, verse 1, and since God cannot create anything that is not perfect, this creation was perfect and some unknown judgement fell upon that initial creation which was destroyed. Thus, it became without form and void and darkness was upon the land. God recreated the universe using six literal days to bring about our present world. The problem with this theory is that it assumes an existence of another world which, if it existed, verse 1, would be the only mention of it in the Scripture and verse 2 would be the only indication of the judgement upon that world with the possible exception of Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 38:11. The passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel would need to be strained to allow for the Gap Theory. No other passage anywhere in the Bible hints of any such creation. However, there is a better explanation rather than the gap theory. It lies in the style of writing which was prominent in the days in which Moses wrote Genesis.

First, a broad, general statement, as seen in a newspaper headline, is given concerning the topic discussed, as in verse 1, "God created the heavens and the earth." In verse 2, Moses recapitulates to fill in the details of the broad statement previously made in verse 1. This style of writing is prominent throughout the first three chapters of Genesis as well as the entirety of Moses’ writings. As far as the Gap Theory is concerned, there is no evidence that it ever occurred.

The day-age catastrophic theory holds that the Hebrew word translated day in our English Bibles yom, referring to the six days of creation, means age. Each of these “days” then were vast ages of undetermined length in which geological development took place usually ending with some sort of cataclysmic disaster, for example, the Ice Age. The theory continues and each day becomes a vast undetermined period of time during which various and sundry life forms were created. Evolution is often interspersed throughout each day-age.

The Alternate Day/Age Theory: Each day of 24 hours was separated by vast geological ages of unknown lengths of time covering thousands, perhaps millions of years. This view makes an assumption upon the Biblical text. It is at best speculative.

The Variable-Length Day Theory: Each day was not necessarily a 24-hour day. It may have been a 24-hour day on one occasion and on another it may have been millions of years. This view is problematic with Hebrew grammar.

The Revelation Day Theory: God took millions of years to create the earth but He revealed it in six days and then rested on the seventh. It is believed it took God six 24- hour periods of time to reveal His creation to mankind. Again, the text offers no support for this position. It is speculation.

The Re-creation Theory is very similar to the Gap Theory but it has some differences. Genesis 1:1 does not refer to the original, sinless and perfect earth. But rather, the Genesis account is one of refashioning of a chaotic original creation. Genesis 1:2 describes conditions or circumstances existing at the time of the principal action in verse 1 creation is viewed as a process rather than being a creative act ex nihilo - that is, out of nothing.

The last view is the simple Day Creation Theory. God created in six 24-hour periods of time. This view has the greatest support from the Hebrew text as well as Biblical doctrine.

**The Biblical Account**

Genesis means "beginnings", origins or generations. Generations is a key word found in the book of Genesis. This is the generations of the heavens and the earth, the generations of Adam, the generations of Noah, and the generations of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Genesis is a very appropriate title since this book deals with the beginnings of the universe, the world, man, God's people, as well as His redemptive plan as it affects mankind.

Chapter 1, verse l, this simple statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" which is a headline or summary of details of God's creative acts given in the next three chapters. Because our western thinking is a logical process, moving from the beginning to the conclusion, it is hard for us to understand the oriental method of thinking in which the subject discussed is generally stated and developed later with added detail. In this passage, "heaven" should be translated heavens, plural instead of singular. This word refers not only to the atmosphere, but also to the universe.

Verse 2, the first creative act is the earth. It is created before the universe, stars, moon, planets, sun, or other galaxies. There was nothing and God began by creating the earth. He describes it, "without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep". The word "was", in verse 2 is translated from the Hebrew word "bara" which is used two different ways in the Old Testament. In some instances, it is translated "become" or "became" and in others it is translated "was". The determination of how it is to be translated is found in the context. The gap theorists believe the word "was" should be translated "became", that is the earth "became" without form and void. There is nothing in the Hebrew grammar, nor the context, that would indicate the necessity to translate "bara" ’‘become" or "became". The great, overwhelming, majority of times, it is translated "was" throughout the Old Testament and only a relatively few times translated "became" and only when the context indicates that it should be translated "became". In this passage, "was" is an accurate and proper translation of the word "bara". "And the earth was without form and void". The earth is not an undefinable mass in the midst of nothing, but rather it is a rough unfinished creation which is about to be completed. The word "void" describes a world uninhabited. It is without trees, plants, man or animals. It is empty or "void". The earth is in a state which is similar to a contractor building a house, in its "roughed in" form before he finishes it. At this point, the earth is in its "roughed in" form ready for completion.

"And darkness was upon the face of the deep". Darkness is the absence of light. Light has yet to be created. "Deep" refers to the face of the waters, which he calls the face of the deep indicating that there is a great depth of water in the initial creation upon the earth. "The spirit of God “moved"...."moved" comes from a Hebrew word which means to brood. To illustrate, a mother hen broods or hovers over her chicks, and is very concerned about and focuses all of her attention on her chicks. The spirit of God is brooding or moving or hovering "upon the face of the water". Further creative acts are about to begin.

Verse 3, "and God said, let there be light and there was light". Light is created instantly. "And God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness". Light and darkness cannot be mixed. They are eternally separate. Darkness cannot overcome light, but light can overcome darkness. The two cannot exist together or occupy the same area at the same time. "And God saw the light that it was good". God is not discovering that light is good, but rather He is declaring it to be "good". He created light "good".

Verse 5, "And God called the light day and the darkness he called night and the evening and the morning were the first day". The Hebrew word for day is "yom". This word is used several different ways throughout the Old Testament. On occasion, it is used to refer to the day of the Lord, a period of time that is not limited to 24 hours but rather refers to the end-time events associated with Christ's return. "Yom" is also used for other periods of time, such as, twelve, 24 hours, an indeterminate time periods of various length. However, every time the word "yom" is associated with a number, it always, without exception, refers to a 24-hour period of time. The usage of "yom" in the Genesis account is without question a 24-hour day. Not only is "yom" used with a number, but the Jewish method of reckoning days is clearly evident in the text.

To some it may seem to be unreasonable to think God could create the universe and world in such a short time. But, keep in mind, the miracles Jesus performed and the way in which He performed them. The first miracle of Jesus recorded in the Scripture is found in the Gospel of John chapter two. Jesus went to a wedding, to a marriage the Bible says, in Canaan of Galilee and the groom had not planned very well. His guests drank a lot more than he had anticipated and he ran out of wine, which was a social disaster. Jesus' mother came to Him and said, "Jesus, they are out of wine". Jesus had the servants fill large, 30-gallon water pots with water and asked the steward of the wedding to taste it and when he did, it was wine. In evolutionary terms, how many billions of years would it require for water to become wine? So far as we are able to determine, it would be an impossibility for that to happen since the elements that are in wine are different from the elements that are in water. Yet, Jesus transformed the water to wine instantly. On another occasion, Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee, which was subject to severe storms. He was with seasoned sailors and a tremendous storm, which the sailors had probably never experienced before, came up and they were afraid that they were going to perish. They woke Jesus and expressed their fear. Jesus said to the wind and the waves, "Peace, be still" and instantly there was a calm. Since our Lord spoke to the wind and waves and they obeyed Him, it certainly is possible for Him to speak the world into existence. "And God said, let there be light and there was light". On day one the earth was created, the elements of darkness, water and light, as well as the separation of light and darkness. God declares this creation is good. He declares the light to be day and the darkness to be night.

Verse 6 begins with the creative acts of day two, "And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters". For many years this was a puzzling statement. What could this possibly mean? Keep in mind that in verse 2 the waters are described as deep and the indication is a great depth, perhaps several miles. In verse 6 a division occurs of the waters on the earth with a firmament being sandwiched between the two. This firmament is the air we breathe, the atmosphere. Thus, a canopy of water encircles the atmosphere.

This canopy of waters filtered out the sun's harmful aging ultraviolet rays. This would account for the extreme longevity of life in the pre-flood (antediluvian) world. The average life expectancy then was 911 years (from the genealogy of Genesis). Furthermore, the canopy of water would keep the earth at a stable universal temperature. This is a controlled environment. Possibly the temperature on the surface of the earth was a comfortable 72 to 75 degrees with no polar ice caps and extreme cold. Tropical fossilized vegetation has been discovered under the ice in Antarctica.

Verse 8, "And God called the firmament heaven” or more accurately "heavens". The second day of creation is completed with the creation of the universe. "And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Verse 9, "And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place”. The geography of the world that "then was" did not resemble the geography of "this present world". Presently, seven-tenths (71.6%) of the earth's surface is covered by water. In the original creation, the vast majority of the earth's surface was land. A cataclysmic action was taking place, the brooding of the Spirit of God, the sinking of a portion of the earth's surface to permit the waters to form ponds, rivers, lakes and seas, probably a raising of some of the earth's surface to form hills. Probably, the mountain ranges of the world that "Then Was" were not nearly as severe as they are today, but were gentler and rolling.

Verses 9 and 10, "And let the dry land"....or literally the dry to appear...."and it was so. And, God called the dry land earth and the gathering together of the waters He called seas and God declared that it was good."

Verse 11, "And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind." This is the first time the phrase "after its kind" appears. It indicates that which is being created cannot produce anything else but its own kind. The principle after their kind" is established and has never been rescinded. It still is in effect today. Like begets like. Alterations are self-terminating. This principle makes evolution impossible.

"Herb", verse 12, includes all the species as well as other plants which produce edible food. We are not sure how many different types of edible plants were created then, but there was an abundance. "Tree yielding fruit, who's seed in itself, after its kind" seems to indicate that the original fruit trees were self-sustaining or self-reproducing. They did not die. Their fruit did not rot but was sustained continually.

Verse 13, "And the evening and the morning were the third day". By now creation consisted of the earth and various forms of vegetation. As of yet, the sun, moon, or stars had not been created. Vegetation cannot exist without sunlight. The question is, how could vegetation that was just created exist without the sun's light? You will recall that God had previously created light in general, but not sunlight. The entity of light exists, but does not find its source of existence in the sun or stars. No doubt this light, sustained by God's very command to exist, supplied the need of plants. Also, it would be no problem for God to create vegetation and for it to exist without sunlight or, for that matter, any light at all. After all, He is God. Verse 13, "And the evening and the morning were the third day".

The fourth day, verse 14, the creation of the stars, sun and planets. "And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years". Perhaps at this time the earth begins to rotate on its axis and circle the sun. God creates the seasons by setting the planets into motion. There is no specific account of when time began. If it had not begun on the first day of creation, it certainly would have been created by the fourth day.

Verse 15, "And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And it was so". All the universe, to a varying degree, will supply light to the earth, but the greater light and the lesser light of which he speaks, namely our own sun and moon, are the primary source of light for our earth. The greater light (sun) to rule the day, and the lesser light (moon) to rule the night. He made the stars, thus filling the universe. It has been taught that the universe is an expanse from which the earth has developed. The Scripture states quite the contrary. The earth was created as the center of the universe and the rest of the universe was created around the earth.

Verse 17, "God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth." Verse 18, "And to rule (have authority) over the day and over the night and to divide the light from the darkness, and God saw that it was good." The sun has the dominant rule or authority of giving us light during the daytime hours and the moon during night-time hours. God declares that this work is good.

Verse 20, the fifth day. "And God said let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life and fowl that it may fly above the earth in the open firmament and heaven. And God created the great whales (sea monsters) and every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind and every winged fowl after their kind and God saw that it was good." Verse 24, "And God said let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind, and it was so." "Beast" does not necessarily carry with it the idea of ferociousness, but rather it carries with it the concept of power, might, or strength, something that is very formidable in size and ability. It is to these two groups, "the great sea monsters" and the "beasts" that the term dinosaurs may be applied. "Dinosaur" is a relatively new word. It first appeared about 200 years ago. It means terrible lizard and belongs to the reptile family.

Some observations about reptiles. The "great sea monsters" of verse 21 would be the amphibian dinosaurs. The "beasts" would be those that were primarily land dinosaurs. One of the characteristics of reptiles or lizards is that they grow continuously for as long as they live. If a small lizard that could be held in your hand were permitted to live for 100 years, it would become quite large. If it were to live for 300 years, it would become considerably larger. If it were to live for 900 years, it would become dinosaur size. Man grows for about 20 years in which time his full size is achieved. On the other hand, dinosaurs might have continued to grow as long as they lived.

Dinosaurs are referred to about 25 times in the Scripture. In addition to the words of this text, another word that is used in the Scripture for these creatures is "dragon”. Prior to the introduction of the word dinosaurs, the same creatures were known as dragons. Even the archeologists now have come to the conclusion that virtually all of these dinosaurs or dragons were plant eaters rather than flesh-eating creatures. Dinosaurs were created on the fifth day and amphibious land dinosaurs on the sixth day. Archaeologists have discovered that dinosaurs did not die out 65 million years ago as the evolutionist would have us to believe, but rather, that "modem man" and dinosaurs co-existed together. Fossilized footprints of dinosaurs and man have been discovered together in the same strata, proving that they co-existed together.

Verse 20, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

Verse 21, "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind" and God declared it to be good.

“Good" is not in the sense of good as opposed to evil, but in the sense of God's character. His creation was absolutely good as God is good. Verse 22, "And God blessed them saying, be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let the fowl multiply in the earth". His creation is commanded to reproduce. Verse 23, "The evening and the morning were the fifth day".

Verse 24 is the day man is created. "And God said let the earth bring forth living creatures after his kind, cattle, creeping things and the beasts of the earth after his kind. And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after his kind and the cattle after their kind and everything that creepeth on the earth after his kind. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." God said, "Let us". This is the first suggestion in KJV of the Trinity, but “Elohim” (1:1) permits it as well “spirit of God” (1:2). This is a corporate effort in creating man. He declared "Let us" ultimately referring to Himself the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son "make man" not in a physical image, but His moral personal attributes of nature and character. God has a spirit, of which we have a spirit, but that form of God is withheld from our knowledge at this present time. However, the Bible teaches that "one day we shall see Jesus and we shall know even as we are known"(I Cor. 13:12). Man is given "dominion" or authority over God's creation (Psalm 8). All of creation on earth was subject to man. In much the same way as our Lord Jesus spoke to the wind and waves and they obeyed Him, so man could speak to creation and it would obey him.

In their original state, Adam and Eve were far superior to us in our "advanced" technological age. Mentally, physically, and certainly before the fall, they were superior in their spiritual life as well. However, the new birth has once again opened the door to a new spiritual fellowship. The animals were not ferocious or fearsome. In the initial creation, Adam and Eve could direct the animals and they were completely obedient to them. Toward the end of the world that "Then Was", the Scripture indicates that Noah had authority to direct the animals to board the ark. God's original creation was a far cry from a primitive, rough and very crude caveman type of existence as so often is pictured. "To make man in our image after our likeness and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea over the fowl of the air over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth". This was heaven on earth.

Verse 27, "So God created man in His image. In the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." "Man" in the Scripture is the male and the female together. The union of the two are "man". Their individuality is distinguished since He created them "male" and "female". The male and the female of the species is mankind. They had a perfect unity without ever a conflict. However, that was soon lost by their disobedience to God’s will.

Verse 28, "And God blessed them", the concept being that all the goodness of God was now shed upon mankind. All that God had, all that God is was now placed upon man and in man and at his disposal. That was not done for the animals nor plant life nor the spheres spinning in space. Man becomes the crowning touch to God's creation. Adam and Eve were superior to anybody living or dead with the exception of Jesus Christ. They had the ability to experience a life in a state of blissfulness which far exceeds anything that we can presently experience or imagine today. We have relative comfort, but discomfort abounds. Even those who are supposedly in "perfect health" are not, we only know a measure of health. We are far from living in the lap of what Adam and Eve knew as perfect. Not only did they have perfect control over their environment, but they lived in a place that was a perpetual paradise. The Scripture says, "God blessed them and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish (fill) the earth”.

As to the command "multiply and replenish" which was given before the "fall”, we have no record that there were any children born to Adam and Eve before the "fall". This would indicate that the "fall" came about rather soon after Adam and Eve were created. They lost all that God had given them very quickly. "Replenish" is to "fill" and not to refill. They were commanded to fill the earth and to subdue it. "Subdue” does not carry with it the idea that the world was hostile and had to be conquered; but rather, that the world was submissive and all they had to do was to arrange or be completing God's creation, that is, to dress or put the finishing touches on it under man's authority.

Verse 29, "And God said, behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, every tree in the which is the fruit of the tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for food." Man is to be a vegetarian. Adam could just reach out and pick what he wanted to eat. We think in terms of apples, peaches, plums, pears, tomatoes, corn, and beans when we think of fruits and vegetables, but his choices were probably much more extensive, many of the varieties of fruits and vegetables Adam and Eve enjoyed have become extinct throughout the centuries. Many were lost to them with their expulsion from the garden, many others perished with the flood of Noah's day.

Verse 30, "And to every beast and to every fowl of the air and to everything that creepeth upon the earth of which there is life, I have given every green herb for meat and it was so." This Garden of Eden condition will be restored in the earthly Kingdom of Christ when the "lion shall lay down with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6) and the desert shall "bloom as a rose" (Isaiah 35:1).

Verse 31, "And God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good". In this verse He adds the word "very" indicating that He is not just simply declaring it to be good, but that the whole creation is declared exceptional. It is the pinnacle of His creative act. It was "very good, and the evening and the morning were the sixth day".

**DAY OF REST**

Chapter 2, verse 1, "thus the heavens and the earth were finished" (completed) "and all the host of them” ...creation was finished. "And on the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made and he rested on the seventh day". God did not get tired after six days of work. He was not in need of rest. "Rest" is to cease or stop from His creation.

Verse 2, God blessed, set aside, and sanctified the seventh day. This was a day of rejoicing and worship. His work was done and it was beautiful. His glory was in evidence everywhere. There is built into God's creation the principle of sevens. Man, and nature cycle in sevens. The body, the skin, renews itself every seven years. Our body cycles in sevens. After six days work, the body needs one day to renew itself. Man and machine need to cycle in sevens to obtain optimum performance. The seventh day was a time of worship, joy, praise and adoration of God for His very good creation.

Verse 4, "These are the generations (histories) of the heavens and the earth. In the day that the Lord had made the earth and the heavens". "Day" is not to be understood in this verse as a 24-hour day, but rather, the total creative days. No number is used with day in this passage. It is the general time period of creation.

Verse 5, "and every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew, for the Lord had not caused it to rain upon the earth and there was not a man to till the ground". Up to that time it had not rained. There was no record in the Scripture of any rainfall from the time of creation until the flood of Noah's day, which probably occurred about 2,000 years after creation. There were few oceans or seas upon the earth in that day. That would account for the lack of rain, since oceans supply the moisture needed for rain. Verse 6 explains the provision of water for man, animals and plants. It came from a mist that went up from the earth. The humidity was enough to provide all the water needed for God's perfect creation.

In chapters 7 through 9 the account of Noah and the flood is given; the statement is made that the "fountains of the deep were broken up". Not only did it rain for 40 days and 40 nights, but the fountains of the deep were broken up. This indicates that there was an extensive water table under the surface or crust of the earth. This is probably where the moisture came to water the world, much like a giant terrarium is watered. As was customary with writing of that time period, there is a recapitulation of the events of creation, given with more detail in this second account.

Verse 7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground". The same basic elements that are in the earth are also found in our bodies. God performed something that made man different from anything else that He had created, "and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul". This statement is not made of any other of God's creation, but man alone. For that reason, we are unique. This special creative act gives us a soul as well as a moral nature.

According to evolutionary thought, we are the same as any other animal. It is true that our body has come from the dust of the ground and has the same chemical compounds as the earth, as likewise do the other animals; but, man is different, he has a soul. That part of man never ceases to exist. It will continue throughout eternity. Our brain moves the body, but our mind is our soul, is conscious and provides the motivation for the brain. Our soul is that part of our being that is accountable to God.

Verse 8, "God planted a garden eastward in Eden". The question could be asked, eastward from what point? East from where God created Adam. The actual location of the creation of Adam is not disclosed. Attempts to pinpoint this location are futile. The land mass was different then and no further information is given in Scripture. God planted a garden in a place called Eden. Thus, the name Garden of Eden or a garden in Eden. "Eden" means "delight". Garden and Eden combined together express "paradise" or "pleasure". There are three words associated with the Garden of Eden: delight, pleasure, and paradise. These words are also associated with God and His character. These terms describe heaven as well as the new heavens and earth God has prepared for His own in the future. This garden is not just a tropical paradise. It is the experience of the presence of God and all that we could possibly experience in His presence. It was a unique place created, planted, and put on the earth in a location that God called Eden. "And there he put man whom He had formed”. Man was put into the middle of paradise on earth. There are no dimensions given for the Garden, but it was obviously adequate for Adam and Eve and presumably any of their offspring as well; but, of course, God knew that it would not be necessary for the Garden to be a very large place, since sin was about to enter the world and mar God's perfect creation.

Verse 9, "and out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." The trees that are "pleasant for sight and good for food" are plural, indicating an abundance of these trees. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil are singular indicating one of each. Some would have us to believe that this passage is a metaphor or an allegory, but the language and grammar of the text, as well as the context, would indicate that these are literal trees for food and beauty and a literal tree of life as well as a literal tree of the knowledge of good and evil meaning that they were indeed real. The Scripture does not give us any further description of the physical characteristics of these trees. The tree of life in the Garden of Eden was accessible to man until Adam and Eve's sin. The tree of life vanishes when the garden is destroyed, perhaps, at the time of the flood. The tree of life reappears in Revelation chapter 22 with the introduction of the "new heavens and new earth". The reality of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is confirmed by Eve's response to the serpent that they were forbidden to "touch” the tree.

Verse 10, "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads”. The picture is of a major river which divides and becomes four minor rivers. There is no known water system in the world today that accomplishes that feat. There are many water systems which start out as small tributaries and merge to form and feed a larger one. The purpose of the first river is to water the garden. Leaving the garden, it divides. Perhaps what is being indicated by these four rivers are the four points on the compass which correspond to "the four comers of the earth or the four quarters of the earth", also sometimes referred to as the "four winds" (Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 37:9). What is being said is this river flows out of Eden and becomes the irrigation system for the world as it divides to the four quarters of the world or points on the compass. This is a very extensive irrigation system coming from the fountainhead, mentioned in verse 10, "to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads" (chief rivers).

They are identified in verse 11, "The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold." "And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone." The "bdellium" is probably to be associated with the pearl, a pearl-colored stone. The onyx stone is a stone that is green and black mixed and is sometimes associated with a fingernail shape, texture, and appearance.

"And the name of the second river" verse 13 "is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia." The next river is "Hiddekel" and the final river, is the Euphrates. Attempts to clearly identify these rivers with present-day waterways are inconclusive, the reason being the world that "Then Was" was totally different geographically. Most likely the only connection between the rivers mentioned and rivers present today are their names.

With the flood of Noah’s day, a great change took place with the earth’s surface. Oceans, land and rivers were forever changed. In verse 14 Moses describes, "The name of the third river is Hiddekel that is that which goeth towards the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates."

Verse 15, "And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They were instructed that they could eat of every tree in the garden but one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the only prohibition that was given to man in the garden. He was not prohibited in any other way. Man had dominion over the earth or the authority to do anything he pleased, except eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Human nature being as it is, we are challenged to do that which is forbidden. Since it is forbidden, it becomes the one thing we want to do.

Verse 17, "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die”. Suppose it was you or I in the Garden of Eden, if we had been in Adam or Eve's place. Certainly, we would have been obedient to God. We would not have partaken that tree, or would we? Others have suggested it is unfair because of the rebellion of Adam and Eve, we should bear the penalty and the consequences of their disobedience, that we should be born in a state of sin and under its curse suffering because of the decision they made. How can God be fair in permitting this?

Adam and Eve had virtually no concept of death. Their responsibility was to be obedient to the Lord. They could not have understood death since nothing had died. Death, by its basic definition, is separation from God as well as body and soul. Many think of death as ceasing to exist. There is a certain element of truth that when one dies, he/she ceases to exist in this present state, but he/she does not cease to exist. Physical death, from a Scriptural standpoint, is in its essence separation from the body. It is separation from family and friends. It is separation from the physical environment, and spiritual death is separation from God. The second death mentioned in the Scripture is that spiritual death of ultimate, total separation from God in which we are no longer in the realm of His presence, which is a permanent separation described in such graphic terms in the Scripture by the use of the word "hell’'. Adam and Eve did not know what death meant because they were created as perfect individuals living in a perfect environment. They knew nothing but pleasure, delight, and satisfaction. They knew no frustration, no death, nothing died, even the plants did not wither. The grass did not grow brown under the noonday sun. We, on this side of "the sin", have the completed revelation of God. We know, to a certain degree, what death is and so it is easy for us to take the position, "If I had been standing in Adam's footprints or in Eve's, I wouldn't have done what they did." The fact is that if you and I had been given the same opportunity as Adam or Eve, we would have done exactly the same thing that they did. That is why the Bible declares, "As in Adam all die" (I Cor. 15:22). God knew that we would have made the same choice they made. In theological terms Adam is called the federal head of the human race. The Scripture proclaims, "As in Christ we shall all be made alive” (I Cor. 15:22). Being in Christ means that we are able to partake of the new life that Christ has procured for us by dying (being separated from His Father's fellowship) in our place. Up to the time of disobedience, Adam and Eve did not know the experience of death. All their human experiences revealed to them everything was good. Perhaps they reasoned that death must be good since everything they had known and experienced was only good. After all, God had declared everything to be good.

However, there is one thing that God had not declared to be good. In fact, He declared it to be bad. Verse 18, "And the Lord God said it is not good that man should be alone." That is a declarative statement just like the declarative statements after each day of creation when God declared it to be good. God declared it is not good for Adam to be alone. "I will make him an help meet for him" or I will make Adam a helper that is suited for him. More than that, it also includes Eve, because Eve comes out of Adam. She is actually part of being suited for him. That is, every area of need in Adam's life will be met by Eve and then, because Eve comes out of Adam, every area of need in Eve's life will be met in her relationship with Adam. God's intent was for both to have their needs satisfied mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and physically by each other. This was to be a perfect marriage, completely compatible, neither one being superior or inferior to the other.

Verse 19, "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and He brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name there of.” Adam was created before Eve, but they were both created on the same day. Adam's first job was to name all the animals. Adam, being in a perfect state, using all of his mental facilities, had no problem doing this task in just one day.

Verse 20, "And Adam gave names to all the cattle, and the fowl of the air, and every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him". By observing and naming all the animals, Adam found out that none met his personal needs. He was now ready to accept God's provision of woman to be his completer.

Verse 21 is God's intervention, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He (God) took one of his ribs (or side) and closed up the flesh instead thereof." God put Adam to sleep and opened him up and took one of his sides, whether it was his left side or his right side the Scripture does not reveal. When Adam awoke from his surgery, he found that he was whole and more complete than before as a result of that surgery.

Verse 22, "And the rib (or the side) which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman and brought her unto the man." This was the first marriage. This is a monogamous relationship, one man, one woman, one lifetime together which has been God's principle from the beginning. It has not changed in spite of the current views and trends of our society.

Verse 23, "And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." They were the perfect couple, matched in every way. At the end of His creation on the sixth day, God's pronouncement was that it was very good.

Verse 24, "Therefore shall man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife." Cleave is a very strong and powerful word. It carries with it the idea of an adhesion that cannot be torn apart. In other words, the locking together of a couple is permanent from God's point of view. "Cleave unto his wife and they shall become one flesh". "One flesh" is not just limited to the physical body but it refers to all aspects of their being, body, soul and spirit.

Verse 25, "And they were both naked". They did not wear clothing such as we wear. Man is the only creature in all of God's creation that wears artificial clothing. It is not what God had originally intended. God makes the statement, "they were both naked"....or without artificial clothing... "the man and his wife and were not ashamed" (dishonored). Being made in the image of God, Adam and Eve were originally clothed with innocence as God is innocent. They were not dishonored. Being dishonored by sin, their innocence was removed or taken away, thus, they needed a covering. Fig leaves were man's way to restore innocence; but God had to provide a suitable temporary covering, the skins of animals sacrificed to become the first acceptable clothing for mankind. There are those who would claim that this passage is only a metaphor or an allegory and that it is not literal. It is literal on the basis of the Hebrew grammar. It is not written allegorically or metaphorically. It is written literally. There is description given of some things that seem very strange and very difficult for us to comprehend. However, we must keep in mind that world was different from the world that we know today. When we read these things, we should not think of the world as we know it. But we have to think in terms of what it was like in that world in which Adam and Eve lived, the world that "Then Was".

**Entrance of sin**

**THE TEST**

It is not long before the test comes. Will Adam and Eve pass or fail? They are perfect in every way. There is no fatal flaw in their character or nature. The perfect couple is faced with a choice that will determine their destiny and that of the human race. The actions of parents always affect the children. In this case, every one of us has been affected negatively by our progenitor’s decision. The choice was simple, to obey God or follow their own wisdom. Their human reasoning seemed good. They would improve themselves, they thought; but, how could this be? They were already perfect. They reasoned that what the serpent proposed must be better than what they were at that time experiencing. No matter how logical or rational our thinking may be at the moment, it can NEVER be better than our Lord's plan or purpose. Our original parents failed the test; but, thank God, Jesus did not fail the test. He passed for us all. The consequences of His decision affect positively all who will put their faith in Him. As Adam in our place at the beginning failed us, Jesus takes our place and passes with perfection.

Events of that disastrous encounter unfold in verse 1, "Now the serpent was more subtle" (wily, sly, crafty). Snakes are mentioned many times in the Bible and almost exclusively are referred to as dangerous and poisonous. Many of these snakes are not identifiable with any particular species; however, from the context, they are more dangerous "than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made". There is nothing wrong with how God created the snake. Along with the rest of creation, the snake was pronounced "good". As with the rest of God's creation, the qualities of the snake can be used for good or evil. Satan used one of God's creatures for evil. "Which the Lord God had made. And he (the snake) said unto the woman". The snake spoke. Why do you suppose Eve was not startled by this action? As one reads through the text, Eve is not in the least bit shocked, surprised or amazed. She does not wonder the snake is speaking? Again, we have to understand that this world was completely different then the world that we live in. Eve had no reason, knowing only the goodness of God, to question the snake speaking to her. This snake was just like any ordinary, everyday snake that was in the garden. Satan, in order to confront Eve, had to do one of several things. One, he either had to visibly appear himself, in which case that probably would have been a shock to Eve. The question may be asked, "Why would that shock Eve when a snake speaking did not shock her?" Everything that had been created in the animal kingdom had been named by Adam. They were aware of all of God’s completed physical creation. If Satan had appeared, immediately a red flag would have gone up and Eve would have said, "Whoops, I know Adam didn’t miss one." Satan's ability to convince Eve it was OK to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would certainly not have been nearly as effective had he appeared himself. Two, Satan could not have indwelt either Adam or Eve and certainly there was no other person to indwell or to possess.

Satan could not indwell Adam since Adam was created in the image of God, a living soul. In a perfect creation, neither Adam nor Eve could be possessed by Satan. The only thing for Satan to indwell was an animal. The animals were not created in the image of God and they were not living souls; thus, not being moral creatures, they were susceptible to Satan's occupation and possession. Satan used the snake's crafty character for his own evil purpose. Possibly, the snake came very close to Eve as a very attractive pet. Adam and Eve had dominion or authority over the animals including the snake. There would be nothing to fear from the animals even if one spoke. "And he said unto the woman," ...that is Satan in the body of the snake ...."Yea, hath God said you shall not eat” ....now listen very carefully... "of every tree of the garden?" Satan is beginning to set the stage for the test. Verse 2, "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but (verse 3) of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Eve had added to God's limitation. God had not said they could not touch the tree. What He said was they could not eat of the tree. By Eve's response, she reveals in her mind she began to be challenged by the presence of this tree. Perhaps, by her statement, she was seeking to build some mental defense mechanisms against her own will. Perhaps, she had said nothing to Adam about this; but here is this tree, the only tree in all of the garden that has a prohibition associated with it. The only thing in all of God's creation she is not permitted to eat. She could eat anything else she wanted, do anything she wanted to do, go anywhere she wanted to go, but she could not eat of that tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve looked at it and eyed it. With Eve's response to the snake (Satan), she is indicating that the roots of her failure were already planted in her mind. Unconsciously, she had put up a defense mechanism. "I must not touch it!" When Satan, the snake, posed this question to her, she replied, "We can eat of every tree except that one and we can't even touch it, lest we die". She is, of course, quoting what the Lord had said and added her own prohibition not to touch it.

Verse 4, "And the serpent said unto the woman, you shall not surely die." This is a deliberate contradiction of what God had told them. Verse 5, "For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods" (become as God). You, Adam, will be a god like unto "the God", "knowing good and evil". Knowing God was not enough, why not know evil and become like God? Neither Adam nor Eve had any concept of evil. All they knew was that God had withheld something from them. They began to reason, why not better ourselves and become as God? Only one thing is lacking....to know evil (whatever that is?). This is Satan's classic way of attacking by half-truths or partial truths. There is a truism that error can only be sold if it is wrapped up in the garment of truth. The cults and the false religions of the world all have elements of truth in their doctrinal system. It is those elements of truth that sell the package and make it acceptable. After it is accepted, they propagate their error. The error is carried along in the cloak of the truth. The element of truth, in this case, is that they did come to know good and evil. They both knew only good before, but now they will know good and evil. Perhaps, Eve would not have responded to this test had she not, in her mind, previously started the wheels turning by wondering if maybe there was something more to what Satan, the snake, said. "Why is God limiting us?" perhaps she questioned. She was beginning to question the very character of God. She questioned His goodness. Satan only reinforces and confirms her doubts. Satan, through the snake, encourages Eve to go ahead and “advance” yourself "You will be like God. God doesn't want you to be like Him. He wants you to be less than He is, so go ahead.

Give it a try and you will see."

Verse 6, "And when the woman saw" (she is now convinced) that the tree was good for food". Doubt has been overcome, this tree is good for food...."and that it was pleasant to the eyes (very desirable) even a tree to be desired to make one wise (increase knowledge and understanding). She took the fruit there of and did eat and gave also unto her husband and he did eat." What kind of fruit was it, plum, peach or pear? Most often it is pictured as an apple. It was not any of these. This was a unique tree with unique fruit. What physiological properties it took, we do not know.

Verse 7, immediately, "And the eyes of them both were opened". Not only is this the physical eye but this is also the spiritual eye...."and they knew they were naked". They were dishonored. Their robe of innocence was gone and they knew they were uncovered. "And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons". They were trying to regain their honor by their own self effort. The best they could do was fig leaves.

Verse 8, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day". Adam and Eve had experienced a special fellowship with God for the very brief time they had lived in the garden. "The voice of the Lord God walking" is an anthropomorphic description of God. In other words, God is given human characteristics. Throughout the Scripture there are a number of anthropomorphic descriptions of God.

Verse 8, "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord". Fellowship was broken and their unique relationship with Him was lost. They were ashamed and dishonored, so they hid among the trees of the garden. Fear and bewilderment reigned in their lives, to hide was their natural response.

Verse 9, "The Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, where art thou?” Not that God could not find him, but rather He was drawing Adam out to face the issue.

Verse 10, "And he (Adam) said, I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid”. Adam and Eve are faced with a new emotion they had not known before, "fear”. To this day fear, in its various degrees, continues to affect us daily. It is paralyzing, debilitating and humiliating. "I was afraid (Adam exclaims) because I was naked." His robe of innocence was gone. “And I hid myself.” The perfect relationship with God they had known was destroyed. Before, they had welcomed God’s fellowship and presence; now they ran from Him, no longer eager for the times of sweet communion. Guilt had ruined their perfect union. Could this fellowship be restored or was it gone forever? Possibly this could have been the end of the story. But God had a plan to restore fellowship with man. The Bible proclaims that before the foundation of the world Christ was slain in order to bring man back into fellowship he once knew and enjoyed (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4). So great was God's desire to again fellowship with man that He gave His only unique son, that whosoever trusts in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life in His fellowship, never again to lose this union (John 3:16).

Verse 11, God questions, "Who told thee that thou wast naked”, and without pausing God continues, "Hast thou eaten of the tree wherefore I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" God’s desire is for Adam to confess what he had done, to acknowledge with a desire to forsake. This sin of disobedience needed to be dealt with. The only way it could be perfectly dealt with was through Christ's death on the cross which does not occur until thousands of years later. But, instead of repentance, Adam makes excuses. "And the man said," verse 12, "the woman". Adam's response was "the woman". God addresses the woman and her response is "the snake". We still do it today, pass the buck. Our first thought is to cover ourselves, to make sure that when the blame falls, it falls on somebody else. By Adam's statement not only did he blame Eve, but ultimately, it was God that he blamed. Adam responds, "The woman” ...now he blames God..."whom Thou gavest to me". God, I would not have taken of that fruit if you had not given me that woman. God, you are the one who is responsible for my failure. He continued, "she gave me of the tree and I did eat"

God addresses Eve. "And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done?" And the woman answers, "The serpent, he beguiled (tricked) me". Remember, Eve is absolutely perfect living in a perfect environment in the garden and having perfect fellowship with God. There is no way she could be tricked. By claiming that she was tricked, she is actually blaming God. She is inferring that God had made her less than perfect with a “fatal flaw”. When we make excuses for our sin, ultimately, we blame God for our failure. There is only one way to deal with sin, confess and forsake it, and trust Christ to cleanse us and give us victory (I John 1:9). Excusing ourselves only hinders the process of forgiveness and restoration.

God turns His attention to the serpent without responding to Eve's accusations. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle." We might ask this question, why would God curse a snake that had been possessed by the devil? Why not curse the devil that possessed the snake? Indirectly, Satan was cursed through the cursing of the snake. His judgement and doom is already determined (Revelation 19:20). The snake was cursed since it was the instrument the devil had used. We have to realize the snake is not a moral creature, whereas man is a moral creature. Therefore, this is not a moral judgement, but rather a judgment of consequence upon the snake for its participation in Satan's plot. Almost universally throughout society, the snake is a creature that is considered repulsive; but in the garden, before the test, this was not true. Perhaps the snake was a favorite pet of Eve, living in close proximity with her. Perhaps, this was a creature that she had found particularly attractive. The snake is separated from its place of enjoyment and pleasure with man. He is cursed "above the cattle" and "above every beast of the field." "Upon thy belly thou shalt go and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed. And it (man-Christ) shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Some ancients believe that the snake originally was a four-footed creature that walked upright. However, there is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate this to be true. Mythology depicts the snake as a very beautiful creature with four legs, a large torso and a long tail. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that anything physically changed with the snake as a result of the curse. The snake is expelled from the garden indicated by his "eating dust”. He will not be a favorite of man any longer.

When Adam was created out of the dust of the ground, it was outside the Garden of Eden. The Garden was a very lush beautiful place. The Scripture refers to it as paradise, a place of beauty beyond compare. The snake originally had the run of Paradise and now is banished, cast out to crawl through the dust of the ground rather than crawling through the lush vegetation that was characteristic of the garden. The harshness with which God deals with sin shows its severity. The beautiful garden was off limits to Adam and Eve. They are cast out into a world outside of the garden, which was not a bad place; but it was not paradise either. It was a good place, a nice place, better than we experience in our present world, but it was not paradise.

**THE ADJUSTMENT**

Verse 15, "And I will put enmity (hostility) between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed and it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This is the very first prophecy concerning a coming Messiah, a Redeemer. Satan would bruise the heel of Christ, His suffering and death on the cross. But Satan’s head would be crushed by Christ's resurrection. This is Satan's ultimate defeat. Each time that Eve bore a son, she hoped that this child would be the promised one, the Redeemer.

Verse 16 "And unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.

