

Gary Ray

A STUDY ON

**BIBLE**

PROPHECY

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**P**

**prophecy**

a worthy study topic for every believer in Christ



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## INTRODUCTION

**The reason for this study book:** The Church often struggles to find balance with regard to teaching on the topic of prophecy. Some ministries teach almost exclusively on eschatology and prophecy — others rarely teach on prophecy or end-time events at all.

Nearly one third of Scripture is prophetic in nature. Those who study this significant segment of Scripture will find comfort and gain insight as prophecy notes what God has done, and what God is going to do. I believe that God's prophetic message is given as a gift to prepare, equip, and inspire His people. Further, I believe there are three primary reasons that prophecies are presented in the Word. These reasons are noted below, and should facilitate a desire to gain a deep understanding of, and appreciation for, holy Scripture:

1. **Prophecy notes the goodness of God.** The Lord warns those whom He loves. It is a good and loving God who takes the time to reveal, in advance, what will happen in the days to come. The wise make themselves aware of the warnings and declarations of God.
2. **Prophecy confirms the wonder and integrity of Scripture.** The record of prophetic fulfillment is 100% accuracy. There are no parallels in all of history. Prophecy sets the Bible, and Christianity, apart from all other religious books and teachings.
3. **Understanding prophecy can better one's witness.** The world today is spiritual, but skeptical. A strong witness will include *reasons to believe*. Presenting information on the accuracy and statistical probability of prophecy fulfillment strengthens one's witness. When one concedes that biblical prophecy is verifiably true, what often follows is an acknowledgement that there is a divine hand behind the writing. And when one acknowledges that past prophecies have been fulfilled, one must concede that future prophecies will likely come true and that wise spiritual decisions should be made in order to prepare for what is to come.

May God richly bless you as you seek Him (Acts 17:11).

## WHAT MAKES BIBLE PROPHECY DIFFERENT AND SUPERIOR TO OTHER PREDICTIVE METHODS?

There are several ways to predict the future—a few are noted below. Though it is true that some methods show some degree of accuracy, it is also true that no method of predicting the future comes close to the degree of predictive precision and accuracy one finds in biblical prophecy. A few of the common ways to predict future happenings are noted below.

- ➔ **Prediction based on signs:** This method of foretelling the future is often based on feelings or signs. For example, when Aunt Sue’s shoulder begins to ache, she predicts rain tomorrow. The ancient maxim, ‘Red sky at night, sailors’ delight. Red sky at morning, sailors take warning’ references a way to forecast the weather based on certain atmospheric conditions. This method of foretelling has its highest degree of accuracy when dealing with fairly local and near-future issues.
- ➔ **Prediction based on probability:** This method of foretelling the future uses past performance or happenings to predict future events. The old Farmer’s Almanac is a good example—a sports betting pool is another. This method of predicting future events is limited, and a very poor method of predicting non-near-future events.
- ➔ **Web Bot:** This method of foretelling the future is newer and more sophisticated. It assumes that most, if not all humanity have a 6th sense—an intuition which draws them to gather information on significant events. In our current digital age, it is possible to track Google-type search engine queries. And if for example, there is a statistical spike in searches for west

coast earthquakes, the theory is that there will be a west coast earthquake in the near future. Though there is some interesting research on this predictive method, it should be considered highly questionable.

- ➔ **Distance seeing:** This method of foretelling the future focuses on ‘training’ the mind or utilizing ‘gifted individuals’ to see into the future, and/or observe non-local happenings. It is said that the US Military has experimented with this. The 2009 movie, “Men Who Stare At Goats” referenced this activity (‘Third Eye’ viewing or ‘Remote Viewing’ are related subjects). Again, though there is some interesting research on this predictive method, it should be considered highly questionable, if not dubious.
- ➔ **Clairvoyance:** This method of foretelling the future focuses on ‘gifted’ individuals who utilize different means to see into the future. Edgar Casey had dreams. Jeane Dixon had feelings. Nostradamus utilized nutmeg and wrote quatrains. Related to this are crystal balls, séances, Ouija boards, etc. This method of foretelling generally seeks information from the spirit world. It is dangerous and expressly forbidden in Scripture (Deut. 18, 19; Exod. 22).
- ➔ **Divine Revelation:** This method of gaining insight into the future relies on looking to Scripture for understanding. Scripture notes that the Word of God is sufficient for all believers need to know to live well in the moment, and to prepare for the future (2 Pet. 1:3, 4; John 20:30, 31).

## A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY

### **How many prophecies are in the Bible - How do we know?**

Many are aware that there are prophecies in the Bible, but few realize that more than 27% of the 31,124 verses in the Bible are prophetic. The J. Barton Payne's Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy notes that there are 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament, for a total of 1,817. These encompass 8,352 verses. There are two schools of thought regarding how to count Bible prophecies.

**General:** Some record prophecies in a broad or general way – this is appropriate but does reduce the number of prophecies by about 50%.

The Bible records that Jesus was a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. A general way to view the fulfillment of this prophecy is to acknowledge that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham—hence, one prophecy was fulfilled.

**Specific:** Most Bible scholars record prophecies in a more precise way—counting each part of the fulfillment of a general prophecy as an independent prophecy fulfillment. For example, the Bible notes that Jesus was a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham. Therefore, four prophecies (not one) are fulfilled—Jesus was a descendant of Abraham (1), and Isaac (2), and Jacob (3) and David (4).

### **The precision of prophecy**

Most psychics today speak in very general terms and offer what I call 'Fortune cookie-type counsel.' It is important to note that Bible prophecies are specific and measurable. And though many have tried, no one has been able to prove a Bible prophecy to be in error. There are approximately 1000 general prophecies

in the Bible; about 900 have come to pass, 895 have been verified to be true. 5 are unverifiable at this time, but as they are unverifiable they cannot be used to prove the prophecies are false. Jesus fulfilled more than 125 specific prophecies.

Scholars note the probability of Jesus fulfilling just eight prophecies picked at random is approximately 1 in  $10^{17}$ . These odds approximate the likelihood of blindly picking the one marked silver dollar mixed in with coins two feet deep in an area the size of Texas. Scholars have noted that the probability of Jesus fulfilling just 48 prophecies is 1 in  $10^{157}$  – that is one, followed by 157 zeroes! Which is roughly the number of atoms in the universe.

It is not difficult to illustrate the precision of Bible prophecy. Ezekiel 4 provides one example. The prophet Ezekiel wrote at a time in history when his nation, Israel, had fallen to invaders. Many were forced to serve as slaves in Babylon. Ezekiel chapter 4 notes how long it would be before Israel would again be a sovereign and independent nation. Let's take a look at this prophecy.

Ezekiel chapter 4 records that the prophet was bound on his left and right sides for a certain number of days. The number of days (430) prophetically point to the number of years it would take before Israel would be restored as a nation (Ezek. 4:4-6). To represent the duration of Israel's and Judah's judgment, respectively, Ezekiel was bound with cords and lay on his left side for 390 days, and on his right side for 40 days (Ezek. 4:4-8). Again, the 430 days (390 days for Israel plus 40 days for Judah) in Ezek. 4:6 represents 430 years. Jeremiah prophesied that the period of captivity would last exactly 70 years. Historians note that Babylon captured Israel (and took inhabitants away as slaves) in the spring of 606 B.C. and that exiles were allowed to return precisely 70 years later (just as foretold) in the spring of 536 B.C.

The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of exile (Israel not being an independent nation) took place in 536 B.C. when exiles returned to Jerusalem. However, that still left 360 years of judgment to be served (430 - 70 years = 360 years). Though exiles were allowed to return to Israel, Israel would remain part of the Persian Empire for some years. One might ask: What happens 360 years later? Did Israel become an independent nation at that time (176 B.C.)?

The answer is no. In fact, when Jesus ministered on the earth, Israel still had not re-established as a nation. At the turn of the 20th century, Israel still had not become an independent nation, and this is why.

Leviticus 26:18 indicates that in the face of stubborn rebellion, the Lord “will punish you seven times more for your sins.” Many Hebrews returned to Israel, but most quickly fell away from true faith. Therefore, the 360 years noted were to be multiplied by seven, equaling a total of 2520 biblical years [360 day years]. To convert the 2,520 prophetic years into solar [365.25 day] years, one must multiply 2,520 by the 360 days in the prophetic/biblical year (907,200 days). The next step is to divide 907,200 days by 365.25 (the length of a solar year). The answer is 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days. Therefore, Ezekiel’s prophecy indicates that the end of Israel’s displacement/judgment would occur 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days after the end of the Babylonian exile (which took place on July 23, 537 B.C.). When one adds 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days to July 23, 537 B.C (the year in which the Babylonian captivity ended), they arrive at May 14, 1948 (the precise day Israel regained their independence under UN Charter).

## BIBLE PROPHECIES PRINCIPALLY FALL INTO ONE OF THREE CATEGORIES

**Prophecies concerning Israel:** There are many prophecies about the land of Israel. They speak of the formation of the nation of Israel, wars against Israel, the exile of the Hebrew people and their return to the land, the restoration of the nation of Israel and prophetic events in and near Israel in the last days.

**Prophecies concerning the Gentile World:** Many prophecies profile the rise and fall of Gentile kingdoms; for example, Daniel 11-12 presents more than 100 such prophecies.

**The Messiah:** There are several hundred specific prophecies concerning the Messiah. During His first coming the Messiah fulfilled more than 125 specific prophecies – scores more will be fulfilled in the last days.

## THERE ARE FOUR PROMINENT CONCENTRATIONS OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT

The 100-year period surrounding the birth of Israel (roughly 1450—1350 B.C.) marks the first significant concentration of prophetic fulfillment. During this time Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt and Joshua led Israel to possess the promised land. Prophecies include:

- ➔ God told Abraham that from him would come a nation.
- ➔ God revealed the nation's borders.
- ➔ God foretold of an upcoming time in Egypt.
- ➔ God foretold that plagues would befall Egypt.
- ➔ God foretold of Israel's new home in the new land.
- ➔ God foretold that Israel would eat quail and manna as they traveled in the wilderness with Moses.
- ➔ God revealed which armies Israel would face, and conquer.

The period surrounding the exile of Israel (roughly 620—520 B.C.) marks the second significant concentration of prophetic fulfillment. During this time Israel turned away from the Lord, was overrun by Babylon, served 70 years in captivity and then returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. Prophecies include:

- ➔ Judah would make treaties with other nations but will fall.
- ➔ The northern kingdom would fall first, followed by Judah and Jerusalem.
- ➔ The "Jews would be scattered." (Deut. 28:64; Ezek. 36:17-24)
- ➔ Invaders would destroy the Temple.
- ➔ The people would be taken away in bondage for 70 years.
- ➔ The Temple treasure would be taken but returned.
- ➔ A foreign king would issue a decree to return the treasure and provide for Hebrew rebuilding projects.
- ➔ Permission would be given to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Temple.

The 100 year period surrounding the birth and ministry of Christ (roughly 5 B.C.—95 A.D.) marks the third significant concentration of prophetic fulfillment.

During this time the Messiah was born, crucified, and rose again, the Church was established, and believers received the Holy Spirit. Prophecies include:

- ➔ A star would announce the birth of the Messiah.
- ➔ The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
- ➔ His birth would be associated with the slaughter of innocents.
- ➔ Miracles would mark His ministry.
- ➔ His ministry would be in the region of Galilee.
- ➔ He would be falsely accused, tried, convicted and crucified.
- ➔ He would rise on the third day.
- ➔ The New Testament Church would be born.
- ➔ The Gentile Church would bring the Gospel message to the world.

