

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ANTICHRIST

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CHAPTER ONE

“He Shall Confirm a covenant with Many”

According to bible prophecy, the event that takes the Antichrist to the pinnacle of power on the international scene and begins his seven-year reign is a seven-year pact or covenant described in the book of Daniel. Whether this covenant is the actual formation of a one-world government or whether it is brokered by that government, already in place is a matter of speculation. However, events such as the formation of the European Union and the adoption of the euro by most of its members as a single currency have shown that nations are prepared to put aside national sovereignty in order to achieve greater economic and political ends. A constitution for Europe, giving even more authority to a central European governmental body, is at the time of this writing being debated by its member states.

1Daniel 9:27

Those are watershed events, for up until now national sovereignty has been nonnegotiable to nations since the beginning of time. To voluntarily pass on some of the rights and privileges inherent to national sovereignty to a supranational body is a major step. Now that this step has been taken by many of the nations of Europe, the precedent has been set, and others will soon be willing to follow. Just when this one-world government is inaugurated or what events will lead up to it is not now known, but one thing is for sure, this one-world government will not be a debating club similar to the United Nations. This government will wield actual governmental authority on a global scale.

The Bible refers to this covenant as a "Holy Covenant,"¹ because of its religious implications. At least in part, it has to do with the Jews rebuilding their national temple in Jerusalem and the restoration of animal blood sacrifices on its altar, a practice that was the heart of their religious observance until their temple was destroyed by the Romans nearly two millennia ago. The temple was situated on the top of Mount Moriah, now commonly known as Temple Mount or to the Muslims as Al-Haram al-Sharif (The Noble Sanctuary), in the center of old Jerusalem. The first temple was built there under the direction of King Solomon (Daniel 11:30 and dedicated in 960 B.C. The Babylonians later razed it to the ground during their sack of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The Jews under Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple in 515 B.C. In 19 B.C., King Herod I, the Idumean client-king of Judea, which was part of the Roman Empire at this stage, began the project of enlarging and beautifying the temple complex in the period shortly before Jesus' birth, circa 4 B.C. This project wasn't totally completed till 64 A.D. To facilitate the building of the original temple,

the top of Mount Moriah had originally been made level by the building of a retaining wall around the summit and then filling it in with rock and dirt. Part of this retaining wall remains today and is referred to as the Wailing Wall. The foundation of the ancient temple's altar was the rock upon which Abraham started to sacrifice Isaac.

In 70 A.D., the Romans sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. They did not leave one stone upon another, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:2: "Do you not see all these [temple buildings]? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Jerusalem remained under Roman/Byzantine dominion until the Muslim Arabs captured Jerusalem in 638 A.D. under the second Khalif,

'Umar ibn al-Khattab. He built a wooden mosque on the southernmost wall of the Noble Sanctuary. This was later replaced by a stone structure in 705 A.D. It is called the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which still stands. Moreover, in 687 A.D., Abd al-Malik, the fifth Khalif of the Arab Umayyad dynasty, had a second mosque, the beautiful Dome of the Rock, built over the rock that was previously the altar rock in the Jewish temple. And that mosque also still stands there today. The rock was also sacred to Muslims because it is the site from which the Muslims believe the prophet Muhammad made his Miraaj or Night Journey into the heavens. A Because of the significance of this spot, it's quite obvious that the Muslims today would never agree to the Jews rebuilding their temple over this site, and it is extremely unlikely that the Jews would ever consider building it anywhere else.

When Israel captured East Jerusalem in 1967, the aged Jewish historian, Israel Eldad, was quoted in TIME magazine as saying, "We are at the stage which David was when he liberated Jerusalem. From that time until the construction of the temple by Solomon, only one generation passed.—So will it be with us." Just two weeks before the war in which the Israelis occupied old Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area, on May 21, 1967, the Washington Post and the New York Times ran the following anonymously sponsored full page ad:

To Persons of the Jewish Faith all over the world:

The project to rebuild the temple of God in Israel is now being started. With divine guidance and hope, the temple will be completed. It will signal a new era in Judaism. Jews will be inspired to conduct themselves in such a moral way that our Maker will see fit to pay us a visit here on Earth. God will place in the midst of many persons in all walks of Jewish life the desire to participate in this work. Executive talents, administrators, and workers in all levels are needed. All efforts will be anonymous. God will know those desiring to participate. God's Will Shall Prevail.

Today, there is a growing impetus within Israel and amongst Jews worldwide, a drive spearheaded by the

Temple Institute situated in Old Jerusalem, to see the temple rebuilt. Indeed, it is reported that much of it has already been prefabricated and it just remains for it to be assembled. The Temple Institute has also already fabricated the sacred vessels and garments needed for use in the temple, and these can be seen displayed in their headquarters. Some of these can be viewed on the World Wide Web at <http://www.templeinstitute.org/main.html>. Even though the Israelis are in control of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount remains under the control of the Muslims in the person of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. The only way the Muslims and the Israelis could work out some kind of an agreement or compromise with each other so that the temple could be rebuilt would be with the direct intervention of a dominant outside third party, such as a world government. This compromise or agreement is thought by many Bible scholars with expertise in Endtime studies to be part and parcel of the Covenant spoken of in the Bible prophecies of Daniel. Daniel wrote: "And he [the Antichrist] shall confirm a Covenant with many for one week."¹ The original Hebrew word that is translated "week" in the New King James Bible, the Bible translation we will be quoting from in this book, is shabua, which means "unit of seven." Therefore a little better, more understandable translation of this verse would be: "And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one unit of seven." And by carefully studying the marvelous Messianic prophecy regarding the exact time of the first coming and crucifixion of Christ in verses 24 to 26 of Daniel chapter 9, we know that "one week" or "one seven" equals seven years. Thus the verse can be understood as saying, "And he shall confirm a Covenant with many for seven years." (See Appendix 2.)

This seven-year agreement will have to be a very ingenious compromise, and will no doubt deal with not only the Temple Mount, but also the entire city of Jerusalem. Today Jerusalem is an irresolvable issue. The majority of Israelis have sworn that they will never let it go nor share it, that it is their "eternal capital" forever.

David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973), the first prime minister of Israel, vowed, "We took Jerusalem and we will never give it up again until the last man and woman is dead defending it. No matter what the cost, we will never give it up until the last Jew is dead. That's how all our people feel."

On the other hand, the Palestinians, who have lived there for over a thousand years and refer to it as Al-Quds (The Holy), want East Jerusalem, which the Israelis captured in the 1967 war, as their capital. This is a proposal that successive Israeli governments have dismissed outright. The future of Jerusalem and of the Temple Mount is one of the most explosive issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This

is exemplified by the fact it was then Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on September 28, 2000, that sparked the series of events that destroyed the peace agreement signed in Oslo in 1993, and set off another round of violence and death on both sides, which continue as of the writing of this text.

To resolve this issue, it is believed that the Antichrist will internationalize the city of Jerusalem. Many world figures, the Pope among them, have called for this, believing it to be the only way to forge a settlement.

Many Bible prophecy teachers believe that the Antichrist is going to be of Jewish descent, as one description of him in Daniel says that he "regards not the God of his fathers."¹ If he is Jewish, this could be one reason he succeeds in getting the Israelis to compromise and allow this to occur. In fact, according to the Bible, this world dictator of this one-world government eventually makes Jerusalem the political capital of his world government.

Could the prestige that comes with the world being governed from its ancient capital be the impetus that Israel needs to compromise its stance on Jerusalem?

Daniel prophesied of the Antichrist that there "shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue."³ He is described here as a "vile person" because God knows he is, but it would seem that he is going to be quite a popular leader as far as the peoples of the world are concerned. Exactly what it means about not giving him the honor of royalty remains to be seen, but in today's world royalty and monarchy grow increasingly

¹Daniel 11:37

²Daniel 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:4

³Daniel 11:21

unpopular. So perhaps it just means he is confirmed as a leader without giving him an appellation of

royalty, such as king, but that he rules as an absolute ruler in the style of ancient kings. It appears he doesn't use violence to achieve his initial aims, and therefore would probably present himself as a promoter of international peace. But whatever his platform, he achieves his aims through intrigue. The King James Version of the Bible uses the term "flatteries" in the place of "intrigue." This is also appropriate as it shows that he uses his considerable charm to flatter and weasel his way into power

In the early stages of the Antichrist's regime, everything will appear to be going well. He'll be trying to make everybody happy, and will somehow manage to bring peace to many parts of the world. He will seem to be the smartest man who ever lived, with the greatest power and the greatest wisdom, able to solve intractable problems, stop all wars, and put everybody to work building peace. "Peace and safety" will be a slogan of his government and the general populace. "Everything's going to be peaceful and safe now. No more wars. Everything's going to be secure. Everybody's going to have plenty."¹ And despite some setbacks and troubles, initially it will seem to be true!

11 Thessalonians 5:3

Notes

A. In the ninth year of the Prophet's mission, about 620

A.D., Muhammad rose in the middle of the night to visit the Sacred

Mosque in Makkah. After a time of worship he fell asleep near the Ka'aba. The angel Gabriel came to him and woke him from his slumber. He led the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to the edge of the sacred Makkan mosque. Awaiting them

was al-Buraq, a white winged beast "whose each stride stretched as far as the eye could see." Muhammad mounted al-Buraq and sped northwards with Gabriel to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the Furthest Mosque.

When they reached Jerusalem the Prophet dismounted and prayed near the Rock. Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets, peace be upon them all, gathered together to pray behind him. Muhammad was presented a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. The Prophet chose the milk and Gabriel said, 'You have chosen the true religion.'

The Prophet then embarked on the ascension (Miraj)

in which he, peace and blessings be upon him, received the command to pray five times a day and the revelation encapsulating the beliefs of Islam:

"The Messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord. And the believers; each one believes in Allah and His angels and in His books and His messengers. We make no division between any one of His messengers. And they say: We hear and we obey. Oh Lord, grant us Thy forgiveness; unto Thee we return." (Qur'an II/285)

CHAPTER TWO

The Dragon

BUT WHAT IS THE REAL NATURE OF THIS MAN, the Antichrist, and the world government

that he heads? The book of Daniel has much to

say about what he does physically, but in the book of Revelation we get chilling insights as to what is going on in the spiritual realm.

First, let's look at some great events that Saint John, the author of the book of Revelation, observed and recorded happening before the arrival on the scene of the Antichrist and his satanic anointing.

Now a great sign appeared in heaven:

a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The woman in this vision is obviously giving birth to Jesus Christ. The first interpretation to come to mind is that she is Mary, the human mother of our Lord when He was on Earth. But things get a bit confusing with this interpretation when it says the woman fled into the wilderness for 1,260 days.

Several times the Bible refers to the second half of the Antichrist's seven-year reign as the Great Tribulation. "Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."² Daniel talked about this time when he wrote, "At that time Michael [the archangel] shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time."

1Revelation 12:1–6

2Matthew 24:21

3Daniel 12:1

The Bible even tells us several times how long this Tribulation period will last, using several different yet synonymic terms: "three and a half years," "42 months," or "1,260 days."¹ A

If these 1,260 days where "the woman" flees into the wilderness are the Tribulation period—which it seems they are—then the woman described above could not be Mary, as she long ago left this world for her heavenly reward. So the identity of this woman must

have a different interpretation. Could this woman symbolize the believers of all time, the people of God, into whose lineage Jesus was born? This seems to be a viable interpretation, as during the 1,260 days of Tribulation the true Christians will be in the "wilderness" of this world. They will be outcasts, persecuted by the Devil and the Antichrist government forces, and many will be on the run and not able to live in the cities that will be the centers of Antichrist domination.

Aside from the great red dragon's identity being revealed in the next verses of Revelation

12, we also get corroboration that this is the "time of trouble," because again it mentions the Archangel Michael who goes to war with the

evil forces of the spirit world. "And war broke out in Heaven: Michael [the archangel] and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Revelation 11:2–3; 12:14; 13:5 and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in Heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him." At this time Satan is cast out of Heaven with a "third of the stars of Heaven," these "stars" being his demons, the angels who have been in rebellion with him against God and who are now cast down to Earth with him.

These Scriptures can be shocking for some, as they infer that Satan and his demons are presently allowed in Heaven. In the book of Job there is a surprising confirmation for this when we are taken to a scene in the courts of the Lord. Job 2:1 says: "There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord." Although Satan is in rebellion against God, he still appears before Him in the courts of Heaven accusing the saints day and night. In Revelation, after Satan is finally cast out, it states: "Then I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.'²

1Revelation 12:7–9

2Revelation 12:10

The heavenly voice then warns: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."¹ So begins that short three-and-a-half year Tribulation period, the worst in world history, in which the Devil rants and raves, and rampages across the face of the earth. No longer able to soar into the heights of Heaven and accuse us before God, he has been cast down to the earth, confined here, and later to be chained and confined to the darkness of the Bottomless Pit.