In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." The perfect harmony of marriage was destroyed by their rebellion and disobedience. Suffering in childbirth became the normal experience of the woman. No man can comprehend the pain that a woman goes through to deliver a child. There is no experience of pain quite like it. Only women who have born children can relate to this pain. Each time that Eve bore a child, that birth reminded her of what she had lost because of her sin. But, with each birth, there was the hope that this possibly was the redeemer which God had promised to provide as the way of redemption. The perfect harmony with her husband was marred by differing viewpoints, which sometimes would bring about conflict. She is appointed to submit to her husband's authority, thus reducing conflict. The New Testament echoes the command for the wife to be in submission to her husband’s authority. In addition, the Scripture commands "submit yourselves one to another" (Ephesians 5:21). This is a mutual yielding which brings about a bond of unity between the husband and wife. The husband is still the leader, but now there is a measure of unity again. Even though the woman suffers physically when bearing children, her desire to be with her husband will not be diminished.

Verse 17, God continues to address Adam, "Because thou has harkened (listened, heard, or responded to) the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, cursed is the ground for thy sake." It is important to note that God does not curse Adam nor Eve. The snake and the ground are cursed but not Adam and Eve. There is hope for mankind. The consequences of sin affect the ground "In sorrow", God pronounces, "shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles"...verse 18.."shall it bring forth unto thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field." A change in Adam’s diet occurs. In the garden they ate of the fruit of the trees. Recall that the Scripture said that the trees were given for food unto them, the fruit there of. The "herb of the field" is added to their diet. The word "herb", includes vegetables not just spices. "In sorrow you shall eat of it (product of the ground) all the days of your life" indicating that man will have to plant crops since they will no longer grow spontaneously for him as they did before. Adam will become a gardener planting, cultivating, caring for, harvesting to provide for himself and his family.

Adam and Eve are removed from the garden with its perfect paradise, environment, relationship, and fellowship with God left behind. The world outside the garden did not have all the delightfulness and amenities they had once known. As a result of the curse, the world that "Then Was" became an unpleasant place to live. Suffering became a way of life ending in death. Nature outside the garden was a better world than we presently experience, but it was certainly a far cry from the paradise they had once known.

Verse 19 God addresses Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (all food in general). You will labor, He commands, "until thou return unto the ground" (until your body corrupts and you physically die, separated from your body). "For out of it thou wast taken, for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return", which is the ultimate end of all of flesh.

Verse 20, "And Adam called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all living." "Eve" means life-spring or life-giver. Adam’s hope is in the redeemer which is to come. In the meantime, God sacrifices the life of some animals to provide clothes for Adam and Eve. This is the beginning of a sacrificial system which will illustrate and remind mankind of God’s ultimate plan of redemption. Details are sketchy as to the character of this sacrificial system, but we get some insight from Cain and Abel when they bring their offerings to God.

Verse 21, "And unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." This had to have been an horrendous experience for Adam and Eve. They had never known or seen death. None of God's creatures had ever died. Now they witness suffering and death for the first time. God sacrifices at least one, perhaps two, or maybe more of His creatures in order to clothe them and to protect them in an environment that had now become hostile to them. Perhaps they even watched the death of those animals. Since they wore the skins of these animals, you can probably imagine what a sense of humiliation and horror they experienced. We are not given all the details, but what the Scripture gives, leaves us in a state of horror at what had been lost, but not without hope, hope for a future redeemer, a hope that they could look forward to.

Verse 22, "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil" (to know it experientially) "and now lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” There is an abrupt stop in the text. The original Hebrew is written in such a manner as to indicate the sentence is not finished. It implies that the thought of Adam and Eve taking of the tree of life and living forever in the state of sin was too horrible of a thought to even consider the consequences of that action. Praise God, in love He did not permit man to partake of the tree of life in his fallen state of sin.

"Lest they live forever”. Had they never taken of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would have lived forever. The tree of life stood in the garden of Eden as a testimony of the eternal life that they experienced in their daily fellowship with God. Probably, it was not necessary for them to eat of the tree of life in order to maintain eternal fife, but rather it was a testimony unto the eternal life provided by their perfect union with God. In the book of Revelation, we again read of the tree of life reappearing in connection with the new heavens and the new earth. Believers have eternal life through our union with God by means of Jesus Christ. We do not have to regularly eat of the fruit of the tree of life in order to maintain eternal life. It is eternal life by the mere fact that it comes from the very source of, or tree of life, Christ Himself. The tree of life appears again with the new heavens and the new earth as a testimony of God's provision of eternal life through Christ. Adam and Eve's experience soon taught them the meaning of death. It certainly was not what they had expected. Quickly, their desire was to eat of the tree of life, but then, they would have lived forever in a state of sin. Had they eaten of the tree of life in their sinful condition, no possibility would have existed for the removal of sin from mankind. Man would forever exist in a state of sin. As with Satan, there would be no hope for redemption. God was indeed merciful in denying Adam and Eve access to the tree of life. By denying them access, God opened the door for His plan of redemption for all mankind.

Verse 23, “Therefore, the Lord God sent (banished) Adam forth from the garden to till the ground from whence he was taken." Adam was sent out of the garden and into the world. This indeed was a sad day for humanity.

Verse 24, "so he (God) drove out the man". Adam and Eve did not leave willingly. God had to drag them out, so to speak, kicking and screaming. "Drove" indicates they were forcibly ejected. At first the rebellion toward God was subtle. They just wanted to improve themselves (they thought), thus implying God had not made everything good. Now it was an open active rebellion. They would not leave the garden willingly in obedience to God’s command. They had to be forced out. In addition, God had to place angelic beings in front of the garden entrance in order to make sure they did not return to the garden and the tree of life. Perhaps, they were waiting for God to turn His back, so to speak, and then they would reenter the garden and partake of the tree of life. Before the fall they probably had free access to go in and out of the garden as they chose. There was an entrance "to the east". Evidently there was an enclosure of some type which surrounded the garden that could not be scaled, only the angelic beings are placed at the entrance.

God placed two cherubim at the entrance to the garden. The word cherubim is plural indicating more than one was at the entrance. Cherub is the singular form of the same word. These are special beings that are close to God and do His bidding, usually in relation to His presence, worship and protection of sacred things, such as the tree of life and the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. God sends these heavenly messengers with a flaming sword to guard the garden. This must have been a very terrifying sight for Adam and Eve. As far as we know, this was their first appearance to man and that with a flaming sword, which was a warning of destruction and death. A sword is often used as a symbol of warfare and death (Luke 2:35). These angelic creatures were equipped to wreak horrible death upon any who would try to enter the garden. So far as we are able to tell, this garden existed from creation to the time of the flood, about 2,000 years.

A population explosion may have taken place during this time. There could have been as few as 5 billion and as many as 50 billion people upon the earth at the time of the Noahic flood. There is no way of knowing for sure, but general calculations using the numbers given in the genealogies could support these figures. Our world presently supports 7.8 billion people with many parts of the world experiencing overcrowding. We have to keep in mind that presently seven-tenths of the world's surface is covered by water. In the world that "Then Was", the majority of the earth's surface was land. There certainly would have been adequate land mass for any number of people born during that time. Jewish tradition maintains that Adam and Eve produced 78 children. Currently, the average size of a family in America is 1.5 children per household. The guarded presence of the Garden was a constant reminder of what they had lost. They probably told their children what it was like to have lived in the garden. Outside the garden, life was much more difficult. At times, it must have seemed unbearable. Even with the best and most lavish lifestyle our present world could offer, it would be a far cry from the perfect environment Adam and Eve had known while living in the Garden.

Chapter 4 verse 1, Adam began to make a living since he is about to become a father. "And Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bear Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord". It is not known if Cain was the very first child that Eve bore since there are only three children mentioned by name, Cain, Abel and Seth. Genesis 5:4 reveals that Adam had sons and daughters, but their names are not given. As has been pointed out, Jewish tradition assigns 78 children to Adam and Eve.

Assuming Adam and Eve had 78 children over a period of 100 years, with a life expectancy of 911 years (average of genealogies given) factored in, which was the average life expectancy in the world that "Then Was", 32,000 descendants could have been born to Adam and Eve in 100 years. If each of those 32,000 descendants produced an average of 78 children, by the end of the second 100 years, the population would be into the millions. It becomes evident from the Scriptures that Cain was a man of the world and his descendants followed his lead. They were not people of God. There are two genealogies given in Genesis, a Godly line and an ungodly line. Abel was a special son, a Godly son. That becomes evident by the type of sacrifice that he brought to God. He was hated by his brother Cain for his Godliness and thus he was killed by Cain. Soon, Seth was born to Eve, a special son of God in the sense of his Godliness, as we are sons of God because of our faith in Christ. Seth’s descendants were Godly, seeking to follow the Lord with a life pleasing to Him.

**The End of the World That "Then Was"**

**The Noahic Flood**

In Chapter 5, we read of a separation of the Godly Sethites, those calling upon the name of the Lord, in corporate worship of God, from the Cainites. God does not seem to be a part of the lives of the Cainites. Violence and murder was a way of life for these people. God's response, verse 3, "And the Lord said, my spirit shall not always strive with man." After intermarriage began, believers (Sethites) and unbelievers (Cainites), society corrupted rapidly. The Scripture does not say my spirit shall always be in fellowship with man. "Strive", in this chapter, carries the connotation that fellowship has already been broken. Any kind of worship that had been establish had "gone out the window". The people had departed from the Lord and the Lord seems to be laboring, toiling against their wills to bring about their repentance. However, mankind continues in rebellion in spite of all the efforts God makes to draw mankind back to Himself. We do not like to think that there is a point that God ceases to deal with man, but there is. There is a time in which He ceases to deal with society, civilizations, nations, and individuals. When our rebellion reaches a certain point, God says, that's enough! We find that once God makes that pronouncement there is never any recovery. Verse 3, "And yet his days shall be 120 years." God warns, "My striving is going to end in 120 years." To the people He calls, “come back to Me". They had already received prophetic warnings from the Lord, perhaps, for several hundred years. Judgement is about to come upon the world that "Then Was".

Verse 4, "There were giants in the earth in those days and also after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men and they bear children unto them and the same became mighty men which were of old men of renown." "Giants" refers to their physical strength and stature. Skeletons have been uncovered by archaeologists of human remains eleven feet tall. The average height presently is around six feet. Some basketball players are seven feet or more tall. These would have to look up to somebody eleven feet tall. "Men of renown" speaks of their intellectual attainment. It is speculation, but there seems to be some indication that there was some kind of genetic engineering in that day. The Scripture speaks of their wickedness and the imagination of their heart in verse 5 "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was continually evil" indicating that they were totally corrupted even though their technology probably surpasses ours. Currently, our knowledge doubles every three years. Their intelligence and learning had not brought them closer to God but had led them far from Him. That does not mean that intelligence and education by nature will lead us from God, but often we become proud of our intellectual achievements and accomplishments and that brings us to a sense of independence. We often reason, “we don’t need God anymore”. It is interesting to note that when Jesus spoke of His second coming He said, "As in the days of Noah, so shall it be with the coming of the Son of Man" As we read, the very characteristics that were prevalent in Noah’s day prior to the flood, these will be the same characteristics prevalent in the world, prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination and the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." With all of man’s mental attainment, the only thing man could do was to become eviler. We see that happening in our society.

Verse 6 "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved Him in His heart". God is not acknowledging that He made a mistake rather, He is speaking in human terms so that we might understand the emotion of His heart. As God viewed the rebellion and violence in the world, it grieved His heart very much. The emotion of God is an overwhelming sense of loss of fellowship with the pinnacle of His creation, man.

Verse 7, "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast and every creeping thing and the fowls of the air for it repenteth me that I have made them.” The sons of God had married the unsaved. As a result, the world had totally corrupted its lifestyle upon the earth. God is no longer going to strive to reach man but rather, He will destroy him. So to speak, He is going to wipe the slate clean and start over again.

Verse 8, "But Noah found grace (unmerited favor) in the eyes of the Lord". Verse 9, "These are the generations (history) of Noah. Noah was a just man and perfect (without chargeable offense) in his generations and Noah walked with God." Three outstanding characteristics in a world that had gone mad. Noah was a just man. He sought to be just in a world that was very much unjust. He was perfect, not in comparison to God but in comparison to the people who lived around him. He walked with God. This is an indication that no matter how bad things get, one can still walk (lifestyle) with God.

Verse 11, "The earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence." The media reports violence, murder, abuse, war, famine, and pestilence. An indication just before the Lord returns that the same characteristics present in the world as they were in the antediluvian world will indicate the approaching judgment and the end of the age.

Verse 12, "And God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt" (rotten through and through to the core). "For all flesh"....not some, not a part, not a few, but all,.... "had corrupted (perverted) his (God's) way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh has come before me”...the terminal generation...."for the earth is filled with violence through them (man) and behold I will destroy them (man) from the earth."

Verse 14 begins a description of God's provision of salvation for believers, "Make thee an ark” (box). God does not instruct Noah to make a boat, a ship, a yacht or an ocean liner, but He tells Noah to build a box. No doubt Noah's friends, perhaps some of his family, and society as a whole thought "Noah has definitely gone off the deep end. What is this monstrosity that he is building in his backyard?" The description is given in cubits. Verse 15, "And the fashion which thou shalt make of it. The length of it shall be 300 cubits, the breadth of it 50 cubits and the height of it 30 cubits.

Verse 16, "A window shalt thou make to the ark and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side there of with lower, second, and third stories (decks) shalt thou make it." A cubit is generally defined in the Scripture to be from the tip of the hand to the tip of the elbow, which on the average man is about 18 inches. These are approximate figures, 450 feet long, 45 feet high (four and a half stories) and 75 feet wide, so needless to say, Noah did not keep this project a secret. Some of the models and drawings portray a sloped roof This is draftsman's liberty. The Scripture does not reveal to us what kind of roof was used. The word "ark" means box, basically a sealed unit. This box had a very low center of gravity. Thus, it would sit low in the water making it virtually impossible to capsize regardless of how turbulent the waters were. It would be far more stable than the ocean liners with very little rolling and pitching. It had a window. The Scripture says "to finish it above". The indication is that this was a window approximately 18 inches high that encircled the top deck of the ark. Its purpose was for light as well as ventilation. Contained in the ark were three stories or decks with rooms or booths. The Scripture declares there was a door in the side, but no dimensions are given for this door. As we read in the text, when the flood came, Noah and the animals enter into the ark. The Scripture makes the pointed statement that God shuts the door. It does not say that Noah shut it, nor that his sons shut it, but that God shut the door. Noah had nothing to do with the judgment that came upon the world. It was God's responsibility alone.

This was a very large box. Its capacity was about 200 standard railroad boxcars. Easily, 7,000 different species could be contained in the ark. God prompted the animals to come to Noah. No doubt these animals were not fully matured. Some probably hibernated during the year they were on the ark. Noah and his sons probably had very busy days caring for the needs of the animals that had not hibernated. Daily they lived in the expectation of the end of the flood. What a day of rejoicing that must have been to see dry land once again.

Verse 14, relates the events of the flood, which was worldwide in scope. The critics maintain, "It was only a localized flood and it could not have possibly been worldwide in scope. It was localized in the Mesopotamian valley and the nearby regions". If it was a local flood, could not Noah have walked his way to safety in 120 years? During this time, he could have traveled far enough, thus escaping any local flooding. In all parts of the world, geology has revealed sediment deposits, oftentimes many feet thick, indicating a flood, a deluge of water of cataclysmic proportions, had at one time covered this earth. Correctly interpreting from a geological point of view, a worldwide flood must have occurred. Evolutionists believe the Grand Canyon took millions of years to form by a relatively small river. However, no amount of time would be sufficient for the present amount of water that passes through the Grand Canyon to have eroded away the landscape to its present state. It is evident that there was a tremendous amount of water at one time which drained off the land quickly, thus creating the Grand Canyon. Noah's flood would account for a creation of this magnitude.

Verse 14, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood" (probably a Cyprus tree of some kind) no doubt a resinous wood, durable and very strong. It was to be pitched (coated) within and without, as the Scripture says, to give it a water-tight seal. Pitch is bituminous, a tar-like substance. Thus coated, the ark would be seaworthy. God speaks, "behold I even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under the heaven and everything that is in the earth shall die".

Virtually all societies throughout the world have some record or tradition concerning a universal flood. Such examples are the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Hindus, Chinese, English, Polynesians, Mexicans, Peruvians, American Indians and Greenlanders all have a tradition of a worldwide flood. All these traditions have local color and flavoring with a lot of myth and folklore included. Nevertheless, they serve to confirm that a universal flood did occur.

Verse 18, God speaks to Noah, "But with thee I will establish my covenant" (an agreement or contract). In the Scripture there are basically two types of covenants. The first is unconditional in which God promises to accomplish or do something irrespective of man’s actions. The second is conditional. God agrees to accomplish or perform certain things based upon man's response to His instruction. An unconditional covenant is not an optional agreement. Conditions of the covenant will be accomplished even if man fails to meet God's requirements. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" and that grace enabled him to respond to the command of God to build the ark, prepare his household, gather his family, receive the animals into the ark. Every command, the Scripture reveals, Noah obeyed. This points to another principle of Scripture, that of faith. Noah is listed as one of the heroes of faith in Hebrews Chapter 11 since he was obedient to God's command. Faith is to hear the word of God; believe the word of God, and to act upon the word of God.

To live by faith is to live in obedience to God's revealed will. That is exactly what Noah did. It had never rained before and Noah could have asked the question, "What is rain?" They had not experienced flooding so he could have asked, "What is a flood?" But, he did not question God. He simply responded in obedience and built an ark. Faith is easy when we are sure of the outcome and when all of our questions are answered. Faith is difficult when we do not know the outcome and when we do not know the answer to our questions. May we live by faith in obedience to God's revealed will, trusting God's wisdom and judgment. Verse 18, "Thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy son's wives with thee"...a total of eight people.... "and of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring (receives) into the ark".

Verse 22, "Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded” so did he. Chapter 7, Verse 1, "And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee I have seen righteousness before Me in this generation." Noah was not perfect, but in comparison to the rest of the world, Noah's lifestyle or standard of living was superior.

Verse 2, "And of every clean beast, thou shalt take of thee by sevens". God qualifies the animals that are to be brought on board the ark. The birds that are clean and the beasts that are clean are to be brought in seven pairs and the rest one pair each. The question is often asked, "What is the distinction between clean and unclean?" First of all, being clean or unclean has nothing to do with the hygiene of the animals. "Clean" comes from a Hebrew word which means to be pure, to be holy or separated. From this we understand that these animals labeled as clean are set apart for a specific purpose yet to be revealed. This will become clear in the chapters that follow. The purpose of these animals was for sacrifice in worship to the Lord. The unclean animals were animals not chosen to be used in sacrifice. In the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, a dietary consideration is added to this group of clean and unclean. In verses 2 and 3, seven pairs are commanded in order to give Noah ample sacrifice. The principle of sacrifice is portrayed throughout the Scriptures culminating with the ultimate sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins.

Verse 4 warns seven days and then rain. Verse 11, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day all the fountains of the great deep broke up and the windows of heaven were opened." Noah and his sons and all their wives had entered the ark along with a pair of all air-breathing animals, plus seven pairs of clean animals, those designated for sacrifice.

Noah and his family lived in the ark for 371 days. It appears the world that "Then Was" was destroyed, returned to its first-day-creation status. Genesis 1:2 declares, "the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep". Verse 6 begins the second day, "And God said let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters and God made the firmament and it divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven and the evening and the morning were the second day." This is the canopy of water which is sandwiched by air (the firmament). The root word of firmament is firm. It comes from a Hebrew word with reference to metal making in which a sheet of metal is hammered out. Do not think in terms of today's steel industry in which a sheet of metal is rolled out, but rather the metal is hammered by hand into a sheet which could support weight. It is from this root word the air, the atmosphere, becomes the firmament or the “firm entity” which supports the upper canopy of waters.

Chapter 7 verse 11, "the fountains of the deep were broken up." Earlier we pointed out that the land masses were watered by a mist that came up from the ground. This mist could have come from a water table which was just below the surface or crust of the earth. It was probably a very extensive water table in which, by absorption, the vegetation was watered. Earthquakes broke up the surface (crust) of the earth. This is verified by the geological column which is twisted, broken and shifted. With the breaking up of the earth's crust, the water table underneath gushed up in places and the land masses began to sink in other places into the void which was created by the displacing of the water which forced it upward with violence. The canopy of waters began to break up; probably, at the same time as the fountains of the deep were being broken up, this changed the atmospheric pressure which further weakened the firmament; thus, the canopy of waters began to fall as torrential rain which continued for forty days

Verse 24 of chapter 7, "And the waters prevailed upon the earth 150 days" indicating that the waters covered the surface of the earth. The entire globe was encircled with water, even the highest mountains were covered. Verse 20 declares to a depth of "Fifteen cubits (22 and a half feet) upward (or above) the waters prevailed (dominated or continued) and the mountains were covered"...22 feet over the highest mountains. In the world that "Then Was", mountain ranges probably were not as rugged as they are presently. Probably, the earth's surface was relatively smooth, a gentle rolling plain. Perhaps there were no mountains that exceeded the present tree line. That drastically changed with the flood. The world that Noah stepped out into after the flood was completely different from what he had previously known.

The flood was upon the land for 371 days. Everything outside the ark that required air to survive had perished. After 150 days the waters began to abate or assuaged.

Chapter 8, Verse 1, "And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark” (not that God had forgotten them, but God is speaking in terms which we can relate to) "and He made a wind to pass over the earth". That is the first time that we read about wind blowing upon the earth. In the world that "Then Was” there were no high-or low-pressure systems, thus no wind. Perhaps, there may have been a gentle breeze, but certainly not a wind. "And He made a wind to pass over the earth and the water assuaged." This causes a combination of events the earth's surface. Wind is present since the canopy of waters is no longer in place. Also, the sun begins to have an adverse effect upon the earth, but at this point, God is using this adverse effect to bring about some positive effect, the drying out of the earth. "Assuaged" carries with it the idea of a filled bathtub having the plug pulled, thus draining the tub. So to speak, the plug of the earth was pulled and the water went down the drain. Where did all the water go? It had to go somewhere. From day 150 and following and perhaps, to a certain degree to this very day, it still continues through earthquakes. The surface under the water continued to rise and fall, thus creating large ocean basins, some of which are miles deep. The ocean liner Titanic sits on the bottom of the ocean floor two and a half miles down and there are other places in the ocean, which we are told by oceanographers, that are much deeper. As the earth's surface continues to break up and settle, the waters began to abate or "assuaged", to drain into these large basins. As a result, the water level began to decrease and the ark came to rest on a mountain range called "Ararat". On the 224th day from the beginning of the flood, seventy-four days later, from the 150th day, the tops of the mountains were seen.

Verse 5, "And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month and in the tenth month on the first day of the month were the tops of the mountains seen". As land mass continues to adjust, obviously the plates of the earth are going to be pushed in different directions and this forces some up and others down. Mountain ranges begin to appear. Some of these mountains push very high so that today they are snowcapped. This shifting of the earth's surface is continuing in the form of earthquakes. Day 264, Noah waited yet another forty days before sending out the raven. To do this, he removed the cover off the ark, or literally removed the lid of the box, and then sent the raven out. Seven days passed, day 271, he sent out a dove with no positive results since the waters were still upon the whole earth. However, a raven is a parasitic bird. It lives off dead vegetation and flesh. When the raven did not come back, that indicated that it could survive apart from the ark. A dove is not a parasitic bird and so there had to be fresh vegetation for the dove to survive on its own. The dove returned. Day 285, the dove was sent out again but this time does not return. Previous to that he was sent out and returned with a freshly picked olive leaf. Olive trees are asexual, which means that they can germinate themselves, so probably, as the waters abated and as the sun came out, germination occurred from seed that remained before the flood. The dove brought back a leaf but did not find a place to nest. Finally, after seven more days, the dove is sent out again, but this time it does not return. The water continues to recede. Day 314, Noah waits another 29 days until the water had dried off the earth. Day 371, Noah waits another 57 days until the earth was dry before leaving the ark. Over a year has passed since Noah and his family entered the ark. Now it is time to disembark. Noah and his family are about to embark upon an adventure in survival, but they were thankful for God's provision and deliverance.

**THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH “WHICH ARE NOW**”

**The Brave New World**

Verse 15, "And God spake unto Noah saying, go forth out of the ark, thou and thy wife, thy sons and thy son's wives with thee." I am quite sure that Noah was ready to leave the ark by this time. However, the world that he looked out upon was a different world then the world that he had previously known. God had reduced the world that "Then Was" virtually to creation, day-one status. Repopulation of this brave new world begins with Noah and his family. The animal kingdom must also repopulate from those transported on the ark. We can only imagine the adjustment Noah and his family had to make, but make it they did by God's grace.

Verse 17, "Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee. All the flesh, both of fowl and of cattle and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth that they may breed abundantly upon the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth…" Verse 20, "And

Noah built an altar unto the Lord and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar and the Lord smelled a sweet savor"... indicating that the Lord had accepted his offerings... "And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." When Adam sinned, God cursed the ground so that it would not bring forth its abundance for Adam. He had to labor in the new world to make it produce crops for himself and his family. A totally new environment is before Noah. Everything is changed, the air, sea, and land. Noah was the instrument to deliver humanity from the curse of the ground. What about the world now? Is the ground cursed? Not directly. It is actually under the judgment of God but it is not under the curse of God and there is a difference. The curse of God was a direct limitation upon the earth. In the world that we live in now, the ground is under the judgment of God. The curse on the world that "then was" is the ground would not bring forth its abundance. Presently, there are places that do bring forth an abundance. There are other places, of course that do not and would require a great amount of irrigation, fertilization, etc. to bring forth abundance. However, the consequences of the judgment upon the world that "Then Was" remains.

The human race would have terminated had Noah not found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Had Noah not responded to God's love and mercy, we would not be here today. But, Noah did respond positively to God's grace and he became the door of deliverance for all humanity. Noah was God's second chance for humanity. He was God's gateway to new life and hope humanly speaking. Just as Noah was God's opportunity for a lost humanity, in a similar way Jesus is God's hope and deliverance for fallen mankind. May we, as Noah did, walk through the door of salvation, which is Jesus, to new life. Jesus said, "I am the door (John 10:7). I am the way....No man comes unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the ONLY hope of salvation and way out of judgment for mankind. All other ways mankind invents only lead to destruction. The Scripture warns "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof is death" (Proverbs 14:12). Jesus spoke of a broad way which leads to destruction and that there were many on that way (Matthew 7:13). If you have not turned to Jesus as your way of escape from certain destruction, I urge you to turn to Him NOW! The Bible declares that in Noah's day they were unaware until the flood came and took them all away (Matthew 24:39). It was too late after God shut the door. Someday God will shut the door on this present world and it will be too late for mankind. Everyday God shuts the door individually as we are taken one by one in death. Enter the ark of safety while there is still time! He awaits. His welcome mat is still out.

Our present world is built upon the ruins of the world that “Then Was". We drive automobiles which are powered by fossil fuels. Fossil fuels would not have existed had it not been for the judgment upon the world that "Then Was". Our houses are heated by fossil fuel. In some cases, the generators that generate the electricity for our homes and industry are run by fossil fuels. As best we can, we utilize our present environment to build the "good life"; but, it is, after all, still hostile to us. God has promised to one day restore all things to perfection. As with many who have gone before us in death, we eagerly look forward to that day as believers to be ushered into His presence. It will be a day of great rejoicing.

Verse 22, "While the earth remaineth" (this is an indication that the earth is not eternal) "seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease". We are either too hot or too cold. We are too dry or too wet. We are always too something but never just right since our environment is built upon the judgment of the world that "Then Was" which resulted in its collapse. Noah’s occupation was changed with the passing of the world that “Then Was”. As a result, he experienced a new environment which he had never previously encountered. For example, spoilage of food has become common, which was not the case in the world that "Then Was". Nowhere in Scripture do we read of spoilage in the world that "Then Was". The lifespan of man was drastically shortened because the earth was no longer protected from the sun’s harmful rays as it had been with the canopy of water. There were many other adjustments Noah and his family had to make in this "brave new world".

Verse 22, "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." Consider these observations. First, in the world that "Then Was", food grew continuously. It did not have to be planted or cultivated. But this is not the case in this present world. Food grew with little effort on the part of Adam for it to bring forth its abundance, probably seed time and harvest did not exist as we know it. Most likely, there was a perpetual growing season. That is now changed. Quite obviously, we cannot plant during the winter months. Certain regions of our planet have become uninhabitable due to extreme environmental conditions. "While the earth remains", indicating that as long as this present world continues, the cycle of seasons will continue. Verse 20, Noah steps off the ark and builds an altar to offer the prescribed sacrifice in praise and thanksgiving to God for salvation and deliverance from judgment The purpose of his sacrifice was 1) to show obedience unto God; 2) show dependence upon God; 3) to acknowledge from whom his deliverance came; and 4) it pictures man's need of salvation and God's provision of that salvation. Ultimately, it becomes the picture of man's redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was an acceptable sacrifice because it was offered according to God's command and provision. It appears from the text that it was quite a large offering. Verse 20, Noah "built an altar unto the Lord and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar." God's response, verse 21, "He smelled the sweet savor" in other words, the sweet savor of Noah's obedience and gratitude, which was pleasing to the Lord. "And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I again smite anymore everything living as I have done". Provision, hope, mercy, and grace are exhibited toward mankind by a loving God. As previously mentioned, in this new world, the lifespan of man begins to plummet rapidly. Man has to work hard for his livelihood. The world had become very hostile to Noah, but still he was thankful that God had delivered him and his family. God reveals: "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." We only have to turn to the media to see the truth of that statement. It seems that most of the news that we hear is a result of evil on the part of man. That does not mean that man is not capable of doing good things, he is; but rather, it refers to the general corruption of men's heart. God uses the term "heart" referring to the center or the seat of men’s affections. "Youth" as it is used in this passage refers not just to his childhood but from his birth.

God promises that He never again will destroy the whole world totally as He had done with the world that "Then Was". God's plan is still to redeem mankind since his heart is evil. Human history points to the time when "in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son" (Galatians 4:4) to bring redemption to a fallen and corrupt human race. His invitation is to "come unto Me all ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Have you come to Christ and found forgiveness and peace that faith in Him alone brings? Why not do so right now?

Chapter 9, verse 1, "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them, be fruitful, multiply and replenish (fill or repopulate) the earth."

Verse 2, "and the fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every fowl of the air and upon all that moveth upon the earth and upon all the fishes of the sea and into your hand they are delivered." Previously, the animal kingdom was a pet kingdom. Not so in this present world. "I will put the fear, the dread of you". The animals become wild. For the most part, they will flee from man, even lions and tigers will flee from man. Exceptions are if they are hungry, cornered or injured, then they will attack man. We find that man's diet has been altered. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you even as the green herb (vegetation) I have given unto you." Flesh becomes a part of man's diet. God instructs that man is not to eat the flesh as long as the blood is in it, the meat is to be cooked. It has to be thoroughly cooked so that there is no blood in the meat for sanitary and health reasons. God’s instruction continues, if animals killed humans, those animals were to be destroyed.

New standards are given for man. If a man kills another, then his life was also forfeited. The punishment for murder in the world that "Then Was" was different then it is now in this brave new world. Capital punishment, as such, becomes the absolute deterrent for the crime of murder. Verse 5, "And surely the blood of your lives will I require at the hand of every beast will I require it and at the hand of man and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." Verse 6, "Who so shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made He him."

Verse 7, God restates the command to be fruitful and multiply abundantly filling the earth. God promises in verse 8 and following that He will not destroy the world again with a flood of water.

The first rain Noah experienced was in connection with the flood. From that point on, rain and snow became a common experience. When clouds started forming and the winds started to blow and raindrops began to fall, Noah probably was a little worried. Was God going to destroy the world again? His fear was calmed by God's promise, a promise which was unconditional. The token of God's unconditional promise was "My bow" in the sky, the rainbow, that was His confirmation that He would never again destroy the whole world with a flood of waters. Every time Noah saw the rainbow, he knew that God had not forgotten His promise.

Verse 18 of the 9th Chapter, "And the sons of Noah that went forth from the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth and Ham is the father of Canaan." That is specifically pointed out since Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites, a very godless people with many perversions and practices that were offensive to God.

**Repopulation of the Present World**

Verse 19, "These are the three sons of Noah and of them was the whole earth overspread”.

The population of this present world came from Noah and his three sons. The question must be asked, "Where and how did the races develop?" One of the explanations, which was very popular during the early days of our nation, was Noah’s curse. The reasoning followed that Noah cursed Canaan, the son of Ham, which in some way resulted in the inception of the black man. According to the beliefs of that period, the black man was considered less than human and with only the intelligence of an animal. Therefore, it was quite natural and seemed quite right that they be used as slaves. Many of the southern plantation slave owners were Christians, who sincerely believed that there was nothing wrong with slavery because of the curse upon Canaan. They viewed the primitive conditions of the black man, who lived in virtual animal-like conditions, as the result of that curse. However, the Scripture does not indicate anywhere that the curse of Noah resulted in the origin of the black man, not one word anywhere. The real truth of the matter is that there is only one race and that is the human race. The variations of the color and other physical features can be attributed to genetic and environmental conditions. Depending upon genetics and environment over a period of several centuries there developed certain predominant characteristics which we define as race. Because of the consequence of man's sin, his genetic code was corrupted and permanently altered. It can only be restored by a new creation. Those who believe that there was not a universal flood, but rather a local flood, argue that there were other people that God created in other parts of the world that were totally separate and distinct from Noah and his family and those groups were the origin of the different races. There is no evidence whatsoever in the Scripture to support this theory. In fact, all the evidence in the Scripture is to the contrary. We find in the Scripture that all of the genealogies lead back to one man, Adam. The New Testament records for us that "as in Adam, all die. So as in Christ shall all be made alive ((Cor. 15:22)." The "races" all came from Noah and his three sons. A reason why close marriages were forbidden in the Scripture, was genetic corruption. As we move further away from man's perfect beginning, the genes became more and more corrupt, close marriages would bring out the compounding of this genetic defect which causes mental and physical deficiencies with perhaps tendency for different diseases.

Verse 20, "And Noah began to be a husbandman"...that has nothing to do with marriage, it is an old English term for one who cared for a vineyard...."and he planted a vineyard." Verse 21, "he drank of the wine and was drunken." This is the first mention of drunkenness in the Scripture. Not once do we read of drunkenness in the world that "Then Was" Probably Noah, in the process of making adjustments to this brave new world, planted a vineyard as he had done many times in the past. With the first harvest of grapes, he made grape juice as he had done before. In the process of enjoying his grape juice, as he had done before without any negative effects, he became drunk. In the world that "Then Was" there probably had not been any spoilage. Therefore, the grape juice did not ferment. But, in this new environment, spoilage begins rather quickly. When Noah made grape juice, it spoiled quickly without his knowledge. The grape juice probably had a maximum alcoholic content of 8%, since this would be natural fermentation and not the processed fermentation, which would raise the alcoholic content considerably.

Genetically, some individuals are more susceptible to becoming drunken than others. Noah was one who “didn't hold his liquor well". He became drunk. There was no indication in Scripture that Noah was aware or conscious that he would become intoxicated. He just did what he had always done before and as a result he became drunk. Verse 22, “And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without". ...that is Shem and Japheth. Verse 23, "and Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon their shoulders and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father and their faces were backward and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done unto him and he said, cursed be Canaan. A servant shall he be unto his brethren and he said bless be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant and God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant." Taking it for face value, it seems that Ham saw his father unclothed and as a result, his father, Noah, put a curse upon Canaan, Ham's son. The question is, "Why?" We must look deeper to find the answer. "When he (Noah) awoke from his drunkenness and knew what his younger son had done" it appears that he was probably in a semiconscious state and his son, Ham, had a homosexual relationship with him without his father’s conscious knowledge. But that still does not answer the question why Noah put a curse upon Ham's son? Ham's son was not guilty of any offense or sin.

First of all, we need to understand a little bit about curses and blessings in the culture of that day. It was often the practice of a father to observe his sons and make pronouncements (evaluations of their character), broad general statements of their character traits that were either blessings or curses as they related to others, as well as to themselves. The father had no power to bring about the pronouncements, but rather, the father evaluated their son's spiritual characteristics, the type of person they were from the lifestyle they lived. He would draw conclusions as to the logical outcome of such a lifestyle. These conclusions could either be blessings or curses, depending upon the individual's character, whether it was good or bad. In some cases, the father would make observations concerning the good, upstanding, moral, Godly characteristics of their son, then would make a proclamation concerning their character, which would indicate that probably God would bless that son in relationship to his good character. Why? Not because of the declaration or proclamation, but because of the good character of his son. On the other hand, God did not place a curse upon the son because of the declaration of the father, but rather, those individuals were cursed because of the very character that they exhibited. In other words, the son's character became the basis for blessing or cursing. The father only observed and made the pronouncement. Why curse Canaan instead of Ham? Ham was the father and this was a horrendous sin. As a result of that sin, Noah's observation of Ham's flawed character caused him to realize that as the father of Canaan and ultimately of Canaan's children, he would pass on the example of this sin to his descendants, not genetically, but by the example of his character. Sociologists know that the father has a principal influence upon his children’s character. The character of the father often will become the character of their children. Children become what they experience. There are exceptions, of course, but this is true of fathers in general. Men have a tremendous responsibility for the kind of fathers they are, because that will determine, to a large extent, what kind of character their children will become. For Ham, needless to say, it was godlessness. He was corrupt in his morals and in his character. He was corrupt in his respect for his father. He had hit the bottom and undoubtedly, his sons would follow his example. "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah,"., and Sodom and Gomorrah were known for homosexuality. These were the descendants of Canaan. The misery and debauchery that followed Ham's descendants are but history now. This history becomes a warning for our nation.

Verse 28, "And Noah lived after the flood, three hundred and fifty years and all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died."

Chapter 10, "And these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth" Job is not listed, although he is a principal figure in Old Testament history. Job lived between the time of Noah and the time of Abraham but it is not known for sure exactly when. Dinosaurs were present during Job's lifetime. All have since become extinct. Today there are lizards, which belong to the dinosaur family. Since today’s lizards do not live as long, they do not grow as large as they did in Noah's day before the flood. They die before they reach the gargantuan size that they achieved during the antediluvian or the pre-flood world.

About five to six hundred years passed from the time Noah disembarked the ark to the birth of Abraham. Verse 32, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." Many of them traveled far and wide over the earth. Many civilizations, nations, and cultures were formed as a result of their travels.

Verse 1 of chapter 11, "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech and it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime"....or bituminous...."had they for mortar. And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach into heaven and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." A population explosion took place. There was a desire to remain united in one general geographical area, Shinar. God had instructed them to scatter and repopulate the earth, but they stayed in one general locality. As a result, they built a city and a tower desiring to make a name for themselves. That seems somewhat innocent on the surface, but in reality, what they were doing was challenging God, that is, to become like or as God. This appears to be their intent by building a tower, which probably was some sort of communication center.

Verse 1, "And the whole world was of one language and of one speech." That in itself is not particularly significant because the world that "Then Was", was all one language. At least there is no indication in the Scripture that there was more than one language in the world that "Then Was".

Verse 2, "And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there in." As Noah and his family disembarked from the ark, they were given the command to repopulate the earth, meaning to spread out upon the earth. Their natural tendency was to stick close together. They settled in a place called Shinar, a very large plain located in present Iran/Iraq near the Persian Gulf. It is the area where the famous Biblical city of Babylon was to be built. It was on this plain, a fertile area, where they "dwelt", settled, put down their roots.

Verse 3, "And they said one to another, go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly and they had brick for stone and slime they had for mortar."

Archaeologists have uncovered remains of this type of construction, which was used extensively in that region during that time. The brick is made of clay, since the region of Shinar was rich with clay and made excellent bricks, a very durable building material. Slime is bituminous or pitch, a tar-like substance. It is almost impossible to make a separation of the joints of these brick and bituminous even though they are thousands of years old. The construction is far superior to our concrete block and mortar construction used today. The bricks of that day are not the eight-inch brick we are accustomed to. These were large bricks, perhaps weighing several hundred pounds and, in some cases, upwards of maybe a ton or more.