The final concentration of prophetic fulfillment will unfold in the last days. Many believe that we are now in the final period of prophecy fulfillment and that this last prophetic cycle began when Israel became a sovereign and independent nation (1948). During this time 'birth pains' will increase, the tribulation period will begin, and the Antichrist will come to power. Prophecies include:

- ➔ Knowledge and birth pains will increase (Matt. 24; Daniel 12).
- ➔ Jews will return to Israel (Zech. 8:7-8).
- ➔ The Hebrew language will once again be the predominant language spoken in the land of Israel (Zeph. 3:9).
- ➔ Israel will bloom and prosper (Isaiah 35).
- ➔ A confederation of 10 nations will attack Israel (Psalm 83).
- ➔ Destruction will befall the city of Damascus (Isaiah 17:1).
- ➔ There will be technology for global commerce (Rev. 13:16-18).
- ➔ The Gospel preached to all (Matt. 24:14, 28:18-20).
- ➔ A peace agreement/covenant will be signed (Daniel 9:27).
- ➔ Permission will be given to rebuild the Temple (Matthew 24:15).

## WHY IS THERE SUCH AN EMPHASIS ON PROPHECY IN THE BIBLE?

The gift of prophecy is an expression of God's love. Because He loves us, He warns us. God wants His people to know He is aware of what is happening, and what will happen. Prophecy is given as an empirical proof for the existence of God. It shows God is master of past, present, and future, and can be used to validate the integrity of Scripture. The 100% accuracy rate of biblical prophecy is unmatched among the religious writings of the world.

Speaking of prophecy, the prophet Isaiah noted: "I declared them (prophecies) to you long ago, before they took place I proclaimed them to you, lest you should say, 'My idol has done them...'" (Isaiah 48:5). God uses prophecy to declare that He is the author of all that is good. He is in control, He has a plan for the future, and nothing takes Him by surprise. Noted below are a few prophetic verses which provide insight regarding what to expect in the last days.

### Key Verses

- ➔ "But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book UNTIL the time of the end...many shall run to and fro but] knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4). *This verse indicates that the ability to understand the meaning of the more difficult Bible prophecies will increase in the last days.*
- ➔ "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 2:28-31). *This verse indicates that God will provide insight to His moving in the last days via dreams and visions. Non-clergy members will receive these visions.*

## A syllabus of prophetic language

The language of prophecy: The language of the Old Testament is Hebrew. Therefore, it is essential to interpret Old Testament prophecies in light of ancient Hebrew culture. For example, in our culture, someone might say, “After I watch the Hawks and 49ers on the 60” plasma, I’m going to drive the Ford to SeaTac then catch the Red Eye to the Windy City. Most today would have little difficulty understanding that sentence. However, if we went back in time just 100 years the sentence would not make sense. Remember, Bible prophecies are more than 2000 years old, and are presented in a different cultural context. Therefore, interpreting prophetic words and phrases must be done with great care. A few common words with uncommon meanings follow.

- Days = often equal years.
- Week = a week of years or 7 years.
- Horn = often represents power.
- Biblical years = 360 days (the ancient calendar followed a lunar cycle).
- Animals can be used to represent kings and kingdoms.
- Animals with wings can be used to indicate swiftness.
- Multiple eyes can indicate all-seeing (four can indicate seeing throughout the four points of the compass).
- Wind = can indicate a war or a unique working or moving of God.
- Water = can indicate life or cleansing; it can also represent judgment.
- Oil = can be a symbol of blessing.
- Virgin = often signifies purity.
- Prostitute/harlot = unfaithful or false church.
- Yeast = often represents sin.

- ➔ The numbers 3, 7, 10, 12, 40, 70, 120, 1000, 144,000 have spiritual (and symbolic) importance.
- ➔ The number 1000 was considered perfect and uncountable.
- ➔ A generation = 40, 70 or 80 years (depending upon the verse or specific context).
- ➔ Fire and various signs in the heavens warn of or announce divine judgment.
- ➔ End days/Last days/End times = the period from Pentecost to the end of the Great Tribulation.
- ➔ Birth Pangs = The end of the Last Days to the beginning of the Tribulation period. During this period 'troubles' on the earth will intensify.
- ➔ The Rapture = A catching-up and rescue of believers in Christ prior to the outpouring of God's wrath profiled in the book of Revelation.
- ➔ The Tribulation = The last 7 years.
- ➔ The Great Tribulation = The last 3 ½ years.
- ➔ The Millennial reign = Jesus' final reign on earth (understood as a literal period of 1000 years)..

## THE HEBREW FESTIVALS AND PROPHECY

he Jewish Festivals have a prophetic element. The Passover Festival is linked to the Cross, the Feast of First Fruits is linked to the resurrection, the Feast of Pentecost is linked to the giving of the Spirit and birth of the New Testament Church, etc. The spring Festivals are linked to Jesus' first coming. The three fall Festivals are linked to the Lord's second coming. The commandment to annually celebrate seven Festivals was given by God, through Moses, more than 1400 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The commandment predates Israel's entering the Promised Land and the age of Judges or Kings. The ancient Hebrews saw in them great cultural and spiritual significance—but do they have prophetic significance? Read on to learn how the Hebrew Festival calendar points to what Jesus did 2000 years ago and what He will do in the future, and how the Hebrew calendar greatly influenced recent predictions of the Lord's return in the fall of 2015 and 2017.

### **The structure of the Hebrew language**

The Hebrew language has a poetic element—it is rich in imagery and word-pictures. For example, many of the names for God in the Old Testament have ties to stories and special events. Jehovah Jireh (God is the provider) is one such example. That title has ties to the story of God providing a substitute sacrifice for Abraham as he was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

The word, provider is typically a verb—it is something someone does. However, in the Hebrew cultural context, it is a blend of a verb and a proper noun—it is something God does, and it is who He is. The point here is that in Hebrew culture, certain words, numbers, and even celebrations have deep spiritual meaning. As such, Festivals and Feasts have profound implications in Jewish culture and end times prophecy.

## Signs in the heavens

God told the ancients that the sun and moon were for light and warmth, for direction, **“and to set boundaries for times and seasons”** (Genesis 1:14). In time humanity would learn about the earth’s tilt, the speed of the earth’s rotation, the path of earth’s orbit, the vernal equinox, lunar gravitational impact on tides, and how all these things link to the sun and moon—the ‘lights in the...sky.’ Not only are the sun and moon linked to the division of days, months and years, but also to ‘sacred times.’ In the days of Moses, Festivals were established and linked to the lunar cycle. These Festivals were not simple community gatherings or meals—they were ‘sacred’ religious celebrations of great importance.

## The origin and meaning of the Festivals

As mentioned above, the Festivals were established by God in the days of Moses. About one year after the Hebrews left Egypt, God gave instructions regarding the need to observe seven annual Festivals—four in the spring and three in the fall. In the book of Leviticus we read:

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***“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.’” Leviticus 23:1-2***

In the writings of Moses, we see a tie between new moons and Festival celebrations. The celebrations were to be reminders of the great things God had done and also to foreshadow the great things God would do in the future. For example, in Leviticus 23:4-5 we read:

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***“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.”***

Here we see that the Festival of Passover commemorates how in the days of Moses and tenth plague, judgment and death **passed-over** those who had the blood of an unblemished lamb over the door to their home. Passover then, commemorated how lamb's blood and God's grace provided salvation for Moses and the Hebrew people. However, this Festival also (prophetically) foreshadowed the great work and sacrifice of the Jesus, whom John called the Lamb of God—and how His blood and grace provides the hope of salvation for all who believe.

Note that the words Feast and Festival are synonyms. Note also that the word "**Feast**" does not mean food. The Hebrew word for feast is "Moed" and means an **appointment** (mow`ed = **an appointment or fixed time**). These Festivals were called Holy "**Convocations,**" which in the Hebrew is "Miqura" which means, an "**assembly**" but also implies a "**dress rehearsal.**" That is, these Festivals were a type of dress rehearsal or time to prepare (prophetically) for a great working of God in the future.

**The Festivals point to the fulfillment of specific prophecies.** Let me not how the spring Festivals are associated with prophetic fulfillment.

1. **The Passover Festival** (Lev. 23:5) points to the Messiah being our Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7) which makes possible the forgiveness of our sins and redemption. It was the shedding of His blood on Calvary that makes salvation possible, just as the blood of unblemished lambs saved the ancient Hebrews in the days of Moses. Note that the crucifixion of Jesus took place on the day of preparation for the Passover and that He died at the same hour (3:00 pm) lambs were being sacrificed for the Passover meal that evening (John 19:14). Jesus' death on the cross was the prophetic fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover Festival.
2. **The Festival of Unleavened Bread** (Lev. 23:6) pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a symbol of sin). Being sinless, He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of the Passover Feast. He was hidden (in the tomb), as the center piece of unleavened bread is hidden during the Passover celebration. During the Passover meal, the center of unleavened bread is hidden and later returned

to the table as participants celebrate. Jesus, the center piece of the Trinity, returned (rose again) on the third day in fulfillment of the Scripture.

3. **The Festival of First Fruits** (Lev. 23:10) was a happy Festival which celebrated the first reaping of the spring harvest. It also pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the joyful "first fruit" of a new harvest—the new covenant of grace and redemption. Jesus was resurrected on the day of First Fruits, which is one of the reasons the Apostle Paul refers to Jesus in 1 Cor. 15:20 as the "first fruits from the dead."
4. **The Festival of Weeks or Pentecost** (Lev.23:16) occurs fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Festival was a time to celebrate new beginnings (originally marking the giving of the law to Moses). The gift of the Holy Spirit was given 50 days after the crucifixion (Acts 2). This event marked the beginning of the Church Age and the new covenant of grace. The book of Acts notes that on this day, the disciples began to speak in tongues, and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's sermon.

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*Prophetic elements in these first four [spring] Festivals were fulfilled during Jesus' first coming, 2000 years ago. Many suggest that prophetic elements associated with the three fall Festivals (below) will be fulfilled at the Lord's second coming.*

5. **The Festival of Trumpets** (Leviticus 23:24) is the first of the fall Feasts. It begins with the new moon and the blowing of a trumpet. Many see the parallel between this Old Testament celebration and trumpet sound, and the joyous celebration and trumpet sound associated with the return of Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:52). The Old Testament Festival announced the "Days Of Awe" and ended with the Day of Atonement and the beginning of a new year. Many see parallels to this Festival's trumpet call and the Rapture, the "Days of Awe" and the years of Tribulation," and the conclusion of the Festival and beginning of the new year with the 'glorious appearing' and Christ making 'all things new.'
6. **The Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 23:27). This Festival followed the 'Days of Awe' and celebrates being cleansed, forgiven and invited to begin anew in the new year. Many believe this Old Testament Festival prophetically

points to the day of the Second Coming of Jesus (which will follow the seven-year tribulation period). On this day the Jewish remnant will “look upon Him whom they have pierced,” and receive Jesus as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:1-6, 25-36).

7. **The Festival of Tabernacles or Booths** (Leviticus 23:34). This Old Testament Festival commemorated how God journeyed with them through the wilderness in the days of Moses. Many believe this Feast points to the Lord’s promise that He will once again “tabernacle” with His people (i.e., the Millennial reign of Christ) when He returns to reign over all the world (Micah 4:1-7).

## WHY SOME BELIEVE THE TIMING OF THE SECOND COMING WILL BE IN THE FALL

- ➔ As noted in this section, the Festivals seem to foreshadow the future working of the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled the spring festivals during His first coming. Many believe He will fulfill the fall Festivals at His second coming. This will include the rapture, the commencement of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ.
- ➔ The fall festivals embody the tone of judgment and newness, which complements the tone of eschatological prophecies.
- ➔ The fall Festivals have associations to trumpets, wonders in the heavens, judgment, and the phrases, a *thief in the night* and *no one knows the day or the hour*, all of which have links to the second coming of the Messiah.
  - » The *thief in the night* phrase has ties to the Temple Priest who, like a thief in the night, would sometimes check on those ordered to stand watch at night to sight and announce (with a trumpet blast) the new moon. The arrival of the new moon in the fall had a 48-hour window. The ancients did not know on which day the new moon would arrive, so temple officials would stand watch and wait—sometimes for two days. Temple officials were reprimanded by the High Priest if caught

asleep at their post. Periodically the High Priest would check on them slyly as a thief in the night). Sighting of the new moon would be signaled by a trumpet blast and would mark the beginning of the fall festival of Trumpets.