Back to Saint John's vision of the woman and the dragon: "Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [three and a half years], from the presence of the serpent."² Although the true believers have to flee into the wilderness during the time of Tribulation, still they are being kept and fed, and away from most of Satan's venomous attacks.

"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

1Revelation 12:12

2Revelation 12:13–14

In those last three and a half years Satan will no longer be able to go before the court of God accusing the believers on earth before God in Heaven, but he's going to be right here, face to face with them, not only accusing them, but persecuting and trying to kill them.

Notes

A. At the time that the book of Revelation was written, there were several competing calendars in use in the world. The Jews had one that John, being Jewish, possibly followed. There was the official Julian calendar that the Romans followed, and there were others followed by the Greeks and Egyptians. All these differed in the number of days in a month (the number of days in a month differed from month to month, as it still does now) and the number of days in a year. This would no doubt have led to considerable difference as to what a month or year may have meant in actual terms of number of days. So it seems that the Lord nailed it down to 1,260 days so there would be no confusion.

1Revelation 12:17

CHAPTER THREE

The Beast

THE 13TH CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF

REVELATION INTRODUCES US TO THE BEAST FROM HELL. "Then I [Saint John] stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a Beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name."¹

More details of this Beast are given in

Revelation chapter 17: "The seven heads are ... seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time."² "Kings" in this instance stands not just for a single person, but kingdoms or empires.

The details that are covered in this chapter are fascinating, but at the same time things may seem complicated as we try to decipher what the heads and horns and crowns of this Beast represent. However, please don't be

put off by all these details. The main thing to

1Revelation 13:1

2Revelation 17:9–10 understand is that the Antichrist is the ultimate embodiment of the Beast. We don't have to hang a label on every head and horn—and at the moment we can't—but we do understand a considerable amount of what this vision represents, and so we will try to unravel at least some of the mystery here.

It is a point to remember that the Bible is a book to, for, and about God's people. And so the events described in Revelation are directly related to God's people. If we look back at their history, it becomes clear what the first six kingdoms were.

In the Old Testament the Jews were God's people, but by the time of the New Testament God's people included everyone who received Jesus as his or her savior. A The Jews often lived in their own independent nation, but they were, for large periods of time, dominated and ruled by five successive empires. These were, in order: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and then the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great and his successors. These five empires had all "fallen" by the time of John's vision. The Roman Empire, which was officially declared an empire in 27 B.C., was in power and thus the one that "is" when John wrote this. Although there have been empires in the intervening centuries from the fall of Rome till now, none of them have entirely dominated

God's people in political, civil, and military ways as these first six did. Since the time of John, Christians were and still are scattered in every land, and thus have not been all ruled by any other single empire until this last empire that is yet to come—the seventh head of the Beast, which John described—once again achieves this political, civil, and military dominance over God's people. What have we learned about this final empire of the Antichrist?

It is global in its dominion, or very nearly so, it seems.

John writes: "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the Beast."¹ These ten horns are obviously personalities, because they have no kingdom. Because these ten kings, kingdoms, or powers had "received no kingdom as yet" during John's day, at the time of the Roman Empire, it can be safely assumed that these "ten horns" are all on the final seventh head, the empire of the Antichrist. "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the Beast."²

In chapter 7 of the book that bears his name, Daniel also had a vision of beasts. He describes four that, similar to the heads on the Beast in Revelation, represent the empires that dominated the Jews. In this chapter the first three beasts represent Babylon, Persia, and the

1Revelation 17:12

2Revelation 17:13 Grecian empire of Alexander the Great. The fourth kingdom, a monstrous beast described in the passage following, represents the empire of Rome:

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

Out of the head of this beast grew ten horns that correspond to the ten horns on the seventh head of the Beast described in Revelation chapters 13 and 17. Since this beast of Daniel represents the Roman Empire, this is a strong indication that these ten kings, nations, or powers of the Endtime Antichrist Empire will come from the remains of the ancient

1Daniel 7:7–8,11,19–25 Roman Empire. Many of the nations of modern Europe were part of the Roman Empire. Today we see Europe becoming more and more a united entity. Could the European Union be a precursor of the core of the Antichrist Empire of the future?

The little horn in this passage that arises after the ten has all the hallmarks of the Antichrist, and indeed it does represent him. Daniel tells us that three of these ten leaders, governments, or countries are plucked up by the roots—overthrown by the Antichrist in his ascent to global power. Whether this happens because of war, internal coups, financial crises, or the leaders and governments of those three that oppose the Antichrist are turned out of office peacefully and replaced by Antichrist supporters, we don't know. Being “plucked out by the roots” and “subdued” seems to denote violence, but in another place where it describes the Antichrist's rise to power it says, “He shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.” Whatever the case may be, the Beast in Revelation once again has the full complement of ten horns. The three are replaced by Antichrist supporters, and all ten now “are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the Beast.”

1Daniel 11:21

2Revelation 17:13 You'll have noticed that the Dragon and the Beast described in Revelation bear some remarkable similarities. They both have seven heads and ten horns, but they differ in that the Dragon has seven crowns upon his seven heads, whereas the Beast has ten diadems, or crowns, upon its ten horns.

“The Dragon gave [the Beast] his power, his throne, and great authority.”¹ The power behind the throne in all these empires that have had temporal rule over and have often cruelly persecuted God's people through millennia is none other than that great red Dragon, Satan. But now he is cast down to the earth, and he intends not just to be the power behind the throne but the very power himself in the person of the Antichrist. Things get a little complicated because the Beast is a seven-headed monster, but only the seventh head is

specifically the Antichrist. Yet the Antichrist is referred to in Revelation as the Beast.

The Antichrist is the incarnation of the seven headed

Beast in the last days, but the whole Beast has been anti-God, and therefore by extension anti-Christ, since it first manifested itself in the ancient Egyptian Empire. Although there were some good personalities associated with and sometimes even ruling those ancient empires, the essence of those empires was anti-Christ, as can be seen by the persecutions they often mounted

1Revelation 13:2 against God's people. Generally when the Beast is referred to from this point on, it is speaking specifically of the Antichrist. John continues: And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the Beast. So they worshiped the dragon [the Devil]

who gave authority to the Beast; and they worshiped the Beast, saying, "Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?"¹

We know that this is referring to the seventh head, the Antichrist, because a few verses later on we see that the Antichrist has a false prophet who "causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the ... Beast [the Antichrist], whose deadly wound was healed ... telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived."

This assassination attempt on the Antichrist

is the pivotal moment in his satanic career. A mortal wound is one that you die from. If he doesn't die from it, it cannot be said he was mortally wounded. This "head," in other words, is definitely dead. The Antichrist has been killed. End of story? No! He comes back from

1Revelation 13:3-4

2Revelation 13:12-14 the dead. His "healing" is such a "miracle" that "all the world marvels." Revelation 17:8 again states that "those who dwell on the earth will marvel ... when they see the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Now things are going to get even more intriguing as we are presented with a riddle. "And the Beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition."¹

This Beast of Revelation has only seven heads. So where does this eighth one pop up from? Somehow an eighth personality has entered the equation.

When the Antichrist first rises to power and confirms the seven-year Covenant, he is the head of the seventh great empire. But he is not yet really completely anti-Christ; he hasn't yet been fully possessed of the Devil. But "in the middle of the week," three and a half years after confirming the Covenant, he is killed and resurrected. This "resurrection" would serve as his credentials

to divinity. It seems that it is at this point the Antichrist becomes possessed completely by the Devil. He looks like the very same man, the seventh head, only he is now the eighth.

The Bible records a definite behavior change at this point. The man is obviously evil of heart to begin with, but now he is no more Mr. Pretend-Nice-Guy. He will no longer be the same man who brought world peace, solved

1Revelation 17:11 the thorny problem of Jerusalem, and made the Covenant. Now "the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition [Hell or damnation], who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."¹

The Devil is the ultimate megalomaniac. Satan has always wanted to be worshiped as God. He even tried to get Jesus to "fall down and worship [him]."² And now he is demanding that the world worship him. Satan in the form of a man is finally going to get what he's been after all the time, kingship of the world, and to be worshiped as God.

The Antichrist Beast will be Satan incarnate, Satan in the flesh, just as Jesus was God in the flesh. And this will result in hell on earth during those last three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign. "And he was given a mouth speaking

great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months."³

Notes

A. Some scriptural passages that support this position follow:

"Just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Therefore know that only those who

12 Thessalonians 2:3-4

2Matthew 4:9

3Revelation 13:5 are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be

blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham” (Galatians 3:6–9).

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26–29).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Romans 1:16–17).

“That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:11–12).

[Jesus said to the chief priests and Pharisees:] “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, They will respect my son. But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance. So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?’ “They said to Him, ‘He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.’ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet” (Matthew 21:33–46).

B. In Daniel chapter 8, we are also told that the Antichrist’s great power is not of himself: “And in the latter time ... when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;”—but by Satan’s power—“he shall destroy fearfully and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity” (Daniel 8:23–25).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Abomination of
Desolation, aka

The Image of the Beast NOW THAT WE HAVE THE ANTICHRIST BECOMING COMPLETELY
POSSESSED BY

SATAN, it is time to examine what he does next.

In the middle of the week, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.¹

As was explained in the first chapter of this book, the week represents the Antichrist’s seven-year reign, so the middle of it would be three and a half years into it. If the “sacrifice and offering” are ended, then they first have to start. And if it’s going to start, then the Jews have to have the temple. So this is confirmation 1Daniel 9:27 that the temple is an integral part of the seven year Covenant.

This command will not just be for Jewish temple worship to cease. The Antichrist will forbid and abolish all religious worship, declaring himself God and requiring mandatory worship of himself, with suppression, persecution, and even death to all who won’t bow to him. “He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

Because of transgression, an army was given over to the [Antichrist] to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.”¹ The “Prince of the host” is believed to mean Jesus or God. So the Antichrist is now saying to everyone that he is God.

“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the Abomination of Desolation.”²

By stringing these Scriptures together we can determine that three and a half years after confirming the seven-year Covenant—“in the middle of the week”—he not only forcibly enters the newly rebuilt temple on Mount Moriah, Jerusalem, and “takes away the daily sacrifice” and sets himself up as God,

¹Daniel 8:11–12

²Daniel 11:31 but he also “places” something called “the Abomination of Desolation.”

Over five hundred years after Daniel gave this prophecy, Jesus, in His famous dissertation on “the signs of His [second] coming and of the end of the world” in Matthew chapter 24, said: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”—obviously the Jewish temple in Jerusalem—“whoever reads [the book of Daniel], let him understand.”¹

Jesus said that we’d better understand, because He was placing this event in the future. He is saying that at the time of His life here on Earth, this event, the placing of the Abomination of Desolation, had not occurred. Some Bible scholars and historians contend that Antiochus Epiphanes (circa 215–164 B.C.), the Greek king of the Hellenistic Seleucid

Syrian kingdom (one of the successor states of Alexander the Great’s empire), fulfilled the prophecies in Daniel 8 and elsewhere about the Abomination of Desolation in 166 B.C., when he captured Jerusalem and forbade the worship of God and all the Jewish rites on pain of death.

In the temple an altar to Zeus Olympios was erected, and sacrifices were to be made at the feet of an idol in the image of the king. This event was certainly an abomination in the eyes of the Jews, but because it happened before

¹Matthew 24:15 Jesus spoke of it as happening in the future, that rules it out as being the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel.

What did Jesus say would happen when this Abomination of Desolation appears? “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . . then there will be Great Tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”¹ So the placing of this Abomination of Desolation introduces the Great Tribulation period, the second three and a half years of the Antichrist’s reign. When you see it standing there, you’ll know the Tribulation has begun.

So the big question now is, what is this Abomination of Desolation? Jesus said you’d see it “standing in the holy place.” Daniel 11:31 says the Antichrist “places there the Abomination of Desolation.” Daniel 12:11 says that “the Abomination of Desolation is set up.” He places it, he sets it up and it stands there, so it’s some kind of standing object.

In the 13th chapter of Revelation we find out that it’s an image of the Antichrist himself. And it’s not just a dumb statue like the one that old Greek king erected, but it will be a most amazing machine.