Verse 4, "And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had built. And the Lord said, Behold the people are one and they have all one language and this they begin to do and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." Their technology was very advanced. Probably anything that they thought, they had the technology to do. Our technology today is close to that but has not reached that level yet. There are a lot of things that we can think about doing, but our technology will not yet permit us to do those things. As commonly believed, the people of that day were not primitive people wandering about in a desert wearing goatskins, living a caveman stereotype. On the contrary, they were extremely intelligent and advanced in the sciences. Some cultures did, for a time, dwell in caves living in very primitive fashion, just as some peoples today live very primitively even in the midst of our technologically advanced age. We might ask ourselves this question, why would God be so upset with them for building a tower? What's wrong with a skyscraper? What is so drastically wrong with their tower being so high? It was not that the building or the structure itself was the problem; we must look deeper.

First, they were in rebellion to what God had commanded. They were to overspread and repopulate the earth. Instead, they wanted to remain relatively localized. The tower became a symbol of their unity and rebellion to God. The statement in the Scripture that they wanted to build for themselves a great name is an indication their desire was to become as God. Their sin was the same sin that Satan had committed, “pride”, desiring to ascend to the position and place of God. They considered their technology, intellect, and ability, and thus concluded, "We need to make a name (to be honored as “God”) for ourselves". We can get along without God. Just look at our accomplishments" they probably reasoned. The tower became their symbol of independence from God. It is significant to note that in the world that "Then Was", there probably was one language and a spirit of unity and pride which ultimately brought about their doom. Even in this present world, mankind is striving for the same thing, "unity", which ultimately will bring about a one-world government headed by a powerful ruler, which the Bible calls the "Anti-Christ". There is nothing wrong with unity as long as the Lord is the center of that society. For the Christian, we are unified as one body of believers with Christ as the head (Lord). The Tower of Babel was man's effort to achieve unity apart from the Lordship of God. It was a symbol of his independence and rebellion toward God. As this symbol of rebellion is being constructed, God intervenes in man’s plans. He confounds their language. If they cannot communicate, they cannot be unified. This brought about a diversification of languages and is the origin of our approximately 6,000 different languages and dialects.

Verse 7, "Go to, let us go down and there confound (confuse, mix up) their language. That they may not understand one another’s speech. The Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the whole earth and they left off to build the city." This action by God is a merciful means of deterring mankind from their path which would lead to their own destruction similar to that of Noah’s day.

Verse 9, "Therefore is the name of it called Babel", which means confusion. It is also the root word for Babylon and it is in this geographic region that the great city Babylon would be built. Babylon is the oldest city in the world with its roots in Babel. Symbolically in Scripture, Babylon stands for materialism, rebellion, humanism, and hedonism.

Verse 10 begins with the genealogy or the history of the Shemites after man is dispersed from the building of the tower. It is through the line of Shem that Abraham is to be born.

**Birth of Israel**

**The law**

Genesis 12 records the beginning of the history of Abraham, previously known as Abram, with the birth of the Hebrew nation about 2,000 years before Christ. God's desire has always been to bring man back to Himself. Had God not interfered in the affairs of the Tower of Babel, history probably would have been repeated, which would have ended in judgment similar to the flood. In the future, the same type of circumstances will arise again with Satan's attempt to unite mankind in a final conflict with his Maker. The generations of Shem, the Shemites, later known as Semites, are highlighted, for they are Abraham's family roots. Abraham was born and raised in Ur of the Chaldeas. He became one of the world's wealthiest men. Abraham had his own private army, servants, and great possessions. Do not picture Abraham as sitting on a barren plain by a wind-blown tent watching a half dozen sheep graze by the oasis. On the contrary, he lived in a house, probably an extremely elegant mansion, remains of which archaeologists have discovered. God directed Abraham to leave his home and his family and go to a land that He would reveal to him. No doubt, Abraham found that a very difficult challenge to his faith, but he was victorious. He would have to leave the comforts of his home and become a nomad. Abraham's faith is demonstrated by his obedience to God's instructions. God promised to make a great nation through Abraham's descendants, which He would preserve through the centuries. From time to time, the people strayed from God and He would send His prophets to challenge them to return in faith to Him. Finally, God's people (Israel) desired to have a king like the other nations around them. God granted their request and Saul was anointed their first King, followed by David and then David's son Solomon. It was under Solomon that the nation rose to its zenith of power as a unified nation and became "the" world power. But, the roots of demise were also sown by him through complex and varied alliances with other nations. With Solomon's passing the kingdom divided into the Northern Kingdom comprised of 10 tribes (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). There were a series of weak and often godless kings; the northern kingdom had no Godly king. In the southern kingdom about half their kings were Godly Total corruption of the two nations ultimately won out. First, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, went into Assyrian captivity in 721 or 722 B.C. Then the Southern Kingdom, Judah, followed 131 years later being overrun by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Southern Kingdom remained in exile for 70 years and then was restored under Ezra and Nehemiah, but only as a tribute nation. Under these conditions, they returned to the land, but never knew the glory nor independence which they had experienced under Solomon. It seemed they were always under someone's thumb. This condition continued through the centuries. In 1948 Israel once again became an independent nation, but remains in unbelief. With the last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi there was no word from the Lord for 400 "silent" years. It is during this time that a group known as the Pharisees originated, they were spiritual leaders at first. They were the "fundamental Bible believers" of the Jewish nation at their inception. They kept the religious tone of the nation strong through a number of years of turmoil. But, by the time Jesus was born, their ways had corrupted. Externally they were "religious", but their hearts were far from God.

There is a principle that we need to keep in mind, it takes only one generation to apostatize. Many of the major denominational churches in America at the turn of the 20th century were solid, Bible-based churches and their scholarship and faithfulness to the Scriptures, as well as their love for the Lord Jesus unquestioned. But, there came a generation that decided to turn away and now many of the major denominations have departed from the Lord and their Biblical heritage. As a result of liberalization, a movement known as fundamentalism sprung up to defend the conservative position on Christ and the Scripture. We must remember, just as the ancient Pharisees fell, just as the major denominations fell, we too can corrupt and fall in one generation.

As a bright and shining light after 400 silent dark years, John the Baptist was born to ‘'prepare the way of the Lord" (Mai. 3:1; Matt. 3:3). "In the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4) Christ was born, the unique God-man who lived a perfect sinless life. Then He died — gave His life - the sinless for the sinner. The Scripture proclaims "He who knew no sin became sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21). No other one could stand in our place. He alone is able. The cry of the Scripture is "no other name is given under Heaven among man whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). God called Abraham for a purpose, to establish a nation from which the Messiah (Redeemer, the Anointed One, Savior) would come.

Chapter 12 of Genesis and verse 1, "Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred".... pack up and leave mom, dad, and friends, your job and everything else ...."and from thy fathers house unto a land that I will show you." Abraham's instruction was to follow the Lord's leading as God revealed it to him. All Abraham had to do was be obedient to God's instruction. That's living by faith. Abraham did so and became the father of those who believe (Romans 4:11).

A fourfold promise is given in verse 2, "And I will make of thee a great nation (one) and I will bless thee (two) and I will make thy name great (three) and thou shalt be a blessing (four)". Verse 3 continues, "And I will bless them that bless thee and curse them the curse thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The Jewish people thought they were exclusively God's property and that God was not interested in anyone else. In reality, the very first time that God spoke His promise to Abraham, He promises the peoples of the earth that they will be blessed. Abraham received this promise about 2,000 years before the birth of Christ. God always keeps His promises. He never made a promise He could not keep, nor a promise He would not keep. In God’s time, He delivers.

Hebrews Chapter 11 verse 8 is a commentary on the promised blessing to Abraham. "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." He trusted only in God's revealed word. That which God said to do, Abraham did. Verse 9, "By faith he sojourned"...or travelled. He did not put down roots. He was a nomad, "in the land of promise as in a strange country." This was not his permanent home. "Dwelling in tabernacles"...or tents (dwelling place)...."with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." He did not find that city then, four thousand years have passed and still we wait with Abraham for that city. By faith he, and we, see it afar, but now, it is nearer than when we first believed (Romans 13:11).

Revelation Chapter 21, verse 10, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me (the Apostle John) that great city. The holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. Verse 1 chapter 21, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Verse 14, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb." This is a description of the city Abraham was looking for. Abraham was not looking for a city in this present world or for the temporal Jerusalem; but he was looking for the ultimate city which will never pass away, whose builder and whose maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

The prophet Isaiah wrote 750 years before Christ. He makes this prediction, Isaiah 11:1, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." Jesse was King David's father. "And a Branch shall grow out of his roots and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of ears: But, with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove the equity of the meek and of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And the righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins (authority). The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the feeding together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice den" (poisonous spiders and snakes). Verse 9, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This prophecy will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ.

Isaiah 65, verse 17, "For behold I create New Heavens and a New Earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come to mind." In the book of Revelation, it is recorded that God will wipe away all tears, death and sorrow will pass away. The Greek rendering for "to pass away" is as if it never was. This is the same concept that is set forth in the 17th verse of Isaiah 65. The former things (referring to the world that “then was” and the heavens and the earth which "are now", will pass away (as if they never had existed). In heaven we will not think about the times when we, in this present world, went through trials, troubles, and suffering nor, for that matter, the "good", often brief times of this world. We will never remember these times. We will not remember lost loved ones who never came to Christ. That will never be a part of our new experience. This is the promise and the hope we have in God our Savior. In order to get to the new heaven and new earth, with all its blessedness, we must enter through the door. Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:7). We must enter through Him. If you have not, why not enter "now".

**The Birth of Christ**

**Rejection of Jesus as Messiah**

**Messiah’s sacrifice**

The birth of Christ is the focal point of human history, extending in both directions, from His birth to the days of Adam and Eve and into the future to the new heavens and the new earth, as well as the world to come. The whole world centers on that moment of time the Bible speaks of "as the fulness of time" (Galatians 4:4). Without Christ's birth, there would be no hope for humanity. His birth provides the hope we need to continue. His birth fulfilled scores of promises made centuries before. It is altogether fitting and proper that our calendar should measure time around Him. He is indeed the center of all humanity.

Incarnation is a theological term for Christ's first coming or advent. In Luke chapter 19 and verse 10, the Lord Jesus tells us why He came, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus frequently uses this term "son of man". In fact, this is His favorite title He uses in reference to Himself. This indicates Jesus's desire for a close personal identification with humanity.

Consider these terms: seek, save, and lost. "Seek" means to go in search of, to try to find. What did Jesus do when He said, "I am come to seek?" He came in search of mankind. The religions and cults of the world are man's attempt to search for God. Christianity is not a religion in the popular definition or sense of the word since Christianity is God's search for man. When Jesus left heaven's glory and came to this world, He came to seek for us, to search us out and to find us. Everyday He accomplishes this in human hearts. Has He found you yet? He asked Adam "Where art thou?" (Galatians 3:9). Maybe He is asking that question of you?

"Save" means to rescue from danger or loss. From the Scriptures it becomes obvious that with the fall of man from his perfect state, we are lost, lost from God’s presence, fellowship, and blessing which began in the garden of Eden. There are those who would suggest that perhaps that fall was not a fall downward but it was a fall upward. If one is falling, one is not ascending, one is always descending. We need to be rescued from eternal loss. We cannot rescue ourselves. We must be rescued by another, namely Jesus. Has He rescued you?

To rescue, literally, means from the danger of loss, to deliver or to protect, to heal to preserve, to make whole. Jesus came to rescue us from the loss that we are experiencing, to deliver us from the power of sin and death. There was nothing we could do once sin entered the human race. Man was powerless to save himself to reverse or stop his progress on the road to destruction. The Ten Commandments were given to show mankind his need for God. God's provision of redemption was provided in Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments were never designed to justify us, but rather to show our extreme need, to show us where we have missed God's mark of perfection and holiness. Their design was to create a desire in our hearts by which we would respond to God's gift of salvation as found in the person of Christ.

"Lost" means no longer possessed or retained. That is pretty obvious from the events in the Garden of Eden. To this very day, mankind no longer retains fellowship with and the personal knowledge of the presence of God until they are born again. We need to be saved, restored, renewed, regenerated, that is, born again. "Lost" also means bewildered as to place or to direction, wasted, destroyed, ruined, hopeless, desperate, no longer belonging to, die and perish. All these words describe the terrible condition of mankind. Jesus said I have come to seek and save that which was lost. I have come to restore them. I have come to remove them from this horrible condition. Most of mankind denies that they are in this condition. Our response is, "I'm fine. Everything is well with my soul. Leave me alone. Everything is well with me. I want to get on with my life." But, in reality, it is not well with mankind. Sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts all deal with the feelings and the emotions of people that are expressed in this word lost. Many people feel that they do not belong to anyone, there is an emptiness in their lives. They feel they just do not really know what direction their life is taking. What is my purpose? Why am I here? Where am I going? How am I going to get there? These are all very popular questions. Many seek professional counseling for these symptoms and symptoms are just what they are. They indicate a deeper need of mankind, the need to be in union and fellowship with God.

Counselors have found that people often mask their real needs with symptoms for which they want an aspirin to remove their pain, but want nothing to cure the fatal disease they have. To be sure, the problems (consequences of sin) do not disappear overnight, but they begin to melt away as we grow in our new relationship with the living God. Since Jesus came to save us from our lost condition, the child of God now possesses peace and a sense of destiny and purpose that the world does not have and cannot give.

The second reason why Jesus came was to confirm the promises of God. A promise is given in Genesis 3:15, born of the seed of a woman and born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14, Son of God, Seed of Abraham, Son of Isaac, Son of Jacob, Tribe of Judah, etc. born in Bethlehem, presented with gifts, the prediction that Herod would kill the children in Bethlehem. His preexistence, various names, titles and positions that He holds, etc. are all promises Jesus fulfilled by His birth.

The critics respond that the prophecies in the Bible concerning the Lord Jesus Christ are vague and general so almost anybody in history could have fulfilled them; however, they are anything but general. The prophecies are very specific. A study done some time ago revealed the probability of anyone fulfilling just eight of the predictions concerning Christ at His first coming. To determine the probability, they chose only 8 of the 348 prophecies. The probability was calculated to be one chance to the 157th power. That figure boggles the mind. That number is beyond our ability to comprehend, but to illustrate, consider the state of Texas covered to a depth of 2 feet with silver dollars. Mark one silver dollar and mix well, blindfold someone, and the chance of them picking out the marked silver dollar is one chance to the 157th power. For all intents and purposes, the possibility of anybody else fulfilling the prophecies concerning Christ is nonexistent. Jesus was the only one who could completely fulfill God’s promises.

Romans 15:8 & 9, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision". Circumcision is a term that Paul uses to refer to the Nation of Israel. "For the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" that is unto Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and of course all the nation of Israel and more than that, verse 9. "And that the Gentiles (all who are not Jews) might glorify God for His mercy as it is written, for this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles and sing unto His name."

The third reason that Jesus came was to reveal the Father, John 1:18. "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten son, which is in the bosom (the heart) of the Father, He hath declared Him." (or reveals) to make known, to manifest, to show, literally to prove, to demonstrate, or to set forth. Presently in the continental United States, there are 150 plus religions and cults of significance. Worldwide, the number exceeds that. The different religions testify to man’s attempts to find God. However, all of man's efforts only lead to failure. God cannot be discovered by man, but rather God must reveal Himself to us and that He has done (I Cor. 1:21). The very essence of God is in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the father" (John 14:9). The Scripture declares in John 1:1-5 "In the beginning was the word, (Jesus the living word) and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: (Jesus) and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life (the essence of God) and the life was the light (revelation) of (to) men. And the light shineth in the darkness; (lack of human understanding) and the darkness comprehended it not." Jesus declared Himself to be the light of mankind. Jesus said, "No man comes unto the father (God) but by me."

Jesus came to put away sin. Hebrews 9:26, "For then must He (Christ) have suffered since the foundation of the world". In other words, since the inception of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered (because of sin in the world). "But now, once in the end of the world (age of law) hath He appeared to put away sin with the sacrifice of Himself’. We do not like to hear the word sin. It is a dirty word. It is an ugly word. The word itself simply means a transgression of divine law in the slightest way. The Ten Commandments were given to reveal where we failed in living up to God's standards. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He expanded the Ten Commandments. It was not simply the external actions of keeping the law, but the internal motivations of the heart which are important. Sin is a violation of a moral principle, literally an offense. It means to miss the mark. In the book of Romans, we read "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). In the original language, sin carries with it the idea of the ancient Olympic games and the specific sport of archery in which the archer would draw back his bow and let the arrow fly towards the target. If it missed ever so slightly the precise center of the target, it was said that the archer sinned. It had to be dead center on the target. We have all missed the mark. Romans 3:23, in putting away sin, Jesus came to die for many. In the Bible “many” often stood for “all.” Mark 10:45 reads: "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." He came to die for you and me. Sin demands the penalty of death. He came to take our place. It is very popular in our culture to magnify the attribute of the love of God. Oh, the love of God and how true that is, but God also has other attributes that are equal to His love. Justice is one of these attributes. His justice is not diminished by the attribute of love, neither is the attribute of love diminished by the attribute of justice, but both are a part of His essence and nature as are His other attributes. Because we have sinned, the penalty is death. For God to be just, He has to carry out that penalty and that is why the Scriptures say "we are dead in trespasses and sin" (Ephesians 2:1). We have died. We are doomed, but Jesus came to put sin away. He came to die in our place to give us life. The perfect came to die for the imperfect. The Scripture says, "He who knew no sin became sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21). Jesus came and took our place to be our substitute and Isaiah 53 is the classic passage on that subject. This is the chapter that most in Christ's day missed. Isaiah 53: 5 & 6 is the suffering servant passage referring to Jesus.

His contemporaries saw Christ the Messiah coming to establish His kingdom, but they did not see Christ the Messiah the suffering servant. Verses 5 and 6, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him". That is the perfect picture of substitution. "And with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord hath laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all".

There are those who believe that physical healing is in the atonement they cite this passage, "with his stripes we are healed." However, they do not understand the full scope of healing as covered in this passage. Of course, all that we suffer physically is an indirect consequence of the curse of sin upon humanity, that is why we suffer. We ultimately will be healed when we receive our new body. A body like unto our resurrected Lord never again subject to the infirmities of this present body.

A popular belief during the time of Christ was that if one was sick, it was because of sin, either their own sins or the sins of their parents or grandparents. They were shunned and rejected as sinners because of their physical illness. That is why Jesus made the statement when He healed the one individual, "Which is easier, to say rise up and walk or your sins are forgiven?" (Matthew 9:5) The attitude of many was that he must be a great sinner because he was so sick and I must not be a great sinner since I am well. The fallacy of this thinking is death is total in every generation. Nobody dies from good health. Everybody dies because our body fails as a result of the curse of sin. Our body is susceptible to disease or accident. The ultimate healing of all of our physical ills and ailments is when we see Christ and receive that new glorified body He promised us. Then we will never be sick again for we will be unsusceptible to the infirmities of this present age.

It is interesting to note that every person Jesus healed eventually died. Even the ones that he raised from the dead died again. He did not remove the curse from them at that time, but rather He demonstrated His power over sin and its consequences, infirmity and death. The time is coming when the curse will be removed and that is the time we look forward to. What a glorious future we will experience as believers in that final day of redemption and deliverance.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8, "He that commiteth sin is of the devil." That is the reason Jesus said you are of your father the devil. "For the devil sinneth from the beginning." From the very inception at the Garden of Eden the devil sinned; but more than that, he sinned from the very day in which iniquity, as the book of Daniel tells us, was found in his heart. "For this purpose, the son of God was manifest (revealed) that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). Now the works of the devil were destroyed at the cross when Jesus died and proclaimed, "it is finished" (John 19:30). The judgment was passed and the devil's works were destroyed. We might ask ourselves the question, if that be the case, why is sin, evil, and its consequence still present and active? With any litigation there is a time for the trial and after the trial is concluded with a guilty verdict, the judge sets a date for sentencing. After the sentence is rendered, there is generally a period of time that elapses before the sentence is carried out. We are in that period of time in which the devil was sentenced, doomed, and defeated at the cross. This is just the interim time in which the devil is going about as an angry roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8) as the Scripture warns, trying to stir up all the trouble he can to defeat as many as he can during this time before his sentence to the lake of fire is carried out.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Is there any hope for this present time or must we look only to the future for any satisfaction? When Jesus said that He had come to give us abundant life, He was referring in part to this present life as well as to the future. But, why is it that so many seem to have it so hard and often they are victims of circumstances that are beyond their control? Often it even seems that they are beyond the control of our Lord as well. However, this is not the case. Romans 8:28 promises that all things work together for good to those who are the called, who love God. It does seem that these are paradoxes with no logical resolve. In order to gain a full understanding, we must look closely at the verses in question in order to see what our Lord is saying. "I am come that they might have life." Life, as it is used in this passage and many others, relates to the life we have in Christ that is the very life of God. It is that quality of existence that God Himself continually experiences. By its very definition it is broader than this present circumstance. It includes it, but is not limited to it. "And that they might have it more abundantly", that is, beyond the realm of the natural order, to the fullest possible extent.

In part, we can now experience life as God knows it; but ultimately, when we see Jesus face to face, we will experience life to its fullest extent. Still, this seems to beg the question, why the pain? Keep in mind this abundant life is the very life of God Himself. Presently, our Heavenly Father feels and experiences pain as a result of sin in the world and more specifically in the life of His children. We often do not think in terms of God feeling pain, but He does. Often the Scripture pictures God as experiencing pain such as with His people Israel in the days of Hosea the prophet. God’s people had turned their back on God and gone to serve idols. God showed Hosea that he felt the pain in much the same way that Hosea did when his own wife became a prostitute. "And we know (are convinced) that all (not just good) things work (how?) together (in the great master plan of God often not fully understood in this present life) for good (to the honor and glory of God and our ultimate benefit even though it may not be known to us how or by what means it will or is being accomplished) to them that love God, (this can only be claimed by God’s children and not the world as a whole) to them who are the called (God's elect, His children) according to purpose (God’s master plan)." We are so short sighted. We see only the immediate situation and often overlook the big picture. It is a case of not seeing the forest for the trees. God will use every situation in the life of His child for His glory and the child's good. Whatever one may experience in this life as the child of God has purpose even if it cannot be understood presently! The book of Job is a wonderful insight into the master plan of God. There is a war going on behind the scenes, a war that is being fought spiritually. The Scripture declares that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood but, against principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). Let us remain confident in our Heavenly Father who knows all and will not let one of us slip from His hand (John 10:28-29). For the moment, we serve Him. Nothing is ever lost when we serve Him. So, we must keep on "keeping on”. To illustrate, think of life as a tapestry. On the front side is a beautiful pattern mingled with various colors. The design is clear and the purpose plain. But, turn it over and one observes a hopeless web of tangled threads running every which way with seemingly no purpose or plan. So it is presently in the life of the believer, we see the back side now, but one day we will view the beauty and elegance of the front side.

Does this mean that this world and this life will be preserved? NO! We wait for a grander day and a final day of deliverance.

Jesus came the first time in order to prepare for His second coming. Hebrews 9:28, "so Christ was once".... not many times, once ..."offered to bear the sins of many. And unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation". In other words, when He appears the second time it is not for the redemption or the defeat of sin. It is not to bear sin as He did in the past, Jesus will come as a conquering king.

The purpose of Jesus was to bring lost mankind back to Himself. When He completed that task He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He showed Himself alive and ascended into heaven. As the book of Acts records, the heavenly messenger said to those who watched Him ascend into heaven, "This same Jesus that you see ascending into heaven shall so come again in like manner" (Acts 1:11). From the days of the early Church and Christ's ascension into heaven, the Church has looked for His return with anticipation and expectation. Perhaps now, as never before in Church history, the signs seem to be converging for His return. Throughout history, interest in Christ's coming has increased and waned from time to time. There have been periods when there was great anticipation, such as, in the First Century. They looked eagerly, daily for Him to return. They greeted one another with "Maranatha", meaning the Lord returns. But, as the First Century came and went and the Lord did not return, interest began to wane and there was not quite as much excitement about it. Christians began to settle down, so to speak, as they looked forward to this climaxing event of history. However, within the last 175 years interest concerning Christ's return has again come to the forefront. As a result of that interest, there have been many date-setters, those who have tried to nail down the day when Jesus would return. Many of these dates have come and gone and the Lord has not returned. Jesus made this statement, "No man knows the day nor the hour, not I, but my father in heaven knows when I shall return" (Matthew 24:36). However, He did tell us that there would be certain signs that we could look for and when we see these signs converging, we could expect that His return was near.

The second coming of Christ has many different aspects. Some of the more notable are: the rapture of the Church; Daniel's 70th week, more commonly known as the tribulation; Christ's literal and physical return to the earth; the establishment of Christ's earthly kingdom commonly known as the millennium, which includes the redemption of the earth; the battle of Armageddon; a great period of peace upon the earth, prosperity and blessing to coincide with the millennial kingdom; a final conflict between Satan and the Lord; the Great White Throne Judgement; and the New Heavens and the New Earth in which the Scripture declares dwelleth righteousness in which the Lord will be our God and our King. Nothing unholy or ungodly shall ever enter therein. Utopia will have arrived!

Other terms that the Scripture uses in connection with the second coming of Christ are "the day of God”, "the day of the Lord", and "that day." Many have attempted to arrive at a precise chronology of events. Among Bible scholars, teachers, and students there is a wide range of opinion as to the timing of certain events. We must all agree that these events will unfold in God's time, but as to precisely when, we must be gracious.

**The age of grace (church age)**

**The Return of Jesus**

**Rapture of the church**

1. The Two Key Passages Describing the Rapture
2. I Cor. 15:51-53:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

1. I Thess. 4:13-18:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

1. The Participants in the Rapture

For whom will Jesus come? Christ will come again for His church, which is composed of all saved people from Pentecost up to the Rapture itself!

1. Some False Views Concerning the Rapture
2. That the Rapture Is the Same as the Second Coming of Christ. False: At the Rapture Jesus comes for His church in the air, while at the second coming, He comes with His people to the earth. See Jude 14,15; Revelation 19:11-16.
3. That the Rapture Will Include Only ‘‘Spiritual” Christians, and the Carnal Christians Will Be Left Behind to Endure the Tribulation. This theory is refuted by one little word in I Corinthians 15:51, where Paul says that “we shall all be changed.” This false view is often called the “partial Rapture” theory.
4. That the Rapture Will Not Occur until the Middle of the Tribulation. The entire church is thus forced to go through the first three-and-a-half years of God’s wrath.
5. That the Rapture Will Not Occur until the End of the Tribulation. This is known as post-tribulational, and is refuted by I Thessalonians 5:9 and Revelation 3:10.

The New Testament pictures the church as the body and bride of Christ. If the mid-tribulation or post-tribulation view were correct, then a part of this body would suffer amputation, and a section of the bride would be left behind! In addition to this, one would be forced to con­clude that all bodies of carnal departed Christians would likewise be left in the grave. This simply is not the clear teaching of the Word of God!

The Bible teaches clearly that the Rapture is pre-tribulation in nature and includes all believers. See I Thessalonians 1:10 and Romans 5:9. Perhaps the strongest proof of this statement is the fact that up to chapter 6 of Revelation the church is mentioned many times, but from chapter 6 to chapter 19 (the period of the Tribulation) there is no mention whatsoever of the church on earth. In fact, the only godly group which Satan can find to persecute is the nation Israel! See Revelation chapter 12.

In Revelation 4:1 John declares, “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither. . ." We are told that Christians are God’s ambassadors on earth (2 Cor. 5:20) and that he will someday declare war on this earth. The first thing a king or president does after he declares war on another country is to call his ambassadors home! Thus, we conclude that the church will escape the tribulation!

1. The Trumpet of the Rapture

In at least three Biblical passages concerning the Rapture, a trumpet is mentioned (I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16; Rev. 4:1). How are we to un­derstand this? Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost writes, “the phrase ‘the trump of God’ is significant, for in the Old Testament the trumpet was used for two things — to summon to battle and to summon to worship.”

Which of the two meanings, however, is involved at the Rapture! Dr. Pentecost suggest that both meanings are in mind, one directed toward angels and the other to believers.

1. To Angels, the Trumpet Blast Will Mean “Prepare for Battle!”

According to various New Testament passages (Eph. 6:12: John 14:30; I John 5:19) this present world lies in the hands of the evil one, the devil, and the very atmosphere is filled with his wicked power and presence. Satan will obviously resist believers being caught up through his domain and becoming freed from his wicked worldly system. Therefore, the trumpet commands the angels, “Prepare for battle! Clear the way for the catching up of those resurrected bodies and those living believers!”

1. To All Believers the Trumpet Blast Will Mean “Prepare to Worship!”

In Numbers 10:1-3 we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver. . .that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly. . .and when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to these at the door of the tabernacle..

Regarding the Rapture trumpet, Numbers 10:4 seems to be especially significant: “If they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.” At the Rapture only one trumpet is sounded, suggesting that in God’s sight all believers occupy a place of utmost importance. We are all “head princes” in the mind of God.

1. One Old Testament Type of the Rapture

Seen in Enoch, Who Was Taken from the World before the Flood Judgment (Gen. 5:24].

1. The Challenges of the Rapture

Because of this glorious event the child of God is instructed to do many things.

1. He Is to Attend the Services of the Lord Regularly. …not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).
2. He Is to Observe the Lord’s Supper with the Rapture in Mind.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26).

1. He Is to Love Believers and All Men.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men…to the end he may stablish your hearts... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Theas. 3:12,13).

1. He Is to Be Patient.

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8).

1. He Is to Live a Separated Life.

"...we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself..." (I John 3:2,23).

"...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12,13).

"And now little Children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (I John 2:28).

1. He Is to Refrain from Judging Others.

"Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:5).

1. He Is to Preach the Word.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word..." (2 Tim. 4:1,2).

"Feed the flock of God. . . and when the chief Shepherd shall ap­pear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:2,4).

1. He Is to Comfort the Bereaved.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:16,18).

1. He Is to Win Souls.

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire ...” (Jude 21-23).

1. He Is to be Concerned with Heaven.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4).

**Introduction**

The second coming of Christ and the related events theologically is known as eschatology (study of last things). Usually we think in terms of the last days being the last few weeks or months or perhaps years just prior to Christ’s second coming. Biblically speaking, the last days is the entire Church Age, the time from Pentecost until our Lord returns establishing His kingdom.

As we consider this exciting time, let’s discuss briefly what the second coming of Christ is not.

It is not the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus, before He ascended into Heaven, to reside with the believer. The Scripture indicates Christ’s return will be visible and physical, that which physically can be experienced. The second coming of Christ is not one’s personal conversion or salvation. In a sense this is true, but it does not fulfill the details given in Scripture concerning Jesus return. Another view of the second coming of Christ occurred when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by Titus, the Roman general. It is true that Jesus predicted Jerusalem's fall, but Jesus did not physically return when that event occurred. Still another view of the second coming of Christ is death. He came the first time to the cross to die for our sins, He comes a second time, when we die, to receive us to Himself. Certainly, Jesus receives us at death, but this is not the “second coming”. Yet another view, the second coming of Christ is the conversion of the world. This was a very prominent belief around the early part of the 20th century. At the conclusion of World War, I, there was a spirit of euphoria among many. The war that would end all wars had just ended and a spiritual sensitivity was in the hearts of many. Christianity was supposed to sweep the world. This was thought to be Christ's second coming. However, the second coming of Christ is not the conversion of the world for the world as a whole will not be converted. The second coming of Christ is His literal physical return to earth fulfilling all His promises, prophecies, and to establish His kingdom finalizing His plan of redemption of the redeemed.

There are a number of views concerning the timing of the rapture of the Church. The first is the pretribulation view. This view holds that the rapture of the Church occurs just prior to the 70th week of Daniel (tribulation period). Approximately, 75% of Christendom holds this position. The remaining 25% can be divided among the other views. The second view is the mid-tribulation view, which basically states during the first three-and one-half years of Daniel’s 70th week, the Church will endure persecution and suffering. At the mid-point of the 70th week, just prior to the great tribulation, the Church will be caught up or raptured out of the world. A third view is the post- tribulation view. It is the belief that the Church will experience the entire 70th week. At the conclusion of the 70th week, the Church will be raptured to meet the Lord in the air and then immediately return to the earth to rule and reign with Him in His Kingdom. A fourth view is the partial rapture of the Church; however, not many hold this view. They believe only those who are expecting and looking for Christ's return will be raptured. Those who are not looking for His return will be left to experience all or part of the 70th week. The emphasis of this view is to be alert and ready for Christ to come for His Church. Only those living Godly lives will be raptured. Believers living in sin will be left behind when Christ comes. Certainly, we need to be living in the expectancy of His return; however, the Lord is not going to remove just part of His Bride (the Church), but all believers living and physically dead. Recently, another view has surfaced which has met with some acceptance, the pre-wrath rapture view. It is probably a modification of either the mid-tribulation view or the post-tribulation view since, according to their position, the rapture will occur sometime during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation. The pre-wrath rapture view basically states that the Church will endure most of the 70th week and be raptured out sometime prior to the trumpet and vial (bowl) judgments mentioned in the book of Revelation, which are to be poured out upon the earth as God’s wrath and judgment. We must remember that regardless of what position one takes, it is not a test of fellowship or biblical orthodoxy as to timing of the rapture. But it is an essential doctrine to believe that the Lord will return for His Church.

I Thessalonians 4:13: The Thessalonian church was a very active and committed church. Some years had passed since the Lord ascended into heaven. The believers in Thessalonica were aware of the teachings of Jesus about His Kingdom, but something had happened that disturbed the church. A number of them had died and as a result, the question arose in the Thessalonian church, “will those believers who had died miss out on the Kingdom of God and its blessings because of physical death?” Paul writes in response to that question to correct the error of their thinking.

Verse 13, "But I would not have you to be ignorant" (to be without knowledge) brethren (this truth is for believers) "concerning them which are asleep." Paul uses the term “asleep" as a synonym for physical death since physical death is not final for believers. We awake from death in the resurrection, thus, the use of the term sleep or asleep "that you sorrow not even as those which have no hope." Certainly, we sorrow because our loved ones are separated from us. We are separated, but we do have hope (assured promises of God). The Scripture declares "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8) With the resurrection of Christ, there is ultimate victory over death to be experienced by all believers.

Verse 14, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him". Paul is confirming the fact that God will include those who have died physically as believers in the blessings of His Kingdom at His second coming.

Verse 15, "For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord". In those days it was quite common for the church to call councils together to discuss church doctrine and policy. The original councils met in Jerusalem, but later on, they met in other locations. The major church leaders and the Apostles would get together to discern and discuss controversial issues or items of question and how they should handle them. The Apostle Paul is not giving the council's review on the second coming. Rather, he gives God’s direct revelation. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (that is, those who are alive when He comes at the rapture) shall not prevent" (to precede or to go before), or shall not go (into the Kingdom of God) before them which are asleep. The generation that is alive when the Lord returns will not enter into the kingdom of God before the believers who have already died. We will enter as one complete body together.

Verse 16, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven". He does not send His angels to gather the Believers as He does in Matthew 24 where we read that He will send His angels. When He descends, He comes for His Church. When He comes physically to the earth, He will send His angels throughout the world to gather His people (Israel) together. But here, the Lord Himself comes for the Church. Paul announces, "He shall come from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first “quickly” The Scripture says in the twinkling of an eye, I Corinthians 15:52. "Behold, I show (reveal to) you a mystery (that which is hidden). We shall not all sleep, (die physically) but all believers shall all be changed, (transformed, metamorphosized) in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, (about 1/12-millionth of a second) at the last trump, (close of the church age) for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible (no longer in a state of deterioration) and we shall be changed” (transformed into the likeness of Christ's resurrected body). At the precise moment of occurrence, it will only be a flash upon the mind’s eye. "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up" (to catch up, to snatch, to catch away suddenly, to rescue from danger). This is termed by some as the great snatch. Instantly, the Church will be gone. Paul says, "We shall be caught up together (with those who have died in faith and those who are alive in faith) in the clouds (of believers) to meet the Lord in the air (atmosphere) and so shall we ever (continually, without cessation) be with the lord. Wherefore comfort (encourage) one another with these words".

The reasons why the Church will not experience either part or all of the 70th week (tribulation) are as follows: First, the meaning of the words "caught up" is to rescue from danger. The tribulation (70th week) would be a very dangerous time for believers. Persecution, hardship, and suffering will be intense. It will be a time of great trouble and distress of nations (Luke 21:25) upon the earth. The Church will be rescued from this danger. Second, an Old Testament passage, Jeremiah 30:7, refers to this time as "Jacob's trouble". Nowhere in Scripture is the Church associated with this tribulation as being a part of their trouble. Third, the chronology of the events of Daniel's 70-week prophecy indicates that the Church will not experience any part of the 70-week prophecy including the 70th week commonly referred to as the tribulation. The events of the 70-week prophecy involve only the nation of Israel. The Church is not mentioned. Fourth, the chronology of events, as outlined in Matthew 24 and 25 and the parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21, would indicate that the Church is not a part of this time of testing for Israel. Israel, not the Church, is in view in these passages as being a part of the 70th week. Fifth, the early Church was not looking for additional suffering. If the Church is to endure the main body of the 70th week, it would be better to look forward to natural death instead of Christ's return. Yet, the Church is encouraged to look for Christ’s return with expectation. The early Church suffered extensively. It has been estimated that until the Twentieth Century, more believers died in the First Century for their faith than during the intervening years.

Sixth, a promise is given in Revelation 3:10 to the Church at Philadelphia (located in Asia Minor) that they will not have to go through the hour of testing "which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3:10), but they shall escape that hour of testing. Some have suggested the Church needs to be purged with the fire of trial to be ready for Christ's return. How can this be if true believers are cleansed by the blood of Christ? Seventh, the Scripture teaches that the restraining force or the restraining power, which most agree is the Holy Spirit, will be removed prior to the beginning of the 70th week and since the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer, it is only reasonable, rational and logical that if the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world, the believers will be taken right along with Him.

Consider the principal events when the rapture occurs. The church will be removed from the world to be united with Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb. As the church is taken out of the world, the believers will be changed, as we have already discussed. But, what will believers be changed to and how will this change to take place? I Corinthians 15 reveals that the corruptible, which is our present state, cannot inherit the incorruptible (eternal state).

The following are a number of observations concerning the resurrected body of Christ, which will be the same type of body that every believer will receive at the resurrection. First, His body was recognizable. When He was first seen, Mary thought that Jesus was the gardener. There are several reasons for this. She was not expecting Jesus to come back to life. He was dead and, in the tomb, so she really was not expecting to ever see Him alive again. But now, His body was different. It was no longer susceptible to physical destruction. He had been beaten. He had been bruised. Isaiah 53 proclaims that His figure was so marred that He was unrecognizable from previous person. Jesus stood before Mary in His resurrection glory. He spoke and she recognized Him. Not only will we recognize Jesus, we will also recognize one another. Matthew 17:4 relates the account of the transfiguration (metamorphosis) of Christ. Jesus took His inner circle of disciples up the mountain, apart from the rest of his disciples and apart from the crowds that were constantly surrounding Him. "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James and John, his brethren and bringeth them up unto a high mountain apart and was transfigured" (transformed). His essence was changed before them. "And His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as light and behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias (Elijah) talking with him (Jesus). Then Peter said unto Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt (will) let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Now the point is this, there is no introduction given. Jesus does not introduce these heavenly visitors as Moses or Elijah, yet, Peter recognized them. I think believers are going to know one another as part of their transformed state. Jesus was recognizable and believers shall be recognizable too. Believers will be different just as He was different after His resurrection. There will be no need for glasses. Perhaps our hair will not be white or missing. There will be none of the frailties that we have come to associate with recognizing one another in this life. Sometimes we find it hard to recognize people when we do not see them in their usual setting; however, we will recognize one another even though we will be different.