- » The *no one knows the day or the hour* phrase has ties to the ancient custom of the bride’s father setting the wedding date and time. 2000 years ago, if, a few months before the wedding, someone asked a bride, “What day and time the wedding event would occur?” The bride would respond, ‘Only the father knows—no one knows the day or the hour.’ This phrase became linked to the return of Christ and the fall Festival of Trumpets because Jesus presents himself as the Groom who will one day come for his bride (the church) at a time which no one knows.

## **WHY SOME LOOKED AT THE FALL OF 2015 AS BEING SIGNIFICANT**

A number of books (written between 2010 and 2015) speculated that the Lord would return in fall of 2015. Noted below are some of the reasons that prompted this supposition:

- ➔ Fall 2015 coincided with the Hebrew Year of Jubilee (Jesus’ ministry began in the Year of Jubilee).
- ➔ Fall 2015 marked the beginning of a Shemitah cycle—a seven-year cycle associated with blessings for the faithful and judgment for those who have forsaken the Lord. The last day of the Shemitah cycle for 2015 was Elul 29 (September 13th), the day of a solar eclipse.
- ➔ The Fall 2015 Festival of Trumpets marked the end of a 49 Hebrew Year cycle (7 cycles of 360-day years) from June 7, 1967, the day Israel gained control of Jerusalem, to 2015’s Festival of Trumpets.
- ➔ Fall 2015 marked the end of a Lunar Tetrad (4 Blood Moons—each falling on the days of significant Hebrew Festivals).
  - » The rarest form of a solar eclipse (Total and Annular eclipse—Class 3) preceded the Lunar Tetrads. The next Total and Annular eclipse will

take place in 2172.

- » Some previous Lunar Tetrads seem to have ties to significant happenings (relative to Israel or the Hebrews).
- ➔ In 1733, Sir Isaac Newton, using the writings of Daniel and the Hebrew tradition of the Cycle of Jubilees, wrote that the tribulation would begin in the fall of 2015 (and also noted 2060 as a possible date).
- ➔ In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Judah Ben Samuel predicted the number of years the Ottoman empire would control Jerusalem, the period between the Ottoman loss of control of Jerusalem and the city falling again under Hebrew control, and the coming of the Messiah (which he predicted would be the fall of 2015).
- ➔ The 12<sup>th</sup> century Bishop Malachy is said to have been given a vision that there would be 112 more Popes and that the last Pope's would be evil. The current Pope Francis is the 112<sup>th</sup> Pope.
- ➔ About 100 years ago, three young girls (in Fatima, Portugal) said they received visions regarding apostasy and God's judgment. Some suggest the visions concern Francis, the 112<sup>th</sup> Pope.
- ➔ There was an increase in the posting of dreams and visions regarding the rapture and coming divine judgments.

## **WHY SOME LOOKED TO THE FALL OF 2017 AS BEING PROPHETICALLY SIGNIFICANT**

- ➔ Some suggest that the Hebrew cycle of Jubilees coincides with the fall of 2017, rather than the fall of 2015, as most suppose.
- ➔ Preceding the fall Festivals of 2017 was a solar eclipse.
- ➔ Scientists recorded a marked increase in the number of annual fireballs, earthquakes, and volcanic activities since 2015.
- ➔ Many suggest that Revelation 12 references a particular and significant celestial formation. The timing of this rare celestial formation was associated with the timing of the Feast of Trumpets (September 23, 2017). The Revelation 12 text and a profile of the celestial formation follow.

*“And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.<sup>2</sup> She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.<sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.<sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and his throne,<sup>6</sup> and the woman fled into the wilderness... where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.” Revelation 12:1-6*

### **The celestial alignment (Interpretation possibilities)**

**Some suggest it tells a story.** The protagonist is a sun-clothed woman (God’s people). The antagonist is a dragon (the devil). The hero is the woman’s child, representing Israel and the Messiah. Other players move on and off the stage— noting that though Satan constantly rages against God, the Lord will prevail.

#### **➔ The setting (understanding the text by looking BACK in time)**

- » The woman had a child (Jesus).
- » Satan, the dragon, sought to destroy the child (perhaps a reference to Herod’s order to kill infant boys in Bethlehem).
- » The woman flees to safety (perhaps a reference to Joseph, Mary and Jesus’ flight to safety in Egypt).
- » **The war in heaven is perhaps a reference to the circumstances surrounding the fall of Satan.** “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back...” Revelation 12:7

➔ **The setting (understanding the text looking FORWARD in time)**

- » The child is the Church.
- » Satan, the dragon, seeks to destroy the child. His effort intensifies during the Tribulation period.
- » The woman flees to safety and is kept safe for 1260 days (perhaps a reference to God's protection on His remnant during the last half of the Tribulation period, 1260 days).

### **Summary**

Many focus on trying to determine exactly when the Lord will return. However, the better course of action is to focus on being ready for His return. The first and best step to prepare for His coming is to receive Jesus as Lord and commit to making Him the Lord of your life. Scripture notes, "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns." Matthew 24:44-46

*Note: Links to literature and a video teaching on the topic of salvation and being spiritual prepared for the return of Jesus are provided in the appendix of this book.*



**We are to focus on the WHO more than the WHEN  
(See Acts 1:7-8)**

## **MESSIANIC PROPHECIES**

Prophecies concerning the Messiah make up the largest category of biblical prophecy. These prophecies were given so that individuals would have hope, would recognize the Messiah when He came, and would trust the integrity of God's Word. The fulfillment of these prophecies affirm that Scripture is true, and that what God has promised He can bring about.

Some have suggested that 2000 years ago, a group familiar with Messianic prophecies sought to manufacture a Messiah to give hope to the oppressed nation of Israel. The story is that to this end, they worked with Joseph to help him travel with Mary to Bethlehem and then to Egypt, they helped to establish Jesus' ministry in Galilee, staged many of His purported miracles, faked His death on the cross, resuscitated Him and circulated reports of His resurrection.

This supposition is designed to disparage the integrity of Scripture and deny the deity of Christ. It also supposes that individuals could somehow orchestrate the fulfillment of the scores of precise prophecies (many of which are far beyond the ability to control). The truth is, it takes more faith to believe that humans could orchestrate the fulfillment of more than a hundred Messianic prophecies than it does to believe that God was at work and these prophecies were fulfilled as part of the unfolding of His perfect plan.

As stated in a previous section, Jesus fulfilled more than 125 general prophecies. The probability of Jesus fulfilling just eight prophecies picked at random is approximately 1 in  $10^{17}$ . This number approximates the odds of blindly picking the one marked silver dollar mixed in with coins two feet deep in an area the size of the state of Texas. The probability of Jesus fulfilling just 48 of the 125 specific prophecies he fulfilled is 1 in  $10^{157}$  (a number similar to the number of atoms in the universe). A profile of a few dozen Messianic prophecies follow.

## A PARTIAL LIST OF MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

	<b>THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY</b>	<b>OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE</b>	<b>NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT</b>
1.	The Messiah would be born of a virgin	Genesis 3:15, Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:20-23; Gal. 4:4; Luke 1:26-31
2.	The Messiah would come from the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David	Gen. 12:3, 17:19, 21:12, 22:18, 49:10, Num. 24:17; 2 Sam. 7:12-13 Genesis 22:18	Matt. 1:1-2; Luke 1:32-33, 3:33-34; Rom. 1:3, 9:5; Heb. 7:14
3.	The Messiah would flee to Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matt. 2:14-15
4.	A massacre of children would accompany the Messiah's birth	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
5.	A messenger would prepare the way for Messiah	Isaiah 40:3-5	Luke 3:3-6
6.	The Messiah would be despised and rejected by his own people	Psalm 69:8 Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11 John 7:5
7.	The Messiah would be declared the Son of God	Psalm 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17
8.	The Messiah would be a Nazarene	Isaiah 11:1	Matthew 2:23
9.	The Messiah would minister in the region of Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
10.	The Messiah would speak in parables	Psalm 78:2-4 Isaiah 6:9-10	Matthew 13:10-15, 34-35
11.	Messiah would be sent to heal the brokenhearted	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
12.	The Messiah would be praised by children	Psalm 8:2	Matthew 21:16
13.	The Messiah betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Psalm 41:9 Zechariah 11:12-13	Luke 22:47-48 Matthew 26:14-16

	<b>THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY</b>	<b>OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE</b>	<b>NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT</b>
14.	The Messiah would be falsely accused	Psalms 35:11	Mark 14:57-58
15.	The Messiah would be silent before his accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
16.	The Messiah would be struck	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
17.	The Messiah would be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38 Mark 15:27-28
18.	The Messiah would be given vinegar to drink	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34 John 19:28-30
19.	The Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced	Psalms 22:16 Zechariah 12:10	John 20:25-27
20.	Soldiers would gamble for Messiah's garments	Psalms 22:18	Luke 23:34 Matthew 27:35-36
21.	The Messiah's bones would not be broken	Exodus 12:46 Psalms 34:20	John 19:33-36
22.	Soldiers would pierce the Messiah's side	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
23.	The Messiah would be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
24.	The Messiah would resurrect from the dead	Psalms 16:10 Psalms 49:15	Matt. 28:2-7 Acts 2:22-32
25.	The Messiah would ascend to heaven	Psalms 24:7-10	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:51
26.	The Messiah would be a sacrifice for sin.	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8

### **SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY**

*100 Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus: Messianic Prophecies Made Before the Birth of Christ*  
by Rose Publishing; *Book of Bible Lists* by H.L. Willmington;  
NKJV Study Bible; Life Application Study Bible.



**We never carry our cross alone  
(See Matthew 11:28-30)**

## **PROPHECIES CONCERNING ISRAEL**

### **Israel's First Captivity and Return**

About 2000 years before the birth of Jesus, on the 14th day of Nisan (the future day of Passover), the Lord made a covenant with Abraham concerning the Promised Land. God foretold that Abraham's descendants would be in affliction and bondage for four centuries. *"And he said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years"* (Genesis 15:13).

- ➔ Exodus 12 and Galatians 3 notes how this prophecy was fulfilled. *"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt"* (Exodus 12:40-41).
- ➔ *"On Passover, 430 years later, the captivity ended."* (Galatians 3:17)

### **Israel's Second Captivity and Return**

Between 900 and 606 B.C., many of the kings of Israel rebelled against God and led their people to turn to idol worship despite God's explicit warnings through His prophets. Because of willful disobedience, the ten northern tribes of Israel were conquered by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6). Jeremiah prophesied that the Kingdom of Judah would also be invaded and the people displaced (for precisely 70 years) because of their sins. *"And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years"* (Jeremiah 25:11). Precisely 70 years after their exile, on the first day of Nisan, 536 B.C. (just as Jeremiah had prophesied), King

Cyrus of Persia released the Jews. Despite the royal permission, only a small remnant of the Jews left Babylon and returned to Israel. The vast majority never returned, and chose to live throughout the Persian empire.

### The Third Displacement

The Bible contains numerous prophecies regarding a final return of exiles to the Promised Land in the “last days.” The prophet Ezekiel received a vision concerning the final return of his people.

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*“This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou also upon thy **left side**, and lay the iniquity of the **house of Israel** upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, **three hundred and ninety days**: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy **right side**, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of **Judah forty days**: I have appointed thee each day for a year.” (Ezekiel 4:3-6).*

#### An analysis of the prophecy is presented below:

- ➔ Ezekiel declared that each day represents one biblical year.
- ➔ Israel, therefore, would be punished (kept from being a nation) for 430 years (390 years plus 40 years).
- ➔ At the end of 70 years of captivity, in Nisan of 536 BC, a small remnant of the house of Judah returned to Jerusalem to fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11.
- ➔ The vast majority of Jews remained in the Persian Empire as colonists. As a whole, the nation of Israel was viewed as being unfaithful to the Lord.