Now we must introduce another evil Endtime personality—another beast that ¹Matthew 24:21 exercises all the authority of the Beast we have just been describing in Chapter 3 of this book. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first Beast [the Antichrist] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He [this two-horned beast] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.¹

Who is this two-horned beast? We find the answer in Revelation 19:20, which states: “Then the Beast [the Antichrist] was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the Mark of the Beast and those who worshiped his image.” This two horned beast is called the “False Prophet.” We don’t know exactly who he will be, but it’s clear from the passage above that he performs the multiple roles of being the Antichrist’s propaganda minister and high priest of the worship of the Antichrist. He has some sort of extraordinary powers or genius, similar to the Antichrist himself, as he “performs great signs.”

¹Revelation 13:11–13 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the Beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was

wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the Image of the Beast, that the Image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the Image of the Beast to be killed.”¹

The order to kill all those who refuse to worship the Image of the Beast is obviously the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This meshes with the Scriptures about the Abomination of Desolation being set up at exactly the same time. So this Image and the Abomination of Desolation are the same thing.

From the description of the Image having “breath,” it sounds like it’s some kind of an automaton, a computer-operated cybernetic robot, programmed so that it can speak and act like it’s alive and command the worship of the world.

As far fetched as this would have sounded in John’s day, to give life to this image is now quite feasible with the many advances that are being made in robotics and artificial intelligence.

Futurists—scientists and others

who predict what the future holds—even have a

1Revelation 13:14–15 name for when artificial intelligence (AI) will no longer be the product of man but will assume control over itself. They call it the “Singularity.”

The Image of the Beast will be able to not only speak, but also kill—or cause to be killed somehow. It will most likely be demonically inspired to where it actually has demonic intelligence, more than just what man has programmed it with. It’s apparent that it will be a real wonder, and could really be worshiped by mankind. It will be the ultimate in idolatry: Man worshiping the crowning creation of his own hands—an abominable demon-possessed machine that desolates the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Mark of The Beast

THE FALSE PROPHET GOES ON TO CAUSE “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.”¹

For millennia, what John described as this new way of buying and selling, essentially conducting commerce, seemed too fanciful to be put into practice. John himself must

have wondered about it, as the technology for such control was unheard of. It is the amazing technological advances of the last few years that have made the implementation of what John cryptically called the Mark of the Beast possible. From reading this, it is clear that the Antichrist government is going to establish

1Revelation 13:16–18 a new economic system through this mark that enigmatically links to the number 666.

That “no man may buy or sell” also signifies a total control situation that is impossible under the current predominant free-market capitalistic system. Something has to change before this kind of economic uniformity can be imposed. What’s amazing is that the technical infrastructure for just such a system is even

now being developed and pilot programs are being tested. If universally adopted, these programs could develop in the not too distant future into the very economic system foretold in this chilling passage of

John’s. But why get rid of the current financial and economic system based on cash? The fact is that it has been done away with to a large degree already. The vast bulk of the money that changes hands in the

millions of transactions made each day never takes the form of hard currency. Most is just numbers in electronic ledgers. The lowly bills and coins that are still in common use are a mere tip of the iceberg when

it comes to the amount of money in circulation. Although still widely used

because of its functionality, cash is slowly being replaced. Paying with plastic—credit, debit, and other cards—is becoming the norm. One segment of the population, however, is greatly attached to cash: the criminal underworld. Drug smuggling and money laundering are billion-dollar industries in which most of those billions change hands inside suitcases, the US\$100 bill being the medium of choice. Experts say that these bills are used so often in drug transactions that it is almost impossible to find one that does not have some traces of cocaine or heroin or other illegal drugs on it.

Doing away with cash (and hence, anonymous transactions) is a dream of law enforcement and tax agencies throughout the world, and would deal a crippling—and in some cases, fatal—blow to the many mafias that run illicit drug and other criminal rackets. One could hardly make a more compelling argument for the removal of cash from the economy.

Much is being made of e-commerce, and futurists are bold in their predictions that all financial transactions will eventually be made electronically. Already just about anything can be bought and paid for

electronically. Even taxes in certain countries can be paid by credit card via the Internet. The convenience of all our business being transacted from the comfort of our living rooms is enticing, and many of the more technologically savvy already do this. However, there are some very serious drawbacks, and the most difficult to overcome has been the problem of identity theft. Credit card numbers stored on easily hacked computer servers have been stolen by the thousands and then used to make purchases amounting to millions. This might be minuscule when compared to the trillions of dollars of financial transactions that are conducted on a daily basis, but until the serious problems of foolproof identity verification and identity theft are totally overcome, the full implementation of a cashless society is still only a pipe dream. But it won't be a pipe dream for long, because as you read this, thousands of the brightest minds in the world are tackling these problems and others from a multitude of angles; it won't be long until digital commerce is fully reliable.

One of the most promising technologies has been in existence for some time. It is known as the smart card, and you possibly even have one or more of them in your wallet at this very moment. They are the size of the ubiquitous credit card, but within their plastic exterior beats a heart of silicon. At the core of each card is a computer chip that can store just about all the personal information that you or anyone else would want to know about you. On top of that, it contains digital money for you to spend. Initially, smart cards needed to be swiped, just like your credit cards, but now there are contact less smart cards that only need to come near a terminal to be read and transactions completed in a fraction of a second. As you pass within a certain proximity to the terminal, it powers up the microcomputer in the card via a small antenna embedded in the card, and then via that same antenna transacts whatever business is needed. Already some countries have installed smart card readers in their public transportation system, and the passengers need not even take the card out of their pockets to pay their fare.

In addition, some countries are now offering smart cards to people frequently traversing their borders in order to speed immigration procedures. Without needing to present a passport, a cardholder simply inserts his card into a machine that then compares his fingerprints on a scanner with those on his card. If they match and there are no other problems on the person's record, the person passes the immigration check in a matter of seconds.

Another use that the smart card has been put to is with communications. Many companies and governments are seeing the need to keep internal e-mail communications confidential. Smart cards are being used to firstly identify that the recipient of a message is bona fide, and secondly to contain the necessary encryption keys to decrypt messages. They also are being used as keys to open electronic locks on doors in restricted areas. Many of these cards can hold a variety of data, such as biographic, biometric, medical, and financial, and perform several functions such as electronic identification, encryption, and access keys.

There is, however, one major flaw with smart cards: They are not theft or loss proof.

The only way to prevent this is to match the card with the person through some sort of biometric identification method such as that described above, where the user's fingerprint (or eye) is scanned and matched against the print embedded on the card. Accurate biometric scanners are costly, and would be nearly impossible to install in every point of sale worldwide. So a better solution must be found. And it has been. For the tiny computer at the heart of the smart card to become permanently associated with its owner without risk of loss or theft, it needs to be physically attached to the body or even become part of the body—and even be powered by the body. The stuff of science fiction only a few short years ago, such technology exists today not just in the laboratory, but also in real life.

Much has been published in the media about Professor Kevin Warwick, the British university professor who had a chip implanted under his skin that performed all sorts of nifty tasks for him, such as opening electronically locked doors, turning on lights as he walked into a room, and starting his computer. Oh, and yes, having the building's central address system cordially greet him as he arrived in the morning.

Then there are the Jacobs. The "chipping" (insertion of a computer chip under the skin) of people quietly began rolling out in the U.S. in 2002, via Applied Digital Solutions' VeriChip. In May 2002 the "historic chipping of the Jacobs family" took place. This family and several other volunteers had unique identifier chips injected under their skin. The chip, about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen, can be read by a handheld VeriChip scanner. The Jacobs family suffers from various ailments and the storage of their medical history provided the logic behind their volunteering to be the test cases. Already, though, Applied Digital Solutions is advertising this service for anyone for an initial payment of \$200, along with a \$10 monthly fee. A similar system to keep track of house pets has been in existence for years, and millions of

pets in the U.S. and other countries have a tiny chip implanted under their skin. How long will it be till this chipping of people becomes the norm and we turn to it to facilitate all those daily functions such as shopping? Let's once again look at the passage from Revelation:

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.¹

Could today's smart card and "chipping" technology be a forerunner of this Mark? It certainly seems possible. Already we have a computer small enough to be embedded in a thin piece of plastic carrying out the functions of buying and selling. Taking it a step further, we have the Jacobs and others already proving the functionality and feasibility of having a computer chip inserted under the skin, solving the issue of positive identification, as well as enabling financial transactions, personal data storage, etc. It doesn't seem that there is much of a credibility gap to hurdle to imagine a system similar to this being universally adopted. Is this then the Mark of the Beast? If it isn't, it is so strikingly close that whatever it is, it must be related in some way.

So what of the number 666? For now, speculating on what that could be is still in the realm of guesswork, but it is likely to have something to do with people being assigned a unique number, much like many countries have today, such as Social Security or Personal Identification Numbers. The Bible cryptically tells us that it is apparently going to take "wisdom and understanding" to decipher how this number plays into this scheme, but when it does become apparent, it will confirm the dire predictions associated with it.

Right now, it seems that the switch from cash to electronic currency and the technology associated with it would be very beneficial. It would make our lives a lot more convenient by speeding up many time-consuming tasks, such as waiting in line to pay bills or at checkout counters, providing quick and easy boarding of airplanes and other transportation, hassle-free border crossings, instant identification when you need it, not to mention delivering the world from much of the crime that depends on cash. Surely such an improvement in the quality of life would not be sinister. Or would it?

The sinister underside to this new economic system is that while it will make life more convenient, it will also make our lives

more controlled. It would be comparable to the ankle transmitters that some prisoners under house arrest or on parole must wear. Privacy would be virtually nonexistent. Every purchase you make would be known, every place you frequent could be determined, even every show

you watch on TV could be monitored. The all seeing Big Brother of Orwellian fame would become a reality. There is one more catch to this. The Bible clearly points out that the driving force behind this Mark is not benign but rather the most malign and terrible entity the world has ever known. Satan is not only moving behind the scenes of this world-dominating dictatorship of the Beast, but he is actually in full possession of the Beast. The Beast is the Devil incarnate.

The Devil's goal since creation has been to have people worship him instead of God, and in this final horrific period of Great Tribulation, he will pull out all the stops in order to achieve it.

So there's clearly a link between accepting the Mark and accepting the Antichrist's regime. Accepting the Mark could not just be a financial decision, but also a decision—perhaps unwittingly—to embrace the Beast and all he stands for. We don't know for sure, but if the Mark is some sort of computer implant, it could well achieve a dominance over the bearer's mind and actions. John, later on in his Revelation, foretells a horrifying doom for those who bear this mark and worship the Antichrist. If anyone worships the Beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone. . . . And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.¹ But the comforting thought is that although the Beast will rant and rave against those who refuse to accept him and his system, his time is short and his doom is sealed. He is the ultimate loser. Jesus Christ and those who love and follow Him will emerge from the Great Tribulation as the glorious and eternal winners, as can be seen in the following chapter.

¹Revelation 14:9–11

CHAPTER SIX

The Great Tribulation THEREFORE WHEN YOU SEE THE “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be Great Tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.¹ As we’ve seen in Chapter 4, the placing of the “abomination of desolation” represents the halfway mark in the Antichrist’s seven-year reign. Therefore, Jesus is here describing the

¹Matthew 24:15–21 beginning of the last three and a half years of the current epoch of the earth. In the parallel passage in the Gospel of Luke we see some more details of the events occurring at this moment. But when you see Jerusalem

surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.¹

Jerusalem is surrounded and occupied by the armies of the Antichrist, and Jesus basically says that those in the vicinity should run for their lives. Obviously it is not a peaceful occupation, and most likely it is the culmination of a war. In Revelation 11:1–2 we read the following: “Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure

¹Luke 21:20–24 the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty two months.” John is measuring a temple that seems to be a different one than the one described earlier in Revelation, for the previous temple was in the heavenly realm. This one has at least the outer court given to the Gentiles and they have it and the city of Jerusalem for 42 months, which is most likely the time of the Tribulation. It is also likely that this corresponds to the “times of the Gentiles” of the earlier passage in Luke. And it is a fair guess that the temple John was measuring is actually the one that is going to be rebuilt at Jerusalem.