Luke 24:36, records that Jesus had the ability to appear and disappear at will. “And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them”. In context, the disciples are gathered together in a room and the wording is such that He did not walk into the room through the door; but, He appeared to them. Other passages of Scripture indicate that they were together and the doors and windows were locked and He suddenly appeared; then, He disappeared. He walked with them on the road to Emmaus, and as He was explaining the Scripture, upon completion, He vanished out of their sight. This can be explained. We live in a dimension called time. Some scientists theorize this dimension is limited to our particular area of the universe. If one goes beyond this region, time ceases to exist, at least as we understand it. Let’s suppose, for illustration purposes, that we are living (which we are) in the dimension of time and also let’s suppose that we have the ability to step out of the dimension of time and set ourselves apart from this dimension. In theory, if one were to step out of the dimension of time and move to another location, it would seem to those who were living in the dimension of time, that one disappeared. Outside of the dimension of time in eternity, one could move to another location and then step back into the dimension of time. It would then appear to those living in the dimension of time that you reappeared. You disappeared at one point, but you reappeared at another. This is only theory and there is certainly no evidence of this occurring as far as hard scientific facts can determine. But the theory points out that at least some scientists think that there is a possibility for such an occurrence. Certainly, it is no problem at all for the great God of the universe to give man the ability to appear or disappear at will, no matter what method He so desires to use to enable us to accomplish that feat.

It appears that Jesus was able to pass through solid mass. John 20:26 "And after eight days again his disciples were within". This is after His resurrection. The disciples are gathered together by themselves and they were within the house and Thomas was with them. "Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, peace be unto you." Keep in mind several factors. First of all, the disciples were frightened. They believed their Lord was dead and they were in fear of reprisals from the Jewish rulers. This was not a public meeting, but a secret meeting with the door being shut. This does not simply indicate a closed door. Rather, locked and guarded, it was watched to see that nobody not invited would enter. They did not want anyone coming in who might disclose where they were meeting or who was attending the meeting or what they were discussing. This indicates that not only did Jesus have the ability to appear and disappear at will, but that He could actually pass through doors and walls. Scientists tell us that it is theoretically possible for two objects to pass through each other and yet both remain intact. The theory goes like this. All matter is made up of atoms and around those atoms there are spaces. If you take the atoms of one object and the atoms of another object and line them up in such a way that the atoms of one object pass through the spaces of the atoms of the other object, you would, in effect, pass them through each other and both objects would remain intact.

Another characteristic of Jesus after His resurrection was that He could travel great distances in a moment of time. In those days, the principal means of travel was walking. The second means was to ride on an animal, such as a donkey. Another method of transportation was by chariot, but it seems in reading some of the passages after Christ's resurrection, that He was in one place and then immediately He was someplace else. The indication from the text is that He had the ability to travel great distances in a moment of time. The fastest thing in the material world known to man is the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second. Space is measured in light-years which is the distance that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second in one year, but yet there is something else that is faster. It is so fast that it cannot be measured and that is the speed of thought. Think it and you are there. For example, if you want to be in Hawaii, think it and you are there. As I was reflecting on this, I remembered an experience that I had many years ago. I was in college at the time. I had received word that my mother had gone to be with the Lord and I needed to be home with the family. Being young and a good deal inexperienced in those days, I thought, "I got to get there" and the quickest way that I knew was to put the peddle to the metal. At the time I owned a 1958 Chevrolet 6-cylinder, 215 cubic inch single-barrel carburetor, 3-speed manual transmission which had a top speed of 108 miles per hour. That's how I drove home on the Interstate, flat out at 108 miles per hour. But I noticed it did not seem like I was moving. My mind was already at home and even at 108 miles per hour, it seemed like I was standing still. I could not drive fast enough because my mind was already at its destination. Certainly, when one considers the vastness of God's creation, the concept of thought travel would not be unrealistic. Are not all things possible with Him?

Finally, it is a perfect body. Probably that is what we are all looking for most, a perfect body. I Corinthians 15 is the great chapter on the resurrection. Verse 42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead (speaking of the body). It is sown in corruption (subject to deterioration). It is raised in incorruption (perfect - without ability to ever deteriorate again). It is sown in dishonor (cursed by sin and its consequences). It is raised in glory (ever experiencing the presence of God). It is sown in weakness (subject to failure). It is raised in power (completely victorious). It is sown a natural body; (subject to limitations) it is raised a spiritual body" (not subject to limitations). This new spiritual body is material. It can be touched. It is capable of eating food. It can do the best of the present body, but much more. It can only experience the positives of God with none of the negatives of this corrupted world. Death cannot touch it. Injury cannot afflict it. What we have to look forward to is a body that is impervious to corruption, like unto our resurrected Lord. All that He is and experiences will be ours to enjoy for eternity.

**Reward Seat of Jesus**

A. The Bema Judgment Seat of Christ

1. The Meaning of the Bema Judgment

The Greek word bema (translated “judgment seat" in the KJV) was a familiar term to the people of Paul’s day. Dr. Lehman Strauss writes: “In the large Olympic arenas, there was an elevated seat on which the judge of the contest sat. After the contests were over, the successful competitors would assemble before the bema to receive their rewards or crowns. The bema was not a judicial bench where someone was condemned; it was a reward seat. Likewise, the Judgment Seat of Christ is not a judicial bench... the Christian life is a race, and the divine umpire is watching every contestant. After the church has run her course, He will gather every member before the bema for the purpose of examining each one and giving the proper reward to each."

1. The Fact of the Bema Judgment

But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:10-12).

“Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it...” (1 Cor. 3:13).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ... (2 Cor. 5:10).

1. The Purpose of the Bema Judgment

a. Negative considerations

1. The purpose of the Bema Judgment is not to determine whether a particular individual enters heaven or not, for every man's eternal destiny is already determined before he leaves this life.
2. The purpose of the Bema Judgment is not to punish believers for sins committed either before or after their salvation. The Scriptures are very clear that no child of God will have to answer for his sins after this life.

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:10-12).

“Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back” (Isa. 38:17).

“I have blotted out ... thy transgressions and ... thy sins” (Isa. 44:22).

“Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19).

“For I will be merciful... and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12).

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

b. Positive considerations

What is the purpose of the Bema Judgment? In 1 Corin­thians 4:2 Paul says that all Christians should conduct them­selves as faithful stewards of God: “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

The Apostle Peter later writes in a similar way: “Minister ... as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10).

In the New Testament world, a steward was the manager of a large household or estate. He was appointed by the owner and was entrusted to keep the estate running smoothly. He had the power to hire and fire and to spend and save, being answerable to the owner alone. His only concern was that periodic meeting with his master, at which time he was required to account for the condition of the estate up to that point.

With this background in mind, it may be said that someday at the Bema Judgment all stewards will stand before their Lord and Master and be required to give an account of the way they have used their privileges and responsibilities from the moment of their conversion.

In conclusion, it can be seen that:

1. In the past God dealt with us as sinners (Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 5:6-8).
2. In the present, God deals with us as sons (Rom. 8:14; Heb. 12:5-11; 1 John 3:1,2).
3. In the future, God will deal with us (at the Bema) as stewards.
4. The Materials to be Tested at the Bema Judgment

In 1 Corinthians 3:11 the Apostle Paul explains the glorious fact that at the moment of salvation a repenting sinner is firmly placed on the foundation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Paul says, "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon ... Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is’’ (1 Cor. 3:10,12,13).

1. Negative considerations

It should be noted immediately that this passage does not teach the false doctrine known as purgatory, for it is the believer’s works and not the believer himself that will be subjected to the fires!

1. Positive considerations

From these verses it is apparent that God classifies the works of believers into one of the following six areas: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. There has been much speculation about the kinds of work that will constitute gold or silver. But it seems more ap­propriate to note that the six objects can be readily placed into two categories:

1. Those indestructible and worthy objects which will survive and thrive in the fire. These are the gold, silver, and precious stones.
2. Those destructible and worthless objects which will be totally consumed in the fire. These are the wood, hay, and stubble.

Though it is difficult to know just what goes to make up a "golden work" or a "stubble work,” we are nevertheless informed of certain general areas in which God is particularly interested.

1. How we treat other believers

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Matt. 10:41,42).

1. How we exercise our authority over others

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief...” (Heb. 13:17).

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (James 3:1).

1. How we employ our God-given abilities

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee ...” (2 Tim. 1:6).

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Cor. 12:4,11).

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

To these verses can be added the overall teaching of Jesus’ parables of the ten pounds (Luke 19:11-26) and the eight talents (Matt. 25:14-29).

1. How we use our money

“Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6,7).

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...” (1 Cor. 16:2).

1. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and per­secute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
2. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven...” (Matt. 5:11,12). "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:12,13).

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29,30).

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

1. How we spend our time

"... redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16).

"Walk in wisdom... redeeming the time” (Col. 4:5).

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Peter 1:17).

"So, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom” (Psa. 90:12).

1. How we run that particular race which God has chosen for us

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24).

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13,14).

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1).

“... that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain...” (Phil. 2:16).

1. How effectively we control the old nature

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is tem­perate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:25-27).

1. How many souls we witness to and win to Christ?

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30).

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 These. 2:19,20).

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

1. How we react to temptation (testing)

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2,3).

“Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

1. How much the doctrine of the Rapture means to us "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” [2 Tim. 4:8).
2. How faithful we are to the Word of God and the flock of God

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:2-4).

“1 charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word. . .” (2 Tim. 4:1,2). “Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:26-28).

1. The Results of the Bema Judgment *Seat of Christ*
2. Some will receive rewards

“If any man’s work abides which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (I Cor. 3:14). The Bible mentions at least five possible rewards. The rewards include:

1. The incorruptible crown — given to those who master the old nature (I Cor. 9:25-27).
2. The crown of rejoicing — given to soulwinners (Prov. 11:30; I Thess. 2:19,20; Dan. 12:3).
3. 'Hie crown of life — given to those who successfully endure temptation (James 1:2,3; Rev. 2:10).
4. The crown of righteousness — given to those who especially love the doctrine of the Rapture (2 Tim. 4:8).
5. The crown of glory — given to faithful preachers and teachers (I Peter 5:2-4; 2 Tim. 4:1,2; Acts 20:26-28).

It has been suggested that these "crowns” will actually be talents and abilities with which to glorify Christ. Thus, the greater the reward, the greater the ability!

1. Some will suffer loss

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. . .” (I Cor. 3:15).

This word for “suffer" is *zemioo* in the Greek New Testament, and is used again by Paul in Philippians chapter 3, where he describes those things which were the greatest source of pride to him prior to salvation. He tells us, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, of Pharisee; concerning zeal, per­secuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless (Phil. 3:5,6).

But after his conversion Paul writes, “. . .for whom I have suf­fered the loss of all things... that I may win Christ" (Phil.3:8).

The point of all these teachings is simply this: at the Bema Judgment the carnal Christian will suffer the loss of many past achievements, even as Paul did, but with one important ex­ception — Paul was richly compensated, since he suffered his loss to win Christ, while the carnal believer will receive nothing to replace his burned-up wood, hay, and stubble!

“Is it possible for someone who has earned certain rewards down here to lose them somehow through carnality?" Some believe this to be tragically possible on the basis of the following verses: “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 1:8).

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). “Let no man beguile you of your reward...” (Col.2:18).

1. The Old Testament Foreshadowing of the Bema Judgment Seat of Christ

Although the church is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, there is nevertheless a passage which can very easily be applied to the Bema Judgment. This can be found in the words of Boaz (a foreshadowing of Christ) to Ruth (a foreshadowing of the church), when he says, “It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done...The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:11,12).

Thus, is described the destiny of the saved. But what of the unsaved? What will be their lot? An Old Testament writer (Daniel), and one in the New Testament (John) vividly describe for us the awful future of all unsaved people!

**Marriage of the Lamb**

1. The Fact of the Marriage

Many passages in the Word of God teach that the most fantastic and wonderful wedding of all time is yet to take place in this universe.

1. This Marriage is Described through the Parables of Jesus.

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding” (Luke 12:35,36).

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son” (Matt. 22:2).

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matt. 25:1).

1. This Marriage Is Described through the Vision of John.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7).

1. The Host of the Marriage

The New Testament very clearly presents the Father as the divine host who gives this marriage. He is pictured as preparing it, then sending his servants out to invite the selected guests (Luke 14:16-23).

1. The Bridegroom of the Marriage

The Father’s beloved Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), the Lord Jesus Christ, is the bridegroom!

1. As Stated by John the Baptist.

“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must in­crease, but I must decrease" (John 3:27-30).

1. As Stated by the Lord Jesus Christ

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And they said unto him, why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers . . . but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days” (Luke 5:32-35).

1. The Bride of the Marriage

In two key passages the Apostle Paul makes crystal clear the identity of the bride:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:22-32).

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2).

1. The Guests of the Marriage

"And he saith unto me, Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...” (Rev. 19:9).

Who are these invited guests of the Lamb's Marriage to the church?

1. In General

A group which would include all believing Gentiles who were converted prior to Pentecost or after the Rapture.

1. In Particular

A group which would include all saved Israelites everywhere. The ten virgins mentioned in Matthew 25 are Israelites. The five wise represent saved Israelites and the five foolish represent unsaved ones. They cannot represent the church, for the church is the bride, inside with the bridegroom! The virgins are guests who have been invited to the wedding. Note that a bride is never invited to her own wedding. If she refuses to come, there is no wedding!

1. The Service Schedule of the Marriage

The marriage of Christ to the church will follow the oriental pattern of marriage as described for us in the New Testament. It consisted of three separate stages:

1. The Betrothal Stage.

New Testament marriages were often begun when the couple was very young (sometimes even prior to birth) by the groom’s father. He would sign a legal enactment before the proper judge, pledging his son to a chosen girl. The father would then offer the proper dowry payment. Thus, even though the bride had never seen the groom, she was nevertheless betrothed or espoused to him. A New Testament example of this first step was that of Mary and Joseph. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise; when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18).

Both Mary and Joseph had come from Bethlehem and had perhaps been betrothed, or promised to each other, since childhood. But now Mary was found to be with child before the marriage could be consummated, and of course Joseph could arrive at only one conclusion—she had been untrue to him! Then the angel of the Lord explained to Joseph the glories of the virgin birth!

Thus, the betrothal stage consisted of two steps:

1. The selection of the bride
2. The payment of the dowry

With this in mind we can state that the marriage of the Lamb is still in its betrothal stage:

1. The bride has been selected!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love’’ (Eph. 1:3,4).

1. The dowry has been paid!

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s’’ (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot’’ (1 Peter 1:18,19).

1. The Presentation Stage.

At the proper time the father would send to the house of the bride servants carrying the proper legal contract. The bride would then be led to the home of the groom’s father.

When all was ready, the father of the bride would place her hand in the hand of the groom’s father. He would then place her hand in that of his son.

Applying this background to the marriage of the Lamb, the church still awaits this second phase, the presentation stage, which we know as the Rapture! The following verses speak of this presen­tation stage:

"... Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it... that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish’’ (Eph. 5:25,27).

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ..(Jude 24).

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7,8).

Then follow the events which comprise the second stage:

1. The Heavenly Father will send for the bride.

“After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither...” (Rev. 4:1)

1. The proper legal papers of marriage will be shown

“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his... (2 Tim. 2:19)

1. The bride will be taken to the Father’s home

“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3).

1. The Celebration Stage.

After the private marriage service was completed the public marriage supper would begin. To these many guests would be in­vited. It was during such a celebration that our Lord performed his first miracle, that of changing water into wine (see John 2:1-11). Jesus later made reference to this third step when he spoke the following words:

“Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding... Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them” (Luke 12:35-37).

“Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper and bade many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready” (Luke 14:16,17).

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding...” (Matt. 22:2,3).

1. The Time of the Marriage

When does the wedding transpire? In view of what has already been said, it would seem that the wedding service (the presentation stage) will be privately conducted in heaven, perhaps shortly after the Bema Judgment Seat of Christ. The wedding supper (the celebration stage) will be publicly conducted on earth shortly after the second coming of Christ.

It is no accident that the Bible describes the millennium as occurring right after the celebration supper has begun. (The supper is described in Revelation 19 while the millennium is described in Revelation 20.)

In New Testament times the length and cost of this supper was determined by the wealth of the father. Therefore, when his beloved Son is married, the Father of all grace (whose wealth is unlimited) will rise to the occasion by giving his Son and the bride a hallelujah celebration which will last for a thousand years!

1. The Certainty of the Marriage

Earthly marriages may be prevented because of various unexpected problems.

1. In an Earthly Wedding there Can Be a Last-Minute Refusal on the Part of Either the Bride or Groom, but not with the Heavenly Marriage!
2. The bridegroom has already expressed his great love for his bride (Eph. 5:25), and he never changes!

“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

“. . . Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

1. The bride has already been glorified and is sinless, and therefore cannot be tempted into changing her mind or losing her love for the Bridegroom!

“For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:4) .... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle ... but... holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

1. In an Earthly Wedding a Serious Legal Problem Might Arise, such as Lack of Age, or even that of a Previous Marriage — but not in the Heavenly Wedding! (See Romans 8:33-39).
2. In an Earthly Wedding the Tragedy of Death Might Intervene — but not in the Heavenly Wedding!
3. The bride will never die.

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:26).

1. The Bridegroom will never die.

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forever more; Amen” (Rev. 1:18).

**The Final Week of Human History**

**Tribulation period**

**Various Names for the Tribulation:**

1. The Day of the Lord (Isa. 2:12).
2. The Day of God’s Vengeance (Isa. 34:8; 63:1-6).
3. The Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer. 30:7).
4. The Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27).
5. The Time of the End (Dan. 12:9).
6. The Great Day of His Wrath [Rev. 6:17).
7. The Hour of His Judgment (Rev. 14:7).
8. The End of This World (Matt. 13:40,49).
9. The Indignation (Isa. 26:20; 34:2).
10. The Overspreading of Abominations (Dan. 9:27).
11. The Time of Trouble such as Never Was (Dan. *12:1).*
12. The Nature of the Tribulation:

The following passages aptly describe this future and fearful time.

“Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand . . . Therefore, shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt . . . 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 . . . And I will punish the world for their evil. . ." (Isa. 13:6,7,10,11).

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

“Behold, the Lord make the earth empty . . . and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof . . . 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 . . ." (Isa. 24:1,19,20).

“For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies . . . Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll..." (Isa. 34:2-4).

“I have trodden the winepress alone ... for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart... And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury...” (Isa. 63:3,4,6).

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places ... And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold ... 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 . . .” (Matt. 24:7,11,12,21,22).

“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 ... for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25,26).

”... the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 These. 5:2,3).

”... and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:12-17).

1. The Purpose of the Tribulation:

Why this terrible period? At least six scriptural reasons are forthcoming:

1. To Harvest the Crop that has been Sown Throughout the Ages by God, Satan, and Mankind.

This aspect is so important that our Lord took an entire ser­mon to discuss it. Portions of his message are as follows:

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

When pressed for an explanation concerning the meaning of this parable, our Lord said:

He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:37-43).

1. To Prove the Falseness of the Devil's Claim.

Since his fall (Isa. 14:12-14), Satan has been attempting to convince a skeptical universe that he, rather than Christ, is the logical and rightful ruler of creation. Therefore, during the Tribulation the sovereign God will give him a free and unhindered hand to make good his boast. Needless to say, Satan will fail miserably!

1. *To Prepare a Great Martyred Multitude for Heaven.*

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb” (Rev. 7:9,14).

1. To Prepare a Great Living Multitude for the Millennium.

*“And* before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:32-34).

1. To Punish the Gentiles.

*"For* the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." (Rom. 1:18).

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 These. 2:11,12).

“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations” (Rev. 19:15).

1. *To Purge Israel.*

“And I will cause you to pass under the rod ... and I will purge out from among you the rebels...” (Ezek. 20:37,38).

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zech. 13:8,9).

“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mai. 3:3).

1. The Length of the Tribulation

To establish this time-span we must now briefly consider the most important, the most amazing, and the most profound single prophecy in the entire Word of God! It is often referred to as the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, and was written by Daniel, who was living in Babylon around 550 B.C. Daniel, a former Jewish captive, had been reading Jeremiah’s prophecy, which predicted that after a seventy-year cap­tivity period, God would permit the Jews to return to Jerusalem (Jer. 25:11; 29:10). As Daniel studied those words he began to pray, con­fessing both his sins and the sins of Israel. During this powerful and tearful prayer, the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and related to him the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, which reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

1. To Whom Does this Prophecy Refer? It Refers to Israel!
2. *What is Meant by the Term "Seventy Weeks?"*

In his correspondence course on the book of Daniel, Dr. Alfred Martin of Moody Bible Institute writes the following helpful words:

The expression translated "seventy weeks” is literally "seventy sevens.” Apart from the context, one would not know what the “sevens” were. This expression in Hebrew would be as ambiguous as if one were to say in English, “I went to the store and bought a dozen.” A dozen of what?

One of the basic principles of interpretation is that one must always interpret in the light of the context, that is, in the light of the passage in which a given statement occurs. As one searches this context, remembering that the vision was given in answer to the prayer, one notes that Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah that God would “accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Dan. 9:2). This is the clue. Daniel is told in effect, “Yes, God will accomplish seventy years in the captivity; but now He is showing you that the whole history of the people of Israel will be consummated in a period of seventy sevens of years.”

To further clarify the meaning of the Seventy Weeks, it should be noted that Israel had in its calendar not only a week of seven days (as in Exod. 23:12), but also a “week” of seven years (Lev. 25:3,4,8- 10; Gen. 29:27,28). In other words, God is here telling Daniel that he would continue to deal with Israel for another 490 years before bringing in everlasting righteousness!

1. When was the Seventy-Week Period to Begin?

It was to begin with the command to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls. The first two chapters of Nehemiah inform us that this command was issued during the twentieth year of Artaxerxes’ accession. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* sets this date on March 14, 445 B.C.

1. What are the Four Distinct Time Periods Mentioned within the Seventy-Week Prophecy and What was to Happen during Each Period?
2. First period

Seven weeks (forty-nine years), from 445 B.C. to 396 B.C. The key event during this time was the building of the streets and walls of Jerusalem "even in troublous times.” This literally took place! See Nehemiah 2-6.

1. Second period

Sixty-two weeks (434 years), from 396 B.C. to A.D. 30. At the end of this second period the Messiah was crucified! See Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19.

The brilliant British scholar and Bible student, Sir Robert Anderson, has reduced the first two periods into their exact number of days. This he has done by multiplying 483 (the combined years of the first two periods) by 360 (the days in a biblical year, as pointed out in Genesis 7:11,24; 8:3,4).

The total number of days in the first sixty-nine weeks (or 483 years) is 173,880. Anderson then points out that if one begins counting on March 14, 445 B.C., and goes forward in history, these days would run out on April 6, A.D. 32.

It was on this very day that Jesus made his triumphal entry into the city *of Jerusalem!* Surely our Lord must have had Daniel's prophecy in mind when he said, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes’ (Luke 19:42).

Of course, it was also on this same day that the Pharisees plotted to murder Christ (Luke 19:47). Thus Daniel, writing some five-and-one- half centuries earlier, correctly predicted the very day of Christ’s presentation and rejection!

1. Third period

One-half week (3 1/2 years), the first half of the Tribulation. At the beginning of this period the antichrist will make a seven-year pact with Israel.

1. Fourth period

One-half week (3 1/2 years), the last half of the Tribulation. At the beginning of this period the antichrist will break his pact with Israel and will begin his terrible bloodbath. At the end of the last week (and of the entire seventy-week period), the true Messiah will come and establish his perfect millennium!

1. Do the Seventy Weeks Run Continuously? That Is to Say, Is there a Gap Somewhere between these 490 Years, or Do They Run without Pause until They are Completed?

Dispensational theology teaches that these "weeks” do not run continuously, but that there has been a gap or parenthesis of nearly 2000 years between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week.

The chronology may be likened to a seventy-minute basketball game. For sixty-nine minutes the game has been played at a furious and continuous pace. Then the referee for some reason calls time out with the clock in the red and showing one final minute of play. No one knows for sure when the action will start again, but at some point the referee will step in and blow his whistle. At that time the teams will gather to play out the last minute of the game.

God has stepped in and stopped the clock of prophecy at Calvary. This divine "time out” has already lasted some twenty centuries, but soon now the Redeemer will blow his trumpet and the final "week” of action will be played upon this earth!

1. Does the Bible Offer any other Examples of Time Gaps in Divine Programs?

It does indeed. At least three instances come to mind in which gaps of many centuries can be found in a single short paragraph.

1. Isaiah 9:6,7

"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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom...”

In the first part of verse 6 a gap of at least twenty centuries is separated by a colon. The phrase “unto us a son is given” refers to Bethlehem, while the words “and the government shall be upon his shoulder” look forward to the millennium.

1. Zechariah 9:9,10

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass ... And he shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”

Verse 9 is a clear reference to the triumphal entry of our Lord, but verse 10 looks ahead to the millennium.

1. Isaiah 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 brokenhearted, 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...”

In verse 2 of this passage Christ’s earthly ministry (to “proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”) and the Tribulation (the “day of vengeance of our God”) are separated by only a comma! It is extremely important to note that when Jesus read this passage during his sermon in Nazareth, he ended the reading at this comma, for “the day of vengeance" was not the purpose of his first coming! See Luke 4:18,19.

1. The Chronology of the Tribulation:

As we have learned from Daniel chapter 9 the Tribulation will last for 7 years. I would now like to divide this period into three main time slots and examine those events which I believe will transpire during each slot. These are:

The first half (approximately 3 1/2 years)

The brief middle period (undetermined time period—perhaps only a few weeks)

The last half (approximately 3 1/2 years)

1. *The First Half of the Tribulation (3 1/2 years)*
2. The formal organization of the super harlot church

It is composed of apostate masses from Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, and every other major world religion.

* + - 1. b. The appearance of the Antichrist

“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High... “(Dan. 7:25).

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak... things against the God of gods...“(Dan. 11:36).

“. . .that man of sin. . .the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is wor­shipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. . .Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, will all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:3,4,9).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (I John 2:22).

“And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2).

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea. . .And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power. . .and great authority. . .And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God..." (Rev. 13:1,2,6).

The Tribulation

These passages describe for us the most powerful and perverted person who will ever walk the paths of this earth. We shall briefly examine this vile and vicious man along the following lines:

1. His personal characteristics
2. He will be an intellectual genius (Dan. 8:23).
3. He will be an oratorical genius (Dan. 11:36).
4. He will be a political genius (Rev. 17:11,12).
5. He will be a commercial genius (Rev, 13:16,17; Dan. 11:43).
6. He will be a military genius (Rev. 6:2; 13:4).
7. He will be a religious genius (Rev. 13:8; 2 These. 2:4).
8. His identity
9. Some believe the Antichrist will be a Gentile, since he comes from the sea (Rev. 13:1), which is often a symbol for Gentile and heathen nations.
10. Some believe he will be a resurrected individual, on the basis of Revelation 13:3 and 17:8.
11. Some believe he will be Judas Iscariot, on the basis of the following verses:

John 6:70,71. Here Jesus refers to Judas as the Devil.

Luke 22;3; John 13:27. Here Satan actually enters Judas. This is never said of any other individual in the Bible.

John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3. The title “son of perdition’’ is only found twice in the New Testament. In the first instance Jesus used it to refer to Judas. In the second instance Paul used it to refer to the Antichrist.

Acts 1:25. Here Peter says that Judas after his death went “to his own place." Some have seen in this a reference to the bottomless pit, and believe that Satan has retained Judas here for the past 2,000 years in preparation for his future role of the Antichrist!

1. His rise to power
2. Through the power of Satan (Rev. 13:4; 2 Thess. 2:3, 9- 12).
3. Through the permission of the Holy Spirit. His present- day manifestation is being hindered by the Holy Spirit until the Rapture of the church. God is in control of all situations and will continue to be! (See Job 1 and 2,2 These. 2:6,7).
4. Through the formation of a ten-nation organization.

He will proceed from a ten-dictatorship confederation which will come into existence during the tribulation.

1. Through the cooperation of the false religious system (Rev. 17).
2. Through his personal charisma and ability.
3. Through a false [or real)? resurrection (Rev. 13:3).
4. Through a false peace program, probably in the Middle East (Dan. 8:25).
5. Through a master plan of deception and trickery (Matt. 24:24; 2 These. 2:9; Rev. 13:14).
6. His activities
7. He begins by controlling the western power block (Rev. 17:12).

(h) He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel but breaks it after 3 1/2 years (Dan. 9:27).

1. He gains absolute control over the Middle East after the Russian invasion (Ezek. 38.39).
2. He attempts to destroy all of Israel (Rev. 12).
3. He destroys the false religious system, so that he may rule unhindered (Rev. 17:16,17).
4. He thereupon sets himself up as God (Dan. 11:36,37; 2 Thess. 2:4-11; Rev. 13:5).
5. He briefly rules over all nations (Psa. 2; Dan. 11:36; Ecc. 13:16).
6. He is utterly crushed by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19).
7. He is the first creature to be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).
8. His amazing ability to imitate

The following areas in which he will attempt to imitate the person and work of Christ.

1. The Antichrist comes in the very image of Satan, as Christ came in the image of God. (Compare Rev. 13:4 and 2 Thess. 2:9 with Col. 1:15 and Heb. 1:3).
2. The Antichrist is the second person in the hellish trinity, as Christ is in the heavenly trinity. (Compare Rev. 16:13 with Matt. 28:19).
3. The Antichrist comes up from the abyss while Christ comes down from heaven. (Compare Rev. 11:7 and 17:8 with John 6:38).
4. The Antichrist is a savage beast while Christ is a sacrificial lamb. (Compare Rev. 13:2 with Rev. 5:6-9).
5. The Antichrist receives his power from Satan, as Christ received his power from his Father. (Compare Rev. 13:2 with Matt. 28:18).
6. The Antichrist will experience a resurrection (perhaps a fake one), just as Christ experienced a true one! (Compare Rev. 13:3,12with Rom. 1:4).
7. The Antichrist will receive the worship of all un­believers, as Christ did of all believers. (Compare Rev. 13:3,4,8 and John 5:43 with Matt. 2:11; Luke 24:52; John 20:28; Phil. 2:10,11).
8. The Antichrist will deliver mighty speeches, as did Christ. (Compare Dan. 7:8 and Rev. 13:5 with John 7:46).
9. The greater part of the Antichrist’s ministry will last some 3 1/2 years, about the time span of Christ’s ministry. (Compare Rev. 13:5 and 12:6,14 with John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55).
10. The Antichrist will attempt (unsuccessfully) to combine the three Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king, as someday Christ will successfully do!
11. The Antichrist’s symbolic number is 6, while the symbolic number of Christ is 7. (Compare Rev. 13:18 with Rev. 5:6,12).
12. The Antichrist will someday kill his harlot wife, while Christ will someday glorify his holy bride. (Compare Rev. 17:16,17 with Rev. 21:1,2).
13. The appearance of the False Prophet

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth...” (Rev. 13:11).

1. His identity

Who is this second beast of Revelation 13 who is also called on three later occasions “the False Prophet" (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10)? Some believe he will head up the apostate church.

1. His activities

It has already been pointed out that the Antichrist will attempt to mimic Christ; it would appear that the False Prophet will try to copy the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the heavenly trinity (Matt. 28:19), while the False Prophet is the third person of the hellish trinity (Rev. 16:13).
2. The Holy Spirit leads men into all truth (John 16:13), while the False Prophet seduces men into all error (Rev. 13:11,14).
3. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:13,14), while the False Prophet glorifies the Antichrist (Rev. 13:12).
4. The Holy Spirit made fire to come down from heaven at Pentecost (Acts 2:3), while the False Prophet will do likewise on earth in view of men (Rev. 13:13).
5. The Holy Spirit gives life (Rom. 8:2), while the False Prophet kills (Rev. 13:15).
6. The Holy Spirit marks with a seal all those who belong to God (Eph. 1:13), while the False Prophet marks those who worship Satan (Rev. 13:16,17).
7. His mark

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath un­derstanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six-hundred threescore and six' (Rev. 13:16-18).

Perhaps no other single passage in the Word of God has been the object of more silly and serious speculation than this one. How are we to understand the number 666?

In concluding this section, we shall quote from two well-known authors Rene Pache and John Walvoord:

In Greek (as in Hebrew and in Latin) the letters of the alphabet serve likewise as signs for the figures. Alpha signifies one; beta, two, etc. For any name it is, therefore, possible to add together the numerical value of each letter and to arrive at a total which forms ‘the number of a man.’

The name of the Antichrist will give the total of 666. Men have sought to apply this method with reference to all the persons in history who have seemed to be the Antichrist. By more or less arranging the letters of the titles of these persons they have arrived at the number 666 for the names of Nero, Mohammed, the Pope, Napoleon, and even Hitler, not to speak of many others. In our opinion the proof that these interpretations are still premature is that they are all contradictory. We are convinced that when the last and great An­tichrist appears, the true believers of the entire world will recognize him. The Holy Spirit will give to them enough light to calculate unanimously the number of his name.

Probably the simplest explanation here is the best, that the triple six is the number of a man, each digit falling short of the perfect number seven. Six in the scripture is man’s number. He was to work six days and rest the seventh. The image of Nebuchadnezzar was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad. Whatever may be the deeper meaning of the number, it implies that this title, referring to the first beast, Satan’s masterpiece, limits him to man’s level, which is far short of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Whatever is involved in this hellish mark, it is apparently very important, for it is referred to again no less than six times! (See Rev. 14:9,11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

1. The Conversion of the 144,000

No ink will be wasted here refuting the silly and unscriptural claim of that sect known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who brazenly claim that their devilish group today comprises this 144,000! The Bible clearly teaches that the 144,000 will consist of 12,000 saved and commissioned preachers from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

1. The revival of the old Roman Empire

In Daniel chapter 2, we are told that the old Roman Empire will be revived during the last days. Furthermore, it would consist of western nations!

One has to consult his newspaper in order to follow the rapid present-day fulfillment of this revived Roman Empire prophecy! Students of history will readily agree that the unity of any empire of nations depends upon four factors. These are the military, the economic, the political, and the religious.

* + 1. The political aspect

This will be brought into being by the Antichrist

1. The religious aspect

This will be brought into being by the False Prophet.

We conclude this section with a quotation from Dr. Donald Barnhouse:

Many men have been haunted with the idea of a revival of this empire, but it has never yet been revived. Charlemagne attempted it, and the pope who crowned him Emperor on Christmas Day of the year 800 no doubt saw a revival of Caesar’s power. But at Charlemagne's death the dream vanished, and the division of his kingdom at the treaty of Verdun in 843 laid the foundation for all the wars of Western Europe since that time. The Holy Roman Empire was then established, and it moved in spectral fashion across the history of the centuries that followed — never achieved, yet never forgotten. Napoleon found himself on an island in the South Atlantic after he had con­solidated European power for a few brief moments and named his own little boy ‘the king of Rome.' Mussolini added a worthless African plateau to the territory of Rome and immediately proclaimed a ‘Roman Empire/ a haunting name, evoking thoughts of grandeur and glory that have never been forgotten since the Roman legions wrote their laws in letters of blood across the Mediterranean lands. But the death stroke of the Roman Empire most certainly will be healed. God’s Word will never pass away. Every jot and tittle must be fulfilled.

1. The pouring out of the first six seals (Rev. 6:1-17)

Especially to be noted are the first four of these seals:

1. First Seal

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see” (Rev. 6:2).

1. Second Seal

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (Rev. 6:3-4).

1. Third Seal

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6:5-6).

1. Fourth Seal

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was death, and Hell followed with him. And Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:7-8).

1. The mass return of the Jews to Palestine

Even today we see the beginning of this future Israelite ingathering.

They have been gathered from over one hundred countries.

Three additional passages bear out this latter-day Jewish return:

For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land... (Ezek. 34:11-13).

Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth (Isa. 43:5,6).

1. The rebuilding of the Jewish temple

There is ample scriptural evidence to show that the Antichrist will allow (and perhaps even encourage) the building of the temple and the rendering of its sacrifices during the Tribulation. See Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:14,15; 11:2.

1. The ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-13)
2. Their identity

A number of scholars believe these two are Moses and Elijah.

1. Their ministry
2. To prophesy in sackcloth before men as God’s anointed lampstands.
3. To destroy their enemies in the same manner that their enemies would attempt to destroy them.
4. To prevent rain for 3 1/2 years.
5. To turn waters into blood.
6. To smite the earth with every kind of plague.
7. Their death
8. The Antichrist is finally allowed to kill them.
9. To show his contempt for them, he refuses to permit their dead bodies to be buried, but leaves them to rot in the streets of Jerusalem.
10. All the earth celebrates their deaths through a hellish Christmas; men actually send gifts to each other!
11. The dead bodies of these two prophets are viewed by all the nations of the world in a 3 1/2-day period.
12. Their resurrection (here the work “great” appears three times)
13. A great voice calls them up to heaven (Rev. 11:12).
14. A great fear falls upon those who witness this (Rev. 11:11).
15. A great earthquake levels one-tenth of Jerusalem and kills 7,000 prominent men (Rev. 11:13).
16. The Middle Segment of the Tribulation (a brief un­determined period)

*We* have already suggested that the seven-year Tribulation may be broken up into three sections. The first part is 3 1/2 years, the middle perhaps just a few days, and the last again 3 1/2 years. We shall now observe six important events which may, with some degree of certainty, be placed in this brief middle period.

1. The Gog and Magog invasion into Palestine (Ezek. 38,39)

“Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophecy against him, and say, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. . ” (Ezek. 38:2,3, American Standard Version, 1901).

(1) The identity of the invaders

Where is the land of Magog? It seems almost certain that these verses in Ezekiel refer to none other than the Russian people. Note the following three­fold proof of this.

1. Geographical proof

Ezekiel tells us in three distinct passages (38:6,15; 39:2) that this invading nation will come from the “Uttermost parts of the north” (as the original Hebrew renders it). A quick glance at any world map will show that only Russia can fulfill this description.

1. Historical proof

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus (first century A. D.) assures us that the descendants of Magog (who was Japheth's son and Noah's grandson) migrated to an area north of Palestine. But even prior to Josephus, the famous Greek historian Herodotus (fifth century B.C. writes that Meshech’s descendants settled north of Palestine.

1. Linguistic proof

Dr. John Walvoord writes concerning this,

In Ezekiel 38, Gog is described as 'the prince of Rosh (ASV). The Authorized Version ex­presses it as the ‘chief prince.' The translation 'the prince of Rosh' is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew. 'Rosh' may be the root of the modern term, 'Russia.'

1. The allies in the invasion

Ezekiel lists five nations who will join Russia during her invasion. These are Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomar, and Togarmah. These may (although there is some un­certainty) refer to the following present-day nations:

Persia — Modern Iran

Ethiopia — Black African nations (South Africa)

Libya — Arabic African nations (North Africa)

Gomer — East Germany

Togarmah — Southern Russia and the Cossacks, or perhaps Turkey

1. The reasons for the invasion
2. To cash in on the riches of Palestine (Ezek. 38:11,12).
3. To control the Middle East ancient conquerors have always known that he who would control Europe, Asia, and Africa must first control that Middle East bridge which leads to these three con­tinents!
4. To challenge the authority of the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40-44).
5. The destruction of the invaders

Upon her return, Russia is soundly defeated upon the mountains of Israel. This smashing defeat is effected by the following events, caused by God Himself:

1. A mighty earthquake (Ezek. 38:19,20).
2. Mutiny among the Russian troops (Ezek. 38:21).
3. A plague among the troops (Ezek. 38:22).
4. Floods, great hailstones, fire and brimstone (Ezek. 38:22; 39:6).
5. The results of the invasion
6. Five-sixths (83%) of the Russian soldiers are destroyed (Ezek. 39:2).
7. The first grisly feast of God begins (Ezek. 39:4, 17,18,18,20). A similar feast would seem to take place later, after the battle of Armagedon (Rev. 19:17,18; Matt. 24:28).
8. The threat will cease forever.
9. Seven months will be spent in burying the dead (Ezek. 39:11-15).
10. Seven years will be spent in burying the weapons of war (Ezek. 39:9,10).
11. The martyrdom of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7)

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”

There is a hint in Revelation 11:8 that the two witnesses will be crucified by the Antichrist!