#### Interpreting the Ezekiel 4 Prophecy

- ➔ When one deducts the 70 years of captivity (in Babylon) that ended in Nisan 536 BC, from Ezekiel’s 430 years of punishment, Israel is still left

with 360 years of further **captivity** to serve (or better said, 360 years of not being an independent nation). However, 360 years later, Israel was still not a sovereign and independent nation.

- ➔ The solution to this mystery is found in Leviticus 26. There the Lord established promises and punishments based on obedience and disobedience. God told Israel four times in this passage that if, after being punished for her sins, Israel would not repent, the punishments previously specified would be **multiplied by seven**. *“And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins”* (Leviticus 26:18; also Leviticus 26:21, 23-24, 27-28). As the Israelites did not repent, the punishment previously promised (360 years) was now multiplied seven times (360 years x 7 = 2,520 biblical years). Therefore, Israel would become a sovereign and independent nation only after 2,520 biblical years from the time of the exile and fall of the government of Israel in 606 BC.

#### ➔ **Interpreting the prophecy**

- » **Biblical Years:** The Hebrews of old followed a lunar calendar and each year was 360 days. The 70-year Babylonian captivity (Jer. 25:11) ended in the spring of 536 BC (1<sup>st</sup> Nisan). Our calculations begin at this date.
- » The period of worldwide captivity/displacement would last 2,520 years (as reckoned by the ancient Hebrews a lunar calendar).
- » 2520 biblical years = 907,200 days.
- » The next step is to add 907,200 days from the day Israel returned from exile (536 BC).
- » Make the adjustment for the (lack of) year 0.
- » Make an adjustment for the changes made when the world moved to the Gregorian Calendar (1582).

**THE CALCULATIONS BRING YOU TO  
MAY 14TH 1948—THE DAY THAT ISRAEL WAS  
REESTABLISHED AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION.**

**Note that a little more than 19 years after the surrender of the Hebrew government (606 BC), Jerusalem was destroyed by the forces of Nebuchadnezzar (587 BC).**

### By following the same process noted above...

- ➔ Add 907,200 days from the day Israel returned from exile (536 BC).
- ➔ Make an adjustment for the year 0.
- ➔ Make an adjustment for the move to the Gregorian Calendar (in 1582).
- ➔ Add the number of days between the fall of the government and the fall of Jerusalem, to the day that Israel became a nation in 1948 = June 7, 1967.

## THIS IS THE DAY THAT ISRAEL REGAINED CONTROL OF JERUSALEM IN THE 6 DAY WAR.

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*PROPHECY 1 "And this whole land shall be a desolation and astonishment. And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Jer. 25:11*

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*PROPHECY 2 "Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, 390 days so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side. Then you shall bear the iniquity of...Judah for 40 days. I have laid on you a day for each year." Ezek. 4:4-6*

### NEW TESTAMENT ERA PROPHECIES REGARDING ISRAEL

Noted in this section is a sampling of New Testament era prophecies about Israel and the Hebrew people. These prophecies were fulfilled between 70 A.D. and the present. Note: 'Birth Pains' and Tribulation period prophecies are profiled in another section.

- ➔ **The destruction Temple:** The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 AD. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword...Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24, Luke 19:43-44.

- ➔ **The scattering of the Jews:** This happened as a result of a series of failed uprisings against the Romans to gain independence. "...And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them..." Ezek. 36:17-24.
- ➔ **The Hebrews will return to the land of Israel:** The exodus back to Israel began in 1948, and is happening in great numbers even now. "This is what the Lord says: 'I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem...'" Zech. 8:7-8
- ➔ **The cities of Israel will be rebuilt:** The rebuilding of Israel these last 70 years has been amazing. Israel leads the region in agriculture, economy, education, and medical research. "I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God." Amos 9:14-15
- ➔ **Israel will become a nation in a day:** This very strange prophecy was fulfilled when, by UN Charter, Israel became a sovereign and independent nation by the stroke of a pen in May 1948. "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children." Isaiah 66:7-8
- ➔ **The Hebrew language will return to Israel:** Many do not recognize that because the Jews were scattered and Israel was occupied by various nations through the centuries, Hebrew was not the primary language in the land of Israel for more than 1000 years. Yet, in fulfillment of this prophecy, it is today. Note: Israel is the only nation in the world to be displaced for more than 1000 years and then reestablish as a nation. "For then I will return to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him..." Zeph. 3:9 (KJV)
- ➔ **Israel will prosper:** It is clear that Israel's prosperity these last 50-70 years is disproportionate to that of the nations which surround her (Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Syria, etc.). This is not because Israel has received some financial



## PROPHECIES PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH AGE

More than 100 Bible prophecies address the Church Age and 21st-century Church. This section provides a general summary of these prophecies, and will assist the reader in gaining insight into what will take place in the Church, and in the world, in the days to come. For additional information, please see our study on the Lord's message to the seven churches in the book of Revelation on the [IAmAWatchman.com](http://IAmAWatchman.com) website.

- ➔ **Jesus Christ will establish the Church and serve as the Head and Cornerstone:** (Matthew 16:18 / 1 Peter 2:6). The fulfillment of this prophecy took place at Pentecost – 50 days after the crucifixion.
- ➔ **Every nation will hear the Gospel message:** *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* (Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20). The fulfillment of this prophecy is expected to be fulfilled soon.
- ➔ **False prophets will lead many astray:** (2 Peter. 2:1-2). This prophecy is in the process of being fulfilled. The last days will see an increase in the number and influence of false teachers.
- ➔ **Violence will increase:** The Bible notes that war, crime, and violence will significantly increase during the final decades before the commencement of the Tribulation period (Luke 17:26; Genesis 6:11-13). In the United States, violent crime has increased nearly 500% since 1960. Fifty years ago abortion was illegal in most countries. Today abortion is legal in many countries, and more than 50 million children each year. The news seems saturated with reports of terror and violence, but the worst is yet to be.
- ➔ **Knowledge will increase:** This is not a reference to technological, scientific or medical advances, it is a reference to an increase in understanding of Scripture and prophetic references (Daniel 12:4). It is interesting to note that since the year 2000, there has been a marked increase in the development of prophecy-related books and ministries.

- ➔ **Disease (pestilences) will increase:** (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:8). Through the centuries there have been plagues—but in recent decades there has been a marked increase in unusual and exotic deadly diseases.
- ➔ **There will be “signs and wonders” in the heavens:** (Luke 21:11, 26; Revelation 6:12). These may include (but not be limited to) red or blood moons, solar eclipses, comets, unusual sun activity, and uncommon celestial formations.
- ➔ **Famines will increase:** (Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:5-8). In recent years, at any given time approximately 20 million people are on the brink of starvation.
- ➔ **A global economic system will exist:** (Revelation 13:16-17). Global financial systems and economic alliances are fragile. That fact, and advancing technology, make moving to a new economic system (a cashless society) where all purchases can be monitored, a not-too-distant-future possibility.
- ➔ **The nations surrounding Israel will conspire against them and attack** (Psalm 83:4-8; Zechariah 12:2). Today, Israel is surrounded by hostile nations and finds little support in the United Nations organization.
- ➔ **Jerusalem will be a “burdensome stone” and “cup of trembling:”** (Zech. 12:2-3). Since 1967, issues regarding the partition of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount have been a source of tension and regional conflict.
- ➔ **God will return Jerusalem to the Jews:** (Zech. 12:3). Israel regained control over Jerusalem after the 1967 war (a miraculous victory). However, rightful control over this city is in dispute. The United Nations, the Vatican, and many world leaders want to make Jerusalem an international city. The Palestinians want Jerusalem as their capital city. However, God says that the city is His and He has given it to the Jews forever (Gen. 15:18; Lev. 25:23; 2 Chron. 6:6). All who burden themselves with it will be “cut in pieces.” Despite God’s warning, UN Resolution 476 states that Israel’s claims to Jerusalem are null and void, and in May of 2017, UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) stated that Israel has no historic right to the Temple Mount area.
- ➔ **The destruction of Damascus:** Damascus will lie in ruins and be rendered uninhabitable (Isaiah 17:1, 14; Jeremiah 49:23-27; Amos 1:3-5; Zechariah 9:1-8). Damascus is the capital of Syria, and Syria is hostile to Israel and heavily supported by Russia and Iran. The destruction of this city will be a significant international event.

- ➔ **Great earthquakes:** There will be an increase in the number of earthquakes “in diverse” (unusual) places (Luke 21:11; Isaiah 24:19-20; Revelation 6:12-14; 16:18-20). Experts note that in the last 50 years, the number of earthquakes each year has remained relatively constant, but the number of higher magnitude earthquakes has increased substantially.
- ➔ **Narcissism:** Humanity will become increasingly materialistic, selfish and lovers of pleasure (2 Timothy 3:1-5). It not difficult to see that in many (perhaps most) cultures, selfishness, self-centeredness, and feelings of entitlement are on the rise.
- ➔ **A lack of respect for authority:** Youth will become increasingly rebellious (2 Timothy 3:2-3; Mark 13:12). Anger, crime, the school drop-out rate, the creation of safe zones, protests and counter-culture demonstrations point to social-shifts that are moving the world toward the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- ➔ **Persecution:** Jesus said Christians “would be hated for His name’s sake” (Luke 21:17; Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4). Studies show that Christians are the #1 persecuted people-group in the world. Open Doors ministry reports that on average, more than 215 million people face extreme persecution for their faith every day. The current scope of persecution surpasses the persecution Christians experienced during the dark days of the Roman Empire.
- ➔ **Sexual confusion and homosexuality:** Jesus warned that the last days would be like the days of Lot (Luke 17:28-30). Since 1960, there has been a profound shift regarding homosexuality in many parts of the world. The behavior has moved from being viewed as sinful and shameful, to being commended and lauded. It is common now for politicians and the media to endorse and profile the behavior. Teachers seek to shape the thinking of today’s youth by presenting the behavior as a new normal. The behavior has never been, and will never be acceptable to God, but prophecy notes that the world will attempt to make it seem so in the last days.
- ➔ **Apostasy in the Church:** Apostasy will occur before the Antichrist is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Prophecy notes that in the last days the Church will question and move away from foundational teachings. In recent decades a number of ‘mainline’ denominations have argued (and some have split) because church leadership cannot agree on core teachings

such as: Is hell to be understood literally or figuratively? Is the Bible true and to be understood literally? Was Jesus divine? Did Jesus indeed die on the cross? Is homosexuality a sin? Is there a Heaven? etc. Increasingly, experience-based Christianity is replacing the Bible as the standard for saving faith.

- ➔ The ecumenical movement is striving for unity at the expense of truth. In the name of tolerance Christ's absolutes are rejected as irrelevant. This trend will continue and escalate until the midpoint of the tribulation period when there will be a forced One-World (compromised) religion (Rev. 13, 17).

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*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*  
**2 Peter 3:9**

## **UPCOMING CONFLICTS NOT MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Many are concerned about what will happen in the last days. The book of Revelation provides insight into what will happen during the last seven years (known as the Tribulation period), but the question remains: Does the Bible provide any insight into what will happen before the Antichrist comes to power and the Tribulation begins? The answer is, 'Yes.' This section notes several prophetic events (not specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation) that could precede the commencement of the Tribulation period. These prophetic events include:

- ➔ The expansion of the borders of Israel (to include much of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan).
- ➔ Israel will be attacked by the ten nations that are near to its borders.
- ➔ The capital of Syria (Damascus) will be attacked and rendered uninhabitable.
- ➔ There will be a preemptive strike by Israel against Elam (an area of Iran).
- ➔ A coalition of armies from distant lands will attack Israel (an engagement known as the Gog/Magog war).