The Antichrist, from what we have already covered, has apparently been mortally wounded and has literally come back from the dead. But now he is not just a pawn of Satan, he is totally possessed by him. He sets up both his image and his throne in the temple environs. All who will not worship him and take his infamous Mark are then declared beyond the law and are marked for extermination. Although all in this category are to be hunted down and killed, it appears from Revelation 12—the vision of the woman and the dragon—that those who are Christians are particularly singled out: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.¹ This sounds terrible for Christians—and certainly when compared with the temporal might of the Antichrist and his armies and his massive government apparatus, we might not seem to stand a chance—but we have one almighty ace up our sleeves: Jesus Christ Himself. Yes, He may at this time be unseen, but He will be fighting on our side and that means we will be the ultimate victors. We will come through this period on top in the end. It might look like we are losing at times, and we will suffer casualties, but in the end we will win, because the battle is Jesus’ and He always wins.

As the wise Jewish teacher Gamaliel said to the Jewish leaders when they planned to persecute the early Christians, “If it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found ¹Revelation 12:12–13,17 to fight against God.”¹ The apostle John, one of the very people Rabbi Gamaliel was warning against harming, echoed this when he wrote: “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”² Also Paul, who had studied under Gamaliel, again reminded us of the inevitability of our victory when he said: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,

knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”³

However, for the formal, organized denominations with their big church buildings and economic and political clout, the handwriting is on the wall. Daniel prophesied of their troubles when he said, “I was watching; and the [Antichrist] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them. ... He ... shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and ... the saints shall be given into his hand. ... He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. ... And when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.”⁴

1Acts 5:39

21 John 5:4–5

31 Corinthians 15:57–58

4Daniel 7:21,25; 8:24; 12:7

Why would God allow this?—Because it is good for His people. It purifies His Church by driving them to Him in desperation. It “makes them white,” as Daniel was told by the angelic messenger.¹ Many of the rich and powerful churches today are as different from Jesus and His disciples’ sample as night is from day. Whenever persecution has come to Christians, it has always resulted in revival in the long run, with believers drawn closer to the true values of Christianity. The Bible not only promises “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” but also “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.”² Even though the Antichrist will be allowed to physically overcome the organized temporal power of the Christian denominations, he will not and cannot overcome the true Christians spiritually. The Lord says, “And they overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”³ The only power they’re going to have left will be God’s power. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”⁴ In the world’s darkest hour of greatest iniquity, real genuine Christians are going to supernaturally, miraculously witness and shine brighter than ever before. “For behold,

1Daniel 12:10

22 Timothy 3:12; Romans 8:28 KJV

3Revelation 12:11

4Romans 5:20 the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”¹

Furthermore, the Bible promises that during this time “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many.”² This is very important because the *raison d’être* for the Lord’s people during this momentous and trouble-filled time is to witness to others and teach them and instruct them as to what is going on. The Antichrist regime will be horrible and oppressive, and many people are going to hate it and will want to know what they can do about it. Those who know God will be in their element because they will have multitudes of hungry hearts to win and teach the good news of God’s Word and Jesus’ imminent return.

People are going to be more receptive than ever then, just like they are now in times of personal trial, emergency, catastrophe, illness, or accident. A lot of people are going to believe then, and many are going to need salvation and need the good news. Those who understand from the Bible what’s happening and what’s going to happen will be a great encouragement to millions of people throughout the earth.

1Isaiah 60:2

2Daniel 11:32–33

It costs something to witness, and in that day it is definitely going to cost some dedicated Christians who “know their God” their lives. The Antichrist is going to try to wipe them all out because they’ll be telling the truth and exposing him. They’re going to be “instructing many,” warning them of who he really is. And he and his forces are going to be furious.

But if you love the Lord, don’t fear the Tribulation. God’s a much greater enemy to the Antichrist forces than they are to you. “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”¹ As His Word has said, “It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you.”² Powerful men and women of God, just like the ancient prophets and prophetesses of old, are going to be God’s leaders and have supernatural, miraculous powers to protect and defend their flocks and followers and help them survive to the very end. Two such witnesses are mentioned in the following passage in Revelation 11: And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days [the Tribulation period], clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two

11 John 4:4

22 Thessalonians 1:6

Lamp stands standing before the God of the earth .A And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Now when they finish their testimony, the Beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three and a half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Now after the three and a half days

the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from Heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to Heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.¹ Certainly the power of these two witnesses is awesome. But it is not unprecedented. Elijah called down fire from Heaven and caused it not to rain for three years in Israel²; Moses and Aaron brought plagues on their oppressors and caused the waters to be turned to blood.³ So these powers have been available to God's chosen before, and they will be available again in the Endtime. It's going to be a time of great victory and marvelous testimony so that the whole world will hear. Multitudes of believers are going to survive right until the very coming of the Lord. So there are going to be many people still functioning for the Lord and surviving and living by faith and preaching the Gospel. There are going to be millions of them still alive to see the Lord come. And although there's going to be the most hell the world has ever known, there's also going to be the most heavenly power and defense and help and protection. It's going to be a time of great victory over the forces of Satan and tremendous triumph over the anti-Christ wicked. The Tribulation is not going to be a rampaging victory for the Devil.

¹Revelation 11:3–12

²2 Kings 1:9–15; 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1

³Exodus 7:17–21; 9:13–26 Supernatural, miraculous victories are going to be won over him and all of his powers. Don't think that God's people are all just going to be cowering, hunted victims. Many will be mightily empowered to fight and battle in the defense of the Gospel right up to the end, alongside all the forces of Heaven, aided by the curses and plagues that God unleashes on the wicked. Nevertheless, it will be a time of persecution, and even the two witnesses lose their lives as martyrs. Daniel explains: "Yet for many days [the people of God] shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time."¹ Many Christians in countries that are closed to the Gospel already experience these kinds of conditions where they are persecuted and informers weasel their way into their fellowships, and some believers even die for their faith. But these conditions do have an end.

Aside from getting a little help from some quarters, there is a lot of help forthcoming from the spirit world. Revelation chapters 8–10 relay what will happen when the Seven Trumpets of the Tribulation are sounded in Heaven and seven ¹Daniel 11:33–35 mighty and fearsome angels begin to execute the judgments of God on the Antichrist's empire. The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.¹

Who are these ferocious insect-like creatures from the bottomless pit hurting and tormenting?— Those people on Earth who do not have the “seal of God” on their foreheads. Revelation chapter 7 describes how God had held back His avenging angels till those who were His servants on Earth had received this seal. We don’t know what form this seal will take, although it seems to be a spiritual rather than an actual physical mark. One thing we do know is that those who receive it are His people, and they are not on the receiving end of these plagues. It is the followers of the Antichrist who are on the receiving end, those who are trying to persecute and kill the ones who refuse to worship the Beast. For all the trouble, pain, and hurt they try to inflict on those who love Jesus, it

¹Revelation 8:7 to 9:4 sounds like the Antichrist and his followers come off the worst for it.

The Lord set a precedent for this kind of thing way back when the children of Israel were held as slaves in Egypt, in the days of Moses. Moses demanded that pharaoh give the Israelites their freedom but pharaoh kept refusing. God, therefore, sent numerous plagues against Egypt because of pharaoh’s recalcitrance. At least some of those plagues did not touch the land of Goshen, the area of Egypt where the Israelites lived.¹ And just as they were spared, we will also be spared much of the horror.

And they [the monster locusts] were not given authority to kill them [the Antichrist’s followers], but to torment them for five months. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.² These creatures have power to inflict pain with their stings for five months, and their victims will wish they could die but apparently can’t. The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and

¹Exodus 9:26

²Revelation 9:5–6 their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.¹

Like much in the book of Revelation, this passage is cryptic; and although some have tried to explain exactly what these creatures are, it seems we won’t really know until we actually see them. But the good thing is that if you have the seal of God in your forehead, you don’t need to worry. And if you have Jesus in your heart and love Him and try to serve Him, then you qualify as a servant of God and you will have that seal. (See Appendix 3.)

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I

heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound

at the great River Euphrates.” So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the ¹Revelation 9:7–10 horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.¹

This sixth trumpet obviously has to do with war occurring during the period of Great Tribulation. What these horses with heads of lions and mouths that breathe fire are is for now a mystery. But it seems that the armies involved numbered 200 million, and the casualties in that war were a third of all mankind. That surely sounds like a time of great troubles or Great Tribulation. Today the world is a powder keg just waiting to have someone strike the match, and if ever there was an entity who glories in destruction and would love to see the world engulfed in a conflagration of the magnitude spoken of here, it is the Devil. And he will be in the thick of it in the person of the Antichrist.

¹Revelation 9:13–19

Notes

A. Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lamp stand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." ... Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lamp stand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:1–3, 11–14).

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Can you drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared" (Mark 10:35–40).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mystery Babylon! BEFORE WE LEAVE THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD, we need to look at another event that will be happening during this time or shortly afterwards, and that is the destruction of Babylon the Great! It still is unclear exactly when this occurs.

The following passage refers to "seven angels," but these are not the angels with trumpets who are associated with the Great Tribulation as we read in the previous chapter. Rather, these are seven angels who appear after Jesus' Second Coming. These are carrying seven bowls filled with the Plagues of the Wrath of God that they pour upon the Antichrist and his minions.

Then one of the seven angels who

had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet Beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.¹ At the time of John, the great Babylonian Empire had been gone for over 500 years. In fact, the great city Babylon was an abandoned ruin. This Babylon that John was being shown was not the Babylonian Empire but was something far more sinister and enduring.

Her identity, at least in John's time, was a mystery! But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the Beast that carries

¹Revelation 17:1–6 her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The Beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. And the Beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition."¹ We covered these verses in Chapter 3 of this book, and you'll remember that we concluded that this king that "has not yet come" is the Antichrist, who is both the seventh and the eighth heads and is ultimately headed for Hell. There has been much speculation around this passage. Some have suggested that the seven mountains represent the seven hills of ancient Rome, and hence by inference that Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church that is headquartered on one of those hills, the Vatican. But a closer reading equates the seven mountains with

seven kings and

1Revelation 17:7–11 hence kingdoms. This Babylon comes riding on the back of the seven-headed Beast, on the back of the seven empires which you will remember are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Alexander's, Rome, and finally the Antichrist's.

The Catholic Church wasn't even around during the time of the first five empires, so obviously the Catholic Church is not this Babylon. Some have recently contended that this Babylon is the nation of Iraq, since the site of the ancient city of Babylon is in that country. However, Iraq has neither the power nor the decadence to resemble this great harlot. This harlot is Mystery Babylon. She is not that readily or easily identified.

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the Beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the Beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. 1

These horns are the ten rulers and nations that unite with the Antichrist, and are the core of his empire, who even go so far as to make

1Revelation 17:12–14 war against Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and do so by initially persecuting those who believe in Jesus, and finally try to take on Jesus Himself in the Battle of Armageddon. The angel tells John: The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the Beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the Beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 1 This great harlot sits on all the peoples of the world and rides these empires like a mistress, as though she were their owner. And indeed she is. What or who has always pulled the strings and dominated every empire?—Those who controlled the financial and commercial interests. Isn't a big, gaudy, decadent whore who oppresses all with her extravagances and abominations a fitting symbolism of the power of materialism throughout all ages? But finally, the Beast itself has had enough of carrying this harlot through the centuries, and the ten horns on the last head, the

1Revelation 17:15–17 Antichrist empire, turn on her with hatred and vengeance, leave her desolate and naked, and burn her with fire. But how will they do that?

How do they attack a spiritual entity?

Well, she is not just a spiritual entity. The next verse goes on to explain: "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." 1 Materialism—the devotion to material wealth and possessions at the expense of spiritual or intellectual values—is virtually synonymous with capitalism, the profit-driven system that dominates the economies and nations of today. If we look for the center of capitalism, where do we find it headquartered? In the greatest commercial and military superpower the world has known, the United States of America. So it seems that just as the Antichrist is the final manifestation of the Beast, so the United States is the ultimate manifestation of Babylon the Great. Of course capitalism reigns worldwide, so the USA is not the only manifestation.—Nor are all Americans part of spiritual Babylon. But if we look around us, there is no single place today that epitomizes Babylon more than the United States. And if there is any one great city of the USA that reigns over the kings of the earth, it is New York. If America was attacked and suffered some sort of nuclear conflagration, this would

1Revelation 17:18 certainly fulfill this prophecy. Destroy America, especially her financial centers, and the world's capitalistic, materialistic system would be shattered. While the United States and New York are just the most apparent manifestations of the capitalistic mistress that rules the empires of man, nevertheless their destruction would fulfill this vision of Babylon being destroyed in one hour. In a previous chapter, we explored how the ten kings emerge from the Roman Empire, speculating that they could represent the ten leading nations of Europe. If that is the case, then the current split in Europe between those nations that are pro-U.S. and those that are not could give rise to three being overthrown (as per Daniel chapter 7, where the Antichrist overthrows three of the ten kings) and culminate in this hate-filled final stage of Ten Kings versus Babylon the Great enmity and nuclear attack.