1. The martyrdom of the 144,00 Hebrew evangelists (Rev. 14:1-5) “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1).
2. The casting out of heaven’s monster (Rev. 12:3-15)
3. The identity of this monster.

There is no doubt whatever concerning the identity of this “creature from the clouds.” He is pinned down by no less than four titles.

1. The Great Red Dragon - Rev. 12:3
2. That Old Serpent - Rev. 12:9
3. The Devil-Rev. 12:9
4. Satan-Rev. 12:9
5. The location of this monster

Satan has been, is now, or shall be in one of the following locations:

1. In heaven, as God’s anointed angel (past location - Ezek. 28:14)
2. In heaven, as God’s chief enemy (present location - Job 1,2)
3. On earth, as the Antichrist’s spiritual guide (future location, during the tribulation - Rev. 12:12)
4. In the bottomless pit (future, during the millennium - Rev. 20:1-3)
5. On earth again (future, after the millennium - Rev. 20:8,9)
6. In the lake of fire (future and forever - Rev. 20:10)
7. The activities of this monster
8. He deceives all living unbelievers (Rev. 12:9)
9. He accuses all departed believers (Rev. 12:10)
10. He persecutes the nation Israel (Rev. 12:13)
11. The destruction of the false church (Rev. 17:16)

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”

One of the most ironical turn of events in all history will be the destruction of the false church. For this evil organization will meet its doom not at the hands of Gabriel, or the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit, but the Antichrist!

We have already seen how the false church elevates the Antichrist into power. But then she apparently attempts to control him. He will have none of it, however, and will destroy her buildings, burn her holy books, and murder her priests!

1. The Last Half of the Tribulation (3 1/2 years)
2. The full manifestation of the Antichrist

After the judgment of Russia, the destruction of the false church, and the murder of most of God’s preachers (the 144,000 and the two witnesses), an unbelievable vacuum will undoubtedly settle down upon the world. The Antichrist will immediately exploit this. The following is but a suggestion of the chronology of events which may take place at this critical time.

1. The Antichrist and his False Prophet make their headquarters in Jerusalem after God destroys Russia.
2. Here in the holy city, perhaps during a television speech, the Antichrist is suddenly assassinated, as millions of astonished viewers watch (Rev. 13:3,14).
3. Before his burial — perhaps during the state funeral — he suddenly rises from the dead. The world is electrified.
4. The Antichrist is immediately worshiped by the world as God.
5. The False Prophet thereupon makes a statue of the An­tichrist, causes it to speak, and places it in the Holy of Holies (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thess. 2:4).
6. A law is passed which stipulates that no one can buy, sell, work, or obtain any necessity of life unless he carries a special mark on his right hand or his forehead to identify him as a worshiper of the beast (Rev. 13:16,17).
7. The number of this mark is 666 (Rev. 13:18).
8. The worldwide persecution of Israel

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. . . (Dan. 12:1).

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matt. 24:21).

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child (Rev. 12:13).

When the Israelites see the statue of the Antichrist standing in their Holy of Holies, the words of Christ will come to their minds. He had warned them of this very thing many centuries earlier (Matt. 24:15-20).

There are two key passages which suggest that at least one third of Israel will escape the wrath of the Antichrist and be hidden out by God during the final 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation. Note:

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent (Rev. 12:14).

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say. The Lord is my God (Zech. 13:9).

Some believe this hiding place will be in the ancient city of Petra!

1. The pouring out of the last seal judgment (Rev. 8,9,11:15-19)

This final seal judgment consists of seven trumpet plagues.

1. The pouring out of the seven bowls of judgment (Rev. 8,9,11:15- 19)
2. The sudden destruction of economic and political Babylon

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Rev. 14:8).

... and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierce­ness of his wrath (Rev. 16:19).

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen ... (Rev. 18:1,2).

Literal Babylon will be rebuilt during the Tribulation. The Old Testament city of Babylon is mentioned more times in the Bible than any other city with the exception of Jerusalem. It is mentioned no less than 260 times! We shall now note several features involved in the destruction of Babylon.

1. The source of her destruction—God himself! See Revelation 18:8,20.
2. The means of her destruction—it would almost seem that atomic power of some sort is used to accomplish this! This is strongly suggested by the swiftness of the judgment, the raging fires, and the distance kept by those who watched her burn—possibly due to fear of radioactive fallout! See Revelation 18:9,10,15,17,18,19.
3. The reaction to her destruction
4. By those on earth

“And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate” (Rev. 18:19).

1. By those in heaven

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her” (Rev. 18:20).

There are three events in the Tribulation which cause all of heaven to rejoice.

1. When Satan is cast out (Rev. 12:12).
2. When Babylon is destroyed (Rev. 18:20).
3. When the Lamb is married to the church (Rev. 19:7).
4. The reasons for her destruction
5. Because the city will become the headquarters of all demonic activity during the Tribulation (Rev. 18:2),
6. Because of her devilish pride (Rev. 18:7).
7. Because of her gross materialism. This wicked city will import and export twenty-eight principal items of merchandise, beginning with gold and ending with the bodies of men (Rev. 18:12,13)!
8. Because of her drug activities (Rev. 18:23).
9. Because of her blood shedding (Rev. 18:24).
10. The Battle of Armageddon

The Holy Spirit of God has chosen five capable authors to describe for us in clear and chilling language that most famous of all battles—Armageddon! These five authors are David, Isaiah, Joel, Zechariah, and John.

Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He who sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his great displeasure. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:l-5,9).

Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye peoples; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stench shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom (Isa. 34:1-6).

I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I will tread down the peoples in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and 1 will bring down their strength to the earth (Isa. 63:3,4,6).

I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will judge them there for my people and my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land .. . Proclaim this among the Gentiles, Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up; beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come all ye nations and gather yourselves together round about; there cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 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 3:2,9- 16).

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem (Zech. 12:2).

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle . .. And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth (Zech. 14:2,3,12).

And 1 looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying. Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (Rev. 14:14-20).

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:11-21).

A former president of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences, helped by historians from Britain, Egypt, Germany and India, and using an electronic computer, has found that since 3600 B.C. the world has known only 292 years of peace. In this period of more than 55 centuries there have been 14,531 wars, large and small, in which more than 3.6 billion were killed. Since 650 B.C., there have been 1,656 arms races, all except 16 ending in war, and those 16 ended in economic collapse for the countries concerned.

But this coming War of Armageddon will be by far the biggest, boldest, bloodiest, most brazen, and blasphemous of all times!

Dr. Herman A. Hoyt aptly describes the location and size of this battle.

The staggering dimensions of this conflict can scarcely be conceived by man. The battlefield will stretch from Megiddo on the north (Zech. 12:11; Rev. 16:16) to Edom on the south (Isa. 34:5,6; 63:1), a distance of sixteen hundred furlongs—approximately 200 miles. It will reach from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the hills of Moab on the east, a distance of almost one hundred miles. It will include the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2,12) and the Plains of Esdraelon. At the center of the entire area will be the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1,2). Into this area the multiplied millions of men, doubtless approaching 400 million, will be crowded for the final holocaust of humanity. The kings with their armies will come from the north and the south, from the east and from the west ... In the most dramatic sense this will be the ‘Valley of decision for humanity (Joel 3:14) and the great winepress into which will be poured the fierce­ness of the wrath of Almighty God (Rev. 19:15).

(1) The reasons for this battle:

What will draw all the nations of the world into the area of Armageddon? They will gather themselves there for perhaps various reasons. It would seem that the following are three of the more important reasons:

(a) Because of the sovereignty of God.

In at least five distinct passages we are told that God himself will gather the nations here:

“ ... he hath delivered them to the slaughter" (Isa. 34:2).

“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat...” (Joel 3:2).

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle..(Zech. 14:2).

”... For my determination is to gather the nations ... to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger...” (Zech. 3:8).

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16).

1. Because of the deception of Satan (Rev. 16:13,14).

In this passage we are told that three special unclean spirits will trick the nations into gathering at Ar­mageddon.

1. Because of the hatred of the nations for Christ.
2. A number of passages tell us of this devilish hatred (Psa. 2:1-3; Rev. 11:18).
3. The nations, led by the Antichrist, will doubtless realize the imminent return of Christ (Rev. 11:15; 12:12).
4. They will also be aware of his touching down on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:9-12).
5. Thus, it is not unreasonable to assume they will gather in that area to destroy him at the moment of his return to earth!

(2) The chronology of the battle

1. The drying up of the Euphrates River (Rev. 16:12)
2. The destruction of Jerusalem

Perhaps the saddest event during the Tribulation will be the siege and destruction of the Holy City. This will be the 47th and last take-over of the beloved city of David. The following passages bear this out:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege... (Zech. 12:2).

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go forth into captivity... (Zech. 14:2).

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

The final week of seven years of human history is outlined by Daniel, expanded upon by Jesus, and detailed in the book of Revelation. It will be characterized by trouble upon the earth and specifically for God's chosen people, Israel, thus the popular term, "Tribulation Period." What will be the response of the unsaved at that moment when the Church is removed from this world? Will there be a response of faith or will they only wonder what has happened? Will the leading news story be: "Millions Vanish Around the World, Seen Ascending into The Heavens"? By the absence of comment in Scripture, it seems that the world will hardly notice the Church is gone. First, the speed at which the Church leaves, one-twelve-millionth of a second, is almost imperceptible The Scripture characterizes it like the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:52). You have to catch it at the precise moment it happens or you will have missed it. Those who remain and do view it will be in a state of disbelief. Probably, only the Church will hear the trumpet and the voice of the Archangel. The Scripture does not indicate that there will be any open graves or people seen ascending into the clouds. There will not be any visible evidence that the rapture took place, just a few “missing persons.”

Based upon the words of Jesus concerning this time, He said, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Luke 17:26). There were only a few believers in Noah's day so the number of believers on the day of the rapture probably will not be that significant. The believers will be listed at the local Police Department as "missing persons". Currently, the average Police Department has any number of unsolved “missing persons”. They simply disappeared without a trace. When the grave "opens" there will not be a physical opening. The action will be the same as when Jesus arose, in essence, the grave was undisturbed. In a similar fashion, the graves of the believers will be undisturbed, but empty.

The Sunday following the Rapture, there will be preachers in their pulpits. There will be choirs in their choir lofts, as well as people sitting in the pews. Life will basically go on as usual. There are many who initially profess to know the Lord, but who do not. They will perform their church work as usual. Jesus warned, Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils? And in they name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Life will go on just like it always has. But somebody might ask, "Won't that husband, that wife, that child be missed?" Yes, but it will just be another unsolved missing person. They will become just another statistic, another husband that abandoned his wife and children, another wife who ran off with another man, another child that was snatched by some kidnapper.

With the rapture, the Church is forever with Christ, "so shall we ever be with the Lord" as I Thessalonians 4:17 states. II Corinthians 5:10 "For we (believers) must all appear before the judgment seat (reward seat)" a special place, which was associated with the Olympic games, and which an individual who participated in the Olympic games would appear before to receive a reward for their performance. So, believers will be rewarded for their faithfulness in the Christian life.

It is significant that we understand the difference in judgments. The Judgment Seat of Christ is different from the Great White Throne Judgment, which is the place where the unsaved will be judged and condemned. The judgment seat of Christ is the place where believers appear to give an account as to their service for Christ "that everyone may receive the things (accounting) done in his body whether they be good or bad". Sadly, there will be Christians that will lose reward; that which God had intended for them to receive, but they will have lost it because of their own choice and desire not to walk with Christ in faith (obedience to His revealed will). Perhaps, some believers are not interested in rewards, but will just be glad to be in heaven. "The Lord can keep His rewards; I don't need any." This sounds humble and perhaps a little spiritual, but in reality, it is a slap in the face of Christ because everyone of His children is created for a specific purpose, (Romans 8:28) which God intends for each of His children. "He that hath begun a good work in you, will continue it unto the day of salvation (Phil. 1:6), for we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). God wants to work through His children. He has something special for each and every one. At times we hinder the moving of God's Spirit in our lives because we sin and that robs us of reward and robs God of His honor. To say we will just be happy to be in Heaven may sound spiritual and humble, but it really is not. Rather, we should want to BE ALL that God wants us to be! We should want to DO ALL that God wants us to do! We should want to HAVE ALL that God wants us to have. This should be our attitude! You (God) are the Potter and I am the clay, mold me into the image of Your Son (Romans 8:29).

The Marriage Supper or Marriage Feast in ancient oriental weddings sometimes would go on for weeks. It was a great time of rejoicing. That is exactly what it will be for the believers in heaven. Meanwhile on earth, Daniel's 70th week continues. Such terms in the Bible characterizing the nature of this time are: wrath, judgment, indignation, trouble, destruction, darkness, desolation, overturning and punishment. The exact chronology of events during this time period is uncertain. It is certain that during this 7-year period of time, the following events will occur:

1. The Antichrist (against Christ) will be revealed.

Many have speculated about who the Antichrist is. No one knows the identity of this person and it is not revealed in the Scripture. During World War II, a book came out that proposed Mussolini to be the Antichrist. Obviously, Mussolini was not the Antichrist. More recently it was suggested that the Antichrist would be a resurrection of Hitler. The Scripture indicates that the Antichrist is not revealed and will not be known until "his appointed time.” Any speculation we make is just that, speculation. Whoever the Antichrist is, he will be satanically empowered. He will stand against Christ, His Kingdom and His people. Everything Christ stands for; this man will oppose. He is the exact opposite of Jesus.

1. The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for 7 years.

Unknown to the Antichrist, this covenant coincides with the 70th week of Daniel. Terms of this agreement are the rebuilding of the temple and reinstitution of the sacrificial system. According to some reports, materials are presently being gathered and stockpiled for the building of this temple and young men are being trained for the Priesthood. For a while, it was thought that the Islamic mosque, the Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem was sitting on the precise site on which the temple was to be built. It was thought that the Dome of the Rock would have to be torn down before the temple could be built. That was viewed as a virtual impossibility because of the Islamic influence in the area. However, recent calculations indicate that the Dome of the Rock is not sitting on the precise site of the old temple. So the new temple could be built without doing any damage to the Mosque.

1. The Antichrist's message will be one of peace.

For years, the world has averaged 40 plus wars a year. As wars end, others arise to take their place. The world is full of violence. The Antichrist will come to power with a message of peace for Israel. His ability to bring about the peace the world longs for will be phenomenal. Peace and prosperity will abound at the beginning. He will be swept into power because of his ability to bring peace and prosperity to this troubled world. He will be hailed as the savior of mankind. His popularity will escalate almost overnight. Indications in the Scripture are that he will be a Gentile.

The Antichrist will initially solve many of the global problems and, as a result, will be hailed as a great leader. There will initially be a feeling of euphoria. Perhaps, he will be proclaimed as the Messiah, the savior of Israel and mankind.

Many of the conflicts in the world are a result of different governments, ideologies, philosophies, and cultures. Many believe our hope is through consolidation into a one-world government, and it appears society is moving in that direction. Decisions are often made multinational. The world is becoming a neighborhood, but without being a brotherhood.

1. One hundred and forty-four thousand Jewish evangelists will appear in these days and they will preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

God will raise up from His people, the Jews, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes to be His testimony and to present the gospel of the Kingdom to the world. There is a slight difference from the gospel that we preach today and the gospel of the Kingdom. That difference is this. We preach the gospel, the good news of salvation through a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The 144,000 will preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Matthew uses this terminology quite frequently. Many will see Jesus as the Savior - Messiah - and turn to Him, but will soon be martyred for their faith. They will look eagerly for His return and Kingdom. The emphasis of the evangelists' message will be the Kingdom.

1. During this time, many Hebrews and a few gentiles will be saved.

The spirit of God will empower His servants much as He did in the days of the Old Testament.

1. The Antichrist will break his covenant about the mid-point of the 7-year agreement.

Three and a half years into building and consolidating his power, he will dissolve the agreement made with the Jews since he will feel that his power base is secure. During this time he will establish himself as the supreme world leader causing the temple worship to cease he will demand that he, and he alone, be worshipped. As a result of his success, he will come to believe that he is invincible.

1. He will have consolidated the world into a one-world government and he will have established a world-wide monetary system which will be cashless.

Many of the financial ups and downs, the fluctuations of money values are the result of the different monetary systems now in place. Consolidating the economies of the world into one system would change the erratic nature of the present monetary systems. Control will be the key factor in the new economy.

He will exhibit superhuman intelligence. Many will agree that this person is a miracle worker. He will have done that which others have failed to do. The great leaders of the past will be dwarfed in his presence. He will bring the world together under one government. The problems that presently seem to have no answer, he will solve, demonstrating his intellectual brilliance. His abilities will set the stage for him to become the world's dictator. Ultimately, he will demand and receive worship from the world. He will be revered and worshipped in much the same way as the ancient Roman Caesars were revered and worshipped. He will accomplish that which no human in history has ever successfully done, rule the entire world with some exceptions, notably Edom and Moab.

1. Virtually all commerce will be controlled by him.

No doubt he will accomplish this through the aid of computerization. Presently, the technology exists and the mechanisms are in place that could make this a reality, all that remains is for someone to implement it.

1. In order to do business, all will have to bear the mark of the Antichrist.

Much has been said about his mark, 666. There are those who believe that perhaps the number will be tattooed on the forehead and on the hand. Perhaps, it will be the literal number 666. However, I think that more probably the number 666 is representative of the Antichrist and his world domination.

In the Scripture, numbers have certain equivalent significance. They are representative, much like an algebraic equation. For example, the number 7 is the number which represents God and is often used as the replacement for God. It also stands for completion, finality or perfection. The number 6 is associated with man. Oftentimes it is associated with incompleteness or imperfection. The fact that it is tripled, 666, when associated with the Antichrist, reveals two things. First, the Antichrist, with Satan and the false prophet, is the substitute of the trinity, thus, 666. Certainly, he is not God; but he wants to be God. He is trying to be God, but his best is an unholy trinity; namely, the Antichrist, the false prophet, even Satan. Second, the number 666 being tripled represents the intensity to which the Antichrist will rule absolutely. Technology has given us scanners that can identify individuals by their hand print or the retina of their eye. Some have suggested perhaps there will be a computer chip placed under the skin of the forehead for the purpose of scanning. Everything about you will be on these chips and updated continually with each scan much like the current bank cards. Bank cards contain public and private information about you, your date of birth, name, address, phone numbers, Social Security number, the number of accounts you have, and the dollar amount in each account as of the last transaction and is constantly updated. When the card is inserted into a machine, it will update virtually instantly from the last time the machine was reconciled with your account. The technology to have the chip placed under the skin of the hand is here, too. It is not seen and yet it can be picked up by a scanner. The point that Scripture makes about this number is that in order to do business, one must submit to the Antichrist's authority, that is, to yield to him in worship. As the ancient Roman Caesars demanded total submission and worship, so the Antichrist will also.

The Scripture predicts that there will be a revival of the old Roman Empire. Whether or not this revival will bear the name Roman Empire or whether it simply will bear the characteristics of the ancient Roman Empire, namely emperor worship, and a centralized worldwide government, is unknown. For certain, a worldwide government is on the horizon, which will bear a number of the characteristics of the ancient Roman Empire.

1. Of the multitudes that will be saved, many will die, probably from starvation since they will not be able to buy food having not received or been willing to receive the mark of the Beast (666).

No doubt there will be a black-market selling food and essential living commodities. Many will die because of their faith. In order to function in this future society, you will have to submit to the worship of the emperor, but as a Christian, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will not and thus shall die for their loyalty to Christ. The world will experience death in a magnitude during these seven years that has never been seen since the flood of Noah's day, which wiped out all civilization except for eight individuals.

1. The second half of the tribulation will see two great witnesses introduced.

They are not identified directly in the Scripture other than that they are called the witnesses of God. Possibly, Moses and Elijah (Mal. 4:5). Witness is a legal term. In ancient Jewish society, two witnesses were necessary to establish something to be true. Two had to give testimony regarding the authenticity of an action or deed. The truth was established based on the credibility of the witnesses. God will provide two special supernatural witnesses which will testify in His behalf They will prophesy super naturally until their appointed ministry is finished, then they will be killed by the Antichrist or his supporters. Until that appointed time, all attempts to hinder their ministry will fail.

1. By the middle of the 70th week, the Antichrist will have established nearly absolute control and will have consolidated his power.

He is humanly invincible. All challenges and attempts to remove him from power will fail. Only the return of Christ will defeat this "man of sin" and remove him from his self-appointed throne.

1. There will be an attempt to assassinate him which will fail.

The Scripture reveals that he will receive a mortal wound, which under normal, natural circumstances, would be fatal. But he will miraculously survive it. It will be like a resurrection from death. The public will view him as God-like, in part, because of this miracle. The Antichrist will duplicate some of the characteristics that made Christ unique, but not to the extent Christ performed them.

1. A false prophet (religious leader), closely associated with the Antichrist will lead the worship of the Antichrist.

Many attempts have been made to identify this false prophet, but to no avail. He is called a false prophet since his message is a lie and the Scripture does not give his name. He will lead the people to worship the Antichrist rather than the Lord God. He will exhibit all the trappings of true "religion and worship" but lead many away from the true and living God. He will probably be a prominent religious leader so, he will be well respected by the masses, thus making it easier for him to deliver his corrupt message, which will lead to the eternal destruction of millions.

1. He will perform miracles in order to add credibility to his false message.

Perhaps, he will even attempt to duplicate the miracles the Lord Jesus performed when He was on the earth. The false prophet will be very convincing. The masses will find no fault with him. They will follow his leading unreservedly.

1. The Antichrist and the false prophet will be empowered by Satan.

Their genius and ability will be unsurpassed. They will deceive many and crush their enemies. They will solve the problems humanity struggles with and for a time, this will be heralded as the earth's golden age.

1. The two witnesses of God will be slain, probably near the latter part of the 70th week.

The Bible records that when they are slain, a world-wide holiday will be declared. These two witnesses have been a thorn in the flesh of the world for months and nothing could be done to stop them. Finally, they are killed. The feeling of that day will be one of euphoria. God has completed his ministry through them and permits them to be killed. The Scripture reveals that they will lay in the streets of Jerusalem for three-and one-half days. An international holiday will be declared. Parties will be given and gifts given to one another. It will be a time much like Christmas. Many will be thrilled and happy with a spirit of joy and expectation. They will believe that good times have returned. But, the spirit of life will again enter into the slain witnesses and fear will return to unbelieving hearts. The two witnesses will be raptured out of this world, their ministry completed, and the world will be left to face the wrath of God.

1. God will send judgment upon the unbelieving world.

This is known in the Scripture as the vial (bowl or saucer) judgments. There will be seven judgments in all. The number 7 indicates they are from God and these judgments conclude the Age. One third of all those living will die in these judgments. Unbelievers who survive until this time will face these judgments poured out upon the world. Not since the days of Noah has the world seen such wrath.

1. It is the day of God's wrath. Sin is stored up until it reaches heaven, then judgment is unleashed.

Because evil is so rampant, judgment will be extensive. None will escape the wrath of God in those days. God's judgment will be accurate and just. No one will receive that which they do not deserve.

1. Under the direction of the Antichrist, a 200-million-man army will kill two-thirds of the world’s population.

This could indicate that conventional warfare will have a resurgence in that day, probably because of the fear of total annihilation by nuclear war. Some theorize that once an all-out nuclear war begins, it could trigger a chain reaction that could not be controlled, which would destroy not only our world, but could cause the destruction of the entire universe. Others speculate that even a limited nuclear war would unleash a nuclear winter. A war of this scope would destroy more by devastation of the environment, not to mention the economy, than the actual nuclear attack. From Scriptural accounts of this time period, it appears that perhaps there will be some limited nuclear activity. At any rate, the armed camp of the military will destroy millions. It will be an army consolidated under the Antichrist, a multinational force. Those not willing to submit to him will perish as he purges all who will not submit to his authority.

1. The Scripture warns, those who worship the Antichrist will be plagued by terrible sores.

This will add to the suffering of the unbelieving world.

1. The waters will be turned to blood.

The sight of blood indicates death and suffering in the Scripture. When one sees blood, there must be suffering at the very least and often death. The Scripture reveals that the waters of that time shall be turned to blood. Perhaps this is an indication that there will be poisoning of the waters in which people who drink them shall die and thus the association of death with the water. Many will die from this plague.

1. The sun's heat will be intensified during this time.

Those who study our world’s climate tell us that the average temperature is rising annually. They report that within a number of years, at the current rate, the polar ice caps will begin to melt, the sea coasts will gradually be inundated. To say the very least, the climate will be altered from its present form.

1. Darkness will cover the land.

Perhaps this will be in association with a limited nuclear winter or the sovereign act of God. The exact mechanism for this to be accomplished is open to speculation.

1. The Jews will be hated by all nations.

They will have no friends and no one to turn to. Perhaps these events will prepare them to "look on Him whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), driving them to look up, since there will be no other to look to.

1. Betrayal will be commonplace.

’’The love of many shall grow cold” (Matt. 24:12). Motivated by fear, greed, success and just plain survival, many will betray friends and family to satisfy their own wants and needs. The Antichrist will use this to his advantage. It will be a time when "big brother will be watching.” Little will be hidden from the sight of the Antichrist.

1. False prophets will abound promising peace, hope, prosperity and the good life.

Their message will be positive. Those who would dare speak to the contrary will be rejected as troublemakers. The mood of that time will be that “utopia” is right around the comer. At the beginning of the 70th week, a very positive attitude will abound. It will not be until the middle that it will be realized that something is wrong -- terribly wrong. But it will be too late. The machinery of the Antichrist will have “swallowed” them up.

1. The stars of the heavens will leave their course and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

Cataclysmic events will shake the universe. The course and the pattern of the rotation of the sun, the stars, the planets and their satellites will be greatly altered in those days. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the darkness of the land and the intensification of the heat of the sun on the earth.

1. Labor and management relationships will be strained to the breaking point.

This is an ongoing conflict that will intensify in the final days before Jesus returns, ever increasing as the greed of man runs wild.

1. Famine will be worldwide.

Those who will come to faith in Christ during those seven years will suffer terribly and most all will die from some form of persecution or famine. The land will fail to produce its fulness as the corruption of man and the pollution of the environment take their toll.

1. Demon and occult activity will abound in that day with many being deceived.

The hope of deliverance from troublesome times will drive many to seek out the supernatural spirit world for help. This will only lead them to their destruction more quickly.

1. The political leader (Antichrist) of the tribulation period could be a Gentile.

Revelation 13:1 seems to indicate this. He will rise from the revived Roman Empire, Daniel 9:26. As mentioned before, most likely his empire will not overtly be identified as the revived Roman Empire, it will be more subtle. Nevertheless, it will bear all of the characteristics of the ancient Roman Empire such as world-wide domination, centralization of government, one unified monetary system and emperor worship. The “Caesars” would be proud of this one we know as "The Antichrist." He will be the head of the last form of gentile world government arising from a ten-kingdom confederation.

Revelation 13:8 points out the Antichrist will rule the nations of the world. Many of the present nations, as well as perhaps new ones, will govern their own lands under the watchful eye of the Antichrist, much like ancient Rome permitted. But they will be puppet governments functioning under this world dictator. We could use the United States to illustrate this. The Federal Government is over the fifty states with each state government, which has local governments, municipalities, and township governments. All are subservient to the one above them and they cannot do those things which would be contrary to the government to which they are subservient. Such will be the program of the Antichrist.

As for the Antichrist, he will be personally marked by intelligence, persuasiveness, and charisma. He will write the book on how to win friends and influence people. He will know what to say, when to say it and how to say it. In the beginning, his influence and popularity will be awesome. He will be a genius with his skill and ability to solve the world's problems. Ezekiel 28:5, he will be crafty and subtle in his work. He will have absolute authority (Daniel 11:36). He will be motivated primarily by might and power (Daniel 11:38). A seven-year covenant will be made by him with Israel, which he will break (Daniel 9:27). He will declare himself to be God (Daniel 11:36 & 37) and deity, 2 Thessalonians 2:9 & 12). All challenge to his power will be defeated (Daniel 11:40-42). He will utilize a corrupt religious system (Revelation 17:3,16 & 17) to institute his worship. His rule will come to an end, not because man has defeated him and not because he has failed in his govern mental plan, but by the direct judgment and intervention of God (Revelation 19:19 & 20).

The 70th week will conclude with the battle of Armageddon. The Tribulation does not make it possible for the Lord Jesus Christ to return, but the Lord Jesus Christ returns to conclude the Tribulation and execute judgment upon the unbelievers of those days. The defeat of the Antichrist and his armies will be decisive. The Antichrist will amass an army of unbelievers for an all-out war, but will be defeated with a single word from the returning conquering Lord Jesus Christ. This will mark the end of human world government. Jesus will usher in earth's golden day with His divine and everlasting Kingdom.

**Setting the Stage For The Earthly Kingdom**

**The Last Days**

**Second coming of Jesus**

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11-16).

1. The Chronology of the Second Coming of Christ
2. It Begins with Fearful Manifestations in the Skies.

“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” (Matt. 24:29).

“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 ... for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25,26).

1. In the Midst of this, the Heavens Open and Jesus Comes Forth!

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30).

“... the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels” (2 These. 1:7).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him ...” (Rev. 1:7).

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True...” (Rev. 19:11).

1. The Returning Savior Touches Down Upon the Mount of Olives, Causing a Great Earthquake (Zech. 14:4,81

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost writes the following concerning this earthquake:

1. After Touching Down on the Mount of Olives, Christ Proceeds to Petra and Bozrah, Two Chief Cities in Edom.

While it is impossible to be dogmatic here, it would seem that he goes to Edom to gather the hiding Israelite remnant. Accompanied by the holy angels, the church, and the remnant, Christ marches toward Armageddon (Isa. 34:6; 63:1).

1. The Purpose of the Second Coming of Christ
2. To Defeat the Antichrist and the World’s Nations Assembled at Armageddon.

Palestine is to be given a blood bath of unprecedented proportions, which will flow from Armageddon at the north down through the Valley of Jehoshaphat, will cover the land of Edom, and will wash over all Judea and the city of Jerusalem. John looks at this scene of carnage and he describes it as blood flowing to the depths of the horses’ bridles. It is beyond human imagination to see a lake that size that has been drained from the veins of those who have followed the purpose of Satan to try to exterminate God's chosen people in order to prevent Jesus Christ from coming to reign. (J. Dwight Pentecost in *Prophecy for Today,* pp. 118,119)

The Battle of Armageddon will result in wholesale carnage among the legions of the beast. The brilliance of Christ’s appearing will produce a trembling and demoralization in the soldiers (Zech. 12:2; 14:13). The result of this demoralization and trembling will be the desertion from the antichrist and the rendering of him inoperative (2 Thess. 2:8). This tremendous light from heaven will produce astonishment and blindness in animals and madness in men (Zech. 12:4). A plague will sweep through the armies from this light and men will rot right where they stand (Zech. 14:12,15). The blood of animals and men will form a lake two hundred miles long and bridle deep (Rev. 14:19,20). The stench of this rotting mass of flesh and blood will fill the entire region (Isa. 34:1- 3). The mangled forms of men and the rotting flesh of men and beasts will provide a feast for the carrion birds (Rev. 19:17,18,21). The beast and the false prophet will then be cast alive into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 19:20) (Herman A. Hoyt, The End Times, p. 165).

1. *To Regather, Regenerate, and Restore Faithful Israel*

Perhaps the most frequent promise in all the Old Testament concerns God’s eventual restoration of Israel! The prophets repeat this so often that it becomes a refrain—a chorus of confidence. Note the following:

Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth (Isa. 43:5,6).

For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down... (Jer. 24:6).

... Thus, saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel (Ezek. 11:17).

And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek. 36:28).

And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God (Amos 9:14,15).

Perhaps the most sublime song of praise concerning Israel’s restoration is sung by the prophet Micah:

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18,19).

In the New Testament our Lord also speaks about this during one of his last sermons:

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. 24:31).

Thus, will our Lord gather Israel when he comes again and, as we have already observed, he will begin by appearing to the remnant hiding in Edom. Here we note:

1. Their temporary sorrow.

“ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem ... in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart...” (Zech. 12:10-12).

“And one shall say unto him, what are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zech. 13:6).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” (Rev. 1:7).

1. Their ultimate joy.

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa. 25:8,9).

“Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound” (Isa. 30:26).

“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isa. 40:11).

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa. 43:25).

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isa. 49:15).

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein; thanksgiving, and the voice of melody” (Isa. 51:3).

“For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isa. 55:12).

1. To Judge and Punish Faithless Israel.

In the book of Romans, the great Apostle Paul makes two significant statements concerning his beloved nation Israel. He writes,

And so, all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26).

For they are not all Israel which are of Israel (Rom. 9:6).

By the first statement Paul of course meant that all *faithful* Israel would be saved. As we have previously seen, this blessed event will occur during the Tribulation.

By the second statement Paul writes concerning *faithless* Israel. In other words, all that glitters is not gold! From the very moment God began working through Abraham (the first Hebrew), Satan also began working through members of that same race. Thus, as the Bible has been advanced by faithful Israel throughout history, it has likewise been opposed by faithless Israel!

Therefore, when the master of all Israel returns, he will be especially gracious to true Israel but especially harsh with false Israel! Note the tragic record of false Israel.

1. Her sins against the Father
2. Rebelling (Num. 14:22,23)
3. Rejecting (1 Sam. 8:7)
4. Robbing (Mal. 3:2-5)
5. Her sins against the Son
6. She refused him (John 1:11)
7. She crucified him (Acts 2:22,23; 3:14,15; 4:10; 5:30; 1 Thess. 2:14-16).
8. Her sins against the Holy Spirit—stubborn resistance! See Acts 7:51.
9. Her sins against the kingdom
10. She refused to use her God-given abilities to promote it (Luke 19:20-24; Matt. 25:24-30).
11. She made light of the marriage feast (Matt. 22:5).
12. She refused to wear the proper wedding garments (Matt. 22:11-13).
13. Her sins against her own people
14. She stole from widows (Matt. 23:14).
15. She killed her own prophets (Matt. 23:31,34,35; Acts 7:58).
16. Her sins against the world
17. She led others into her own wretched blindness (Matt. 23:16,24).
18. She was filled with hypocrisy (Matt. 16:6,12; Rom. 2:17- 23).
19. She had blasphemed the name of God among the Gentiles (Rom. 2:24).
20. Her sins against the gospel
21. She opposed it in Jerusalem (Acts 4:2; 5:28; 9:29; 21:28; 23:2,12).
22. She opposed it in Damascus (Acts 9:22-25).
23. She opposed it in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:45,50).
24. She opposed it in Iconium (Acts 14:2).
25. She opposed it in Lystra (Acts 14:19).
26. She opposed it in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5).
27. She opposed it in Berea (Acts 17:13).
28. She opposed it in Corinth (Acts 18:6,12).
29. She opposed it in Caesarea (Acts 25:6,7).

The Apostle Paul dearly loved his nation, and doubtless wrote the following description of faithless Israel and her future judgment with a heavy and weeping heart:

Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2:15,16).

Thus, the tragic prophecy of Ezekiel will someday be fulfilled upon faithless Israel:

But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God (Ezek. 11:21).

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me... (Ezek. 20:38).

1. To Separate the Sheep from the Goats.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and ye gave me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and ye gave me no food; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

"Then shall they also answer him, saying. Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

"Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" [Matt. 25:31-46).

1. The false views of this judgment
2. That this "sheep and goat" judgment is the same as the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. They are not the same, for one takes place at the end of the Tribulation while the other occurs at the end of the millennium.
3. That the sheep and goat judgment deal only with entire nations. Some have imagined the nations of the world lined up before God. At his command, Russia steps for­ward and is judged—then America, then Cuba, etc. This is not the case. The word translated "nations" in Matthew 25:32 should be rendered "Gentiles.”
4. The basis of this judgment

The test in this judgment is how those Gentiles who survive the Tribulation have treated faithful Israel (here referred to by Christ as “my brethren”).

In Nazi Germany, during the Second World War, escaping Jews were on a number of occasions befriended and protected by various German families who, in spite of their nationality, did not agree with Adolf Hitler. Apparently, the same thing will happen during the Tribulation. Gentiles from all nations will hear the message of faithful Israel and believe it and, at the risk of their own lives, will protect the messengers!

This, then, would seem to be the nature of the sheep and goat judgment. See also Matthew 13:38-43; 47-50; Genesis 12:1-3.

1. To Bind Satan
2. “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ...” (Rom. 16:20).
3. Chained fallen angels

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

1. To Resurrect Old Testament and Tribulation Saints.

It is the view of this study guide that at the Rapture of the church God will raise only those believers who have been saved from Pentecost till the Rapture. According to this view, all other believers will be resurrected just prior to the millennium.

a. The fact of this resurrection.

At least nine passages bring out this resurrection.

1. Job 19:25,26

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

1. Psalm 49:15

“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.”

1. Isaiah 25:8

“He will swallow up death in victory...”

1. Isaiah 26:19

“Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise...”

1. Daniel 12:2

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

1. Hosea 13:14

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; 0 grave, I will be thy destruction ...”

1. John 5:28,29

“Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

1. Hebrews 11:35

“... and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."

1. Revelation 20:4,5

“... and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished...”

b. The order of this resurrection

This is the third of four major biblical resurrections. These are:

1. The resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:23);
2. The resurrection of believers at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-53);
3. The resurrection of Old Testament and tribulation saints;
4. The resurrection of the unsaved (Rev. 20:5,11-14).

Thus, one of the reasons for the second coming will be to resurrect those non-church-related saints. For many long centuries Father Abraham has been patiently awaiting that city “which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10); God will not let him down!

1. To Judge Fallen Angels.

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:3).

All fallen angels are of course included in this judgment.

1. Unchained fallen angels

“And Jesus asked him, saying, what is thy name? And he said, Legion, because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep” (Luke 8:30,31).

“And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art, thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:23,24).

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

The point of these three passages is simply this—there is a group of fallen angels (demons) who have freedom of movement, and can therefore possess the bodies of both men and animals. Their one sin was that of following Satan in his foul rebellion against God. See Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12- 19.

1. Chained fallen angels

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

“For .. . God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

According to the above passages these fallen angels do not have the freedom the previous angels do, but are right now in “solitary confinement” awaiting their judgment at the end of the Tribulation.

1. **The Time-Element Involved in the Second Coming of Christ**

According to Daniel 12:11,12, there will be a period of seventy-five days between the second coming of Christ and the millennial reign. Dr. S. Franklin Logsdon has written,

“We in the United States have a national analogy. The President is elected in the early part of November, but he is not inaugurated until January 20th. There is an interim of 70- plus days. During this time, he concerns himself with the appointment of Cabinet members, foreign envoys and others who will comprise his government. In the period of 75 days between the termination of the Great Tribulation and the Coronation, the King of glory likewise will attend to certain matters.”

**Jesus’ millennial reign**

There are three primary views concerning the millennial (1,000-year) kingdom of Christ. First, the post-millennial view holds that Christ will not return until the conclusion of the millennium. God is presently extending His kingdom throughout the world by evangelistic and missionary efforts. The kingdom of God will be spread by bringing the gospel to the world. The saving work of the Holy Spirit will lead the world to a point that it will be Christianized. Needless to say, that is not happening. This view was popular at the beginning of the 20th Century when missions were expanding rapidly and supported by the end of World War I. It looked like we were about ready to enter into a millennium of peace spearheaded by the spread of Christianity. Presently, missions and evangelism worldwide are on a decline. Post millennialists believe that after the Christianization of the world, Christ will return after a long period of peace, which they commonly refer to as the Millennium.