### **Will the borders of Israel be expanded?**

Genesis 15:18-21 (and Ezekiel 47-48) records God's promise that the borders of Israel will be much larger than they were at their maximum extent almost 3000 years ago, and much greater than they are today. Consider what God says in Genesis 15.

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***“On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.’” (Genesis 15:18-21)***

Though the above prophecy seems rather specific, some question whether or not the prophecy is to be understood literally, meaning that there may be a Hebrew influence in these lands, but not that Israel would control them. Others believe that an expansion of Israel's borders will happen, but only during the Millennial Kingdom which will take place after the Tribulation period (see teaching link on this topic in the appendix of this book).

However, the Bible notes that Israel will feel secure, and be a land of unwallled villages before the last half of the Tribulation period begins. Those holding a more literal view of the Genesis 15 text believe that only an Israel with significantly expanded borders would feel a level security sufficient to warrant the removal of their defensive walls. If this is true, then the borders of Israel can be expanded before the formal arrival of the Antichrist and the commencement of the Tribulation period.

### **Will the borders of Israel expand as a result of war?**

It may be that boundaries will change after Israel signs the Peace Agreement Covenant brokered by the Antichrist. However, it is probable that the conflict mentioned in Psalm 83 precipitates the beginning of a series of battles that will lead to the expansion of Israel's borders. The first conflict mentioned in Psalm 83 is sometimes called the Psalm 83 war.

### **THE PSALM 83 WAR**

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*“O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God. See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. “Come,” they say, “let us destroy them as a nation so that Israel’s name is remembered no more.” With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot’s descendants. Do to them as you did to Midian...Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like chaff*

*before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze...Cover their faces with shame, Lord, so that they will seek your name.*

Psalm 83 indicates that the nations surrounding Israel will conspire and launch a preemptive attack. As the text is ore than 2600 years old, the nations that attack Israel are noted by ancient designations. Below is a listing of contemporary identifications.

- ➔ Tents of Edom = [descendants of Esau] Palestinian Refugees and Southern Jordanians
- ➔ Ishmaelites = Saudi Arabians
- ➔ Moab = Palestinian Refugees and Central Jordanians
- ➔ Hagrites = Egyptians
- ➔ Gebal = Northern Lebanese
- ➔ Amalek = Arabs South of Israel
- ➔ Ammon = Palestinian Refugees and Northern Jordanians
- ➔ Philistia = Palestinian Refugees and Hamas of Gaza Strip
- ➔ Inhabitants of Tyre = Hezbollah and Southern Lebanese
- ➔ Assyria = Syrians and perhaps Northern Iraqis
- ➔ Children of Lot = Moab and Ammon

Some teach that Psalm 83 is not prophetic at all, but that it was written late in history and refers to battles noted in 2 Chronicles 20. Others believe the prophecy refers to conflicts in that took place in 1949, 1969, and 1973 (when neighboring nations conspired against and attacked Israel). However, there has never been a time when ALL parties mentioned in Psalm 83 attacked Israel, and the prophecies concerning Israel's response to this attack have not been fulfilled either. These facts lead most Bible scholars to conclude that the fulfillment of the Psalm 83 prophecy is yet future.

The outcome of the Psalm 83 war is that though the nations surrounding Israel will launch a first strike, an outnumbered Israel will prevail. Most scholars believe God will be behind Israel's victory, but the victory will not be perceived (by the world) as supernatural (as it will be in the battle of Armageddon). Israel's

army will be engaged and will be victorious. It is likely that this war leads to, or includes, the next conflict: war with Syria and the destruction of Damascus.

### **War with Syria and the destruction of Damascus**

Isaiah 17 and Jeremiah 49:23-27 reference a war in Syria and the destruction of Damascus.

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*“See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. The cities of Aroer will be deserted...The fortified city will disappear...In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation. You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants...yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain.” (Isaiah 17:1-5)*

Some believe this prophecy is figurative and that past battles involving Damascus fulfill this prophecy. However, Damascus is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world—it has never been rendered uninhabitable, and therefore the prophecy remains unfulfilled. Isaiah notes that Damascus will be left barren, uninhabited and associated with disease and incurable pain. These references lead many to believe that the battle for Damascus will involve chemical or nuclear warfare. Further, some suggest that the use of conventional weapons inadvertently hitting a stockpile of chemical weapons (which Syria is known to have) could account for the fulfillment of the Isaiah 17 prophecy. The next conflict pertains to an ancient (and current) enemy of Israel, Elam.

### **A decisive strike on the land of Elam**

Jeremiah 49 includes a notable prophecy regarding Israel striking a country hundreds of miles from its borders.

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***<sup>35</sup> This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might.***

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***<sup>36</sup> ...I will scatter them to the four winds, and there will not be a nation where Elam's exiles do not go. I will shatter Elam before their foes, before those who want to kill them; I will bring disaster on them..."***

To understand this prophecy, one must first discern where the land of Elam is. Elam is an ancient designation for a region in west-central Iran. Interestingly, the location of ancient Elam is currently where Iranian nuclear and missile development facilities are based.

Jeremiah 49 notes that Elam will threaten Israel, but that Israel will address that threat via a preemptive strike, which removes their "bows...the mainstay of their strength."

Some ask why the battle of Armageddon principles does not include Elam or Persia. Perhaps it is because the battle of Armageddon likely takes place after the event noted above, and Israel has mitigated their influence and potential for war.

### **The Gog/Magog conflict**

Ezekiel 38-39, Psalm 83; Jeremiah 49; Matthew 24:6; Genesis 49:22-27, Joel 2:2-20, Revelation 9 and Revelation 16 reference wars that will take place in the last days. The Gog/Magog war, mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39, is one of the more prominent conflicts.

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***Ezekiel 38 <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him<sup>3</sup> and say...<sup>4</sup>I will turn you around...<sup>5</sup> Persia, Cush,***

*and Put will be with them...<sup>6</sup> also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops... 11You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people...<sup>18</sup> This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused<sup>19</sup>...There shall be a great earthquake.<sup>20</sup> ...The mountains will be overturned; the cliffs will crumble...<sup>22</sup> I will execute judgment on him...I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops...*

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*Ezekiel 39 <sup>14</sup>People will be continually employed in cleansing the land... [for] seven months...<sup>15</sup>...Anyone who sees a human bone will leave a marker beside it until the gravediggers bury it in the Valley of Hamon Gog,<sup>16</sup> near a town called Hamonah. And so they will cleanse the land.'*

The Ezekiel 38-49 passage speaks of a coalition that moves to attack Israel.

- ➔ Magog, Rosh = Russia
- ➔ Persia = Iran
- ➔ Cush = Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea
- ➔ Put = Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia
- ➔ Gomer, Meshech, and Tubal = Turkey (possibly Germany and Austria)
- ➔ Beth-Togarmah = Turkey, Armenia, and the Turkish-speaking people of Asia Minor and Central Asia

### **The outcome of this engagement**

Though vastly outnumbered, God will intervene and supernaturally thwart the attack against Israel. Israel's army will not need to fight—God will bring about complete victory. Revelation 16-19 references this battle (or series of battles).

## PROPHECIES REGARDING FOUR EVIL END TIME ENTITIES

### Evil entities in the book of Revelation

Bible prophecy notes that several evil entities will arise in the last days. These entities are not merely symbols of evil; they are evil individuals, systems or governments that Satan will work through to advance his agenda. In different ways these entities manifest Satan's rage, for he knows "his time is short" (Rev. 12:12). Read-on to learn more about who or what these evil entities are and what they are prophesied to do.

### Evil Entity #1 - The Antichrist

The Antichrist is one of the principal characters in the book of Revelation. He is evil personified. There are more than eighty references to him in Scripture—none are positive. It is true that the Antichrist will be attractive, politically savvy, and wise, but these qualities are quickly overwhelmed by his ruthlessness, and his hatred of God, His plan, and His people. The Antichrist will be a man but will be indwelt by Satan. The scope of the pain and suffering he will inflict on the world will have no equal. He is the arch-enemy of all that is good. Revelation 13 provides a poetic profile of who he is and what he does.

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*"The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.<sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.<sup>3</sup> One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole*

*world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.<sup>4</sup> People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”<sup>5</sup> The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months...<sup>7</sup> It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.<sup>8</sup> All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.”*

**The Antichrist will likely enjoy an unprecedented rise to power.** He will impress and sway world leaders by his wit, wisdom, cunning, bribery, and ability to solve global issues. He will initially be welcomed by the world and lauded for brokering a peace covenant agreement with Israel; likely bringing peace to the Middle East. His seven-year reign will soon tarnish as he reveals his true agenda and nature. By the midpoint of the Tribulation, there will be no pretenses. He will be indwelt by Satan, usurp control of all world systems, and demand to be worshipped.

War, violence, pride, vanity, and the persecution of all who refuse to worship him will be the hallmarks of his rule. His power will be absolute, and those who defy him will perish by the sword. During his reign, he will proclaim himself to be God, imbue his false prophet with the power to manifest miracles and lead many astray, and tirelessly persecute the Jewish people. Presented below are several verses which profile his nature and work.

### **The timing of his coming**

His identity will be revealed to those who know Scripture when he leads in confirming a “peace covenant with the many,” including Israel (Daniel 9:27).

### **His character and nature**

- ➊ The Antichrist will be a great deceiver. Displays of power, signs, and wonders will embolden his claim to be an agent of good (2 Thess. 2:9).

- ➔ He will be unusually wise and cunning (Daniel 8:23).
- ➔ He will prosper in everything that he does (Daniel 8:24).
- ➔ He will not regard the desire of women (Daniel 11:37).
- ➔ He will sit in the Temple of God and claim to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

### **The early part of his rule**

- ➔ The Antichrist will ascend to power on a platform of peace (Daniel 8:25).
- ➔ The Antichrist will arise from among ten kings (Daniel 7:8).
- ➔ The Antichrist will form a world government, which he will dominate (Revelation 13:1-2).

### **The latter part of his rule**

- ➔ The Antichrist will assume complete control over the world government 3 1/2 years after he confirms the covenant with Israel. He then will continue to reign for 42 months (Revelation 13:5).
- ➔ The Antichrist will wage war against God's people—culminating in the battles of Armageddon (Rev. 6-19).

### **His fate**

- ➔ During the battle of Armageddon, when Jerusalem is surrounded, outnumbered and out-gunned, Christ will come and vanquish the enemies of God. The Apostle Paul noted that Christ will consume the Antichrist, and all enemies of God with the "spirit of his mouth," which is the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
- ➔ The Antichrist will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20).
- ➔ The Antichrist will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).
- ➔ ***For additional information on the Antichrist, please refer to the link to the video teaching on this subject in the appendix of this book.***

## **Evil Entity #2 - The Beast**

There are differences of opinions regarding the identity of the Beast. The Bible references **a** Beast and **the** Beast. The Beast of Daniel 7 seems linked to an evil system or government. The Beast of Revelation 13 seems to be an

individual. Though there are a few verses which make identification of the Beast difficult, most scholars who review all biblical references to the Beast see the high correlation between the attributes of the Beast and the attributes of the Antichrist, and therefore identify the Beast as the Antichrist.

Verses which appear to differentiate the two merely speak to different aspects of Satan's plan or nature. For example, the socio-economic system of the Tribulation period is referred to as a Beast as it is vicious and evil. However, it will be the Beast that governs this global system. The attributes of the system he governs depict the nature of the Beast. The global system he governs will point to his vast authority. The beastly attributes of this system will evidence the evil forces that undergird it. The signs and wonders associated with the Beast point to the supernatural—his agenda links him to the demonic, and his attributes, which mirror that of the Antichrist, makes him one with the Antichrist. Just as there is a symbiotic relationship between the Antichrist and Satan, there seems to be a shared identity between the Beast and the Antichrist. Revelation 13 references the system of the Beast, and the work of the Beast.