The September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers made everyone painfully aware just how fragile and vulnerable a city like New York is. Whatever the attack portrayed in this chapter, it sounds sudden and severe. John continues: After these things I saw another angel coming down from Heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul

spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”¹ These verses confirm that Babylon is not just a spiritual entity but is also an actual place: “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”² What nation is the choice marketplace of the earth where all other nations wish to sell their wares, and that has a trade deficit in the billions of dollars with many of them? That is billions flowing to these countries, and in particular to their merchants. There is only one nation that clearly stands out above all others in this way: The United States of America. And I heard another voice from Heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to Heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her

1Revelation 18:1–2

2Revelation 18:3 just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.

In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”¹ The destruction is going to be sudden. Here it says in one day; later in the passage it says one hour. And what has America “rendered” or exported to the world that sows destruction and that she therefore reaps? Armaments! America is not the only country that sells weapons, but she has the lion’s share of the market. She sells many other things that could also be viewed as abominable by God. But weapons of war have caused such sorrow and pain and anguish that God is furious. So much so that whatever torment and hell America’s military-industrial complex has meted out will now be repaid in like measure. If you have seen scenes of destruction and death that have resulted from war, then you know what horrors lie in wait for “Babylon the Great,” who “thinks herself a queen and knows no sorrow.”

1Revelation 18:4–8

God calls His people to come out of her, so that must mean that there are some and probably many in her. There are millions of Christians and other God-loving people in that country, but as Billy Graham and others have said, if God doesn’t judge America for her sins, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore. ... Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What is like this great city?” They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, “Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.” Rejoice over her, O Heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!¹

1Revelation 18:9–11, 17–20

So as the merchants and businessmen of other nations mourn their lost markets, and therefore their lost wealth, the angel tells all Heaven, the apostles and the prophets included, to rejoice, for they are avenged. The U.S. itself hasn’t persecuted all these. In fact, in many instances it has championed religious freedom and tolerance. It is not all Americans, or just America, being judged here. It is the anti-God, materialistic, soul-enslaving system that has existed down through the ages that at this time of destruction is now done away with forever. It is not just in America that “the Great Harlot” flourishes. It is a worldwide entity, but which today is mostly embodied in America. The USA is now the final inheritor of all that Babylon—the wicked, materialistic, mammon worshiping system that God pictures as a vain, decadent whore—has done since it started riding on the world’s empires.

John writes: “Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.’”¹ So when does this happen? Obviously the Antichrist and his ten kings are in power at this time, so it appears it happens during their reign, most likely after the covenant is broken. It is more than likely that it happens toward the end of the Tribulation or immediately afterward

1Revelation 18:21 during the time that the plagues of wrath are being poured out. (See Chapter 10, “The Plagues of the Wrath of God.”) We’ve already covered how the Tribulation is not a peaceful time, and

a reading of Daniel 11 shows that war seems to be the Antichrist's stock in trade. The angel who showed John these things was also involved in pouring out the plagues of wrath, so that would seem to favor the destruction of Babylon occurring after the Second Coming. However, it also seems that at least some of God's people are still in the USA, so that would place its destruction during the Tribulation. Guessing at the timing is just hypothesis for now, but whenever it does happen, the USA is not a place one would want to be.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Jesus' Second Coming NOW WE MOVE TO THE LAST OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS. The first six all heralded death and destruction on the Antichrist and his followers, and this last one is going to be the most horrible of all for them. However, for the followers of Jesus, it's the most wonderful event of their lives! John recounts: I saw still another mighty angel coming down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them." The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to Heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created Heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.¹ What is the "mystery of God" that should be finished that He has declared to His servants and prophets? It is what we have all been waiting for: the return of Jesus in the sky to rescue all His children. Jesus Himself told us that: For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.¹

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ, often referred to as the Rapture, will be the most anticipated and wonderful event for the Christians who have gone through the Tribulation. They have endured the depths of persecutions and the hell into which the world has descended under the Devil incarnate, the hideous tyranny of the Antichrist. Now their moment of release has come when they are to be taken out of this world and transported into the wonders and joys of Heaven. This is the real thing, not the ephemeral myth of a rapture before the Tribulation begins, which many sincere and dedicated Christians had been so deceived by. (See Appendix I.) It will have been a very hard and difficult three and a half years, but now their deliverance comes.

Jesus described just how sensational His Second Coming will be. The sky is going to light up as though there were lightning, but this is much more than a mere lightning bolt that flashes for an instant—this is as bright as lightning and illuminates the entire sky, from the east to the west. Jesus said that just before His appearance the sun is darkened and the moon doesn't shine, meaning the sky is completely dark. Then, as the powers of the atmospheric heavens start to shake as though in the throes of a colossal thunderstorm, the sign of Jesus Christ appears in the sky. Exactly what that sign is, we don't know, but just like the armies of old followed a standard, a flag held in the vanguard, and oftentimes this was the first thing that came into the view of their enemies as the army approached, so it seems this sign is the first thing that those on the earth see. The Antichrist and his wicked followers are going to be moaning and mourning, but all those who have accepted Jesus are going to be rejoicing. Jesus appears in the clouds, and with a great trumpet blast, the angels start gathering God's people from the four corners of the earth. This description of Jesus' return in the sky, visible to all, was also told to His disciples by angels as they witnessed Jesus' ascension into Heaven after His resurrection: Now when [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."¹

1Acts 1:9–11

The gathering of God’s children to Heaven during the Rapture is also described in the book of Revelation: Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. ... Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One 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 who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.¹

This is the great reaping and calling home of all genuine Christians from the time of the early church on. Saint Paul wrote about this great event in several of his letters:

I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [died], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that

1Revelation 1:7; 14:14–16 we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.¹ Those he is referring to as having “fallen asleep” are those saved Christians who have died. Their bodies are dead in the grave, but their spirits are very much alive in Heaven with Jesus. When Jesus returns at this time, Paul says that all of these will come with Him. Why? Because a very important event is about to occur for them and for those of us who remain. When the Lord descends from Heaven and the shouting and trumpeting begins, the “dead in Christ” shall rise first. All those spirits whose bodies have been buried in the earth are going to be reunited with their physical bodies. However, it is not going to be the old body they knew, but a totally made-over body, regenerated and indestructible, a new heavenly body. We all then get caught up together in the clouds. Yes, we all sail up into the sky in our new bodies.

11 Thessalonians 4:13–18 Saint Paul tells us more about this in his first letter to the Corinthians. “Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”¹ The Bible also tells us that the supernatural, miraculous, resurrected, transformed, fleshly bodies of the future are going to be like those of the angels of God! “Nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”² But it’s still going to be you. You’re even going to look similar, only much better! But it’s going to be you, the same body, otherwise it wouldn’t be a resurrection. (For more on these Resurrection bodies, see Chapter 3, “Superhuman Bodies!” in From the End to Eternity.)

And so we get delivered at the end of the Great Tribulation and then carried off to Heaven to the greatest of all parties ever held up till that time, the magnificent “Marriage Supper of the Lamb,” which we will cover in the next chapter. An amazing thing about the Rapture is that at some point you will be able to mark the date, or close to it, on your calendar when it will happen. The Bible is specific as to how long the Tribulation lasts, and we covered

11 Corinthians 15:51–52

2Luke 20:36 this already in chapters 2 and 6. So, from the time the Antichrist sets up the Abomination of Desolation, which kicks off the Great Tribulation, you can mark off 1260 days. The Lord told us this so we would know how long we would have to endure the Antichrist’s tyrannical rule on Earth. It was to give us hope and help us hang on, knowing that rescue is coming. On this point, some people may bring up the following Scriptures about not knowing the day or the hour of the Lord’s coming. Let’s examine those verses now. This is Jesus speaking to His disciples about His return: But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be

broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.¹ Another passage on this subject is found in Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians: But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.² It is obvious from the first passage that Jesus' Second Coming is certainly going to come as a surprise to many. It is also true that at the time Jesus gave this discourse to His disciples, the only One who knew the timing of the Second Coming was God, Jesus' Father in Heaven. Jesus didn't know and the angels didn't know and we still don't know today. But

1 Matthew 24:36–44

21 Thessalonians 5:1–5 why was He telling us about this and all the other signs of His return if He didn't want us to be aware that the event was at least drawing close? He did and does want those who will actually witness the events (and His immediate audience, His disciples, were not going to) to know the approximate timing and to be prepared. In the second passage, Paul makes it very clear that we are not supposed to let that day overtake us unexpectedly. We are children of the light and aren't supposed to be in the dark on all this. And finally, why would He keep telling us the exact length of time that the Tribulation would last if He didn't intend for us to know when He was coming? Back in Jesus and Paul's day, they didn't need to know the exact timing of His return, because that event wasn't going to affect them. But for us who are alive in these Last Days, and especially if we wind up in the Tribulation, the Lord wants us to know because it will help us endure to the end, either the end of our lives or the end of the Tribulation.

So, at this point we take a hiatus from the war as the Lord comes back to take us home in that marvelous event that we call the Rapture. We are taken up into the air, our bodies are changed and immortalized, and we are off to Heaven for the mother of all parties, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

But for the Antichrist and his ilk, it is the worst event. Those whom he has sworn to kill have been snatched from his clutches by his ancient and unbeatable foe, Jesus Christ. And the worst for the Antichrist is yet to come.

Notes

A. The term Rapture is not found in English-language Bibles but made its way into the Christian lexicon as a transliteration of the Latin for that event. Its biblical equivalent is the Resurrection of the Just, where believers, both living and dead, are taken up to Heaven at the last (seventh) trumpet, and given their immortal bodies. The term Rapture as applied to the catching up into the heavenlies of the saved at Jesus' Second Coming finds its origins in the Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

The Latin word used to render "caught up" is rapiemur. Rapiemur is a derivative of the verb rapio (sometimes written raptio): to seize, snatch, carry away. Saint Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate Bible, apparently looked at the Lord's return and our gathering to Him in the sky as a mass abduction of believers from the Antichrist Empire.

The actual English word rapture, meaning overwhelming happiness, also found its way into English from Latin roots, specifically from the medieval Latin raptura, meaning seizure, and is in turn derived from the classical Latin raptus, which means a carrying off or an abduction.

CHAPTER NINE

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Judgment Seat of Christ

AS YOU ARE HEADING UP INTO THE CLOUDS TO JOIN JESUS AND ALL THE RESURRECTED SAVED, you might be wondering "What next?" Well, my friends, it is time to party, and you are going to be one of the guests of honor. You are cordially invited to your wedding party. Welcome to the great "Marriage Supper of the Lamb," where you, one of Jesus' brides and part of His Church, the elect, the ekklesia, the called-out ones, finally get to celebrate your marriage with Jesus. You became part of His Bride the minute you accepted Him into your heart, and now you finally get to have the wedding supper, and it is going to be the party to end all parties—well, at least up until this point. John described it like this: Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him,

both small and great!” And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’”¹ From that point on, the Bible is silent as to what the celebrations consist of, but we can rest assured that if Jesus is planning the party, it is going to be totally out of this world.

There is another event that will apparently take place at this time, referred to in Scripture as the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is when all the saved will come individually before Jesus Christ to receive their rewards. Paul writes: “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”² Also, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”³

¹Revelation 19:5–9

²Romans 14:10,12

³2 Corinthians 5:10

Jesus said, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”¹ And, “The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”² And also, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”³ The apostle Paul, at the end of his ministry, shortly before he went to be with the Lord, said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”⁴ This crown is your reward.

A lot of Christians get confused by the Bible verses on rewards and crowns, and apply them to salvation as something that must be earned. Salvation cannot be worked for and thus earned; it is a free gift of God.⁵ But you can work for rewards and you can earn praise and commendation from the Lord! A special, “Well done, good and faithful servant. ... Enter into the joy of your Lord!”⁶ Although the good that you do in this life isn’t going to help to get you into Heaven, it will have a great deal to do

¹Revelation 22:12

²Matthew 16:27

³Revelation 2:10

⁴2 Timothy 4:7–8

⁵Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5

⁶Matthew 25:21 with your reward and your position once you’re there. When a heavenly messenger was speaking to Daniel, he said: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”¹ Those who have been wise by living a life dedicated to being what God wants them to be, and to turning others to righteousness, will shine as the stars; but those who haven’t done much for the Lord will be pretty dull and held in shame and even contempt. So those who have done more will receive more rewards. But it also has to be understood that “the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”² He knows what you are capable of and what you desire to do, and if for some reason your circumstances hold you back from being as much of a force for good on Earth as you would like to be, then those circumstances will be taken into consideration. Jesus is called the Righteous Judge, and your reward will be a righteous one. Nevertheless, it is important that we do our best to be and do all that God expects of us.