The second is the amillennialism view. They believe there will not be a literal kingdom, but rather the passages that refer to the millennium and the promises to Israel explained in some spiritual sense as applying to the Church. In other words, God transferred His promises for Israel to the Church. The promise of Christ’s return is spiritually fulfilled when a person comes to Christ. Also, it was fulfilled when Christ died on the cross and Satan was bound. Almost the entire book of Revelation is spiritualized to historical events rather than to literal events that will happen in the future. A secondary view indicates that the millennium is distinct from the Church Age and actually precedes the second advent of Christ. This millennium is pictured as a state of blessedness in heaven. Everything that is recorded in the Scriptures about the millennium does not occur on earth but rather in heaven. It is a picture of the blessedness of the saints in heaven.

The pre-millennial view states that the Lord Jesus Christ will return before the millennium and will institute the events of that time. The pre-millennial view can be divided into at least four views or modification of one or more views: 1) Pre-tribulation, Christ will return before the 70th week begins; 2) Mid-tribulation, Christ will return at the mid-point of the 70th week; 3) Post-tribulation, Christ will return at the conclusion of the 70th week; 4) Pre-wrath, Christ will return prior to the 7th seal judgment. When Christ returns, He will usher in His literal kingdom upon this earth. He will literally descend to the Mount of Olives. He will rule with a rod of iron. The world will be redeemed from the curse (consequences of sin). The earth will know its fulness and be in a state of blessedness and glory.

Let us consider the differences between the Rapture (catching away of the Church) and the Revelation (return of Christ literally to the earth). Even though they often are confused as one and the same event, they are different. There are at least nine distinctions:

1. The rapture.

The Lord Jesus will come in the air. He will not come literally to the earth at that time. He only comes in the air to receive His Church, which is caught up to meet Him. With His revelation, He will literally come to the earth and plant His feet upon this earth.

1. With the rapture, only the Church will see the Lord Jesus.

The rest of the world will not see Him. But, when He comes literally to the earth in His revelation, every eye shall behold Him (Rev. 1:7). How could this possibly be that everybody in all the world could see the Lord Jesus come at the same time? With the advent of television and satellite communication systems we can see events on the other side of the world '’live." The text states that "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). The indication seems to be literally when He appears virtually everybody around the world will see Him at one time. That seems like a physical impossibility, but, keep in mind that nothing is impossible with God.

1. With the rapture,

He comes for the Church; but, in the revelation, He will come with the Church. When the Church is raptured, it is caught up to meet the Lord and the Scripture says so shall we ever (forever) be with Him (I Thess. 4:17). With this catching away of the Church, other events associated with that event are the marriage supper of the lamb, the judgment seat of Christ with rewards for believers, the Honor Day in heaven, if you will. With His revelation, not only will the host of heaven come with Him, but His church comes with Him from heaven as well.

1. With the rapture,

The Lord Jesus does not establish His kingdom. At the revelation, He comes for the purpose of establishing His kingdom with His Church. He will come before the tribulation (70th week) at the rapture and later, at His revelation, He will conclude the tribulation period. Seven years will separate these two events.

1. With the rapture,

He does not come to judge. He comes to collect and to receive His Church. With the revelation, He will come as a judge of the earth to judge the nations of the world.

1. With the rapture,

His ‘’will" will not be imposed upon the earth. But, when He comes to establish His kingdom, His "will" will be enforced. His revelation will be the answer to the prayer Jesus prayed 2,000 years ago, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven" (Luke 11:2). Sometimes we can get a little discouraged in our prayer life because the answer is not "yes" immediately. It is not always God's timetable for a prayer to be answered immediately. Certainly, the Lord Jesus praying this prayer nearly 2,000 years ago has yet for it to be answered, but it will be answered. When He returns to earth, His "will" will be done upon this earth as it is done in heaven.

1. When the Lord Jesus comes for His Church at the rapture,

He does not come to establish peace, but rather to remove the church from a troubled world. With the revelation, He will come to establish peace and the world will know a time of peace like it has never known in the history of mankind. In the roughly 6,000 years of recorded human history, there are only about 237 years of peace in which there has not been a war or a conflict in the world. For the last several years, there has been an average of forty wars a year around the world. But, when Jesus comes, all the armies of the world will be disbanded because there will be no more war. "They will beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4) the Scripture promises. There will be no more crime. One will not have to lock their doors at night. One will not be afraid to go into a fast food restaurant worrying that someone will shoot them because he is disgruntled over getting fired. All fears of muggings and robbery will be gone. Peace and prosperity will abound during that time. It seems almost like a dream, but nevertheless, He will bring it to pass when He returns "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

1. The earth is not redeemed when He comes at the rapture.

But, with the revelation, the earth will be redeemed. The lion will lay down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6). The desert will bloom as a rose (Isaiah 35:1). Prosperity will abound everywhere. The earth will bring forth its abundance. It will be heaven on earth during this period in which the Lord Jesus Christ rules His kingdom.

Daniel Chapter 9 contains prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. The Old Testament prophets did not see the Church, nor did they predict in any way the Church Age. It was a truth that was hidden from them. Consequently, all they viewed was God working with His people, namely the Jews, Jacob’s people, the Israelites. Considering Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks, Daniel 9, we need some background before we focus on the principal verses 24 through 27, which give the prophecy of the 70 weeks. This prophecy covers a period from Daniel's time to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom. It skips over the Church Age entirely.

Verses 1 and 2 deal with the time and the place of Daniel's prayer and the Hebrew nation (Judah). There was a division in the Kingdom after Solomon's death. The Northern Kingdom (ten tribes) was known as Israel and the Southern Kingdom, Judah. The Northern Kingdom went into captivity first. The Southern Kingdom continued to exist for 131 years. Finally, because of sin, they also went into captivity when conquered by the Babylonians. A specific amount of time was assigned by God for this captivity, 70 years. As Daniel writes, it is close to the end of this 70- year period. He and a remnant are living in Babylon. It is there that he begins to pray, verses 3 through 19 record his prayer. There are three things that are very important about this prayer. First, Daniel prays confessing the failure and the sin of himself and of his people. He acknowledges before God that they deserved to be punished and to be in captivity. He pleads, in verses 15 through 19, for God's mercy for the restoration of Jerusalem, and for the restoration of his people to their homeland. Verses 20 and 23 reveal God's answer. God sends His angel Gabriel to Daniel. "Your prayer is answered even as you were praying." Here we have an example of IMMEDIATE answer to prayer. Gabriel is one of two angels named in the Bible. Michael is the other. These are very special angels. They are identified as archangels meaning they were captain angels. Gabriel is sent by God to Daniel with this message, the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

In verse 24, "seventy weeks.” The Hebrew rendering of seventy and weeks are special words which mean seventy sevens. The students of the Bible have understood this to mean weeks by studying the context of the verse. This conclusion was drawn, in part, by the prophecy which has already been fulfilled. Thus, they have determined that "sevens” is weeks, not weeks of days, but weeks of years. Each week of seven days is actually a week of seven years, that is, each day standing for one year. Seventy weeks contains 490 years from Daniel's day to the conclusion of the Tribulation Period (70th week), skipping the time after Messiah is cut off and the beginning of the 70th week (essentially the church age).

Daniel sets forth six events. Some have already been fulfilled and others have yet to be fulfilled.

Verse 25, "Knowing therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks. The streets shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times." The command to return to Jerusalem and rebuild or restore the city was issued by Artaxerxes, in the year 444 or 445 B.C. This is not to be confused with the command that was issued to Nehemiah to return and rebuild the temple. "To restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince shall be seven weeks or forty-nine years. Seven sevens are forty-nine. It took quite a bit of time to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem "in troublesome times." It was not a matter of getting the company together, organizing everybody, packing up the trucks and the chariots and heading off several hundreds of miles to Jerusalem, arriving there and starting the construction project. There were conflicts along the way. When they arrived, needless to say, the people who had settled there were not too thrilled with the idea of the Jews returning. But the prophecy time clock starts ticking at that point and it ticks for sixty-nine weeks. There are four hundred years in which there is not a word given from God until John the Baptist (last Old Testament Prophet) comes onto the scene to speak for God. The birth of Christ and His ministry begins shortly after the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry. All of this transpires during the sixty-nine weeks. Then, Messiah is cut off, referring to His crucifixion. From the decree of Artaxerxes virtually to the very day of Messiah's crucifixion is four hundred and eighty- three years or sixty-nine weeks. There is a gap from the Messiah's being cut off to the beginning of the 70th week. This gap is the age of grace or the church age. It is a time of undetermined length. There is nothing in the Scripture to indicate how long this period will last. Two thousand years have passed so far. This is God's day of grace for the world. During the “age of grace”, God's clock for Israel is on pause. When the “age of grace” ends, (rapture) God's time clock will start ticking again for the nation of Israel. The 70th week is the last 7 years of human history before the Messiah (Christ) returns to begin His reign upon the earth. The 70th week is known in the Scripture as Jacob's trouble or the Tribulation Period. It is the last event before Christ establishes His kingdom.

This is how the prophets of the Old Testament viewed prophecy. They looked across mountain peaks. They saw the birth of Christ, His death, the Tribulation (70th week) and the Millennial Kingdom. But just as you stand on one mountain peak and look across to another, there is something that one cannot see. One cannot see the valleys. Between the death of Christ and the 70th week is the “valley” of the church age. That is why the Old Testament prophets did not write about the Church. It was not revealed to them They were looking across mountain peaks from one peak to another and they did not see the valley of the Church. The Church is a truth that was hidden to them.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D, was predicted by Jesus. During the church age there will be an intensification of the signs pointing to the Millennium and (Jacob's trouble) as we approach that event. This final week is divided into two major divisions of three-and one-half years each, 1,260 days or 42 months. At the end of the 70th week there are additional time periods of 45 days and 30 days, probably for the setting up of Christ's Kingdom.

The date of the Rapture is not predicted in the Scripture. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament since it did not deal with the Old Testament Saints. It is a truth for the Church only. There is no sign for the Rapture given anywhere in the Scripture. It is sign-less, timeless, and eminent. It could happen at any moment, at any time, at any hour of any day. When God's Church (other sheep of another fold [John 10:16]) is completed, the Rapture will occur; this event as to time is known only by the Father.

Verse 24, "Seventy weeks are determined" (predestined or assigned) "upon thy people" (Daniel's people, Israel) "and upon thy holy city" (Daniel's holy city, Jerusalem) "to finish the transgression" which was to bring the conclusion of Israel's rebellion. "And to make an end of sins" (the Lord Jesus Christ coming as the Messiah to put away sin) "And to make reconciliation for iniquity" (for Israel to know the Messiah personally by the taking away of their sins). "And to bring an everlasting righteousness" (Millennial Kingdom). "To seal up the vision and the prophecy" (to establish it). This will take place in God's time. "And to anoint (set apart) the most holy" (the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah) to establish His kingdom.

Verse 25, "know (to become informed) therefore and understand (apply wisdom) unto the Messiah, the Prince, (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks (from the decree given by Artaxerxes). The streets shall be built again and the wall even in troublous (riotous, rebellious, hardship) times”.

Verse 26, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off (crucified), but not for himself (for the sins of mankind): and the people (followers) of the prince (Antichrist) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood (swept away), and unto the end of the war desolations (final conflict, Armageddon) are determined. Verse 27 "And he (Antichrist).... referring to the prince of verse 26... .shall confirm the covenant with many (Jewish people) for one week (70th week, 7 years) and in the midst of the week (3 1/2 years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation (temple service) to cease and for the overspreading of abominations (defilement of the temple) he shall make it desolate, (unusable for Jewish sacrifice) even until the consummation, (end of the 70th week) that determined shall be poured (judgment) upon the desolate (unbeliever)."

"And the people (followers of the Antichrist) of the prince (Antichrist)" who will appear during Jacob's trouble (70th week) or the Tribulation Period, probably the revived Roman Empire in some form. From other prophecies in Daniel, the kingdoms of the earth were set forth in prophetic order. The Roman Empire is pictured as the last kingdom with world domination. All of the kingdoms that Daniel’s prophecy set forth earlier were world-wide kingdoms. They were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and finally the Roman. Daniel, in his prophecy, indicates that the revived Roman Kingdom will be divided into a ten-kingdom confederation. There is a break in the prophecy, the Church Age, which is not seen nor is it prophesied in the book of Daniel. The Roman Kingdom will again be restored or reappear during the 70th week. He will not be known or called the Antichrist when he appears. That would be too obvious. He probably will have the support of the ten-kingdom confederation which will jettison him to power. Some have speculated that this may be the European Union which, from time to time, is composed of ten nations. We do not know if that will be the case or not, but nevertheless, it will be a ten-kingdom confederation that will appear during the 70th week.

The people of this prince (Antichrist), the Roman Empire, was future to Daniel but history to us. It came into existence prior to the birth of Christ and was in existence many years after Christ’s earthly ministry ended. This people will be the people that will "destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (temple) and the end there of shall be with a flood (over-running) unto the end of the war of the desolations are determined". In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was besieged by Rome and was destroyed by the Roman General Titus. For decades, bands of rebels had waged gorilla warfare against the Roman government, before, during and after Christ's ministry. One of the most profound and notable conflicts occurred in 66 AD. when a very large group of rebels waged war against the Roman government and went down in the pages of history. The rebels retreated to a mountain sanctuary, Masada, and there they remained in an almost impenetrable fortress. The Roman government besieged it for many months before they finally were able to conquer it. When it looked like they were going to finally be over run, all the inhabitants of Masada committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner by Rome. Roughly, one thousand people died in that suicide pact. The rebels were a thorn in the Roman government’s side. Finally, 70 A.D. the command was given to take Jerusalem and bring the Jewish people into submission. Jerusalem was besieged. This lasted a year and during that year, out of city of one million and two hundred fifty thousand people, one million died. Horrendous conditions were endured during that year. They even resorted to cannibalism, eating their own dead in order to stay alive to continue the fight against Rome. But finally, with the persistence of the Roman Emperor and Titus, the city was overrun and the nation collapsed and was in dispersion from that time, 70 A.D., to 1947. In 1947 the United Nations made a resolution which granted the nation of Israel their own homeland which, at that point in time, did not include all of the present area that they now occupy. Israel did not recapture Jerusalem until the Six Day War of 1967. Since the time they were declared an independent nation, they have been expanding their borders and many have been returning to their homeland. This sets the stage for the final days and events initiating the 70th week. The U. S. now recognizes Israel’s new capitol, Jerusalem.

Verse 27, "And he (the prince) that shall come (the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week". The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel. No doubt, this will bring peace to the Middle East. Most likely it will be mandated that the Jews will be able to rebuild their temple and reestablish their sacrificial system as a part of this agreement. When the Antichrist has consolidated his power, he will break his covenant with them. According to Scripture, he will set up his throne in Jerusalem. The Scripture indicates, he will command that he be worshiped. Literally, he will come into the temple, a very beautiful place, to establish his throne and bring the priesthood and the sacrificial system to a stop.

Verse 27, "And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease (terminate) and for the overspreading of abominations" that is, when he comes into the temple, he will desecrate the temple by his presence since the Holy of Holies is for God and God alone. Only the High Priest, after proper cleansing, could enter into the Holy of Holies once a year. "And he shall make it desolate (unusable state) even until the consummation (the end of the 70th week when the Lord Jesus will return to earth to establish His kingdom) and that determined (fixed, set, elected) and shall be poured upon the desolate (judgment)" the vial or "bowl" judgments.

**Matthew's Perspective on the 70th Week**

Matthew 24 relates a Jewish perspective on future events. Concerning the background of Matthew's gospel: Matthew was writing primarily to Jews who were not Christians. He was writing to show that Jesus was their Messiah and King and the kingdom they expected would be instituted by Him. He uses certain phrases which are unique to his gospel that are not used in the other gospels. He speaks of the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven." "Kingdom" appears predominantly in his writings in which he refers to the Messianic Kingdom. The events that set the stage for Jesus's discourse begin in the twenty-third chapter. Historically, it is near to the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. As was Jesus' practice when He was in Jerusalem, He would enter into the temple and teach, but He never spent a night in Jerusalem. When evening came, He would always leave the city. It was nearing sunset and about time for Him to leave Jerusalem. Jesus was commenting on the hardness of the hearts of the Jewish people (the Jews rejection of Him).

Verse 34 of chapter 23, "Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets and wisemen and scribes and some of them ye shall kill and crucify and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city that upon you (present generation of Jesus’ earthly ministry) may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barakus, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation", the present generation that Jesus was speaking to.

Verse 37, Jesus laments, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee. How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered) her chicks under her wing, and you would not" (come to me).

Verse 38, "Behold your house is left desolate"...the same word Daniel used in relationship to the "people of the prince who shall come".

The mindset of that time was one day there would be a deliverer who would come to politically deliver them (Jewish people) from their enemies. The Old Testament Scriptures directly point to the fact that the Messiah would come primarily as a spiritual Messiah and secondarily, a political Messiah. But, because of the oppression of the Roman government upon the people for decades, the people's hearts were now concerned with the political aspects of the Messiah's Kingdom rather than the spiritual. They were looking for one who would rid them of Roman rule and deliver them from the yoke of bondage. They believed he would establish them as a free and independent nation and that his kingdom would last forever. Jesus' disciples believed that Jesus was that Messiah, thinking again primarily from the political aspect more than the spiritual. One of the principal events of the millennial kingdom, or the kingdom that they were looking for, would be the restoration of temple worship in its fullest glory.

In light of that background, we come to Chapter 24 verse 1, "And Jesus went out (left the immediate temple area) and departed from the temple (compound)", which was His custom. Jesus and His disciples would leave the temple, go through the streets existing one of the city gates. At this particular time, it appears perhaps He went through the Eastern Gate, down the roadway to the valley Kidron, crossed the brook Kidron, ascended the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane. No doubt this would have taken a sometime for Him to accomplish. As He departed the temple area, "And his disciples came to him to show him all the buildings of the temple." "Jesus, aren't these grand looking buildings?" commenting on their splendor. In the years prior to Jesus' ministry, it had taken forty-six years to build the temple and it was not finished yet. Maybe this prompted the disciples to exclaim, "Oh, look over here. This is a new addition just completed." The temple was not completed until 66 A.D. just four years before its destruction in 70 AD.

Verse 2, "And Jesus said unto them, see you not all these things?"....or, see all these buildings, gentlemen? "Verily (of a truth) I say unto you there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down”. His disciples must have thought, what is Jesus talking about? We know He is the Messiah. We know that the temple worship will continue. But the temple worship cannot continue if the temple is not here. Is He telling us the temple will be torn down? They had learned, after almost three-and one-half years of being with Jesus, not to come to conclusions too quickly because it often showed their ignorance. They did not immediately respond to Jesus' statement. Probably, as they were walking through the streets of Jerusalem and down the pathway and across the Kidron valley discussing Jesus' statement among themselves they pondered, "I wonder what Jesus means?"

By this time, they have crossed the Kidron Valley and were entering the Mount of Olives. "And as He (Jesus) sat upon the Mount of Olives the disciples came unto him privately." That is, they did not come with the rest of the people that normally flocked around Jesus. They came to Him, perhaps no more than the twelve, and asked, "Tell us. When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world (age)?" If the temple is taken away and you, Jesus, are the Messiah and it has already taken forty-six years to build the temple and it is not completed yet, it must be a long time down the road before your kingdom comes, they reasoned. They were expecting any day for Jesus to rise up and overthrow Rome and bring in His Kingdom. They were faced with an enigma, how could both positions be true? Failing to arrive at a satisfactory answer, they approached Jesus with this two-pronged question.

The question they ask is, "Tell us when shall these things be?" That is, when shall the temple be destroyed, torn down, one stone upon another cast off? "And what shall be the sign? (actual event of your coming as Messiah and our King)" It is not a separate sign that appears apart from the event but rather refers to the actual event. "The sign of thy (your) coming?" Jesus spoke to the crowds, "This generation seeketh after a sign. There shall be no sign given unto this generation except the sign of the prophet Jonah." We know from Old Testament history Jesus statement refers to Jonah, who was in the belly of the fish for three days before he was regurgitated, and Jesus would be in the belly of the earth (in the grave) for three days before He would be resurrected. He said that would be the only sign (contemporary with Jesus) this generation would see. He uses a "sign" in reference to Himself or, should I say, the disciples did. "And of the end of the world". "World" comes from a Greek word which literally means the end of the age. The end of the age that they had in mind and the end of the age that was in the mind of most Jews was the establishment of their nation as a free and independent state. When this occurred, it would usher in an age of peace for the Jews. This age would end when the golden age of the kingdom came to full bloom. The Scripture says, "When He comes, He will sit upon the thrown of his father David and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7).

Verse 4, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceives you." Since it was a popular idea that the Messiah would come "then" and would deliver them from Rome as well as establish his temple, it would have been very easy for them to be deceived into thinking as the rest of the nation. Jesus explains, "Take heed", be on your guard, be wise, beware, be aware that you do not be deceived. Why? He states in verse 5, "For many shall come in my name saying I am Christ (Messiah) and shall deceive many." The Greek is Christos or Christ and the Hebrew is Messiah. They both mean the same "the anointed one". "Take heed that no man deceives you for many shall come in my name (my authority) saying I am the anointed one and shall deceive many." In the context of the thinking of that day, that referred to all the rebel leaders that rose up from the days of the Maccabees (heroes to the Jewish people) to the days of Christ and afterwards, such as Barabas. They would rise up claiming to be the anointed one that would overthrow Rome and deliver the nation. Some would be deceived and follow after them. Jesus warns those who would follow these rebel leaders, "Beware, don't be deceived. They are not the Christ."

Jesus continues, verse 6, now gentlemen, "you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not troubled." The indication from the text is that the rumors of wars were beginning in their day and would continue through the destruction of the temple and until the Prince of Peace comes. Notice what Jesus says, "All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet". As bad and as horrible as wars are, nation rising against nation, troublesome times, the end is not yet. Notice what Jesus said to them, "See that ye be not troubled." Do not worry about it, for this is the natural path society will follow. Such is the trouble of this present world.

Verse 7, "For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom and there shall be famines (starvation on a large scale)." Literally millions of people die every year from starvation. It has been estimated that if all the food reserves we presently possess were divided equally among all the peoples of the earth, everyone would go to bed hungry, a sobering thought. Not only will there be famine, "there will be pestilence" (plagues, disease, and natural phenomenon) that sweeps the land. Throughout this period there had been all sorts of plagues that had wiped out whole nations, societies and families. Even in our own age, I just heard a medical report the other day that said ten years ago we thought that we had conquered much of the major infectious diseases, but now there is a resurgence of many of the diseases we once thought were under control, such as tuberculosis, which is resistant to the former means of treatment. So it is with many of the other diseases that are returning. Also, there are new diseases appearing and spreading rapidly, such as the new social diseases. Presently, there are over sixty social diseases, whereas 50 years ago, you could count them on one hand. "Pestilence in the land". Jesus warns, "There shall be earthquakes". The seismologists tell us earthquakes have been increasing in number and in intensity for a number of years. More than that, they are now appearing in places that they never occurred before. "And earthquakes in diverse (different) places".

Verse 3, "All these things are the beginning of sorrows (tribulation, grief, suffering)." Everything that Jesus has said up to this point is the "beginning" or sample of what is to come upon the world prior to His return. It is not the end stages. It is not the middle stages. But, it is the beginning. These things will be seen first. These will be the first signs of trouble.

Verse 9 Jesus continues, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and you shall be hated of all nations for my name sake." This is the principle. Believers shall be hated. Anyone in Christian ministry can tell you the experiences that they have had, if they have been in it for very long, that it is not a popular position to hold. The world does not look favorably at those engaged in Christian ministries. It will challenge us whenever we seek to witness for Christ. Jesus gives the scenario. They (His present disciples) will be hated, certainly not loved. They will be afflicted and they will be killed. First Century Christians knew a tremendous amount of persecution. From various times throughout the centuries to this very day, persecution has been at higher and lower levels. There are those who tell us today, perhaps, we are living in a time in which persecution is greater than it has ever been in the history of the Church. This trouble will intensify even more through the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy.

Jesus continues, verse 10, "And then shall many be offended (by the gospel) and shall betray one another and shall hate one another." The gospel is an offense. The natural (unsaved man) does not want anything to do with God or His righteousness. God’s righteousness offends him. God is rejected as well as all those who represent Him since it is the presence of God's representatives that brings conviction upon them. Their response, do away with God and His representatives, then we will be able to live as we please with no accountability to anyone.

Jesus points out, verse 11, "And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many." In America there are about 150 cults and religions that could be classified as significant. The world is full of false prophets and teachers. Jesus warns that their number will increase. "Many shall be deceived (lead to believe a lie)". Many are swallowed up by the false doctrines of cults and religions which permeate our society. Jesus said that it would be characteristic of this age.

Verse 12, Jesus continues, "And because iniquity (sin, evil) shall abound (increase with greater severity), the love of many shall wax (grow) cold (lose its passion)". True love will be ever increasingly harder to find. Many will speak of love, but its reality will be far from them. This is why the believers are encouraged to support one another with love, more so, as the end of the Age approaches (Hebrews 10:25).

Verse 13, "And he that shall endure (remain true, faithful) unto the end (of the Age), the same shall be saved (be the children of God)." This principle that began with Christ and his disciples continues throughout the Church Age to the conclusion of the 70th week. He who endures to the end shall be saved. Nothing separates like persecution the professor from the possessor. The greatest revealer of character is affliction and infirmity. You never know what a person's character is until they are put under the heat of adversity. It is easy to be a Christian when life is going just the way one wants it to, when our family and friends accept us, when things are going fine at work, when our neighbors and associates as well as those who know us, accept us. When there is no trouble, no challenge to our faith, no adversity in our life, no sickness, no financial reversals, no problems, it is easy to walk with the Lord. "My, the Lord is good, isn't He?" and many will walk with Christ during the good times. But, when persecution, infirmity, and affliction attack us, it is then the character of the true believer is seen. We can see those who truly walk with the Lord from those who merely possess because a separation occurs with trial, persecution, affliction and infirmity. We would have never known the character of Job had it not been for the persecution, affliction and the trials in his life. He would have been just another name that passed through history that nobody would have remembered. But, because of his affliction, we remember him for his outstanding character. The strength of this verse is not that we are tenaciously hanging on to our relationship with Christ and thus our salvation; but, the strength of this verse is the true child of God will "endure” (persevere, kept as in a vault). The true child of God will, not in their own strength but by the grace of God through the ministry of the Spirit of God, "endure". In fact, these very negative events will draw the true child of God closer to His Lord. The statement can be made, when the trial, persecution or affliction comes in our life, after we have passed through, it is easy to look back and reflect, "I would not go through it again for a million dollars but now that I am through it, I wouldn't take a million dollars for the experience." He that shall endure unto the end, the same is the saved one.

Verse 14, Jesus continues, "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." When shall the end come, that is, literally the end of the 70th week? It shall come when the gospel is preached in all of the world. He speaks of the gospel of the kingdom. Normally when we think of the gospel, we do not think about the kingdom, but rather the gospel of Christ, the saving gospel, the gospel of good news or the gospel of God's grace; but we rarely speak of the gospel of the kingdom. The reason why Matthew uses these words and emphasizes what Jesus had said to His disciples in using the term kingdom was by the time the Tribulation Period reaches its zenith of intensity, the gospel of the Messiah coming to save them and establishing His kingdom will be the message that will be preached in that day. Deliverance will come when Christ the Messiah returns.

Verse 15, Jesus continues, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation (Antichrist), spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whosoever readeth let him understand." Jesus addresses the middle of the 70th week in which the Antichrist breaks the covenant he made with the Jewish people at the beginning of this week. This is the "abomination and desolation", the cessation or the destruction of the temple service and the defilement of the Holy of Holies. The Jews will fight for their temple and the Antichrist will overwhelm them. Many will die during that time of carnage and desolation.

Jesus gives some practical advice, verse 16, "Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains. Let them 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." Run for your lives! No matter where one is or what one is doing in Jerusalem when this event occurs, they must run for their lives. Head for the hills! That will be the only place of safety (relatively speaking) since the Antichrist’s armies will seek to kill them. One will not even have time to pack a suitcase. "Run" will be the word of that day.

He also speaks, verse 19, of a disaster. "And woe unto them that are with child (pregnant) and to them that nurse (infants) in those days." Pregnant women and nursing mothers, it will be a terrible time for them to have to flee to the wilderness, in the condition that they are in. Jesus says "woe" trouble and hardship is their lot.

Verse 20, "But pray you that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath." Ask God to grant that it does not happen in the winter time. The winters in Palestine are mild. Nevertheless, it is cold and they do have some snow, particularly in the mountain regions. It would increase their suffering if they had to flee during winter. They should also pray that their flight does not occur on the Sabbath. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, "on the Sabbath" they were never to travel more than a Sabbath day's journey, two miles. To get to the mountains, they would have to travel farther than two miles. Naturally, they would be torn between "It's the Sabbath. We can’t leave today so what are we going to do?" Some would probably remain because of the Sabbath, another reason they would be so easily identified as being Jewish because of the keeping of the Sabbath.

Verse 21, "For then shall be great tribulation". This is the middle of the 70th week, three-and one-half years, the Scripture speaks of the 1,260 days or 42 months. This will be the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the last half of the 70th week. In fact, Jesus speaks of it in this passage "such as never the world has ever seen." That is from the day of creation to the time of this tribulation, "no, nor ever shall be" even from the time of Christ through the Tribulation Period this specific three-and one-half years will be the worst that the world has ever experienced.

Verse 22, Jesus continues, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened." Jesus is not saying that the 24-hour day will be reduced to a 23- or 22- hour day. What He is saying, beginning with the Great Tribulation (middle of the 70th week), if it were to continue to its natural logical conclusion, all flesh would be destroyed upon the face of the earth. Chronologically, we know that Jesus will cut those days short by His return three-and one-half years from the beginning of the Great Tribulation, seven years from the beginning of the 70th week.

Verse 23, "Then if any man shall say unto you, lo (behold), here is Christ or there, believe it not." As the Great Tribulation intensifies, the Jews will be more eagerly looking for the Redeemer, the Messiah. They will be looking for this one to deliver them, which they have heard the 144,000 Jewish evangelists proclaiming. They are trusting the Lord, holding onto their faith. They will be waiting with expectation and suddenly somebody proclaims, "The Messiah is hiding out in the wilderness awaiting the right opportunity to appear.” Somebody else will announce, "He is in Jerusalem hidden away in a secret room". Jesus said, "Don't be fooled by these rumors". They will not be true.

Verse 24, "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders"...literally miracles, no doubt under the power of Satan.... "in so much if it were possible (if God permitted it) they shall deceive the very elect (saved, God's people).” But God will not permit "His" people to be deceived.

Verse 25, "Behold I have told you before” that is, I am telling you before these events take place, don't be surprised when they happen.

Verse 26, He continues, "Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, behold he is in the desert; go not forth:"...don't go looking for him...."Behold he is in the secret chambers" don't believe them.

Verse 27, Jesus declares, "For as the lightening cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." When Jesus returns literally to this earth, it will be as lightening flashing from one horizon to the other. It cannot be missed. It will be unmistakable. Nobody will miss Him. There will be no doubts for they will know for certain that it is "the Messiah."

Verse 28, Jesus continues, "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together." Jesus says that He will come in the fashion that He had described just as certainly as a dead animal in the field will have the vultures gathered around it picking its bones clean.

Verse 29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days (the ending) shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Great cosmic disruption not seen since the days of Noah's flood will be prevalent.

Verse 30 "And then shall appear the sign (literal revealing) of the Son of man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth (Jewish people) mourn (be in grief because of their unbelief) and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." At that appointed hour, the Father will send the Son and the heavens will be split apart. Literally, the physical universe will split apart for His entrance. Quite obviously that will upset the natural operation of the universe. So brilliant will be the glory of His coming that the sun will be darkened. Its light will go out and likewise the stars and the moon. The brightness of His glory will be so great that it will outshine the sun, moon and the stars. "The powers of heaven shall be shaken (cataclysmic event of the upsetting of the universe from its natural order). And then shall the sign of the Son of Man appear." Literally, physically and personally, He will appear. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess" that He is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords". No one will mistake His appearing. It will be unmistakable and unescapable.

Verse 31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect (saved ones) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Jesus will send His angels forth to gather all the redeemed, all the saved that have been scattered around the world during the Tribulation, to bring them together from all over the earth, from the four winds, literally from the four comers of the earth (four points of the compass).

Jesus illustrates, verse 32, "Now learn the parable of the fig tree. When the branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is near." When you see these events, you know that my coming is near just like the fig tree, when it puts forth its leaves, you know summer is near. "So likewise, you", verse 33, "when you shall see these things, you know that it (my appearing) is near even at the doors (very close at hand)."

Verse 34, "Verily I say unto you, this generation (the generation living when these events unfold) shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled." To which generation does He refer? He is speaking of those of the last half of the Tribulation Period, they will see His coming. But, Jesus warns the date-setters by using Noah as an illustration. He speaks of the fact that nobody knows the day nor the hour of His appearing. It will occur much the same way the flood came upon the world of Noah’s day.

Verse 35, the assurance of His coming is surer than the existence of the earth and heaven "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." This world and the universe will pass away, as the Scripture says, "with a great noise". But, His appearing is more certain than those events.

Verse 36, "But, of the day and the hour knoweth no man no not the angels of heaven but my Father only." Jesus indicates that there are certain things that we can look for in general. Verse 37, "But, as the days of Noah (bearing the same characteristics as Noah's day) so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood" Jesus warns, "they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark."

"And knew not (were not aware of the impending doom)" verse 39, "until the flood came and took them all away, so also shall the coming of the son of man be." Jesus illustrates with Noah that date-setting is foolish. Even right up to the very day of the flood, life went on just like it always had. The people of that day went about life as usual. Their daily activity was normal. There was nothing about the events of daily life that indicated the end was at hand. They had been warned for 120 years that the judgment of the flood was coming. They had observed the ark being built, but they just simply did not pay any attention to the signs and warnings all about them. "We have plenty of time" they reasoned. Mankind is a procrastinator thinking there is always tomorrow, but one day tomorrow comes and we are not ready. In Noah's day, the animals came. No doubt the people saw the animals entering the ark. They saw Noah making his preparations. Finally, God said for Noah to come into the ark and he did. Still, there were no clouds in the sky. Finally, God shut the door and the flood came and took them away and they were not even aware until it happened. In the same way, Jesus Christ will come back to this earth. Mankind will be involved in their daily activities. Then, Jesus will return to the surprise of all, including the Antichrist. He will return and it will be too late for unrepentant man. Interestingly enough, up until the time that Noah entered into the ark and the door was shut, anybody could have been saved. Up until the time that the Lord Jesus comes from heaven, all can be saved. But, when He comes, it will be too late. When they see Him, it will be too late; almost, but too late. "I know I need to get right with God and make my peace with him." "I know I need to be saved, but not now, not today, maybe this summer, maybe next fall, maybe a little later on, maybe after I get married, maybe after I retire." We just keep putting it off and all of a sudden, death comes and it is too late. I often wonder how many people would be saved if they knew today, they would die or today the Lord would return.

Verse 40, "Then shall be two in the field, the one shall be taken, the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill. The one shall be taken, the other left." This has been confused with the rapture. It is quite true that with the rapture similar events will occur. But, in this context, Jesus is speaking of his literal return to the earth. When I come there will be two in the field. One will be saved and taken into the kingdom, the other will be lost, left outside the kingdom. There will be two at the mill. One will be grinding and the other will be helping. One will be saved and taken into the kingdom and the other one lost left outside the kingdom.

Matthew 24:42 and the verses that follow to the end of the chapter and all of chapter 25 deals with Jesus' warning to be ready and to be prepared for His return because one does not know when He shall come. Over and over again He illustrates the necessity to be ready. He illustrates this truth using a thief and a man protecting his house, about being aware and ready for His unexpected return. If the homeowner knew the thief was coming, he would be ready for him. Jesus says, in this same manner, prepare and be ready for His appearing. He emphasized this truth by the illustration of marriage in that day. He warns, be ready, be watching, be waiting. In those days marriage ceremonies were different. The general time of the marriage was known, but one did not know specifically the date of the marriage. The marriage did not take place until the bridegroom came and got his bride, and she never knew the specific time when he would come. Talk about waiting at the altar, she would have to be prepared and ready, in some cases, it may be days or only hours. All of her attendants would have to be prepared, ready and waiting, because they did not know when the bridegroom would come for his bride. Jesus continues to illustrate the need to be ready using servants. When they knew the master was away, they would play, so to speak. We have a saying, "when the cats away the mice will play”. In those days, when the master was away, the servants would play and Jesus said be faithful, be ready for my return. Over and over Jesus emphasizes be ready and waiting.

The faithful servant of the Lord always lives in the anticipation and the expectancy of Christ’s return. It is only the unfaithful servant, pretending to be a Christian, that does not remain true and faithfully waiting. Jesus emphasizes being ready more than He does about explaining the events of His coming. By nature, we want to know all the details of this great event. Give us the chronological outline, the date, the time and the place so that we can put it on our calendar and not be too concerned until the time arrives. But Jesus puts the emphasis on being ready and living in expectancy of His appearing. Do you live in the expectancy of Christ’s return? I trust you live daily as if today would be the day of His appearing, for certainly that day will come, maybe today. Are you ready?

Jesus discusses the division (judgment) of the peoples when He returns. Normally it is referred to as a judgment of nations. In Matthew 25:31 Jesus proclaims, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations." Sometimes that is interpreted as being the individual nations, for example the United States, Great Britain, Mexico and Canada. The word "nations", often used in the Scripture, is a general term referring to all peoples, regardless of their nationality. All the living peoples of the world will be brought up before Jesus at that time. Those who have gone through the Tribulation as believers and those who are marked by the beast during the Tribulation time, so the saved and the unsaved alike will be brought up together before Him. "And he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats". Individual division is indicated in this passage. "And he shall set the sheep (His people, the saved) on his right hand but the goats (unsaved) on his left hand. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (before the world existed)." He invites the saved to come into His Kingdom. Remember the Church is already with Christ. It had been caught up (raptured) out of the world. In this passage, these are the individuals who remain who go into the 70th week and the individuals who are saved during the 70th week. They will be separated, the saved from the unsaved.

Verse 46 Jesus makes this ominous statement, "And those (the unsaved) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but, the righteous (saved) unto life eternal.’’

**The Kingdom**

Some 250 years ago, Isaac Watts wrote a hymn based on the truths found in Psalm 98. The name of this world-famous hymn is “Joy to the World!”

At Christmas it is sung all across the world by millions of Christians and non-Christians alike. But a close study of the words of this hymn reveal that Watts did not have in mind the *Bethlehem* coming of Christ, but rather the millennial coming of our Lord! Observe his words:

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King,

Let every heart prepare him room,

And heaven and nature sing.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,

Nor thorns infest the ground;

He comes to make his blessings flow,

Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,

And makes the nations prove

The glories of his righteousness,

And wonders of his love.

1. The Fact of the Millennium

The word itself is a Latin term which signifies "one thousand years.” "... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

In the first seven verses of Revelation 20, John mentions the thousand-year period no less than six times!

In spite of this some have argued that, since this number is found in only one New Testament passage, one cannot insist that the thousand-year period will really come to pass! To emphasize their point, reference is made to 2 Peter 3:8, ", . . One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

It is interesting (and perhaps revealing) to note that the same group which attempts to shorten the thousand-year period of Revelation to one day (and thus do away entirely with the millennium) also attempts to expand the six days of creation in Genesis to thousands of years! One is tempted to ask, "Why can’t God mean exactly what he says?”

Dr. Rene Pache writes the following helpful words:

Let us notice again this fact: the teaching of the Old Testament concerning the millennium is so complete that the Jews in the Talmud succeeded in developing it entirely themselves, without possessing the gifts furnished later by the New Testament. For example, they had indeed affirmed before the Apocalypse that the messianic kingdom would last one thousand years. One should not, therefore, claim (as some have done) that without the famous passage of Revelation 20:1-10 the doctrine of the millennium would not exist.

During the history of the Christian church men have held three major views about the millennium.