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*“I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. Because of the signs...it deceived the inhabitants of earth...It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.” Revelation 13:12-18*

### **Evil Entity #3 - The False Prophet**

The false prophet, like the Beast, noted above, is a mysterious being. His work is specifically referenced in Revelation 13, 16, and 19 (though intimated elsewhere). Satan imitates the things of God (2 Corinthians 11:14-15) and during the Tribulation period, he will arrange for the building of a new Temple in Jerusalem. Through the Antichrist and False Prophet he will compel the world to worship him, and with the Antichrist and False Prophet, he will create a pseudo-trinity. Revelation 20 notes that in the end he will be judged and thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Whereas the primary work of the Beast/Antichrist will be to govern political, social, and economic systems, the primary work of the False Prophet will be to lead a corrupt religious system designed to lead the world away from acknowledging God and His Son Jesus Christ. The False Prophet will speak words which persuade, and have power to manifest signs and wonders to deceive the masses. The False Prophet will lead a global religion designed to honor Satan and the Antichrist. Many who refuse to follow the False Prophet or worship the Antichrist will die as martyrs (Revelation 14:9-12, 20:4-6).

### **Evil Entity #4 - The Woman Who Rides the Beast**

The book of Revelation references a mysterious evil entity referred to as Mystery Babylon, The Whore of Babylon, The Great Prostitute, and The Woman Who Rides The Beast. Revelation 17 describes her in detail.

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*“One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters.<sup>2</sup> With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.<sup>3</sup> ... I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.<sup>4</sup> The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand,*

*filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.<sup>5</sup> The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the great the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.<sup>6</sup> I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.<sup>7</sup> Then the angel said to me: 'Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman...<sup>8</sup> The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.<sup>9</sup> This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.<sup>10</sup> They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.<sup>11</sup> The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.<sup>12</sup> 'The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast...<sup>14</sup> They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them...<sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, 'The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.<sup>16</sup> The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.<sup>17</sup> For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose...<sup>18</sup> The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.'"*

### **What the text reveals about the *Woman Who Rides the Beast***

The Old and New Testaments reference this evil entity. She is referred to as a "mystery" because the nation or system was yet future and would be very different from other empires or nations noted in Scripture. She is referred to as a "whore" because she is unfaithful to the God she claims to love. She is referred to as a "daughter of Babylon" because she embraces many of the pagan philosophies and practices of ancient Babylon.

The many descriptive phrases for this "Woman who rides the Beast" may provide a clue to the identity of the nation or system she represents. Presented below are prophetic, descriptive phrases which to many, show the "Woman who rides the Beast" to have an association with the United States of America.

- ➔ She is noted for her architecture and skyline (Isa. 13:22).
- ➔ She is the lone or newest world power (Isaiah 47:5,8).
- ➔ She is respected and envied by the world, and yet at the same time, hated by the world (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She has a remarkable beginning (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She is a "Queen among nations" (Isaiah 47:5,7; Revelation 17:18; Isaiah 13:6).
- ➔ She is called a lady (Isaiah 47:7-9).
- ➔ She is a land quartered by mighty rivers (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She destroys her land with pollution and waste (Isaiah 14:20, 18:2, 7).
- ➔ She is a democracy—ruled by many counsels (Isa. 47:13).
- ➔ Her governmental system will break down (Isa. 47:13).
- ➔ She is known for religious confusion (Isaiah 47:12-13).
- ➔ She is a virgin nation; her lands untouched by foreign invaders (Isaiah 47:1).
- ➔ Her enemies lie on the other side of the world (Isa. 13:5).
- ➔ Her people think they are God's chosen (Isa. 47:7-8).
- ➔ She acts carelessly before the Lord (Isaiah 47:8).
- ➔ She is proud, haughty, and does not consider her end or ways (Isaiah 47:7-8).
- ➔ She is the youngest and greatest of the end time nations (Jeremiah 50:12).
- ➔ She is a most powerful nation (Isaiah 47, Jeremiah 50, 51, Revelation 18).
- ➔ The strength of her armies will make her the "Hammer of the whole earth" (Jeremiah 50:23; Revelation 18:23).
- ➔ She is a land rich in minerals (Jeremiah 51:13) and agriculture (Jeremiah 50:16,26-27; Revelation 18).

- She is a leading import/export nation (Jeremiah 51:13, 51; Revelation 18).
- She sits upon “many waters” (Jeremiah 51:13).
- She turns on her heritage (Jeremiah 50:11-12).
- Her leaders lead their flocks astray (Jeremiah 50:6; implied in Revelation 18:2).
- She has a mother nation that remains to her death (Jeremiah 50: 12).
- This mother nation has the symbol of the lion (Daniel 7:4; Ezekiel 38:13; Jeremiah 51:38; Psalms 17:12).
- She will turn against her own people (Jeremiah 50:7,33; 51:35; 39; Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7; 17:6; 18:24).
- She trades with many via ships all year round (Revelation 18:17-18).

**THE PROPHET JEREMIAH (CHAPTERS 50-51)  
AND THE APOSTLE JOHN IN THE BOOK OF**

## **ANOTHER LOOK AT PRE-TRIBULATION PROPHECIES**

*(As profiled in the Olivet Discourse and the Four Horsemen in*

Just before the crucifixion, Jesus shared a prophetic word with His disciples concerning the destruction of the great Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and end time events. When asked about the timing of these things, Jesus presented what is now known as the Olivet Discourse. In this discourse (Matthew 24-25), Jesus presents the longest and most detailed account of end-time events in the Gospels.

The material Jesus presents in the Olivet Discourse profiles five distinct time periods or events:

1. The years leading up to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
2. The tribulations associated with the persecuted Church in the Last Days.
3. The 'Birth Pains', which is the period of time immediately preceding the beginning of the Tribulation period.
4. The Rapture
5. The Tribulation period (the last 7 years).

A brief profile of the Olivet Discourse teaching is noted below.

### **The primary teaching points**

#### **1. The destruction of the Temple**

- » **The prophecy:** Not one stone of the Temple will be left unturned (Matt. 24:2). This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. Jerusalem was attacked by the Romans—the Temple was destroyed and, because there was gold in the mortar, soldiers removed each stone from its place (thus fulfilling the prophecy).

- » **Parallel passage:** “They will fall by the edge of the sword...and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Luke 21:24

### God’s directive

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*“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...” (Luke 21:10-21)*

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*The siege against Jerusalem began in 68 AD. But Emperor (Nero) died as the powerful and ruthless Roman army approached the city, The commanding General decided to hold his position until the next Caesar was appointed and he received new orders. In 70 A.D. he received orders to advance on Jerusalem. Approximately 1,000,000 Jews died in the war that ensued, but those who heeded Jesus’ prophecy and fled when they saw ‘Jerusalem surrounded by armies’ were saved.*

## 2. The Last Days and Birth Pains

- » Matthew 24:5-8 notes a few happenings associated with the time period referred to as the **birth pains**.

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*<sup>5</sup>For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many.<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars...<sup>7</sup> There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.<sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

- » Luke 21 is a parallel passage to Matthew 24. In Luke’s account of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus first references **birth pain** period happenings (verses 9-11), and then briefly profiles events that will precede them.

The period that precedes the birth pains is referred to as the **Last Days**. The Last Days is a general reference to the period of time from the birth of the New Testament Church to the end of the seven-year Tribulation.

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*<sup>9</sup>When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen...<sup>12</sup> “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.<sup>13</sup> And so you will bear testimony to me.<sup>14</sup> But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.<sup>15</sup> For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.<sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.<sup>17</sup> Everyone will hate you because of me... Luke 21:9-17.*

- » Many believe the tribulations noted above (Luke 21:12-17) are represented, prophetically, by the Church of Smyrna in Revelation chapter two<sup>1</sup>.

➔ **God’s directives**

- » Do not be led astray (Luke 21:8).
- » Endure to the end (Matt. 24:13).
- » Do not be afraid (Rev. 2:9).
- » Persevere (Rev. 2:11b) “The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.”

Many believe that seven Church Ages are referenced, prophetically, by the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.

CHURCH	TIME PERIOD	CHURCH AGE
Ephesus	30-100 A.D.	The Apostolic Church
Smyrna	100-313 A.D.	The Church of the Roman Persecution
Pergamum	313-600 A.D.	The Church of the Age of Constantine and Compromise
Thyatira	600-1517 A.D.	The Church of the Dark Ages
Sardis	1517-1648 A.D.	The Church of the Reformation
Philadelphia	1648-1900 A.D.	The Church of the Missionary Movement
Laodicea	1900-Present	The Church of the Apostasy

➔ **According to Matthew 24, the Last Days and time of 'Birth Pains' will be marked by:**

- » False Christs, false prophets, and false teachings will increase (V.5, 11).
- » Wars and rumors of wars will grow in frequency (V.6).
- » Famines and earthquakes will grow in intensity (V.7).
- » There will be intense persecution and hatred of believers (V.9).
- » Apostasy will increase (V.10).

➔ **God's directives**

- » Do not be led astray (V.4).
- » Endure to the end (V.13).
- » Proclaim the Gospel (V.14).

### 3. The Rapture

- » The Rapture refers to a sudden taking away of believers before the outpouring of God's wrath during the Tribulation period.
- » It is thought by many that Jesus' words in verses 41-46 of Matthew 24 point to a Rapture.
- » The Rapture can take place at any time. No prophecies need to be fulfilled prior to a Rapture taking place. The wise will be spiritually prepared for the imminent return of the King. A few of the verses from the Olivet Discourse which point to a Rapture are noted below"

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*"There will be two in the field—one will be left" (V.40).*

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*"Two women will be grinding at the mill—one will be taken and one will be left" (V.41).*

#### ➔ God's directives

- » Stay awake (V.42).
- » Be ready (V.44).
- » Be busy about the Master's work (V.46)

#### ➔ The challenge

- » *"It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes." Luke 12:37*

- ➔ **A link to the teaching video on the Rapture is provided in the appendix of this book.**

#### 4. The Tribulation

- ➔ **The prophecy** - This period will be marked by five main characteristics.
  - » False Christs, prophets, and teachings will increase. (V.5, 11).
  - » Wars and rumors of wars will grow in frequency and intensity (V.6).
  - » Famines and earthquakes will grow in intensity (V.7).
  - » There will be intense persecution/hated of believers (V.9).
  - » Apostasy will increase (V.10).
- ➔ **The commandment**
  - » Do not be led astray (V.4).
  - » Endure to the end (V.13).
  - » Proclaim the Gospel (V.14).
- ➔ **A link to the teaching video on the Tribulation is provided in the appendix of this book.**

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*“...there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.” 2 Peter 2:1*

## COMPARING THE OLIVET DISCOURSE IN MATTHEW 24 WITH THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE IN REVELATION 6

The Four Horsemen in the book of Revelation are said to represent key happenings in the Last Days. To understand the meaning of the Horsemen in Revelation, one must first see the correlation between John’s writing in Revelation 6, and Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24 (The Olivet Discourse). The parallel between the events noted by Jesus in Matthew 24 and the events associated with the Four Horsemen of in Revelation 6 is striking. The simple chart below compares the passages. Commentary notes are included in *italics* font.