¹Daniel 12:2–3

²1 Samuel 16:7

Paul wrote, “Now if anyone builds on this foundation [salvation] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.”¹ Having received Jesus, if you live for Him and do what you can to be a living sample of His love for others, when you stand before Him at this great Judgment Seat, these works will endure the test, even as gold and silver endure and come through the fire. They will endure and you will receive a glorious reward. “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus

Christ!”² But, the Scripture passage in Corinthians continues, “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”³ Those who have received Jesus, but yet did nothing for Jesus in thanksgiving, who lived their lives selfishly and did not live by the golden rule of “whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them,”⁴ will find their works burned as wood, hay, and straw, and will not receive much of a reward,

11 Corinthians 3:12–14

21 Peter 1:7

31 Corinthians 3:15

4Matthew 7:12 if any. They’ll still be saved, but they’ll suffer such a sad loss! So if nothing else, this should be strong motivation to do our best to live the way God wants us to live and do the things He wants us to do on Earth, so that we can receive His reward and commendation in Heaven! Meanwhile, as we are rejoicing at the Marriage Supper and receiving our rewards, the angels of the Lord are taking care of unfinished business on the earth.

CHAPTER TEN

The Plagues of The Wrath of God

IN REVELATION CHAPTER 16, we are given a vivid picture of the hell that’s going to be unleashed on this earth after Jesus Christ has taken the believers, those who have accepted Him as their Savior, up to that wonderful wedding supper in Heaven. While that event is happening, God releases His final judgments upon the Antichrist’s empire. In Revelation 15, the introductory chapter to this event, we see that these final judgments will be delivered by “seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.”¹ The destruction of Babylon the Great by the attack on the U.S. occurs at the end of the Tribulation, either shortly before or after the Rapture. This destruction, as referred to in Revelation 17 and 18, sounds very much like a nuclear attack. How widespread an attack it will be, we don’t know, but it seems the events that

1Revelation 15:1 are described now are happening in a post nuclear- war world. Although the United States of America, which is the epitome of Babylon, but not all of it by any means, would have been devastated to a great degree, the USA has also taken many precautions so that if they suffer a first strike, they could launch reprisal attacks even after much of their civilian or military infrastructure is destroyed.

Much is heard today of weapons of mass destruction, which not only include nuclear weapons but also biological and chemical weapons. In a total war situation that would arise from a nuclear strike as devastating as described in the destruction of Babylon, we can assume that every weapon available in a reprisal arsenal would be utilized. The horrors unleashed would be unprecedented, almost unimaginable, and totally unpredictable. Keep that in mind as we examine the Scriptures on the Wrath of God. Even though the source of the last seven plagues is spiritual, it seems that the actual physical delivery system, so to speak, could perhaps be the fallout from this nuclear attack and/or continued nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare between the Antichrist forces and their enemies. John observes, “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.’ So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the Mark of the Beast and those who worshiped his image.”¹ This first plague is poured out upon the earth and the people who have followed the Beast. The followers of the Antichrist who accepted his Mark and worshiped his Image develop horrible sores! “Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.”² Some of these plagues had already occurred to a degree during the judgments of God on the empire of the Antichrist during the Tribulation, as recounted in Revelation chapters 8 and 9. They were only partial at that time: A third of the waters became blood, a third of fish in the sea died, a third of the ships were destroyed, a third of the trees were burned up, and so on. But this time, due to these final seven bowls of wrath, the destruction seems to be total! It says the sea became blood— apparently the entire sea—and everything that lived in the sea died! Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous,

O Lord, the One who is and who was and

1Revelation 16:1–2

2Revelation 16:3 who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”¹

The third angel will pour out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains and they’ll become blood! There’ll be

no way for the wicked to get a drink of water, there'll be nothing to drink but blood! The angel says they're worthy of it because they shed the blood of God's prophets and His people, so they deserve to drink blood!—How the blood of the martyrs is avenged; those martyrs who cried out from under the altar in Heaven in Revelation chapter 6, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"² Well, here is the somber answer to their prayers! Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of

1Revelation 16:4–7 2Revelation 6:10 the Beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds."¹

The fifth bowl is a direct hit on the Antichrist and his forces. While the first four seemed to generally afflict the entire world, this particular one lands right on the Antichrist and his kingdom. The curses and plagues and horrors will be so bad that men shall gnaw their tongues because of the pain. Yet in spite of all this, they curse God and don't repent!— Think of that! It's going to be hell here and hell hereafter for those who insist on being unrepentant and rebellious against God. Isaiah, when prophesying against the ancient city of Babylon, seemed to also foresee this time of wrath and prophesied: Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt 1Revelation 16:8–11 the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.¹ The whole earth will become a disaster area under these awful judgments of God! Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the Dragon, out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.²

The sixth angel dries up the great Euphrates River to prepare the way for the armies of the east. In fact, the kings and armies of the entire earth will be summoned together for one last great battle. The Antichrist and his forces, even in their anger and their torment 1Isaiah 13:9–13

2Revelation 16:12–14 and their pain and their torture, are planning one last decisive battle for world domination. They are still reviling and cursing God and creating even more destruction in a final horrible war called "the Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty."

The passage continues: "And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."¹
1Revelation 16:16

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Armageddon

BEFORE GETTING INTO THE DETAILS OF THIS MOMENTOUS BATTLE OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY, known more commonly as the Battle of Armageddon, it is important to understand a little background. Megiddo was an ancient city of Israel. It guarded the Aruna Pass, the most important pass through the mountains of northern Israel. The city itself is in the Valley of Jezreel on the northern end of the pass. That valley opens up into the Plain of Esdraelon. The Kishon River runs northwest through Jezreel and Esdraelon and into the Mediterranean. The Harad River also drains the Valley of Jezreel and heads east to join up with the river Jordan.

The Aruna Pass was on the ancient trade route from Egypt to Mesopotamia, and as such Megiddo grew rich from the taxes it imposed on the merchandise that flowed through it. Because it was also strategic militarily, the area was the scene of many battles throughout history, the last fought between the British and the Turks in World War I. The ancient city was destroyed and rebuilt many times, but has lain in ruins since Roman times. The site of the city is now covered in the dirt and debris of millennia, and appears as a raised mound or tel and is called in Hebrew Har Megiddo, which means the Hill of Megiddo. This is rendered in English Bibles as Armageddon. Megiddo in ancient tongues meant "rendezvous" or "troop," both fitting names for the place where the Antichrist gathers his troops for his final battle. It is also only 24 kilometers

(15 miles)

from Haifa, Israel's main deep-water port and the most likely place for boats bringing troops and materiel from abroad to dock and offload. But who exactly is the Antichrist gathering his forces to fight? It can only be the remnants of any alliance of nations that he has been fighting all along. We have already seen that war has occurred, but now it seems that the Antichrist and the nations that oppose him are about to really go at it one last decisive time. From reading over the books of Daniel and Revelation and other prophetic biblical passages, it seems that the Antichrist is embroiled in many wars throughout his reign, and the attack on Babylon the Great (USA) is the penultimate battle that precedes his final Battle of Armageddon.

The Rapture has taken place and the Wrath of God is being poured out—primarily it seems on the Antichrist and his forces, but also affecting every part of the earth. Obviously there are still nations even at this point that will not submit to the Antichrist, otherwise the Antichrist would have no one to fight against. The Antichrist must now be determined to wipe them out once and for all. If these people and nations are fighting the Antichrist, then it is obvious that they do not worship him nor have they accepted the Mark of the Beast. By simple deduction we can then separate humankind at this time into three general groups: 1) those who are saved and were taken up to Heaven at the Rapture, 2) those who follow the Antichrist, and 3) those who are not saved but who nevertheless refuse to be allied with or subservient to the Antichrist and his regime. For the sake of simplicity in this chapter we'll give this third group, those arrayed against the Antichrist, the moniker of Anti-Antichrists, or AACs for short. The most likely interpretation of the Scriptures seems to be that the Battle of Armageddon takes place when the seventh Plague of the Wrath of God is poured out, after the Antichrist's forces have gathered together in the vicinity of the Hill of Megiddo, Armageddon. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent [about 35 kg, or 75 lbs]. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.¹ Upon the pouring out of this seventh bowl, a voice from the throne says, "It is done"— meaning, "This is the End!" This is the last scene of the horror drama of all the damage that man has wrought on Earth. This is the last horrific battle before the establishment of God's kingdom on Earth. War is man's most ardently pursued occupation, creating the most possible destruction, the ultimate manifestation of man's inhumanity to man, and in this war the Devil and man have combined to bring about the most utter devastation ever!

¹Revelation 16:17–21 One great final earthquake is going to destroy the "cities of the nations." Whether this means all the cities of the world is not made clear, but it is obvious this earthquake is very destructive. Isaiah also envisioned this great final utter destruction at the time of the Battle of Armageddon when he spoke of "the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall."¹

John's apocalyptic vision is paralleled by Ezekiel's description of the Battle of Armageddon in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. God told Ezekiel that there's going to be a great shaking when God finally decides to judge the Antichrist. After he's caused so much trouble for those who refuse to worship him, and has warred against any nations that oppose him, God finally will put a stop to him! For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: "Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. So that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground."²

¹Isaiah 30:25

²Ezekiel 38:19–20

Here again the great earthquake is predicted, and this time it gives its epicenter as Israel. "And I will bring Gog [another name used both for the Antichrist and the Devil] to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone."¹ We just read in Revelation 16 that the seventh plague of the Wrath of God included mighty hailstones weighing over 35 kilograms (75 lbs) each. "Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord."² In Revelation 19, John writes: "Now I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like

a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”³ Up until this time the Antichrist and his forces have been fighting the AACs who are arrayed against them. And it could be theorized that because of the immense power and resources the Antichrist has available that he is

1Ezekiel 38:22

2Ezekiel 38:23

3Revelation 19:11–13 most likely getting the upper hand. But now a far more formidable foe has entered the battle, leading a heavenly cavalry charge. Who is it that John saw coming on a white horse? Someone called Faithful and True, whose Name is called The Word of God. This can be none other than Jesus, “the Word [that] became flesh, and dwelt among us.”¹ Here is Jesus Christ, crowned with many crowns, not coming as a babe in a manger, not coming as a merciful savior. This time He’s coming with righteousness and with judgment. He is coming now as a great warrior and a judge to make war, as King of kings and Lord of lords! And the armies in Heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.² “And the armies in Heaven ... followed Him on white horses.” When the Wrath of God has

1John 1:14

2Revelation 19:14–16 been wreaked on the wicked below, the armies of Heaven—of which we who believed in Him and followed Him while we were on Earth are going to be a part—are going to climb on fine white stallions, heavenly horses, and are going to ride out of the sky with Jesus, as if an invasion from outer space! There are many references to horses in the passages about Armageddon. In Revelation 9:16 John sees a vast multitude of mounted horsemen and is told that they number 200 million. This is in the middle of a passage that talks about a very different kind of battle horses that have heads like lions that breathe out Fire and tails like serpents that sting. It is very mysterious to us right now what these horses and their riders actually are. We won’t attempt to hypothesize here what they could be or the significance of the many references to horses that are killed in action in the various biblical passages we are quoting from concerning Armageddon. However, when biblical passages can be interpreted literally, it is always best to try and interpret them so. So when it refers to Jesus and His armies riding into battle on heavenly white horses, it is best to accept this as literal. If and why the Antichrist forces and the AACs are using horses, or if John is describing some kind of mechanical weapons of war, we don’t know. “Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”¹

He’s going to strike them with His Word. “The worlds were framed by the Word of God.”² If He can make the whole world and the whole universe just by speaking the Word, how much more can He smite the nations with His Word? “He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”³ This picture of the grand finale of the judgments of God, with Christ coming and casting the wicked into the Great Winepress of God’s Wrath, is also described in Revelation chapter 14: Then 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, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city,

1Revelation 19:15

2Hebrews 11:3

3Revelation 19:15–16 and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.¹ From reading Revelation 14, it seems the city referred to in the preceding passage is Jerusalem. However, the site of Megiddo is about 100 kilometers (60 miles) to the north. If the rivers run with blood after the third bowl of wrath is poured out as we covered in Chapter 10, then this would literally be up to and even beyond the horses’ bridles. The horrific bloodletting at Armageddon would no doubt add to this grisly flow. One thousand six hundred furlongs, or stadia as it is written in the original Greek, is about 300 kilometers, and a horse’s bridle would be about one-and-a-half meters from the ground. So if this is literal, the carnage is going to be of such horrific proportions as to be almost incomprehensible.