1. Postmillennialism

This theory says that through the preaching of the gospel the world will eventually embrace Christianity and become a universal “society of saints?’ At this point Christ will be invited to assume command and reign over man’s peaceful planet. Thus, though postmillennialists believe in a literal thousand-year reign, their position is false, for the Bible clearly teaches that the world situation will become worse and worse prior to Christ’s second coming—not better and better! See I Timothy 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5. This position was popularized by a Unitarian minister named Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), and it flourished until the early part of the twentieth century. Then came World War I, and men began to wonder. Finally, the postmillennial theory was quietly laid to rest amid Hitler’s gas ovens during the Second World War! Today a postmillennialist is harder to find than a 1940 Wendell Wilkie button!

1. Amillennialism

This view teaches that there will be no thousand-year reign at all, and that the New Testament church inherits all the spiritual promises and prophecies of Old Testament Israel. In this view Isaiah’s beautiful prophecy of the bear and the cow lying together and the lion eating straw like the ox (Isa. 11:7) simply doesn’t mean what it says at all! However, if the eleventh chapter of Isaiah cannot be taken literally, what proof do we have that the magnificent fifty-third chapter should not likewise be allegorized away!

1. Premillennialism

This view teaches that Christ will return just prior to the millen­nium and will personally rule during this glorious thousand-year reign. This position alone is the scriptural one, and is the oldest of these three views. From the apostolic period on, the premillennial position was held by the early church fathers.

Beginning in the fourth century, however, the Roman Catholic Church began to grow and premillennialism began to wither, for Rome viewed herself as God’s instrument to usher in the promised kingdom of glory. For centuries the precious doctrine of premillennialism was lost except to a few groups.

But in the past few hundred years God has graciously revived premillennialism and restored it to its proper place, using men like Alford, Seiss, Darby, and C.L Scofield.

1. The Purpose of the Millennium
2. To Reward the Saints of God.

“Verily there is a reward for the righteous... (Psa. 58:11). “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him...” (Isa. 40:10).

“. . . to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward" (Prov. 11:18).

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven...” (Matt. 5:12).

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27).

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance...” (Col. 3:24).

“And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me ...” (Rev. 22:12).

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

1. To Answer the Oft-Prayed Model Prayer.

In Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:9-13 our Lord, at the request of his disciples, suggested a pattern prayer to aid all believers in their praying. One of the guidelines was this: “Thy kingdom come!” Here the Savior was inviting his followers to pray for the millennium! Someday he will return to fulfill the untold millions of times these three little words have wafted their way to heaven by Christians — “Thy kingdom come!”

1. **To Redeem Creation**

In Genesis 3 God cursed nature because of Adam’s sin. From that point on, man’s paradise became a wilderness. The roses suddenly contained thorns, and the docile tiger became a hungry meat eater! But during the millennium all this will change. Paul describes the transformation for us in his Epistle to the Romans:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now (Rom. 8:19-22).

1. To Fulfill Three Important, Old-Testament Covenants.
2. The Abrahamic Covenant

God promised Abraham two basic things:

1. That his seed (Israel) would become a mighty nation (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:5; 17:7, 22:17,18).
2. That his seed (Israel) would someday own Palestine forever (Gen. 12:7; 13:14,15,17; 15:7,18-21; 17:8).
3. The Davidic Covenant (2 Chron. 13:5; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; 23:5)

Here the promise was three-fold:

1. That from David would come an everlasting throne;
2. That from David would come an everlasting kingdom;
3. That from David would come an everlasting King.
4. The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 42:6; Heb. 8:7-12)
5. This promise was also three-fold:
6. That he would forgive their iniquity and forget their sin;
7. That he would give them new hearts;
8. That he would use Israel to reach and teach the Gentiles.
9. To Complete Time-Cycle (?).

*A* question mark is placed here because this purpose is only a suggestion. However, *if* one accepts the 4000 b. c. creation date of man, and *if* the Rapture is truly near, then the millennium will round out 7000 years of God’s dealing with mankind.

1. The Titles of the Millennium
2. **The World to Come *(Heb. 2:5)***
3. The Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5:10)
4. The Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14)
5. The Last Day (John 6:40)
6. The Regeneration (Matt. 19:28)

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28).

The word “regeneration” is found only twice in the English Bible, here and in Titus 3:5, where Paul is speaking of the believer’s new birth. The word literally means “re-creation.” Thus, the millennium will be to the earth what salvation is to the sinner!

1. The Times of Refreshing (Acts *3:19)*
2. The Restitution of All Things (Acts 3:21)
3. The Day of Christ.

This is by far the most common biblical name for the millennium. See 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6; 2:16.

1. The Nature of the Millennium

What will the thousand-year reign of Christ be like? Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost has compiled the following extended and impressive facts:

1. **Peace**

The cessation of war through the unification of the kingdoms of the world under the reign of Christ, together with the resultant economic prosperity (since nations need not devote vast propor­tions of their expenditure on munitions) is a major theme of the prophets. National and individual peace is the fruit of Messiah’s reign.

1. **Joy**

The fullness of joy will be a distinctive mark of the age.

1. Holiness

The theocratic kingdom will be a holy kingdom, in which holiness is manifested through the King and the King’s subjects. The land will be holy, the city holy, the temple holy, and the subjects holy unto the Lord.

1. Glory

The kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, in which the glory of God will find full manifestation.

1. Comfort

The King will personally minister to every need, so that there will be the fullness of comfort in that day.

1. Justice

There will be the administration of perfect justice to every in­dividual.

1. Full Knowledge.

The Ministry of the King will bring the subjects of his kingdom into full knowledge. Doubtless there will be an unparalleled teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1. **Instruction**

This knowledge will come about through the instruction that issues from the King.

1. The Removal of the Curse.

The original curse placed upon creation will be removed, so that there will be abundant productivity to the earth. Animal creation will be changed so as to lose its venom and ferocity.

1. Sickness Removed.

The ministry of the King as a healer will be seen throughout the age, so that sickness and even death, except as a penal measure in dealing with overt sin, will be removed.

1. Healing of the Deformed.

Accompanying this ministry will be the healing of all deformity at the inception of the millennium.

1. **Protection**

There will be a supernatural work of preservation of life in the millennial age through the King.

1. Freedom from Oppression.

There will be no social, political, or religion oppression in that day.

1. No Immaturity.

The suggestion seems to be that there will not be the tragedies of feeble-mindedness nor of dwarfed bodies in that day. Longevity will be restored.

1. **Reproduction by the Living Peoples**

The living saints who go into the millennium in their natural bodies will beget children throughout the age. The earth's population will soar. These born in the age will not be born without a sin nature, so salvation will be required.

1. Labor

The period will not be characterized by idleness, but there will be a perfect economic system, in which the needs of men are abun­dantly provided for by labor in that system, under the guidance of the King. There will be a fully developed industrialized society, providing for the needs of the King’s subjects. Agriculture as well as manufacturing will provide employment.

1. Economic Prosperity.

The perfect labor situation will produce economic abundance, so that there will be no want.

1. Increase of Light.

There will be an increase of solar and lunar light in the age. This increased light probably is a major cause in the increased productivity of the earth.

1. Unified Language.

The language barriers will be removed so that there can be free social interchange.

1. Unified Worship

All the world will unite in the worship of God and God’s Messiah.

1. The Manifest Presence of God.

God’s presence will be fully recognized and fellowship with God will be experienced to an unprecedented degree.

1. **The Fullness of the Spirit.**

Divine presence and enablement will be the experience of all who are in subjection to the authority of the King.

1. **The Citizens of the Millennium**
2. Considered Negatively

No unsaved persons will enter the millennium (John 3:3; Matt. 18:3; Jer. 31:33,34; Ezek. 20:37,38; Zech. 13:9; Matt. 25:30,46; Isa. 35). However, millions of babies will evidently be born to saved but moral Israelite and Gentile parents who survived the Tribulation and entered the millennium in that state of mortality (thus the possible reason for the Tree of Life in Revelation 22:2). As they mature, some of these babies will refuse to submit their hearts to the new birth, though their outward acts will be subjected to existing authority. Thus, Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15; Zech. 14:17-19).

Dr. Rene Pache writes concerning this:

As beautiful as the Millennium is, it will not be heaven ...Sin will still be possible during the thousand years (Isa. 11:4; 65:20). Certain families and certain nations will refuse to go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Zech. 14:17-19). Such deeds will be all the more inexcusable because the tempter will be absent and because the revelations of the Lord will be greater. . .Those who have been thus smitten will serve as examples to all those who would be tempted to imitate them (Isa. 66:24).

1. Considered Positively
2. Saved Israel
3. Israel will once again be related to God by marriage (Isa. 54:1-17; 62:2-5; Hos. 2:14-23).
4. Israel will be exalted above the Gentiles (Isa. 14:1,2; 49:22,23; 60:14-17; 61:6,7).
5. Israel will become God’s witness during the millennium (Isa. 44:8; 61:6; 66:21; Jer. 16:19-21; Mic. 5:7; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 4:1-7; 8:3).
6. Saved Old Testament and tribulation Gentiles (Rev. 5:9, l0; Isa.2:4; 11:12)
7. The Church (I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 1:6; 2:26,27; 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12)
8. The elect angels (Heb. 12:22)
9. **The King of the Millennium**

The Lord Jesus Christ will of course be King supreme, but there are passages which suggest that he will graciously choose to rule through a vice-regent, and that vice-regent will be David! Note the following Scripture:

But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them (Jer. 30:9).

Jeremiah wrote these words some 400 years after the death of David, so he could not have been referring to his earthly reign here.

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd (Ezek. 34:23). See also Ezekiel 37:24.

Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days (Hos.3:5).

If we can take these passages literally, David will once again sit upon the throne of Israel. He will thus be aided in his rule by:

1. The church (I Cor. 6:3);
2. The apostles (Matt. 19:28);
3. Nobles (Jer. 30:21);
4. Princes (Isa. 32:1; Ezek. 45:8,9);
5. Judges (Zech. 3:7; Isa. 1:26).
6. **The Geography of the Millennium**
7. Palestine
8. To be greatly enlarged and changed (Isa. 26:15; Obad. 1:17-21). For the first time Israel will possess all the land promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18-21. A great fertile plain to replace the mountainous terrain.
9. A river to flow east-west from the Mount of Olives into both the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas.

The following passages bear this out:

. . .And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses (Zech. 14:4,8,10).

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim (Joel 3:18).

Then said he unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh.

And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine (Ezek. 47:8,9,12).

1. Jerusalem
2. The city will become the worship center of the world.

But in the last days Mount Zion will be the most renowned of all the mountains of the world, praised by all nations; people from all over the world will make pilgrimages there (Mic. 4:1).

In the last days Jerusalem and the Temple of the Lord will become the world’s greatest attraction, and people from many lands will flow there to worship the Lord.

‘Come, everyone will say, ‘let us go up the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Israel; there he will teach us his laws, and we will obey them. For in those days the world will be ruled from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2,3).

1. The city will occupy an elevated site (Zech. 14:10).
2. The city will be six miles in circumference (Ezek. 48:35). (In the time of Christ, the city was about four miles.)
3. The city will be named “Jehovah-Shammah,” meaning “the Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35).
4. **The Temple in the Millennium**
5. Its Biblical Order

The millennial temple is the last of seven great scriptural temples. These are:

1. The tabernacle of Moses — Exodus 40 (1500-1000 B.C.);
2. The temple of Solomon — I Kings 8 (1000-586 B.C.);
3. The temple of Zerubbabel (rebuilt later by Herod) — Ezra 6; John 2 (516 B.C. to A.D. 70).
4. The temple of the Body of Jesus — John 2:21 (4 B.C. to A.D. 30);
5. The spiritual temple, the Church — Acts 2; I Thess. 4 (from Pentecost till the rapture)
6. The whole church (Eph. 2:21)
7. The local church (I Cor. 3:16,17)
8. The individual Christian (I Cor. 6:19)
9. The tribulation temple — Revelation 11 (from the Rapture till Armageddon).
10. The millennial temple — Ezekiel 40-48; Joel 3:18; Isaiah 2:3; 60:13; Daniel 9:24; Haggai 2:7,9.
11. Its Holy Oblation

Palestine will be redistributed among the twelve tribes of Israel during the millennium. The land itself will be divided into three areas. Seven tribes will occupy the northern area and five the southern ground. Between these two areas there is a section called “the holy oblation,’’ that is, that portion of ground which is set apart for the Lord. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost quotes Merrill F. Unger on this:

The holy oblation would be a spacious square, thirty-four miles each way, containing about 1,160 square miles. This area would be the center of all the interests of the divine government and worship as set up in the Millennial earth.. .The temple itself would be located in the middle of this square (the holy oblation) and not in the City of Jerusalem, upon a very high mountain, which will be miraculously made ready for that purpose when the temple is to be erected (see Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:1-4; Ezek. 37:26).

1. Its Priesthood

On four specific occasions we are told that the sons of Zadok will be assigned the priestly duties (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). Zadok was a high priest in David’s time (the eleventh in descent from Aaron). His loyalty to the King was unwavering. Because of this, he was promised that his seed would have this glorious op­portunity (I Sam. 2:35; I Kings 2:27,35).

1. Its Prince

In his description of the temple, Ezekiel refers to a mysterious “prince" some seventeen times. Whoever he is, he occupies a very important role in the temple itself, apparently holding an in­termediary place between the people and the priesthood. We are sure that he is not Christ, since he prepares a sin offering for himself (Ezek. 45:22), and is married and has sons (Ezek. 46:16). Some suggest that the prince is from the seed of King David, and that he will be to David what the False Prophet was to the An­tichrist.

1. Its Negative Aspects

Several articles and objects present in the temples of Moses, Solomon, and Herod will be absent from the millennial temple.

1. There will be no veil.

This was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) and will not reappear in this temple. Thus there will be no barrier to keep man from the glory of God.

1. There will be no table of showbread.

This will not be needed, for the Living Bread himself will be present.

1. There will be no lampstands.

These will not be needed either, since the Light of the World himself will personally shine forth.

1. There will be no Ark of the Covenant.

This will also be unnecessary, since the Shekinah Glory himself will hover over all the world, as the glory cloud once did over the Ark.

1. The East Gate will be closed.

Observe the words of Ezekiel: “This gate shall be shut, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it; therefore it shall be shut" (Ezek. 44:2). This gate, it has been suggested, will remain closed for the following reasons:

1. This will be the gate by which the Lord Jesus Christ will enter the temple. As a mark of honor to an eastern king, no person could enter the gate by which he entered.
2. It was from the eastern gate that the glory of God departed for the last time in the Old Testament (Ezek. 10:18,19). By sealing the gate, God reminds all those within that his glory will never again depart from his people.
3. Its Sacrifices

As we have already seen, several pieces of furniture in the Old Testament temple will be missing in the millennial edifice. However, the brazen altar of sacrifice will again be present. There are at least four Old Testament prophecies which speak of animal sacrifices in the millennial temple: Isaiah 56:6,7; 60:7; Zechariah 14:16-21; Jeremiah 33:18. But why the need of these animal blood sacrifices during the golden age of the millennium?

To answer this, one must attempt to project himself into this fabulous future period. Here is an age of no sin, sorrow, sufferings, sickness, Satan, or separation. During the millennium even the vocabulary will be different. For example, today respectable and decent society shuns certain filthy four-letter words, and well they should! This will doubtless also be practiced during the millen­nium, but how the words will change! Below is a sampling of some four-letter “cuss words” to be shunned during the thousand-year reign: fear, pain, jail, hate, dope. We wonder if anyone blushed or felt shocked while reading these wicked words. Probably not! They are so much a part of our sinful society that it is utterly impossible to avoid or ignore them! The point is simply this: during the millennium millions of children will be born and reared by saved Israelite and Gentile parents who survived the tribulation. In spite of their perfect environment, however, these "kingdom kids” will need the new birth. As sons and daughters of Adam, they, too, as all others, will require eternal salvation (Rom. 3:23; John 3:3). But how can these children be reached? What object lessons can be used? Here is a generation which will grow up without knowing fear, experiencing pain, witnessing hatred, taking dope, or seeing a jail!

This is one reason that the sacrificial system will be reinstituted during the millennium. These sacrifices will function as:

1. A reminder to all of the necessity of the new birth;
2. An object lesson of the costliness of salvation;
3. An example of the awfulness of sin;
4. An illustration of the holiness of God.

In Revelation Chapter 19 the narrative picks up where Matthew Chapters 24 and 25 leave off. This is a different perspective of the same events. John the Apostle receives a special revelation from God. The heavens are rolled up and opened before him and he is carried in spirit into the future. Verse 11, "And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse". In most cases when one reads about a horse in the Scripture it is associated with war and the implements of war since, in the days of the Scripture, horses were mainly used in warfare. A picture of war is being presented to John. "And behold a white horse (white indicates purity) and he (Jesus) that sat upon him was called faithful and true. And in righteousness he doth judge and make war." The first time Jesus came as a babe in Bethlehem's manger. He came as a Savior bringing mercy, salvation, and grace. The second time He comes, He will come as a judge, a warrior, one who will wage war upon the ungodly. It will be a day of judgment and retribution on all who reject Him and His great love. There will be no mercy at His second coming as there was at His first coming. When one considers His first coming and His second coming, we find no parallels between the two. They are diametrically different. As night is the opposite of day, so is the first coming of Christ the opposite of His second coming.

Verse 12, "His eyes were as a flame of fire" indicating a searching, burning, judging, piercing vision. Fire is often associated with judgment in the Scripture. Here it is associated with His eye of piercing judgment. He will see all to judge perfectly. "And on his head were many crowns" indicating that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. "And he had a name written which no man knew but he himself." This is a puzzling statement until we understand ancient oriental culture. In those days, deities were assigned secret names which were known only to those who were the chosen ones (followers). Of the names of God, which are many, given throughout the Old Testament, many were unspoken names. Names which were secret. These names always carried with them the idea of separation, only those who the god or deity would permit, were allowed to know their secret name. It indicated an exclusive club. When He comes, He will come with a name that the world does not know or recognize. They would not know Him in a personal way. They do not understand Him in an intimate way. They are not a part of His chosen ones, His family. Thus, unbelievers are excluded from Him and His Kingdom.

Verse 13, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called The Word of God." John, in his gospel, begins, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." Jesus is the living word, the living revelation of God. "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean", again speaking of purity, holiness, righteousness and Godliness. The raptured believer is a member of that army. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it He should smite the nations and He shall rule them with a rod of iron and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God". Here we have some very illustrious language. John observes that out of the mouth of Him (Jesus) who sits on a white horse protrudes a sharp sword. Immediately we picture a metal sword protruding from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a grotesque picture and what possible meaning or implication could this have? In the days of the writing of the Scripture, they did not have television, VCR's, computers, magazines, or the printed page, only very few pictures which were paintings or carvings. They had to communicate by using word pictures. What is pictured here is an instrument of war, destruction and death.

That is the sole purpose of this sword. It has no other purpose. Since this instrument of warfare is protruding from His mouth, the word picture indicates that war be waged upon the enemies of God, namely the Antichrist, the beast, the false prophet (false religious leader), and all of the armies that they mass together to stand in confrontation to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture says this confrontation will occur in a place called Mageddo. We have often heard the term "the battle of Armageddon”, which is associated with the climactic war of the ages. Military strategists say this is one of the primary places of the world for a battle to be fought. The armies of the world, under the leadership of the Antichrist, will be gathered together when the Lord Jesus appears. In his brazenness, the Antichrist will believe himself to be utterly invincible and will seek to destroy Christ and His followers. Jesus will simply speak the word of death and they will die.

We have all heard the term "drop dead". Literally that is what will happen. He will speak the word and they will instantly drop dead.

Verse 15, "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron". No challenge will be made to Him by those who remain. Christ’s word will be the law, unmovable and unbreakable. That will be a dictatorship, a theocratic benevolent government. Those that will be born during the days of His kingdom will possess the old sinful nature. They will desire to rebel against the Lord but will not do so, realizing that it would be a futile attempt. They will bide their time awaiting the time their leader (Satan) will be loosed from his prison, which will occur after 1,000 years. Once again Satan will make an attempt to overthrow our Lord and His Kingdom, but this will fail.

"And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Judgment falls upon the false prophet and the beast. The Antichrist will be destroyed and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. Of course, the armies that they have marshalled will be destroyed. Peace will come to a very troubled world, peace such as has never been known since the days of the Garden of Eden.

Verse 16, "And he hath upon his vesture and upon his thigh the name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords" which is indicated by the crowns upon His head. There will be no mistaking who Jesus is or that He is the rightful heir to the throne.

Verse 17, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun and he cried with a loud voice saying to all the fowls (birds) that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God that you may eat the flesh of the kings and the flesh of the captives and the flesh of the mighty men and the flesh of the horses and the flesh of them that sit upon them and the flesh of all men both free and bond, both small and great". The carnage and destruction will be great. The fowls of the air will devour the dead remains of the enemies of God. They will be the grounds keepers of that time.

Verse 19, "And I saw the beast (Antichrist) and the kings of the earth (those who are supporting Antichrist under his authority) and their armies gathered together to make war against the King that sat on the horse and against his army." As they are gathered together, the arrogant pride of man will come to full bloom. The Antichrist, believing he is invincible along with his armies, will storm the throne of Christ; but they will be defeated in an instant.

Verse 20, "And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast." How will the people of that day be deceived? By the miracles that the Antichrist and the false prophet perform. Specifically, the miracles will be performed in and through and by the false prophet "and them that worshiped the image these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone (sulfur)."

Verse 21, "And the remnant was slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse (the Lord Jesus) which proceeded out of his mouth and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." The battle of Armageddon is over in an instant. This is the final battle of this world’s system. This indeed will be the war to end all wars.

Chapter 20:1, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." God sends an angel from heaven with a key. In biblical times, a key indicated authority to open or to close something. If you had the key, you had the authority or right to open or close, to bind or to lose, to lock or to unlock. This angel has the authority to open the bottomless pit. What is the bottomless pit and where is it? We often think of a hole that has no bottom, endless depth; however, a bottomless pit can be a sphere. A sphere has no bottom and it also can be called a pit. It is a bubble, if you will, and Satan will be placed inside this bubble and locked up for 1,000 years. Where is this place? The Scripture does not tell us. The ancient Jews believed it to be the center of the earth. Notice, the angel has a great chain in his hand. In those days a chain stood for that which could bind and could not be broken. This angel has the key, or the authority, to open the bottomless pit. He also has the power to bind (restrain) Satan, that is, to limit his influence upon mankind for 1,000 years. Satan will not, in anyway, influence the affairs of man during this time.

Verse 2, "And he laid hold on the dragon (Satan)1'. He is a fearsome, dangerous and strong creature. The spirit of God does not want us to miss who this individual is. This is our adversary, our foe. Often in Scripture, the word dragon was associated with large dinosaurs. John adds the term "old serpent", which carries with it the idea of a deceiver. "And he (Satan) shall be bound a thousand years". At the beginning of Christ's Kingdom, Satan, who has influenced the affairs of man from the Garden of Eden when he first approached Eve to the final days, will be bound. "The devil made me do it" will not be an excuse in Christ's Kingdom. In the millennium, Satan will have no influence on the affairs of man. Any rebellion will rise only from the corrupt hearts of mankind.

Verse 3, "And cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him." A seal meant that it could not be opened or broken except by the one with the authority to do so. A seal, in the days the Scripture was written, indicated an owner with authority to control. "That he should deceive the nations no more." Satan's principal tool in the world is not by power or by strength, but it is by deception. It began with Eve in the Garden and he has deceived mankind throughout the centuries. He will be shut up and sealed that he should deceive the nations (world population) no more. "Till the thousand years should be fulfilled (completed)." After the thousand years of his imprisonment are fulfilled, he will again be permitted to deceive the nations. "And after that he must be loosed for a little season (short time)".

Verse 4, "And I saw thrones (rule of God's people during the millennium) and they that sat upon them and judgment (discernment) was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them which were beheaded (died during the 70th week) for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God and had not worshiped the beast neither his image neither received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." There will be a special position of service and honor for those who were faithful during the trying time of the 70th week. They will experience a place of high honor and service.

Verse 5, "And the rest of the dead (the unsaved) lived not again until the thousand years are completed (finished). This is the first resurrection." Immediately one may ask, wasn't there a resurrection at the Rapture? Yes, there was. Well, shouldn't that be called the first resurrection? Yet, John is calling this, those who have died during the 70th week who are raised from the dead and brought into the kingdom, he is calling this the first resurrection. We have to understand several things. First, we have to understand that the Church is a separate entity from the nation of Israel and the Kingdom promises, as such, given to the nation of Israel. The resurrection, in connection with the Church, is a separate resurrection, not included in this resurrection. This resurrection deals with the nation of Israel and the promises to the nation of Israel, by God, centuries before the Church was instituted. This is the first resurrection for them (Israel) as a nation, not for the Church. By this time, the Church has experienced its own resurrection at the Rapture.

Verse 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power (authority). But they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years" in Christ's Kingdom. The enemy has been defeated. Satan is bound and the saints are in the Kingdom, which includes those who have come out of the Tribulation Period. The Church and Israel will be included together with Christ to rule with Him and enjoy the blessings of His Kingdom.

Consider the characteristics of the Kingdom. The use of the term millennial or thousand-year kingdom implies that the Kingdom of God comes to an end after a thousand years. The Scripture nowhere teaches that the Kingdom of God ends after a thousand years; but rather, at the conclusion of a thousand years, Satan is loosed for a season. The Kingdom of God does not end, since, in keeping with the Old Testament promises concerning His kingdom, "there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7). The millennial kingdom refers to the first 1,000 years which only prepares the way for the events of eternity.

Let us turn our attention to the attributes of Christ's Kingdom.

1. It will be a Kingdom of peace. In the roughly 6,000 years of recorded human history, only 237 years have been peaceful. The rest of the time war, conflict, and rebellion have characterized our world. No one knows how many dollars are spent annually for police departments and military hardware. Mankind prays for, hungers for, and desires peace, but there is no peace. Peace will come upon the earth when Christ appears. The Scripture promises "they will beat their swords into plow shares" (Isaiah 2:4). Crime will cease. Murders, robberies, rapes, and muggings will not be on the evening news. The military will be disbanded as well as the police. War and crime will come to an end. What a "day” that will be! Peace, sweet peace will become the daily way of life when Jesus comes (Isaiah 9:6).

1. Zachariah records that joy will abound (Zech. 8:19). Joy is always associated in the Scripture with God. His presence will bring joy to human hearts and peace to the land. We read that He will rule and reign with a rod of iron and it seems like that and joy are contradictions; but they really are not because that "ruling and reigning with the rod of iron" is only keeping evil hearts, which would attack and destroy the peace and joy, in check. Joy is a part of God's nature and character (I Thess. 5:16). Joy carries with it the idea of a state of euphoria. Can you image living in a world that is euphoric? Presently, many do not look forward to facing each new day, but in that "day" anticipation of each new day will bring the expectation of joy. Mankind will face each new day with eager anticipation.
2. Isaiah foretells holiness will characterize Christ's Kingdom (Isaiah 35:8). There will be no ungodliness, injustice, sin, or unrighteousness. Holiness basically means separation. In that "day" separation from sin and its evil consequences will characterize Christ's Kingdom. Just the absence of evil will make the world of that "day" heaven. It is hard to imagine such a world or its possibility, but then it will become reality.
3. Isaiah also speaks of the glory of God which will be present in His Kingdom (Isaiah 6:3). The glory of God is resplendent beauty of magnificence. It is a state of absolute happiness, gratification, and contentment. It is the radiance of His eminence that is His very person. He will permeate all of society with blessings. God Himself will radiate out to all mankind in that "day". We cannot look upon the glory of God now because of sin, for that observation would be fatal for us. But, in that "day’’, it will be our very life (all that God experiences).
4. Comfort (Revelation 21:4). The word comfort carries with it the idea of tranquility, the absence of contention, a state of calm. Our society is super-charged with stress. Most people are stressed to the limit and are not aware of how much stress they are living under. We have become so accustomed to stress that it seems normal to live in that state. Every now and again somebody succumbs to stress, when that point of no return is crossed they become its victim. We reason that they have not learned to "manage stress." It seems that when we reach a certain stress level and learn how to manage stress at that point, we must then move on to the next higher stress level. Society continually forces us to the breaking point and finally over the edge. In that "day", stress will be eliminated. Calm and tranquility will be the standard for everyone (Isaiah 61:2).
5. Justice. Jeremiah indicates that the Millennial Kingdom will be characterized by justice. Our present world knows little of justice, but in that "day", there will be justice, not partially, but fully, completely, and absolutely. There will be no wrongs in that "day". Justice will abound. There will be no cry for justice, for all will experience justice (Jeremiah 23:5).
6. Habakkuk, the Prophet, foresees an increase in knowledge. Literally, Habakkuk says that there will be an explosion of knowledge concerning the Lord. All true knowledge emanates from God. Apart from Him, there is no knowledge. Even in this present world, true knowledge comes from God. Knowledge of that "day" will be absolute. As the Scripture says, we will "know even as we are known (of God [I Cor. 13:12])." Our understanding of God will be fully satisfied (Hab. 2:14).
7. The curse, Isaiah rejoices, will be removed from the land (Isaiah 11:6-9). Our environment suffers as a result of the curse of sin in this present world as well we suffer. But in that "day", the curse will be removed forever. The earth will know its fullness of productivity. The world and environment will be restored to what God’s original intention was in the Garden of Eden before sin destroyed the blessing. It will be a perfect place to live. Every day the sun will shine. Beauty will abound everywhere. Nothing of a negative nature will be permitted in that wonderful land. There will be no cold or snow. It will be a time of paradise regained. The earth will bring forth its fullness of vegetation and beauty. There will be no environmental crisis. Man, and nature will live in perfect harmony. It will be "heaven" on earth.
8. Ezekiel speaks of the absence of sickness (Ezek. 34:16). At almost every prayer meeting I have attended; prayer has been requested in behalf of the sick and infirm. In that "day" there will be no illness or injury. There will be no need for hospitals, doctors, nurses, or emergency services. Disease will be history. Health will be the continual and normal experience of everyone.
9. Zephaniah 3:19 tells us that the deformed will be restored. There will be no such thing as birth defects in that "day" and there will be no deformities from accidents or other catastrophes. Mankind will be free from these plagues.
10. Amos informs us that Christ’s Kingdom will be a place of protection (Amos 9:15). In some parts of the world, you can leave your doors unlocked and feel fairly safe, but not so in other parts of this world. There are any number of cities that you cannot walk down their streets and feel safe, particularly in the larger metropolitan areas. Even in some of the rural areas, people fear because of the presence of crime and violence. There will be no crime or violence in His Kingdom. Police departments will go out of business for lack of crime. Freedom from fear of physical violence will be throughout the world, not just in certain isolated places but everywhere.
11. Zechariah writes that we will be free from oppression (Zech. 9:11-12). Many presently live under oppression even in America. Each day, little by little, our "freedoms" are being chipped away. I would dare say that should the Lord tarry His coming, many living in America will see the day that it will be extremely difficult to freely speak of their faith without persecution. Oppression is the burdensome, unjust exercise of authority or power. In that "day" all oppression will cease. Freedom will abound in Christ's Kingdom. The name of Christ will be freely spoken without fear.
12. Isaiah 65:20 tells us there will be no immaturity or mental retardation. The mental faculties of all will function at their maximum capacities. One can only imagine the accomplishments that will be attained in that "day" when men's mind will not be limited by our present frailties.
13. There will be reproduction of the living peoples during the Kingdom Age (Zech. 10:8). Those who came out of the 70th week will be brought into the Kingdom of God. They will not be transformed into glorified beings at that point but will remain in the flesh and repopulate the earth. Since there will be virtually no death, accidents, illnesses or anything that would destroy life, the world's population will expand dramatically. Perhaps as many as 50 billion people will be born within that thousand years. The world of that “day” will be capable of supporting that number of people. Even some environmentalists and agriculturalists tell us that our present world, if all of our resources were utilized appropriately, could sustain a population of 50 billion people. The world of that "day" will indeed be a brotherhood with love, peace, and prosperity abounding.
14. Isaiah speaks of the fact that in the Kingdom there will be labor (Isaiah 62:8-9). The people of the Kingdom will not sit around under a shade tree enjoying the fluffy white clouds floating in the sky for all eternity. There will be work; however, it will not be the kind of labor that is toilsome, but rather, a satisfying and fulfilling labor that brings about a sense of accomplishment and usefulness. Presently, it is estimated that 80% of the people who work do not enjoy their job or are satisfied with it. They are working because they must earn a living while finding little fulfillment in it. In the Kingdom, work will be joyous, rewarding, satisfying as well as fulfilling. Tasks to be performed will be eagerly looked forward to. There will not be any stress or frustration, but a sense of accomplishment.
15. As a result, Amos tells us that economic prosperity will abound (Amos 9:13-14). There will be no recessions or depressions and the economy will not be in the red as it often is today. In that "day" there will be a growing GNP. The world has yet to experience the prosperity that will be present when Christ is King.
16. There will be an increase in light, Zechariah 2:5 announces, no doubt because of the presence of the glory of the Lord. It is reasonable that darkness shall decrease since light and darkness cannot occupy the same area at the same time.
17. Zephaniah also tells us that the world will be of one language (Zeph. 3:9). Presently, there are some 6,000 different languages and dialects throughout the world. No wonder people have trouble communicating with each other. Even subcultures have their own particular jargon or language. In that "day" we will all speak one language and all will be understood. Miscommunication will be a thing of the past.
18. In the book of Revelation, we are informed there will be unified worship (Rev. 5:9- 14). The world's religions and cults will become history. There will be one "religion" and that will be the true worship of the Lord. Only worship of the true and living God will be permitted. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9). Everyone will know who Jesus is. It is estimated that perhaps as many as one half of the present world population does not even know the name of Jesus.
19. The presence of God will be with his people (Rev. 21:3). The Lord Jesus will literally be physically upon the earth as He was after His resurrection and before His ascension into heaven to rule.
20. The fullness of the Spirit of God. Will be known to all (Ezek. 11:19-20). His Spirit, Ezekiel tells us, will be abounding everywhere in the land. To know Him fully is to know Him completely and absolutely. This will be the experience of mankind in that "day".
21. Christ will establish His worldwide Kingdom (Rev. 19:16). It is interesting to note that throughout history different individuals, from time to time, have come to the forefront of human history trying to establish a world-wide kingdom or government, such as Napoleon, Hitler and many others. The Antichrist will also desire to unify the world under one government and will succeed temporarily; but, it certainly will not be a kingdom that will know the characteristics that we have just listed. Actually, his kingdom will be characterized by the opposite of what the Lord will produce in His Kingdom.
22. The Kingdom will be free of satanic influence (Rev. 20:1-2). However, at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released to again have influence upon mankind for a season; however, it will be short lived. The Kingdom of God does not cease at the end of the thousand years. Once the Lord Jesus comes to establish His Kingdom, it will last forever. That is the promise of the Scripture, "Of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Psalm 145:13).
23. The will of God will be done upon earth as it is done in heaven (Matthew 6:10). It has been nearly 2,000 years since Jesus prayed "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done upon earth as it is done in heaven." During the millennium, this prayer will be answered. The earth will experience the perfection of God since nothing will be tolerated that is not within the divine will.
24. The believers will reign with Christ is a promise made in Revelation 20:4. Authority and responsibility will be shared with the faithful by Him. Jesus, on a couple of occasions, illustrated this truth in parables concerning faithfulness. He said, He who is faithful in little, shall be made ruler over much. He who is less faithful will be ruler over less (Matt. 25:21). The believer will be responsible for different areas of His government.
25. This is Israel's golden day. It is during this first thousand years that all of the promises that God made to Israel concerning them as a nation will be fulfilled. Every promise will be kept. God never made a promise He could not keep. He never made a promise He would not keep. This will be a day of kept promises.
26. All who are saved during the Tribulation will enter the Millennium. Nobody who is lost in the 70th week will enter into the Millennium; only the saved will enter. No unbelievers will slip in. With Christ's appearing, the doom of the lost, just as in Noah's day, will forever be sealed (Matt. 25).
27. The temple and its service will be in existence during that time (Ezek. 40:1-48:35). Ezekiel speaks of this temple and its service. A question might be, "Why is there a need for a temple and its service since the Lord is physically present? Since salvation is complete, why the temple?" First, it is a witness to the provision of God's salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the temple service were a gigantic illustration of God's provision of salvation for mankind. The temple service will be a testimony to that which the Lord Jesus Christ completed for us. It is also to fulfil His promise that the temple would be present as that testimony.
28. Many will be saved during this time. We have no idea how many will be saved, but it will be earth's golden time of salvation. Satan will be confined in the bottomless pit. There will be no satanic influence. Satan and his demons will not be wreaking havoc as he presently does in the world. The presence of Christ will be there. The testimony of the temple service will be there. The Saints will be there. Those who have been saved during the 70th week will be there. The Old Testament Saints will be there. Together, this will be a testimony of God's great saving power. The old nature will be present in those born during that time; but the Gospel will be unhindered and accessible to all. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Hab. 2:14).
29. This will be a time of great spiritual ingathering. Death will almost be eliminated. Death will come about as a result of personal rebellion to the Lord. It is like the little child, when Mom or Dad says, "Sit down and be quiet", the child responds, "Well, my body is sitting down and I’m being quiet, but inside I'm standing up and screaming." That is how it will be then; many people will be subject to the Lord outwardly but inwardly they will not be yielded to him. A few of them will express their rebellion and it will result in their death, since God will not tolerate rebellion to His will. He will rule with that rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). Presently, one may sin and lightning does not strike from heaven the very instant that sin is committed. They may not bear the consequences of sin now, but surely, they will later. Ultimately, man is accountable for their sin.
30. The only influence from evil will come from the old sinful nature. It is from the sinful nature, unredeemed humanity, Satan will draw his armies for the final conflict at the close of his 1,000-year imprisonment. Those who are born to saved parents who have entered into the millennium are not automatically saved, they must make a personal commitment to Christ. They are not under a blanket of salvation because they are born of saved parents in the Millennial Kingdom. They still have to make a decision for Christ or against Him as all mankind must do.

Revelation 20:7, "And when the thousand years were completed (expired) Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." Why would God do this? There has been a thousand years of God's personal presence and influence in the world. We have the testimony of the saved during this time. There is the birth of the natural man (who has the old nature) living in this perfect environment, experiencing life as God had originally intended it, perfect, and without satanic influence. The chief difference between the Garden of Eden and the temptation that Adam and Eve faced, and those who are born and grow up during the Millennial Kingdom will be no satanic influence. It could be reasoned that Adam and Eve sinned because of satanic influence. If Satan had not been present, they never would have fallen. What God will do during His thousand-year reign will be to show that even without satanic influence unregenerate mankind will still have a heart of rebellion. By nature, man is rebellious. Satan will be the leader for unregenerate mankind after his release from the bottomless pit. Why would all those who were born, raised, grew up and knew nothing but the goodness of God, when presented with the opportunity to unite under a rebel leader, which they will do, and overtly rebel against God, why would anybody in their right mind do this? The reason for this is the natural rebellion which is in their heart. This will be shown to all during that time. This is the reason Satan will be loosed from his prison. God will step back, so to speak, open the gates of jail, and let Satan out to do his work for a short time in the hearts of unredeemed man. The natural tendency to sin and rebellion will be plainly revealed during this time. The actions of the unregenerate will demonstrate to all that they are not God’s children.