THE HORSEMEN	MATTHEW 24	REVELATION 6
THE WHITE HORSE	<p><sup>4</sup>Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you.<sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and <i>will deceive many...</i></p>	<p><sup>2</sup>I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror...</p> <p><i>Though in some ways this figure may look like Jesus, it is an imposter— The crown he is wearing is not a royal crown (as in Rev. 19). This spirit is evil and conquers by deception and violence.</i></p>
THE RED HORSE	<p><sup>6</sup>You will hear <i>of wars and rumors of wars</i> but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.</p>	<p><sup>4</sup>Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given the power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword. <i>This spirit ushers-in war and conflict.</i></p>

<p>THE BLACK HORSE</p>	<p><sup>7</sup>Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <b><i>There will be famines</i></b> and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of <b><i>birth pains</i></b>.</p>	<p><sup>5</sup>...I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “Two pounds of wheat for a day’s wages, and six pounds of barley for a day’s wages... <b><i>This spirit is associated with poverty and economic hardship. The reference to ‘scales in his hand’ is a reference to commerce/economic hardship.</i></b></p>
<p>THE PALE (LIGHT GREEN) HORSE</p>	<p><sup>9</sup>“Then you will be handed over to be <b><i>persecuted and put to death</i></b>, and you will be hated... because of me.</p>	<p><sup>8</sup>I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! <b><i>Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him.</i></b> They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.</p>

## A FEW NOTES ON THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

- ➔ The Four Horsemen are evil spirits or demons.
- ➔ The book of Zechariah also profiles colored horses (see chapters three and six). These horsemen are spiritual beings that roam the earth.
- ➔ Many have taught that the Four Horsemen announce or launch the seven-year Tribulation period. Scripture, however, notes that the Tribulation begins with the signing of a peace accord between the Antichrist and Israel (Dan. 9:27).

### The Four Horsemen—Four schools of thought

1. The Four Horsemen depict happenings which can **precede the Tribulation**. This view arises from the fact that there seems to be a strong tie to the

work associated with horsemen and the birth pangs (Matthew 24:8), which are said to immediately precede the Tribulation period.

2. The Four Horsemen of Revelation 6 may represent the **initial waves of** judgments during the Tribulation period. These tribulations precede the seal, bowl, and trumpet judgments which begin in Revelation 7.
3. The Four Horsemen of Revelation 6, if associated with Birth Pains events, could provide a **preview** of the happenings that will take place on earth **during the seven-year Tribulation period** as profiled in Revelation 7-20 (though it is possible that Revelation 6 provides an overview of what will happen in Revelation 7-20).
4. The Four Horsemen likely depict the cumulative impact of evil (trials, tribulation, suffering, famine, war, death, etc.) of all time. It is possible that the Four Horsemen are spiritual beings that have been at work for centuries, and will continue (and intensify) their work until the end of the Tribulation period.

### Common Associations

Over the centuries many have linked the colored horses to individuals, movements, groups, and governments. Noted below are four of the most common contemporary associations.

- ➔ The white horse has been said to represent the Pope or Catholicism.
- ➔ The red horse has been said to represent Communism, China or Russia.
- ➔ The green horse has been said to represent Islam.
- ➔ The black horse has been said to represent violent geopolitical groups such as Germany's SS or ISIS.

Linking the Horsemen to specific individuals or movements is an exercise prone to error. Over the centuries the Horsemen have been thought to represent Genghis Khan, Hitler's Nazi's, the Ottoman Empire, Mao, Stalin, the British Empire, Napoleon, the Black Death, the Spanish Flu, etc. It is likely that there was some logic behind these assumptions, but all of these assertions were in error.

Regarding the interpretation of what the Four Horsemen represent; it is perhaps best to center on what is abundantly clear. Below is a summary of such points.

- ➔ The Horsemen represent more general than specific events. For example, they are likely to represent war in general, more than a specific battle or war (such as WWI).
- ➔ The Horsemen likely represent repressive and oppressive movements (Communism, ISIS, Nazism) more than particular tyrannical rulers.
- ➔ The Horsemen point to the work of the devil, the ramifications of evil, and the need for God to bring judgment and check evil.
- ➔ There is a very limited tie between the activity of the Horsemen and particular events or time frames. For example, when a Trumpet or Seal judgment takes place, there is a singular action; such as fire and large hailstones fall from the sky, or water becoming poisoned. The activity associated with the Horsemen is general and passive such as war, deception, false teachings, and poverty.
- ➔ The Horsemen remind the reader that there is a spiritual component to many happenings on earth.
- ➔ The Horsemen remind the reader that trials and “troubles” are coming, and will unfold per the sovereign plan of God.
- ➔ The Horsemen introduce the trials and judgments profiled in the book of Revelation. The Horsemen are the beginning, not the end, of a great story which concludes with the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ and the triumph of good over evil.



## PROPHECIES PERTAINING TO THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

The world is approaching a notable period of history—the Tribulation period. The Bible references the Tribulation by many names; Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, the time of Jacob’s sorrow, the time of God’s wrath, etc. Jesus prophesied that it would be a time of unprecedented upheaval. Still, the Bible notes that in the midst of this dark season God will move. The Lord Jesus will come bringing His army of saints to win a great victory over the enemies of Israel, and rescue all believers who were saved during the 7-year Tribulation period.

Some believe Bible prophecies regarding judgments appear to indicate God is angry or mean. However, the opposite is true. God is not angry—God warns whom He loves, and only as a last resort does He use drastic measures to prompt individuals to pursue a better path.

This writer believes that if the world turned to Christ today, the prophesied future Tribulations would not occur. But God knows that humanity is willful, and knows the choices they will make. Therefore, the prophecies will come true. In the last seven years of our history, God will bring tribulation and wrath to the earth. Why? To bring humanity to repentance and receive His offer of salvation. This section provides a biblically-based overview of the Tribulations period events that are prophesied to come.

### **TRIBULATION PERIOD PROPHECIES (not in chronological order)**

- ➔ **Israel will enter into a peace treaty:** The Antichrist will impose a “covenant with the many” which will include Israel (Daniel 9:27; 8:23-25). It is this ‘covenant’ that initiates the seven-year Tribulation period.

- ➔ **Israel will be at peace and “without walls”** before the invasion from the North and Gog-Magog war (Ezekiel 38-39). It is probable that this sense of security is the result of the peace covenant noted earlier. The invasion from the North will likely come after the mid-point of the Tribulation period.
- ➔ **The third Temple will be built in Jerusalem:** Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John refer to a Temple being in Jerusalem in the last days. This event is referenced in Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:4; and Rev. 11:1-2. Note: Plans for the construction of the new Temple are complete.
- ➔ **Temple sacrifices will be reinstated** in Israel in the last days. Daniel 9:27; 12:11, and Revelation 13 reference this.
- ➔ **Temple sacrifices will be forbidden:** At the mid-point of the Tribulation period, the Antichrist will seize control of the Temple, abruptly end the daily sacrifices and proclaim himself to be God. (Revelation 13).
- ➔ **144,000 believers will be sealed by the Spirit:** The Holy Spirit will ‘seal’ 12,000 Jewish believers from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. This is very likely a symbolic number representing a vast and perfect number of believers God uses to evangelize the world (Rev. 7). Along with these sealed witnesses will come two great prophets (Rev. 11:3-14). These prophets will preach with power for 42 months and then be put to death. Their deaths will be celebrated by many. Their bodies will lie in the street for three days, after which they will be miraculously resurrected and taken up into Heaven.
- ➔ **Revival:** During the Tribulation, many will turn to Jesus (Revelation 7:9-17; Daniel 12:10; Zechariah 2:11; Isaiah 19:16-25).
- ➔ **Earthquakes:** Great earthquakes will shake the world during the Tribulation period (Revelation 6:12, 8:5, 11:13, 16:18, etc.).
- ➔ **Vegetation decimated:** Revelation 8:7 notes that the first trumpet judgment will bring the destruction of 1/3 of all vegetation on Earth.
- ➔ **A meteor or comet falls into the sea:** Revelation 8:8-9 notes that the second trumpet judgment facilitates something falling into the sea, and destroying 1/3 of life in all seas.
- ➔ **Wormwood:** Similar to the second trumpet judgment, the third trumpet judgment facilitates celestial object falling to the earth which causes fresh water to turn bitter—resulting in many deaths.

- **Reduction of light:** The fourth trumpet judgment brings about a 1/3 reduction of light (from the sun, moon, and stars).
- **Tormenting creatures:** The fifth trumpet judgment will bring scorpion-like creatures from the demon world. These creatures torment humanity, but they do not cause death, only grievous anguish. Some suggest that these creatures will not be able to torment believers in Jesus Christ.
- **Forced worship of Antichrist:** 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13 note that the Beast (the Antichrist) will force all to worship him. Failure to do so will result in starvation, ridicule, and death. Proof of allegiance to the Antichrist will include receiving a mark on the right hand or forehead.
- **Sores on those who receive the mark:** Revelation 16:1-2 notes that those who accept the mark of the Beast, signifying their worship of him, will contract painful sores (KJV reads, 'boils') on their body.
- **Refuge:** Ancient Petra (located in Jordan) will become a place of refuge for believers (Isaiah 16:1-4; Matthew 24:16; Revelation 12:6,14).
- **A great army from the east:** The sixth trumpet announces the coming of a great army from the east (two hundred million men). This army advances toward Israel and leaves devastation in its wake (Rev. 9:13).
- **The Euphrates River blocked or dried-up:** The great river Euphrates will dry-up, allowing armies from the east to advance toward Israel. (Revelation 16:12).
- **The Antichrist wounded:** Revelation 13 notes that the Antichrist will apparently suffer a fatal wound to the head, but will recover to the amazement of many—a manifestation that increases his following.
- **The Woman Who Rides The Beast:** Revelation 17 (and Jeremiah 50-51) notes the judgment on this woman—also called the Whore of Babylon and Mystery Babylon. This is the judgment of a nation, not an individual.
- **Life in seas and rivers dies:** Revelation 16:3 indicates that remaining life in the sea dies as the second vial of judgment is poured out. The death toll is such that the oceans become as blood. The third vial of judgment brings about the death of life in the rivers (Rev. 16:4).
- **Scorching heat:** The fourth vial of judgment brings scorching heat which causes misery and devastates vegetation.

- ➔ **Darkness:** The fifth vial of judgment brings anomalous darkness and painful maladies, some translations say ‘plagues.’ (Revelation 16:10-11).
- ➔ **War:** There will be a series of wars—the last great series of wars, are collectively referred to as the battle of Armageddon.
- ➔ **Victory:** Though surrounded by her enemies, God will intervene, and Israel will prevail in the great battle of Armageddon. The enemy will be vanquished. Satan and the Beast will be bound and thrown into the pit. Jesus Christ will begin His Millennial Reign and bring peace and justice to the earth. (Revelation 19-21).

### Conflicts Associated with the Antichrist

- » Although the Antichrist will rise to world power through cunning, deception, and intrigue (Daniel 8:23), he will have to resort to military power to conquer the world.
- » Revelation 13:7 notes that the Antichrist will ultimately achieve “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.” This authority will be achieved through war. Revelation 6 records the outbreak of global war and the resulting death of one-fourth of humanity (Revelation 6:8).

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*“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast (Satan’s Antichrist) rising out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, (The book of Daniel explains these represent ten nations he will rule) and on his heads a blasphemous name...The dragon (Satan) gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” (Revelation 13:1,2)*

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*“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs (miracles), and lying wonders.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)*

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*“It was granted to him to make war...and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.” (Revelation 13:7)*

### ➔ Wars and conflicts arising during the reign of the Antichrist

- » Revelation 9 seems to indicate conventional, spiritual and nuclear war (nuclear because Rev. 8:7 states that the war will result in one-third of the earth being burned up, and Rev. 16:2-11 notes “loathsome and malignant” sores afflicting survivors). The wars noted in Rev. 6, 8 and 9 will result in the deaths of more than half of humanity. The army from the east mentioned in Rev. 9 is comprised of “200,000,000 men.”
- » Rev. 12 Cosmic wars – past, present, and future.
- » Rev. 12-13 Concerted oppression of all who believe in Jesus, Jews, and all who will not follow the Beast.
- » Some of the Jews in Israel will flee to a place in the “wilderness” where they will be supernaturally protected by God (Rev. 12:13-14). Many believe this hiding place will be the ancient city of Petra, located inside a box canyon in modern Jordan. There is good reason for this assumption because Daniel 11:41 says the Antichrist will be prevented from conquering Jordan when it is part of an end time rebellion.
- » Zechariah 13:8 indicates that the Antichrist will kill two-thirds of the Jewish people during this time.
- » Revelation 12:17 notes that the Antichrist will also war against the “offspring” of Israel — namely, those “who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” This is likely a reference to those who accept Jesus as Lord during the Tribulation period.
- » Revelation 7:9-14 pictures a great multitude of martyrs in Heaven. They are identified as “the ones coming out of the Great Tribulation...”
- » Revelation 17-18 notes an attack on the Whore of Babylon. <sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.<sup>16</sup> The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.<sup>17</sup> **For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose...** (Revelation 17).
- » Rev. 16-19 Battles of Armageddon. The war noted in Ezekiel 38 correlates with conflicts mentioned in Revelation 16-19 (not Psalm 83). Revelation 16 verses 8, 11, and 14 state that the war mentioned in

Ezekiel 38 will occur when the people of Israel are living “securely” in “unwalled villages.” Revelation 16 also notes that the allies of Russia do not include a single Arab state with a border adjacent to Israel (something that does correspond to the warring nations noted in Psalm 83).