The prophet Joel also foresaw this gathering of the wicked at Armageddon to be cast into the winepress of

God's Great Wrath when he prophesied: The Lord gives voice before His army. For His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it? Proclaim this among

1Revelation 14:17–20 the nations: “Prepare for 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 pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, “I am strong.” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. . . . Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress 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 moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.¹ The Valley of Jehoshaphat is believed to be the steep-sided ravine that separates the Mount of Olives from the old city of Jerusalem, and that is now known as the Valley of Kidron. But it might not be talking about this particular place, as Jehoshaphat by interpretation means “the Lord is judge.” So here they could be entering into the “valley” of the Lord’s judgments. Several more verses do point to the fact that this last great battle culminates at Jerusalem.

1Joel 2:11; 3:9–15

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. . . . Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You. It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the Lord—neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.¹ This passage states that the Lord’s feet will land on the Mount of Olives during this great 1Zechariah 14:1–7,12 battle and the mount will split and a great valley will be formed. Could this be the valley of judgment that is talked about? Whether it is or not, the other important point from this passage is that this battle is taking place around Jerusalem. Since the Antichrist has already made his capital there, the looting, rape, and deportation of half the population that is referred to in the first part of the passage could be referring to when he initially took it over. But the “plague” referred to in the last part certainly sounds like a continuation of the nuclear carnage that began with the nuclear attack on Babylon. The fact that Jesus touches down on the Mount of Olives is also a fulfillment of the angels’ promise to Jesus’ disciples at His Ascension: While they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.”¹

1Acts 1:9–12

Since Jesus Himself is trampling the winepress of the Wrath of God outside the city as stated in Revelation chapters 14 and 19, then it seems that from this and the other verses already quoted, that although the forces of the Antichrist are gathered at Armageddon, the Battle of the Great Day of the Lord culminates at Jerusalem or at least is fought in and around Jerusalem as well. “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of Heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God.’”¹ This is not referring to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb has already taken place. This is a different kind of supper! This angel invites the carrion-eating fowls of the air to come and feast upon the bodies of these terrible people who rebelled against God and who even tried to fight God to the very end. This angel cries out to all these vultures and buzzards, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”² Ezekiel’s description of this horrific Battle of Armageddon remarkably parallels John’s:

1Revelation 19:17

2Revelation 19:17–18 “‘Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: Assemble yourselves and come; gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal which I am sacrificing for you, a great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth.... You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war, says the Lord God.”¹ Now back to where we left off in Revelation: “And I saw the Beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”² Here the Antichrist makes a last-ditch stand to try to fight Jesus and His forces. “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”³ The book of Jude also describes this: “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”⁴

1Ezekiel 39:17–18, 20

2Revelation 19:19

3Revelation 17:14

4Jude 14–15

The final outcome of the battle is described in Revelation chapter 19: “Then the Beast was captured, and with him the False Prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the Mark of the Beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”¹ That is the miserable end of the Antichrist and all of his bestial followers who have persecuted and imprisoned and tortured and slaughtered God’s people and so many others in their reign of terror. It says the Antichrist forces are slaughtered by the sword that comes out of the mouth of Christ. The prophet Isaiah also foresaw this when he wrote, “He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”² In another passage Isaiah also writes: “For behold, the Lord will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.”³ The sword of the Word proceeding out of Jesus’ mouth is evidently going to be like fire to devour His enemies.

1Revelation 19:20–21

2Isaiah 11:4

3Isaiah 66:15–16

Following is another passage, written by the apostle Paul, that refers to the destruction of God’s enemies by fire: It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe.¹ This Battle of Armageddon is going to be a very great battle and a very great slaughter, and is surely the fulfillment of the wicked being cast into the winepress of the Wrath of God described in Revelation 14. And how long does the period of wrath and Armageddon last? We don’t know for sure, but an interesting passage in the book of Daniel, which could provide some insight to this, is covered in Appendix 5 of this book. When the Battle of Armageddon is over and the blood has run so deep, there will be

12 Thessalonians 1:6–10 so many bodies left that the Scripture tells us it will take “men regularly employed” seven months just to bury the dead in Israel alone!¹ Yet there is one last foe, the ultimate archenemy of all that is good, that has to be dealt with.

Then I saw an angel coming down from Heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.²

So the Devil is locked away for a thousand years. Although it will not be the last we hear of him, at least the earth will be free from his evil for a long time. What is to become of him after that will have to be left to the next book of this series, From the End to Eternity.

In conclusion, at this mighty Battle of Armageddon, Jesus, along with a little help from those who love and serve Him, not only conquers Satan and his forces, but as a result “the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He

1Ezekiel 39:14–15

2Revelation 20:1–3 shall reign forever and ever!”¹ He will take over the world to rule and reign and run it the way it should have been run to begin with, and would have been if man had not believed the Devil’s lies and disobeyed God and gone his own way. God is going to take over the governing of this world, and He’s going to turn it right side up and run it the way it ought to be run, and those who believe and follow Him are going to help Him. Are you ready?

1Revelation 11:15

A Message from the Victor at Armageddon READING ABOUT THE EVENTS AND TIMES THAT HAVE BEEN COVERED IN THIS BOOK

MIGHT HAVE LEFT YOU FEELING APPREHENSIVE AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE, and even alarmed at what might happen to you and your loved ones when this all hits. It is understandable that you would feel this way. These events are all a part of the end of the world as you know it. They will be monumental and range from the worst times the world has ever experienced to the beginning of the best.

But through all of this you must remember that you are not alone. If you have received Me as your Savior and Friend then I, the ultimate winner in the Endtime conflict, am by your side at every moment. No lasting harm can come to you from that point on. You are Mine and I have reserved your place in Heaven. Nothing can take that away from you. Even though these times will be the worst the world has gone through, they do not have to be the worst for you. If I am in your heart and you are staying close to Me, then those days can be some of your greatest, where you achieve more than you ever have before. So don’t look ahead with dread of what is going to happen. Look forward with the knowledge that for you everything is going to work out in the best and most wonderful way you could ever imagine! That is My promise to you!—Jesus.

If you have not already received Jesus’ wonderful gift of salvation, you can do so by saying the following prayer.

Dear Jesus, I believe that You are the Son

of God and I ask You to come into my heart and life to be my Savior. Please forgive me for any wrongs I have committed against You or others, and give me Your gift of eternal life in Heaven. Amen.

APPENDIX ONE

The Unscriptural Doctrine of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE IS A DOCTRINE THAT HAS BECOME POPULAR

ONCE AGAIN, this time in large part due to the Left Behind series of books, some of which have now been made into movies. The promoters

of this doctrine believe that Jesus will whisk all born-again (saved) Christians out of this world and into Heaven in a secret Rapture either at the beginning of the Antichrist’s seven-year rule or at the midpoint of his reign just before the Tribulation, at the time when the Antichrist sets up the Abomination of Desolation. To justify this belief, much is made of Scriptures that relate Jesus’ Second Coming to being like the coming of a thief in the night. These Scriptures are claimed to imply that the Second Coming and the Rapture are two different events. However, even an elementary reading of the Bible shows they are not. First, we will examine the “thief in the night” Scriptures, and then we will look at others that confirm that the Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation period and not before. Here is what Jesus told His disciples. But of that day and hour [of His return] no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.¹ Here it is obvious that Jesus does refer to His coming as being like the coming of a thief. But He also makes it obvious that these people

1Matthew 24:36–44

UNSCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF PRE-TRIB. RAPTURE working at the mill or in the field go up in the

Rapture at the time of the coming of the Son of Man. There is no indication that it is a separate event. Next, here is what Paul said: But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.¹ So what characteristic of a thief coming is this referring to—a secret and stealthy in and out and away? It doesn't seem so. It is sudden destruction. Destruction isn't a quiet thing. Another passage that is sometimes quoted about this is from the second epistle of Peter: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.² This passage doesn't refer to the Second Coming but events that occur at the end of the

11 Thessalonians 5:1–3

22 Peter 3:10 Millennium. However, even if it was referring to the Second Coming, Peter makes it obvious that there is nothing quiet or stealthy about this Thief like event. The characteristic that is thief like in the Lord's coming that the previous passages are getting at is that it is sudden and unexpected and people are caught napping. In fact, those who are Christians and therefore knowledgeable are supposed to be watching and ready, and to repent if we're not, according to this passage in Revelation: "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."¹ So Jesus' return is neither secret nor stealthy, but it is going to be an obvious noisy affair that we are supposed to be prepared for. The Rapture itself is dealt with in the main body of this book, but now we will cover some Scriptures that are very specific about the timing. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and

1Revelation 3:3 then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.¹ Jesus placed His return after the Tribulation, and then His angels will gather the elect, the believers, to Him in the air in the Rapture at that point. The apostle Paul in several of his epistles explains that the Antichrist will already be in power and sitting in the temple of God (which happens after he breaks the covenant and triggers the Great Tribulation) when the Rapture happens. He also states that it will happen when the last trumpet is sounded, the same trumpet Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:31. Paul talks about "we," meaning the believers, being around on Earth at that time. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive

1Matthew 24:29–31 you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.¹

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.²

Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.³ And finally, the prophecies of Daniel (circa 538 B.C.) and Revelation (circa 90 A.D.) are clear that the saints, the believers, God's born-

12 Thessalonians 2:1–4

21 Thessalonians 4:15–18

31 Corinthians 15:51–52 again children, are around in the Tribulation because the Antichrist is warring against them. In fact, it's even very specific about the length of time of this period in several passages. I was watching; and the [Antichrist] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days [God] came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. ... He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall

be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time [three and a half years].¹ Then I heard the man clothed in linen [an angel], who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time [three and a half years]; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.² Now when the dragon [Devil] saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman [the Church]

¹Daniel 7:21–22, 25

²Daniel 12:7 who gave birth to the male Child [Jesus]. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [three and a half years], from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.¹ Although these Scriptures might not be that encouraging, in that it seems that the Antichrist and his forces prevail over the saints for a time, they do show that believers are going to be on Earth resisting him and his regime during the Tribulation (for three and a half years). Undoubtedly, the church that he does prevail over is the visible church system and its temporal power, which will be a sitting duck, just as the church system was when the Communists came to power in Russia and China and their satellites. But those who understand what is going on will be strong and

¹Revelation 12:13–17 do exploits during these times, and through it all will be the ultimate victors.

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he [the Antichrist] shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.¹ At that time Michael [the archangel] shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book [the Lamb's, that is Jesus', book of life]. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the

¹Daniel 11:32–35

²Daniel 12:1–3 firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.² Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Doctrine The Pre-tribulation Rapture doctrine originated in the nineteenth century with John Nelson Darby, a member of the Plymouth Brethren movement. Samuel P. Tregelles, also of the Plymouth Brethren, charges that the view originated during a charismatic service conducted by Edward Irving in 1832. Others maintain that it was the product of a prophetic vision given to a young Scottish girl, Margaret MacDonald, in 1830. Impressed by the accounts of a new Pentecost, Darby visited the scene of the revival and met Margaret MacDonald. Darby rejected her claims of a new outpouring of the Spirit, but he accepted her view of the (Pretribulation) Rapture and worked it into his own system. [This doctrine was later incorporated into the widely read Scofield Bible with notes.] This view has had worldwide influence ever since. (Walter A. Elwell, ed. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, Baker Book House: Grand Rapids [1984], pp. 908–910).