Verse 8, "And he shall go out to deceive the nations (living, unsaved peoples) which are in the four quarters of the earth. Gog and Magog." Much has been speculated about these two names found in Scripture. The names refer to nations (peoples) who stand in rebellion against God. Principally, they will come from certain Northern geographical areas. The names given are associated with the people of the north who rebelled against God and against His people. Ezekiel 38 and 39 is an exposition on this rebellion. When we read prophecy in the Scripture, particularly prophecy that deals with future events or foretelling future events, there are certain characteristics that can be associated with those prophecies. One of those characteristics is "near" fulfillment or a partial fulfillment, a fulfillment on a small scale. In the future, a greater or more complete fulfillment of that same prophecy will occur. Ezekiel 38 and 39 have their near or immediate fulfillment. With the Battle of Armageddon, there is a rebellion of people who bear the same characteristics of Gog and Magog; but its greatest or complete fulfillment will come later, after the thousand years of Satan’s imprisonment. It will be one horrendous battle which will be Satan's and unbelieving rebellious man's final revolt. Their doom is assured in the eternal Lake of Fire (hell).

Verse 8 continues, "To gather them together (speaking of Satan) to battle. The number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (world's largest revolt). The Apostle John is indicating that when Satan goes forth again to deceive, many unsaved embrace him as their leader to overthrow the yoke of the Lord’s rule upon them which, in their hearts, they have never wanted. No matter how wonderful life is, they will want to do things their own way, which they believe is better than what the Lord has provided. They will embrace Satan as the one who will lead them to overthrow the Lord and given them a better place to live. They will be thoroughly convinced that they can accomplish the defeat of God and build a utopia under Satan’s leadership. But they will be deceived by their own evil natures and Satan's lies. Their rebellion will fail. The text indicates that it will be a short, decisive battle.

Verse 9, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth" literally from all over the world. From every part of the earth they will rise up and "encompass (surround) the saints". Evidently this force of evil is very large. Centuries of believers, Old and New Testament, will be present with the Lord surrounded. "And shall encompass the camp of the saints" and not only that, verse 9, "and the beloved city (Jerusalem)", Jesus's capitol city from which He will rule and reign during this 1,000-year interval. The attitude of Satan and his armies, comprised of fallen angels and living rebellious man, will be "We are going to crush the oppressing Lord and all those who oppressed us and kept us under their thumb. We are going to get rid the world and universe of them. And build our own kingdom the way we want it." They sincerely believe they will be able to destroy the Lord and His saints. It is hard to believe they would rebel against the Lord who wanted nothing but their best. Every time someone rebels against the Lord, it leads to their suffering, hurt, sorrow and ruin. It is amazing how Satan, in the eternity of God's time, with the Lord in perfection until one day "iniquity was found in his heart” (Ezek. 28:15). said, "I will move my throne above that of the Lord. I will ascend to the holy mountain of God" (Isaiah 14:13- 14).

Verse 9, "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them"....short, simple and tragic. Verse 10, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast (Anti- Christ) and the false prophet are (have already been cast) and they shall be tormented day and night forever." This is the devil's end. There is no escape from this place described in Scripture as "the lake of fire". In the day in which this passage was written, this described the worst form of physical suffering a human could experience. This place is not God's desire for humanity; but those who reject God and His Son have no other place to go but the lake of fire. In the final analysis, the devil, fallen angels (demons), beast, false prophet and all others end up in this lake by their own choice. Having rejected God and His goodness as expressed in His Son Jesus, God grants them their hearts desire to be rid of Him and His Son. So, they will be cast in the lake of fire which becomes so by God's very absence. May we respond to God's love and grace, as made known to us by His Son, and avoid this terrible place.

**The Final Judgement**

**Great White Throne**

1. **The Fact of this Throne**

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery steam issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7:9,10).

1. **The Judge of this Throne — Christ Himself!**

*“For* the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . .and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:22,27).

“Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts:40,42).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. . ."(2 Tim. 4:1).

1. **The Jury at this Throne — Five Sets of Books**
2. The book of conscience (Rom. 2:15)

Although man's conscience is not an infallible guide, he will nevertheless be condemned by those occasions when he deliberately violated it.

1. The book of words (Matt. 12:36,37)

“But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak; they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

1. The book of secret words

“God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16). “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccles. 12:14).

1. The book of public works

“...whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:15). “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works [Matt. 16:27).

1. The book of life (Exod. 32:32,33; Psa. 69:28; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev.3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19)
2. **The Judged at this Throne**

Only unsaved people will stand before this throne. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17).

1. **The Judgment at this Throne**

The Eternal Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14, 15; Matthew 25:41,46).

John wrote verse 11 of chapter 20, "And I saw a great white throne". The word great indicates a throne like no other. It is unique. The thrones of man are located in throne rooms with the most exquisite beauty that could be imagined. Often, thrones are overlaid in gold and silver, and precious jewels are imbedded in them. Intricate carvings characterize these thrones with the finest of upholstery and tapestries. Usually, they are quite large and thus become the focal point of anyone entering the room. John reveals, "I saw a great", indicating that this throne was bigger and better than any other throne. The throne John views is "white". As we have already indicated, most thrones are gold in color since they were overlaid with gold and silver, but this one is white. There is significance for the use of white. First, it indicates the purity of this throne. The throne that John sees is not associated with the corrupt kings and kingdoms of this world. This throne is free from all corruption.

Second, it is a unique throne, not like any other throne. This is the only one of its kind. "Throne" indicates a place of power and authority. This is the seat of a holy, righteous and just God who will bring to accounting all those who have rejected His mercy, love and grace with all power to do so.

John said, "And him that sat on it" (this is none other than the Lord God) "from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away and there was found no place (to hide or stand) for them". So terrible, due to the nature, purpose and accountability of those who stand before it, is this throne and the one who sits upon it, that the earth and the heavens desire to run and hide. John very quickly points out that there is no place found for them to hide. This is a throne of judgment, not of administration, for it is a throne of accounting. Many people believe that there is no ultimate accounting for life, but there is, and it is certain. Ultimately there will be an accounting and all unsaved shall be accounted for as to their person and actions, as this passage very clearly reveals. There will be no place to hide. This accounting is unavoidable. Sometimes we believe that the crowd is big enough so we can escape unnoticed by God; He will never know. We will blend into the crowd and be safe from our personal day of accounting. The peoples that will be gathered before the throne that day will not be able to blend into the crowd. God speaks of the unsaved peoples being gathered before Him for their individual personal accounting.

Daniel Webster, the great American statesman of another century, was asked, "What is the greatest single thought that has ever crossed your mind?" He thought very deeply for a moment or two before he responded, "My personal accountability to Almighty God".

This is the scene in the throne room of God, verse 12, "And I saw the dead" (spiritually dead) everybody outside of Christ is included in this group. There are no exceptions, "small and great". The leaders of the world, names that are instantly recognized, as well as those who are unknown, shall all stand before the "one" who knows all. Verse 12 qualifies the group, "the dead", the spiritually dead. Then John saw, "and books (plural) and another book (singular) was opened". The spiritually dead are brought up before Him. On the one side is a table of books. Do not think of a book as we know it, but think in terms of a scroll, a very large scroll, with two handles. As the scroll was read, it was unrolled from one end and rolled up on the other. This table has many scrolls on it. On another table there is one scroll, one book, a very special book. John tells us that it is the Book of Life. "And the dead (spiritually dead) were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works". All the thoughts, words and deeds of the unsaved are recorded in these books to which they must give an account.

Scientists tell us that our mind is a very intricate and complex organ. The human mind has the capacity to record everything that one has experienced. Whether we are conscious of it or not, whether we can bring it back to memory or not, it is recorded in the mind. The fact of the matter is so intricate and sensitive is the mind with slight electrical shocks stimulating different areas of the brain, that which is recorded in that particular area of the brain will then be experienced again by the individual as if they were living it again. The same emotions they felt during the first time of the actual experience, the same thoughts they thought, all the same feelings they experienced, whether it was happiness, fear, sorrow or joy, will all be experienced again. Nothing is left unrecorded that is experienced in life. Perhaps, and this is speculation, the "books" have reference here to the very book of our mind which shall be stimulated before God to show what we did and what we said. It will reveal how we felt at any particular time in our life. The true intent of our hearts will be made known. Many who have faced death, or the potential of eminent death, have recounted that their whole life flashed before them in a moment. They remembered and saw things as a child and their whole life ran before them as a giant scroll unrolling before their mind's eye.

Scientists tell us the things that we say create sound waves that never die. Everything that is spoken lives on. Even though once it is spoken it ceases to be audible, the sound waves that are created at the moment of articulation are still present. With sophisticated technology we have at our disposal, it is possible to reproduce these sounds, and it has been done when as much as thirty minutes after the event have elapsed. Everything that is said, good, bad or otherwise, is recorded in the eternity of sound waves. Certainly, the Lord could cause sound to become audible again. Some may stand before Him and argue, "I didn't say that. That's not what I said.”And the Lord God will permit it be heard again just as when it was said for the first time. This is what you said and this is the circumstance, intent and feelings you felt at that time. A number of years ago a certain individual was listening to a radio station which he found quite by accident cruising the radio dial. He was very pleased with what he heard. He felt it was an exceptional broadcast. At the end of the program, the city and the call letters for the station were given. He wrote to the station, which was quite some distance away, to explain his appreciation and to thank them for the programing that night. It was sometime later that his letter came back stamped "undeliverable". The man was puzzled and he began to investigate why his letter was returned. He called the city to inquire about the station. His investigation revealed that the radio station had been off the air and out of business for years. He wondered how this could be since he had just heard the program a few weeks ago and yet the station was no longer on the air. The program that he had heard was a program that had run years before. Yet he heard it as if it was a current broadcast being aired that night. Sound and radio waves never die. What we do and say is recorded on the pages of God's record. In God's records there are no errors or mistakes since the actual events are recorded permanently in history. Most of us have said and done things that we would certainly not want to have made public. When we come to Christ and put our faith, trust and confidence in Him, the slate is wiped clean. The sin is taken away and we are washed white as snow. The Scripture pictures us as wearing white robes (Rev. 7:9, 13). The Scripture speaks of the Church as being spotless, clean and pure (Eph. 5:27). That is the hope, blessing, and joy that believers know. But in this judgment, those individuals who have not come to Christ but have refused the free gift of salvation will be brought up for an accounting and what an accounting that will be. They will be judged, John says, "according to their works" that which they have done. It is evident from this passage no one's works will be good enough to meet God’s holy character, no matter how hard they have tried.

Verse 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." This sea is not the oceans of the world, but rather the sea of humanity, billions upon billions of people, and out of the billions of people that have ever lived, those who are not saved are called up out of this massive sea of humanity to face their judgment. "Death and hell" refer to one and the same condition. "Death" is those who have died physically. Death cannot hide us from this accounting. Hell comes from the Greek word “Hades" which literally means the place of the unseen dead. Death does not end it all. A very popular view of many is live today and tomorrow you are gone so eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die (cease to exist). But this is not true, death will not hide them. Death will not hide them from God or this accounting day. They will be brought up before the Judge of all judges to be judged. "Delivered up" the concept is brought up even against their will. They will be delivered, handed over, the spiritually dead which were in them "and", he repeats that phrase again, as he did in verse 12, for emphasis, to show the certainty of this event, “they were judged every man according to his works." The only way to escape this judgment is salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, this is where everyone apart from Christ will stand. John makes it clear not just a few, not just some, not just the really evil, but all who are apart from Christ will not escape this judgment. There will be no exceptions, "according to their works". Their works will reveal the character of each individual judged. The person who steals a cup of coffee and the most unbelievably evil person will all be judged according to their works. Justice is one of God's attributes, just as love is one of His attributes. Justice demands that every individual be given a just account. The person who steals a cup of coffee will not be under as severe a judgment as the evilest person who ever lived. God will judge justly and He will judge accurately the intents and motives of each heart. Those who are spiritually dead, "will be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death" or, as we call it, hell. There are actually two things the lost will face in this judgment, accountability for their sins and being cast into the lake of fire for their rejection (unbelief) of Christ. The lake of fire is the place of ultimate separation from God. People are not sent to hell by God, but rather, they go there because they do not want God in their lives. God will answer their ultimate prayer and give them what they really want, separation eternally from Him. But that is apart from the judgment they will face for their deeds. They will suffer in direct proportion to the type of life they have lived on earth. This is why this judgment is described in the most awful of terms. In the Scripture, hell is described in the worst possible scenario that can be experienced and even that is not adequate enough to express the agonies that will be experienced by those who are in hell. The synonym of fire is used to describe hell. Those who have been burned say that is the worst physical pain they have ever experienced. Darkness is also used to describe hell, utter darkness. You might ask, "How can fire and darkness exist together?" Darkness is used to describe the absence of the glory (light) of God. The light of His glory and love will be absent in that place of continual pain and suffering. It is beyond our understanding and comprehension to adequately describe the horrors of hell. It is significant that Jesus spoke thirteen times more often about hell, called the lake of fire, then he did about heaven and every time Jesus spoke about hell, He urged us to flee from it. There are three words in the Scripture which refer to the lake of fire often translated hell. The first is hades, (Greek) and sheol (Hebrew). Basically, these two words mean "the place of the unseen dead". It is the netherworld.

A place of gloom, despair, and hopelessness. A second word is "Ghenna" Its Hebrew counterpart is "Ge-Hinnom". Both refer to the Valley of Hinnom just to the south of Jerusalem. It had a long and dark history. At first, it was a place of idol worship. Molech was worshiped there by the sacrifice of children to fire. Later it became a refuse dump for the city. Unclaimed bodies, carcasses of animals and general waste were discarded there where a fire always burned. It was a most repulsive place. Yet a third word used is Tartarus. It is the prison of fallen angels.

There is no description given in the Scripture that pictures hell as an attractive place. To the contrary, it is a place to flee from at all costs.

Verse 14, "And death" that is those who have been swallowed up in death "and hell" (world of unseen dead) those who have been captive there "were cast into the lake of fire". This is the ultimate victory, when death is defeated and the ultimate disaster when lost humanity is consigned there without any hope forever. The Scripture says that the last enemy to be defeated is death (I Cor. 15:26). From this point on, death and hell (world of the unseen dead) literally are cast into the lake of fire, hell. They cease from being any further factor in the affairs of the redeemed. "This is the second death." The first death is spiritual death. Everyone is born spiritually dead. We have hope for recovery from the first death through the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. From the second death (lake of fire, hell), there is no recovery. There is no second chance after our physical termination of life if one rejects Christ.

John emphasizes in verse 15, "And whosoever" (everyone) was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire". They are judged out of the books and then their name is checked in the book of life. If their name is not there, they are cast into the lake of fire. We know from this, as well as other passages of Scripture, the only people at the Great White Throne Judgment are the spiritually dead, verse 15, so ends this present world system. It has come a long way from God's original perfect creation in which God pronounced it "very good". Millenniums have passed, sin has woven a terrible thread of hate, rebellion, suffering, despair, pain and grief through the lives of mankind. Sin is defeated forever and will never again mar God's creation nor trouble the hearts of the redeemed. From this point on, all that will be experienced will be perfect in its most absolute form. The glory of God is fully revealed to the redeemed.

**The end of the world that “now Is.”**

**Final revolt of Satan**

1. The Final Revolt of Satan

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city...’’ (Rev. 20:7-9).

Dr. J. Vernon McGee writes the following words concerning these verses:

When the late Dr. Chafer (founder of Dallas Theological Seminary) was once asked why God loosed Satan after he once had him bound, he replied, **i**f you will tell me why God let him loose in the first place, I will tell you why God lets him loose the second time.’ **Apparently,** Satan is released at the end of the Millennium to reveal that the ideal conditions of the kingdom, under the personal reign of Christ, do not change the human heart. This reveals the enormity of the enmity of man against God. Scripture is accurate when it describes the heart as ‘desperately wicked’ and incurably so. Man is totally depraved. The loosing of Satan at the end of the 1,000 years proves it.

We have already discussed the purposes accomplished by the sacrifices during the millennium. **Apparently,** millions of maturing children will view these sacrifices and hear the tender salvation plea of the priests, but will stubbornly harden their sinful hearts. The fact that earth’s mighty King at Jerusalem once bled as a lowly Lamb at Calvary will mean absolutely nothing to them! Outwardly they will conform, but inwardly they will despise.

**Finally,** at the end of the millennium, the world will be offered for the first time in ten centuries “a choice, and not an echo.’’ Millions will make a foolish and fatal choice!

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost quotes F.C. Jennings, who writes:

Has human nature changed, at least apart from sovereign grace? Is the carnal mind at last friendship with God? Have a thousand years of absolute power and absolute benevolence, both in unchecked activity, done away with all war forever and forever? These questions must be marked by a practical test. Let Satan be loosed once more from his prison. Let him range once more earth’s smiling fields that he knew of old. He saw them last soaked with blood and flooded with tears, the evidence and accompaniments of his own reign; he sees them now ‘laughing with abundance. . .But as he pursues his way further from Jerusalem, the center of this blessedness, these tokens become fainter, until, in the far off “corner of the earth,’’ they cease altogether, for he finds myriads who have instinctively shrunk from close contact with that holy center, and are not unprepared once more to be deceived.

However, this insane and immoral insurrection is doomed to utter and complete failure. As a war correspondent, the Apostle John duly records this final battle:

.. .and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 20:9,10).

**Obviously,** this battle, referred to as Gog and Magog, is not the same as the one in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Dr. J. Vernon McGee writes concerning this:

Because the rebellion is labeled ‘Gog and Magog,’ many Bible students identify it with Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39. This, of course, is not possible for the conflicts described are not parallel as to time, place, or participants — only the name is the same.

The invasion from the north by Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 breaks the false peace of the Antichrist and causes him to show his hand in the midst of the Great Tribulation. That rebellion of the godless forces from the north will have made such an impression on mankind that after 1,000 years the last rebellion of man bears the same label. We have passed through a similar situation. World War I was so devastating that when war again broke out in Europe, it was labeled again “World War,” but differentiated by the number II. Now World War III is being predicted! Likewise, the war in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is Gog and Magog I, while the reference in verse 8 is to Gog and Magog II.

1. The Destruction of This Present Earth and Surrounding Heavens
2. The Fact of this Destruction

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt.24:35). “Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb. 1:10-12).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10,11).

1. The Reason for this Destruction

At this stage in the Bible the final rebellion has been put down, the False Prophet, the Antichrist, and the Devil himself are all in the lake of fire forever, and the wicked dead have been judged. In light of this, why the necessity for this awesome destruction?

To help illustrate, consider the following: let us suppose that a flag­hating hippie breaks into the money vaults of Fort Knox, Kentuckyand, to show his utter contempt for America's capitalistic system, begins pouring filthy crankcase oil on the stacked bars of gold and silver. Upon leaving however, he is caught, tried, and confined to prison. The **authorities** thereupon close their books on the Fort Knox case. But the gunk on the gold remains! In this illustration, the vandal would represent the Devil, the crankcase oil would stand for sin, and the gold and silver for God's prefect creation. God will someday arrest the Devil, of course, and forever confine him to prison. But what about the oily sinstains that remain on his gold and silver creation? To solve the problem, God does what the Fort Knox authorities might consider doing — he purges the stains in a fiery wash! And it works! For the hotter the flame, the more rapidly the oil evaporates, and the brighter the gold becomes!

God will someday **due** to creation what he did to his beloved Israel in the Old Testament:

Behold, I have refined thee. . .1 have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10).

1. The New Creation of Heaven and Earth

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind**”** (Isa. 65:17).

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I shall make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. 66:22).

"Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were **passed** away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

**The world that is to come**

**The eternal state**

**NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH**

**Home of the Redeemed**

The third and final world, the home of the redeemed, is the new heavens and the new earth. The Kingdom of God on earth unfolds into the new heavens and earth. This is a new world order. Sin and all its consequences are forever gone.

’’And I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1). "New” means "of a new order" God is not painting up, fixing up, polishing up anything. He will not take this old globe, dust it off or shine it up. Peter has indicated this world (which now is) will melt with fervent heat. There will be a NEW order lacking sin and the potential for sin. The question may be raised, what if ten zillion years in the future sin should suddenly re-enter into God’s new creation? God promises that the new order will never be defiled by sin. God permitted it in the first order, the world that "then was" and in the world that "now is"; but, in His new order, He will not permit it to ever be defiled by sin. This is the home of the redeemed, what a wonderful, glorious home this will be for God’s people. "For the first heavens", the heavens of the world that "then was" and this present world that "now is" are (combined together) the same heavens of the old order, the former order, that is the world that then was, which was the antediluvian world, and the world that now is, this present world. These two together are the first order. This present world is built upon the judgment and corruption of the antediluvian world, but it is still of the first order. "For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Verse 4, "passed away" comes from the Greek, which means passed away as if it never were or as if it never had happened. Perhaps you may be wondering, how can I be happy in heaven knowing that my loved ones, or my friends are in hell? The answer to that question is, to us living in heaven it will be as if they had never existed. The only people that will exist to us will be the redeemed (our brothers and sisters in Christ). Because this old order, from the 15th verse of the 20th chapter all the way back through to Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, all will be passed away as if it never had existed. That is hard to grasp but nonetheless true. It is replaced by a new order and John describes this in verse 1, the last phrase he records, "And there was no more sea" (masses of humanity). John indicates that the new heavens, new world order, will not be populated by the masses of humanity, but only by the redeemed.

Verse 2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband".

This New Jerusalem is a very beautiful place. John describes it in terms of a bride. Brides are the most beautiful on their wedding day. Bridesmaids and others surround the bride fixing and primping to make them the center of attraction on this their "day". It is the height of their crowning glory, their wedding day. John sees the New Jerusalem, the capitol city of God, coming down out of heaven, literally out of God's very presence, the most beautiful city imaginable. In chapter 21 he describes this city in terms of precious jewels. A king's ransom would be poverty in comparison to the description of this beautiful city that John depicts.

Verse 3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold the tabernacle (dwelling place) of God is with men (mankind, the redeemed)." All those not written in the Book of Life will have been cast into the lake of fire so only the redeemed remain to enjoy their Lord forever. God will be with His redeemed. This is a permanent relationship never to be severed. "And he will dwell (live) with them" and have interaction with them. "And they" (the redeemed) shall be His (own personal) people." Those that are called by His name "and God himself shall be with them and be their God". This is a sense of a unity (oneness) and this unity can never be divided, separated, or broken. This is our hope. Perfect unity and fellowship with God the Lord Jesus Christ will be the everlasting experience of all the redeemed. It is in this relationship that we will know the fullness (abundance) of God. It is in this relationship that all our questions will be answered. It is in this relationship that we will know God to His fullest, knowable extent; we will know even as we are known of God.

Verse 4, "And God shall wipe away (permanently remove) all tears from their (redeemed) eyes. There shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain". Why? "For the former things (the old order) are passed away" (as if they never were).

Verse 5, "And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new". Not a few things, not some things, not one or two things, but all things will be made new, literally "of a new order". It is the same type of creation one experiences when they come to Christ and are saved. The Scripture declares that we have become a new creature in Christ, "old things are passed away and all things are become new" or of a new order (II Cor. 5:17). We are a new creature in Christ of a new order. In the very same manner are the new heavens and new earth. Verse 5 "and he (Jesus Christ) said unto me, write for these words are true and faithful" (it shall come to pass). As God declares, so shall it come to pass. It is fixed in God’s time (ordained) and cannot, will not be changed. There will not be a glitch in His system somewhere along the way in which His plan will be thwarted, cancelled, or altered; but it is forever and for all eternity set in heaven and will be accomplished. What a promise and what a hope for the redeemed.

Verse 6, “And he said unto me"...that is, the Lord God said unto him, the Lord Jesus..."it is done (completed, accomplished as a fact with the same certainty as if we were already experiencing it)." This is the stamp and seal of the approval of God. God views it as an accomplished fact even though we have yet to experience it. He identifies himself, "I am the Alpha (first letter of the Greek alphabet) and the Omega (last letter of the Greek alphabet)". In our way of thinking it would be, I am the A and the Z . I am the first or the beginning, and I am the last or the end. "The beginning and the end". He began everything with creation (Genesis 1:1) and He will bring everything to a conclusion or completion with His new creation. Do not think of the word "end" meaning that it is being cut off and ceases to be, but rather to be brought to completion. The new heavens, the new earth, this world to come is the ultimate end-goal of what God has in mind and will be brought to a completion not to a termination.

And then the promise to all believers, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain (ever gushing) of the water of life freely" (complete satisfaction). You will remember that Jesus made this statement in the Sermon on the Mount of those who hungered and thirsted unto righteousness that they would be filled (Matt. 5:6) and that they would be satisfied and so it will be. What is in view here is the very life of God. It is not just existence. The redeemed will have free access to this life (His life) for all eternity. They will live as God lives and experience what He experiences in all its goodness and completeness.

Verse 7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things (all of these things mentioned) and I will be his God and he shall be My son". I love that verse, "He that overcometh". The child of God is an overcomer. The child of God is victorious. He that has begun a good work in you will continue it unto the day of Christ the Scripture promises (Phil. 1:6).

Verse 8 John gives a word of warning again of those who will be excluded from this blessing. "But the fearful and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and prostitutes and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death". This incorporates all groups of mankind outside of Christ which will fall into one of these categories. I think it is interesting that probably the first category John mentions is most likely the largest category of all "the fearful". I know through the years, as I have been preaching to congregations I have served declaring His word, I have watched people's faces and I have seen this expression over and over again. Fear. They want to become a Christian and make a commitment to Christ, but they are afraid. They are afraid of what their family will say, of what their coworkers will say, what their friends will say, and of the consequences and changes that will take place in their lives should they came to Christ in faith. They are afraid of what people in general are going to think about them, as well as, the impact that it may make on them economically and socially. They are afraid of being embarrassed by their commitment. Perhaps they have attended church for years, but they are still afraid. I recall in a church I pastored a number of years ago, I asked one of the Deacons in the church to teach a New Converts Class as we had a number of individuals who recently professed faith in Christ. After his first class meeting, he came to me with a very surprised look on his face and said, you will never believe who is in the class. I responded, probably not. He told me about this one individual that had been a member of that church for 50 years and had come to the New Convert's Class. It illustrates that one can believe they really knew the Lord and thought they had loved Him for all those years but yet there was still something missing in their lives. "Fearful" people oftentimes are fearful to make a commitment to Christ. Oh, they would have come, but, they were afraid. Next, "the unbelieving (those who reject the truth) and the abominable." A number of sins in the Bible are spoken of as "an abomination unto the Lord". If as such there could be placed degrees upon sin, certainly upon these sins, God has indicated that He has a greater disdain for these as He calls them "abominable sins". "And prostitutes, sorcerers (those who deal in the occult)." In almost any bookstore you will find a whole section dealing with the occult. "Idolaters," those who have clung to other things as their gods. There will be those in the lake of fire that are good, moral, upstanding citizens, fine parents, fine children, fine families, never did anything in their lives that society would consider wrong, model citizens, but their god was perhaps money, position, prestige, something or someone else other than the living God.

"Liars," those who simply do not know the truth. I will never forget a number of years ago I met a man. He was quite elderly at that time and worked at the same place that I worked. You could not believe a word that he said. He constantly told stories and no matter what he said, you could not believe him because he simply did not know what truth was. He had told lies for so many years that in his old age, he was incapable of discerning what was true and what was a falsehood. If he told it, in his own heart and mind, he believed it was true simply because he spoke the words. I felt sorry for this individual because here was a man whose mind was totally destroyed by the lies that he had told all those years. The Scripture warns, "shall have their part (place in the lake of fire)." This is an indication there is a specific area for specific individuals in the lake of fire, "they shall have their part, which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death."

Verse 9, "And their came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues.” This angel is a messenger of judgment that was dispatched to the world during the Tribulation Period and is the one who is being addressed in this passage. "And he talked with me" that is, he spoke with John saying "come I will show you the bride the lamb's wife". He gives the description and name of His bride. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was called the wife of God, also referred to as the bride of God. In the New Testament, the Church is referred to as the bride of Christ. Combined, we have the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints, one body in Christ. As Jesus walked among us He said to those around Him on one occasion, "Other sheep of another fold I must bring with me" (John 10:16) referring to the Church. These two, the Old Testament saints, the Nation of Israel, the believers in Israel and the New Testament Saints, the Church, will be brought together as the bride of Christ (His wife).

Verse 10, "And he carried me” ...that is the angel carried John..."away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and he showed me that great city." It is a city like as unto no other. There is no city in the world that has ever been or ever will be that will be able to be compared to this city. It is exclusively unique, "The holy (separated) Jerusalem". "Jerusalem" is the city of peace and the very first part of it" Jeru" is a prefix for the name of God Himself. God the city of peace. "Descending out of heaven from God." All of this put together is strong support for the fact that the bride, the city of Jerusalem, is the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints coming from God.

Verse 11, "having the glory of God". This is one in the same glory of God...."and her light".... that is the light of the city (God’s glory)., ."was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal".

John begins to describe the city in verse 12 and he uses beautiful and gorgeous jewels to describe this city. The beauty of this city is beyond anything that mortal man can adequately comprehend or understand. John reveals that in appearance, this city is like all the world's precious stone. These jewels are of great value indicating the Church is of priceless worth. Verse 12, "And had a wall great and high." The height of this wall is approximately 216 feet. As walled cities go, that is extraordinarily high. No city in the world has ever had a wall that high "and it had twelve gates." The number twelve appears frequently in connection with the city There are twelve stones, twelve gates, twelve tribes, and the twelve Apostles. The number twelve is inclusive for Israel. The Old Testament saints and the Church are united as one complete body in the family of God from this description. "Twelve gates and at the gates were twelve angels whose names written there on which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates and on the west three gates." Equal access is pictured here. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them the name of the twelve Apostles of the lamb" Do not think in terms of these foundations as being like the foundational structure in use today. These were mammoth foundation stones. The excavation of the old city of Jerusalem reveals stone foundations that were 30 feet long, 5 feet wide and 4 feet high stacked one upon another. These represent the twelve Apostles with their names written on them. I personally believe the Apostle Paul's name is on one of these foundation stones since Judas Iscariot was the false Apostle and thus, he was eliminated because of his rejection of Christ. Mathias was an Apostle who was appointed by men, but Paul was the Apostle chosen by God, so I think the Apostle Paul's name is listed there instead of Mathias. Walls were for defensive purposes. At night the gates were closed, locked and were always heavily guarded. As we read further in this passage, these gates are never closed. They stand wide open, there are no guards and those in the city go in and out freely, which is an indication there is no need for defense. The intrusion of sin or anything that defiles will not be permitted by God. Nothing will defile this city. Sin which defiles, is of the old order. There will be free access for all to enter or exit the city of God.

Verse 15, "And he that talked with me had a golden reed (rod) to measure the city and the gates thereof and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare." That is a quadrangle. All sides are equal in this city. "And the length of it is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs" between fourteen and fifteen hundred miles on a side. Mexico City is currently the largest city in the world with twenty-eight million residents. You could drop Mexico City, with its twenty-eight million residents, into the New Jerusalem and lose them, that is how large the New Jerusalem is. "And the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof an hundred and forty and four cubits" or approximately 216 feet high depending upon a cubit measure. "According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." In other words, the angel had the reed to do the measuring but the angel was using man's measurement.

Verse 18, "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper." Think of a wall 216 feet high made of jasper. "And the city was pure gold." Presently, pure 100% gold does not exist; 24K gold is as close to pure gold as possible. There are no means of getting gold 100% absolutely pure. The method used in refining gold is to heat it, melt it and when the impurities float to the top, they are skimmed off. Continue that process several times to achieve the best or purest gold humanly possible. The gold of this city is pure gold without any impurity whatsoever. "Like unto clear glass." Imagine a window of gold which could be seen through, that would be pure gold. "And the foundation of the wall of the city was garnished (imbedded) with all manor of precious (priceless) stones. The first foundation was of jasper (white, stained with various colors); the second of sapphire (deep blue); the third, a chalcedony (milky or grayish); the fourth an emerald (clear deep green); the fifth, sardonyx (white); the sixth, sardius (used in the breastplate of Jewish High Priest); the seventh, chrysolite (olive); the eighth, beryl (green transparent); the ninth, a topaz (various colors); the tenth, a chrysoprasus (green); the eleventh, a jacinth (multicolored); the twelfth, an amethyst (purple)." Imagine the beauty of this city? And, that is just the foundation stones.

Verse 21, "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every gate was of one pearl and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." John describes that which is hard for the mind to grasp, gates made of pearl, streets of gold. There is simply nothing in our world to compare to this beauty.

Verse 22, "And I saw no temple there in for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple." In the Old Testament, God established the tabernacle. As the nation became more progressive, or so they thought, the people built a temple with God’s permission. In the New Testament, the body of believers become the temple of the Spirit of God. In this city, there will be no temple since the Lord God will be present. The believer will see God face to face? We will know Him, as the Scripture says, "even as we are known" (I Cor. 13:12). He knows us absolutely and we will know Him absolutely. What a day of rejoicing that will be! What an astounding place to spend all eternity.

Verse 23, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it for the glory of God did lighten it." His glory light outshines the brightest of suns. There will be no need for the sun because His light will be beyond anything that we have known or experienced in this present world. How marvelous not to rely on the sun or moon. This seems to imply there will be no shadows in heaven. God and His heaven will be fully revealed to the believers. The light of His glory will be present everywhere to light the way for His children.

Verse 24, "And the nations (saved people) shall walk (live, have their being) in the light of it (glory of God). And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it." The only ones left are the believers. This passage refers to the glory that was known of the earthly kings and kingdoms. Their glory will be overshadowed or dwarfed in the presence of His Glory. This had a great deal more meaning in John’s day. Our society lives pretty well with almost every amenity imaginable. But, in John’s day, the kings lived in wealth while the average person on the street lived in hovels and had barely enough to survive from day to day.

Verse 27, "And there shall in no wise (no way) enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lambs Book of Life." In the eons of all eternity, shall there be any defilement that will sneak into this city? No, never! The purity of that city will remain forever.

Chapter 22 speaks of the fact that nothing shall enter in that will defile the city. The curse is removed and never again shall be a threat to God's people. Chapter 22 verse 1, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb". The river signifies a never-ending stream of life from the throne of God and an abundance of water of life. Not just enough to do the job, but far and away exceeding what is needed to do the job, "proceeding out of the throne of God and out of the lamb (from God)."

Verse 2, "In the midst of the street and on the either side of the river there was the tree of life." We have not read in the Scripture about the tree of life since the Garden of Eden. Now it reappears "which bear twelve manner of fruits and yields her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree are for the healing (restoration) of the nations (people that are saved)." Everything that you have ever wanted to do, everything that you have ever wanted to be that was God-honoring and fulfilling, you will receive from the tree of life. All of God's creation will be able to produce to its fullest possible potential (abundance). "And there shall be no more curse", verse 3. Is there a possibility of sin entering into this holy city? No, that is the promise of God. "There shall be no more curse" because the only thing that curses is sin and sin is forever defeated. "But the throne of God and the lamb shall be in it and his servants shall serve him." The joy and happiness of the believer will be in serving the Lord. I was talking to a man some time ago and he said that he looks forward to the day when his avocation will be become his vocation, when the thing that he really wants to do would be the thing that he will be able to do i.e. to serve the Lord.

The believer will serve God without failure or frustration. An indescribable sense of fulfillment and satisfaction will fill the believer’s lives continually.

Verse 4, "And they shall see his face." That is, look upon Him. The first time the Scripture ever promises that we will be able to see His face is in that day. "And his name shall be in their foreheads." That is the stamp of ownership from the ancient customs of the day of John in which ownership was oftentimes stamped (tattooed) upon the forehead of an individual. The believer is God’s property.

Verse 5, "And there shall be no night there and they will need no candle, neither the light of the sun for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign (authority) forever and ever."

This is just the beginning. Believers will live in the light of God's eternal cloudless day. Eternity will be spent experiencing the absolute fullest blessings of God. What a day that will be! Are you ready? If not, I urge you to, right now, commit yourself to the Savior, God’s door to life everlasting. The choice is yours. There are only two ways to go, toward God through His Son Jesus or away from Him through your self will. Won't you come to Him today? He awaits your response.

# An Explanation of the Gospel

## Introduction

As the Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, Jesus said, “I have come that they (all mankind) may have life, and have it abundantly,” a life with meaning and purpose. The Bible teaches us that God loves all people and wants to bring them into a harmonious relationship with Himself. But man is separated from God by the problem of Sin. God has resolved that problem through the person of Jesus Christ. The following is a short presentation of the good news of how God has provided that men might know Him and experience eternal life.

## God’s Plan of Salvation

While 1 John 5:11 and 12 are written to Christians to give them assurance of their salvation based on the testimony of God’s Word, this passage also highlights the key issue in God’s plan of salvation as it is centered in the person of Jesus Christ.

* **God’s Declaration to Man:** “And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (verse 11).
* **The Important Issue:** “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (verse 12).

This passage teaches: (a) that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son, Jesus Christ, and (b) that the way to possess eternal life is to possess God’s Son.

Two important questions must be asked and answered:

* Why is possession of God’s Son necessary to have eternal life?
* How can a person possess or have the Son of God?

## The Problem of Man’s Separation From God

According to Romans 5:8, God demonstrated His love for us through the death of His Son. Why did Christ have to die for us? Because Scripture declares all men to be sinful. We are all sinners. “*To sin*” means to miss the mark. The Bible declares, “*we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory* (the perfect holiness) *of God*.” In other words, our sin separates us from God who is perfect holiness (righteousness and justice) and who must therefore judge sinful man (Rom. 3:23; Hab. 1:13; Isa. 59:2).

## The Problem of the Futility of Man’s Works

Scripture also teaches us that no amount of human goodness or human works or human morality or religious activity can gain acceptance with God or get anyone into heaven. The moral man, the religious man, and the immoral and non-religious are all in the same boat—they all fall short of the glory of God (God’s perfect righteousness). After discussing the immoral man, the moral man, and the religious man in Romans 1:18-3:8, the Apostle Paul declares “*that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin*,” that “*there is none righteous, not even one*,” and “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:9-10, 23).

Added to this are the declarations of the following verses of Scripture:

**Ephesians 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

**Titus 3:5-7:** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

**Romans 4:1-5:** What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

No amount of human goodness is as good as God. God is perfect righteousness. Because of this, He cannot have fellowship with anyone who does not have perfect righteousness (Hab. 1:13a). In order to be accepted by God, we must be as good as God is. Before God, we all stand naked, helpless, and hopeless in ourselves. No amount of good living will get us to heaven or give us eternal life. What then is the solution?

## God’s Solution for Man’s Problem

God is not only perfect holiness (whose holy character we can never attain to on our own or by our works of righteousness) but He is also perfect love and full of grace and mercy. Because of His love, grace and mercy He has not left us without hope and a solution.

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

This is the good news of the Bible, the message of the gospel. It’s the message of the gift of God’s own Son who became man (the God-man), lived a sinless life, died on the cross for our sin, and was raised from the grave proving both the fact He is God’s Son and the value of His death for us as our substitute (Rom. 1:4; 4:25).

**2 Corinthians 5:21:** He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**1 Peter 3:18:** For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

## The All-Important Question

How then do we receive God’s Son that we may have the eternal life God has promised us? What becomes the issue for us today?

**John 1:12:** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name.

**John 3:16-18:** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Because of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the cross, the Bible states that “*He that has the Son has life*” and we can receive the Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior by personal faith, by trusting in the person of Christ and His death for our sins.

This means we must each come to God the same way—as a sinner who recognizes his sinfulness, repudiates any form of human works for salvation, and relies totally on Christ alone by faith alone for our salvation.

If you would like to receive and trust Christ as your personal Savior, you may want to express your faith in Christ by the following prayer:

Dear God, I know I’m a sinner and that nothing I do can gain heaven or eternal life. I believe Jesus Christ died for me and rose from the grave. Right now, I receive Him as my personal Savior by trusting in Him alone as my only way to heaven. Thank you for giving me eternal life through faith in your Son.

If you prayed this prayer and truly trusted in the person of Jesus Christ and His death for your sin, then you have been born anew into the family of God. You are now one of God’s children by faith in the Savior.

As a child of God, you are, however, a babe in Christ and you need to grow and be spiritually nourished and built up in the things of Christ. As with all Christians, you need fellowship with other believers in a Bible teaching church, personal time daily in God’s Word and regularly with other believers in a Bible teaching setting during the week.