APPENDIX TWO

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel DANIEL, AS HE RECOUNTS IN CHAPTER 9 OF HIS BOOK, is given an amazing prophecy by the Archangel Gabriel that predicted among other things the year that Jesus would be crucified. It was worded in such a way as to make its fulfillment even more amazing than just stating a given date. It hinged its fulfillment on events that in Daniel's day (circa 538 B.C.) had yet to occur. Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome

times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.¹ The word “week” is translated from the Hebrew word transliterated as shabua. Aside from having the meaning of a week, the seven day period, it also has the meaning “seven” or “unit of seven.” Let’s now look at a passage in Genesis concerning the patriarch Jacob. He had been working seven years for his uncle Laban with the intent of earning the right to marry Laban’s younger daughter Rachel. Laban tricked Jacob by substituting his older daughter Leah in the marriage bed on the night of the wedding. Jacob was incensed, but Laban insisted that it was only proper the older daughter should marry first, but he agreed that if Jacob fulfilled Rachel’s “week, we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years.”² The word “week” in this passage of Genesis is the same word shabua used in Daniel, and here we have it being equated with a period of seven years. It can be assumed then that “weeks” in

¹Daniel 9:24–26

²Genesis 29:27 the prophecy of Daniel 9 can be understood to mean periods of seven years. When we add the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks mentioned in Daniel 9:25, we come up with a total of 69 weeks. Then if we multiply 69 times 7, we arrive at a figure of 483 years. Keeping this in mind, we must now consider what is regarded as a year in ancient terms. Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) wrote: “All nations, before the just length of the solar year was known, reckoned months by the course of the moon, and years by the return of winter and summer, spring and autumn; and in making calendars for their festivals, they reckoned thirty days to a lunar month, and twelve lunar months to a year, taking the nearest round numbers, whence came the division of the ecliptic [path of the sun’s annual rotation] into 360 degrees” (Anderson, Robert. *The Coming Prince*. London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1894). In other words, the year of the ancients consisted of 360 days. A biblical confirmation of the length of what is sometimes called a “prophetic year” is found in Genesis 7:11,24 and 8:3–4. The time that the biblical deluge in the time of

Noah began until the Ark came to rest on the top of Mount Ararat is given as 150 days. This period is dated as beginning on the 17th day of the second month of the year and lasting till the 17th day of the seventh month, a period of exactly 5 months. When 150 is divided by 5, we come up with a month being a period of 30 days. If we extrapolate that, then 12 months of 30 days would equal 360 days. In Revelation 11:2–3, 42 months is equated to 1,260 days. Forty-two months is also equal to three and a half years. If we take the 1,260 days and divide it by 3½, we end up with 360 days in a year. Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus. According to his account in Nehemiah chapter 2, it was in the king’s 20th year on the throne that Nehemiah was granted permission to supervise the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem. Dating this event to our present calendar has been done quite precisely due to astronomical records from the time of the Persian Empire. The 20th year of King Artaxerxes and thus the year this command to restore and build Jerusalem is, with a fair amount of certainty, fixed at 445 B.C. Several other decrees issued by Artaxerxes and his predecessors had allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple, but this seems to be the one that gave them permission to rebuild the city walls. Even so, as you can read in the book of Nehemiah, this feat was completed against the constant and “troublesome” interference from neighboring kingdoms. So now it is time to do some math. We need to convert 483 prophetic years into solar years. A solar year consists of close to 365¼ days.

$(483 \times 360) \div 365\frac{1}{4} = 47$ If we now add 476 years to 445 B.C., we arrive at the year 31 A.D. Most sources give the year of around 30 A.D. as the year of Jesus’ crucifixion, but some place it as early as 29 A.D. and others as late as 33 A.D. So the year 31 A.D. being predicted over 500 years previously in the book of Daniel as the year when “Messiah shall be cut off” is a remarkable date to arrive at. Indications are that the Jews of Jesus’ day were expecting the Messiah to come around that time, as Luke records that “the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not.”¹ Could this prophecy from Daniel be the cause for this expectation? The fulfillment of the first part of this amazing prophecy inspires faith that the rest of it will be fulfilled just as accurately. For as you would have noticed, there is one week of years left over. $70 - 69 = 1$. What and when is this last week? It certainly wasn’t fulfilled seven years after Jesus was crucified and then rose from the dead. As shown in Chapter 1 of this book, the last week starts when the Antichrist confirms the covenant with many for one week.

¹Luke 3:15

It really is the last week—the last seven years of the Antichrist’s rule on Earth. When that is over, the stipulations in Daniel 9:24 will all surely be fulfilled. “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to

bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”¹ Jesus already died for our sins at the end of the 69th week and we have thus been reconciled. And by the end of the 70th week the transgression of the Antichrist’s reign in Jerusalem and in the temple will be finished. Everlasting righteousness will be ushered in with the establishment of God’s kingdom on Earth. The vision and prophecy will be fulfilled and sealed, and Jesus will be anointed King.

1Daniel 9:24

7 weeks sixty-two weeks

434 prophetic years

49+434=483 prophetic years= 476 solar years

70 WEEKS

490 YEARS

455 BC

The last week (7 years)

(Messiah is cut off)

49

prophetic years

Circa 31 AD

(The decree is given to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem)

The 70 Weeks of Daniel

APPENDIX THREE

The One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand IN REVELATION CHAPTER 14 THERE IS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE: Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from Heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.¹ Earlier in Revelation, further insight is given into who these one hundred and forty four thousand are: Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand

¹Revelation 14:1–5 were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed. After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe

away every tear from their eyes.”¹ It is still unclear what the significance of the one hundred and forty-four thousand is, but one thing is certain—they are not the only ones to come through the Tribulation and to be washed clean in the blood of the Lamb. It says that a “great multitude that no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues were in this multitude.” It further states that this great multitude “serve [Jesus] day and night in His temple.” If they serve, then they are servants. If they are servants of God, then they qualify for the seal of God wherewith the servants of God are sealed in the Tribulation. So if you have Jesus in your heart and believe on Him as your Savior and are striving to be a servant to Him as best you can, then you will receive the seal of God in the Tribulation and will not suffer from the various plagues inflicted on the wicked in that terrible period. And if you are strong in your faith and love for the Lord, you shall “carry out great exploits and ... instruct many.”² But who are the one hundred and forty four thousand? If the one hundred and forty four thousand of Revelation chapters 7 and....

¹Revelation 7:2–17

² Daniel 11:32–33

.....14 are the same, which is a fair guess but not necessarily so, they are listed as coming from 12 of the 13 Tribes of Israel. Why the tribe of Dan is passed over is a mystery. John also said he heard the number that were sealed and then goes on to say that one hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes of Israel were sealed. The way it is written doesn’t necessarily mean that it was only the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were sealed. The one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 14 are not defiled with women but are virgins. So it seems that they are men. Why women were not included is a mystery, but this could reflect the societal standard of John’s day, when women did not have the rights that they do today. Christianity had broken with that traditional view when Saint Paul stated that “there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus,”¹ so gender was at least by him regarded as of no significance in spiritual matters. Paul also says the marriage bed is undefiled,² so just because a man has had sex with a woman does not make him defiled. So it seems that what is being talked about is some sort of spiritual virginity, not physical virginity. It also says they were the first fruits, which seems to imply that they were drawn from the very

¹Galatians 3:28

²Hebrews 13:4 early church. But then the ones in Revelation 7 seem to be sealed at the time of the Tribulation. Theories have been floated for centuries as to who the one hundred and forty-four thousand are, but the fact is we won’t really know until the Lord decides to reveal who they are.

APPENDIX FOUR

A Brief Overview of the Book of Revelation THE BOOK OF REVELATION, OR THE APOCALYPSE AS IT IS ALSO CALLED, is the last book of the Bible. It is a revelation that was received by the apostle John while he was in Roman-imposed exile on the Island of Patmos in the eastern Mediterranean around 90 A.D. According to the first words of the book, God gave this revelation to Jesus, who entrusted it to an angel to pass on to John. Although not at first given in chapter form, the book of Revelation is now divided into 22 chapters and can be broken up into four separate parts for an easier understanding of how it flows. Chapters 1–6: The first chapter introduces the book and how it was received. Chapters 2 and 3 are letters to churches in seven cities that were in existence in John’s day. In chapter 4, John the Revelator is taken up to the throne room of God, and in chapter 5, he sees a scroll with seven seals, the first six of which are opened by Jesus in chapter 6. These take us through a summary of world history from a spiritual perspective, from the birth of Christianity to the end of the world. Chapters 7–14: These deal with the time we call the Great Tribulation, and once again these chapters culminate in the end of the world. Chapter 7 talks about the 144,000 and others who go through the Tribulation. The seventh seal is opened in chapter 8, and it heralds the beginning of the sounding of the Seven Trumpets of Tribulation. In chapters 8 and 9 the first six trumpets sound and result in various plagues and chastisements on the wicked. In chapter 10, the seven thunders sound to announce the seventh trumpet (the Second Coming of Jesus and the Rapture). In chapter 11 we are told that there will be two famous Endtime prophets who will be the vanguard of God’s witnesses in the Tribulation, and that three and a half days after their martyrdom, the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. In chapter 12 we learn more of the Endtime church, and in chapter 13, we are told about the Beast and the False Prophet. In Chapter 14 we reach the end of the world again—well, almost—as both the Second Coming and Rapture occur, as well as the beginning of the Plagues of the Wrath of God. Chapters

15–20: In these chapters we are taken through the events that occur at the very end of this world’s current epoch. In chapters 15 and 16 the Plagues of the Wrath of God are poured out. In chapters 17 and 18 we read of the judgment and destruction of Babylon the Great Whore. In chapter 19 we are told about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and then about the Battle of the Great Day of the Lord, commonly known as Armageddon. Chapter 20 is a busy chapter, as it covers the imprisonment of Satan, the 1,000-year reign of Jesus and His saints on Earth, the Battle of Gog and Magog that occurs at the end of the Millennium when Satan is loosed for a little season, and then the final destruction of the surface of the earth as we now know it. Finally, we are told of the Great White Throne Judgment when all the unsaved are judged. Chapters 21–22: These pick up where chapter 20 leaves off and cover the New Earth that is made on the surface of the old one and the enormous, glorious Heavenly City that descends from outer space and the bright, beautiful happy future that awaits all believers in the most wonderful place ever made.

APPENDIX FIVE

How Long Is the Wrath of God and the Battle of Armageddon? WE CAN’T BE SURE, but there are some mysterious verses in Daniel that possibly allude to the answer to this question. These are from the last chapter in Daniel and are at the very end of his retelling of an encounter he had with an angel. Daniel was told in cryptic terms of many events in the near and distant future. Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.¹ At the end of all this, he popped the question: “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” And [the angel] said, ‘From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.’² Let’s look at Daniel’s question. He asked, “What shall be the end of these things?” What would God regard as the end? When the angel pours the last bowl of the Wrath of God on the world, “a loud voice came out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’”³ This could be understood as meaning, “That’s it! The End!” In Daniel chapter 2, the return of Jesus was likened to a rock falling from the sky that smashes into the toes of the giant image that represented the empires of the world. A stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together,

¹Daniel 12:5–7

²Daniel 12:8–9, 11–12

³Revelation 16:17 and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.¹ If no trace of these kingdoms of the world was found, then that really is the end of not just the Antichrist’s rule on Earth and the end of the Devil’s influence, but also the ruling and running of the world by man. When Jesus mounts that white horse of His and charges down to Earth to reclaim what is rightfully His, that really is the end of all these things. So from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the Abomination of Desolation is set up, to the time of the “end of these things” is 1,290 days. That is 30 days longer than the length of the Tribulation, which is 1,260 days. So it could be that this 30-day period is the duration of the Plagues of the Wrath of God. In fact, a few verses previous to this it says, “And when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.”²

To Daniel, the “holy people” would be his own race, the Jews. Not that they were holy in the modern understanding of the word, but they were holy in that at that stage they were

¹Daniel 2:34–35

²Daniel 12:7 the “chosen people of God.” Focusing now on the scenario just before the Rapture, Israel has taken quite a beating, and Jerusalem has been occupied and many of its inhabitants have been killed. Perhaps there are a few Israeli military units remaining that are now in coalition with the AACs at the Battle of Armageddon. It seems, though, that at the end of this 30-day period they have been completely shattered by the Antichrist and his forces, and it is at this time that Jesus and His forces intervene and turn the tide of battle—in fact, the whole war—and completely rout and then annihilate the Antichrist and his armies. And as stated before, since the nuclear strike on Babylon the Great Harlot occurs

shortly before or after the Rapture, then the war that results from this between the Antichrist and the AACs will last a little over a month before the Lord and His heavenly army intervene. And what of the second part: “Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days”? It seems that these “blessed” wouldn’t be the saved who already went up in the Rapture and have now returned with the Lord as part of His armies. The saved are already blessed and really have no need to wait any longer to receive blessings. And certainly it is not talking about the wicked who are annihilated. It must be referring to the AAC survivors of this war, whether they are combatants or civilians. Why are they blessed?— Because they survive to live in the new world that the Lord is setting up. If this is the right interpretation, then it will take 45 days from the time the Lord returns until the earth is completely subdued and the last remnants of the Antichrist’s forces and government are eradicated from the earth. For then righteousness and peace will reign and prevail and all who remain will be truly blessed. AMEN.