- » The war noted in Ezekiel 38-39 can be considered **Part ONE** of the Armageddon campaign (Rev. 16).
  - Russia will lead a coalition of nations (none are nations proximate to Israel) to march against Israel. Their motive is stated in Ezek. 38:12... “to capture spoil and to seize plunder.”
  - The invading armies will be supernaturally destroyed by God “on the mountains of Israel” (Ezekiel 39:4). The Lord will accomplish this destruction through earthquakes, pestilence, hail storms, fire, brimstone, and battlefield confusion (Ezekiel 38:19-22). All will recognize that the victory came from God, and many will open their hearts to the Lord (Ezekiel 38:23).
  - Timing: Ezekiel 39:9 notes that the Jews will spend seven years burning the weapons captured in the war (but this does not necessitate the battle preceding the beginning of the Tribulation).
- » Daniel 11:40-45 describes a military campaign of the Antichrist in the Middle East occurring toward the end of the Tribulation. The Antichrist will invade “the Beautiful Land” and subdue area lands except Jordan.
- » Phase two of the Battle of Armageddon is noted in Joel 3, Zechariah 14, and Revelation 19.
- » It appears that just as the armies from the East and the North arrive in the Valley of Armageddon, the Lord appears, speaks a supernatural word, and all the armies are instantly destroyed “with the breath of His mouth.” (2 Thess. 2:8)
  - Joel 3:16 notes that the Lord will “roar from Zion” and “utter His voice from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 10:16 notes that the result will be “a wasting disease.” Zech. 14:12 notes that there will be a plague that will cause the flesh of the soldiers “to rot while they stand on their feet.” Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.”

- » The aftermath (Revelation 20)
  - The Battle of Armageddon will be followed by the Millennial Reign Of Christ. This is a time when Jesus reigns on earth – a time of righteousness and justice (Isaiah 11:4-5,9). Swords will be beat into plowshares and “nation will not lift up sword against nation...” (Isaiah 2:4). The world will be flooded with agricultural abundance (Amos 9:13). There will be no homelessness or hunger. It will be a time of peace and prosperity (Micah 4:4). Satan will be bound during this period (Rev. 20:1-2).
  - The Millennium will begin with only believers. They will begin to propagate, and since death will be curtailed and life spans extended (Isaiah 65:20), the population of the world will grow exponentially. Those born during this time will have the old sin nature. They will desire all the things of the flesh — they will see that any violation of the Law of God results in swift and certain justice. The Bible states that Jesus will rule with “a rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:26-27). Despite the fact that His reign will produce righteousness, fairness, and perfect justice (Isaiah 11:4-5), some living in this era will resent the fact that they cannot freely pursue sin.
  - At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, Satan is released (Revelation 20:7), and many will unite in one last rebellion against God (Revelation 20:7-9). God will prevail.
  - Following this last rebellion there will be a final judgment. (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21).



**Jesus always has a plan to provide for His people  
(See John 6:5, 11-14)**

## A PROFILE OF MILLENNIAL AND RAPTURE VIEWS

This section profiles the primary schools of thought regarding the Millennium, the Millennial Reign of Christ, and the Rapture. In general, teachings regarding the timing of the Rapture and Millennium fall into two main categories.

- ➔ Millennial positions (three primary positions)
- ➔ Rapture positions (four primary positions)

### MILLENNIAL VIEWS

- ➔ **Pre-millennialism:** This view holds that Jesus will return at the end of Daniel's 70th week (the Tribulation period), with the saints who were in heaven, and reign for 1000 years. This 1000-year period is known as the ***Millennial Reign of Christ***. The primary subjects of this kingdom will be the surviving remnant of the world that come to faith during the Tribulation. The pre-millennialists position does not fix the timing of the Rapture to a particular timetable but does place that momentous event before the 1000-year reign of Christ.
  - Most Bible scholars today hold this view.
  - The *I Am A Watchman* ministry holds a pre-millennial view and places the Rapture prior to the beginning of the Tribulation period.
- ➔ **Amillennialism:** This view holds that there will be no Millennial Reign of Christ. A general summary of the amillennial view is that the Kingdom began with Jesus' first coming (His birth) and will continue until His Second Coming (the glorious appearing at the end of the tribulation period). This view holds that there will not be a 1000-year Millennial Kingdom on earth,

and favors an allegorical system of interpretation to understand prophetic events. For example, the material in the Olivet Discourse and the greater part of the book of Revelation is thought to point, symbolically, to past historical events. This position does not anticipate a Rapture but does anticipate the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. This position holds that conditions in this world will continue to deteriorate up until the second coming of Christ. This view is usually traced back to Augustine (354-430 AD).

- ➔ **Post-millennialism:** This view holds that the Millennium is generally synonymous with the Church Age and is currently being experienced. The view holds that Jesus will return at the end of the Millennium, and that conditions on earth will improve until the second coming of Christ. This minor view originated in England and was advanced by Unitarian minister Daniel Whitby (1638-1726). This position does not support a literal interpretation of the 1000-year Millennial Kingdom noted in Revelation 20, and suggests the Millennial Kingdom will last an unspecified but long period of time. In his book, *The Millennium*, Loraine Boettner (a post-millennialist) states: “The millennium to which the post-millennialist looks forward is thus a golden age of spiritual prosperity during this present dispensation, that is, the Church Age.” This Millennial view does not suggest there will be a time on earth when every person will be a Christian, or that sin will be no more. But it does imply that evil in all its forms eventually will be reduced to negligible proportions, that Christian principles will be embraced and be the rule in culture, and that Christ will return to a truly “Christianized” world. In general, this view holds that conditions on earth will continually improve and that we are currently experiencing the Millennial Kingdom.

- ***A link to the teaching video on the Rapture is provided in the appendix of this book.***

## RAPTURE VIEWS

### Foundational thoughts

- ➔ The beginning of the Tribulation period may not precisely coincide with the timing of the Rapture. *The Tribulation begins with the signing of a 'peace covenant' (Dan. 9:27), not a war or the Rapture.*
- ➔ The word Rapture is not found in the Bible (the English, Hebrew or Greek text), but the concept of a Rapture or sudden taking away of God's people (the Church) is clearly present in Scripture. For example, in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 Paul spells out the Rapture in distinct language.

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*"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord, himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17*

- ➔ Implicit in the Rapture teaching is the thought that the Church (Gentile believers) will be caught-up by Christ and thereby escape the fullness of God's wrath on earth. Supporting verses include the following:
  - » The Church will be "kept from the hour of testing that shall come upon all the world." (Rev. 3:10)
  - » The exhortation to be comforted by the "coming of the Lord" (1 Thess.

4:18) is valid only in the context of the pre-tribulation view. It could even be a fearsome thing in a post-tribulation view.

- ➔ It is the Holy Spirit (which currently dwells in the hearts of believers) that currently holding back Satan. “And you know what restrains him [Satan] now...For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he [the Holy Spirit] who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way...” (2 Thess. 2:6-7). The Church is the Body of Christ—believers. The Holy Spirit resides in the hearts of believers. It is the Holy Spirit which restrains Satan. The Antichrist will not be able to take the world stage until the removal of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, which will happen at the Rapture (when the Church/Body of Christ is called to join the Lord in heaven). Paul speaks of a time when the time of the Gentiles [Church] will come to an end.
  - » “Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” (Lk. 21:23-24; Rom. 11:25-26)
  - » Additional support verses for the Rapture include (Matt. 24:30-31; John 14:2; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:52)

## Primary Rapture Views

- ➔ **Pre-tribulation view:** This view holds that the church will be raptured (caught up to be with Christ) at some point before the commencement of the seven-year tribulation period. There are several primary supporting arguments for this position.
  - » The Tribulation describes a period of suffering unsurpassed, “such as was not since there was a nation, no, nor shall be” (Dan. 12:1). The Tribulation period will be a time of wrath (Rev. 6:16-17, 11:18; 14:19; Zeph. 1:15, 18). However, we see in 1 Thess. 5:9 that the Church is not appointed unto wrath, but unto salvation.
  - » 1 Thess. 4:13-18 seems to support the pre-tribulation view: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are

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

- » 1 Cor. 15:51-55 supports the pre-tribulation view. "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
- » Many Scriptures note the "Jewishness" of Tribulation events profiled in the Bible. It is said to be the "the time of Jacob's trouble," it concerns "Daniel's people," a "false Messiah," the city of Jerusalem, the twelve tribes of Israel, the "son of Moses," and a "flight on the Sabbath." The Church is not specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation after the judgments begin. It may be that the Gentile Church is simply outside the Hebrew focus or narrative of the book. The I Am A Watchman ministry believes the church is not specifically mentioned because the Church is raptured before the beginning of the Tribulation.
- » Jesus' teaching on the end times in Matthew 24 seems to indicate that the timing of the Rapture is immediately after the 'Birth Pains' and before the Tribulation.

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***"Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky..." And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds..."Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get***

*tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken, and the other left. “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” Matt. 24:29-44*

- **A link to the teaching video on the Rapture is provided in the appendix of this book.**

- ➔ **Pre-wrath view:** The Pre-wrath position holds that a Rapture of the true Church takes place near the midpoint of the Tribulation (hence, this view is also known as the mid-trib view). The second half of the Tribulation period is known as the Time of Jacob’s Trouble, The Great Tribulation and The Time Of God’s Wrath. The Apostle Paul writes that God has not destined his people to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9). “His people” are the Church. Therefore, the Lord will remove His Church before the commencement of the outpouring of God’s wrath. The outpouring of God’s wrath is said to take place during the Great Tribulation (the second half of the seven-year Tribulation period).
- ➔ **Post-tribulation view:** There are several schools of thought in the post-tribulation camp. The two most prominent are 1) the Church is destined to exist in a preputial state of tribulation--the seven-year Tribulation period is not future, but the past, present, and future. The Church will be received by Christ when He returns at the end of the Tribulation period. 2) The second (and dominant) view in this school of thought is that the seven-year Tribulation period is yet future, the Church will exist during the Tribulation period, but the Church will be sheltered by God’s protective hand through the Tribulation period.
  - » Some have supported this view by noting that although 1 Thessalonians

## THE SONGS OF SOLOMON AND ESCHATOLOGY

The Old Testament book, Songs Of Solomon can be understood to have an eschatological focus designed to warn and urge individuals to be ready for the coming of the bridegroom. This section profiles how Songs of Solomon is a love story between a mighty and fair Groom (Jesus) and His willful and disobedient love (the Church or believers). Songs of Solomon embodies a Rapture-readiness warning. This section profiles a few key passages which make this focus clear.

### About the book

#### ➔ The author (Solomon)

- » Also wrote: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and perhaps Psalm 72 and 127:1-5.

#### ➔ The book, Songs Of Solomon (Shir Hashshirim)

- » In Hebrew it is “The Song of Songs” or “An Ode of the Odes.”
- » An Ode indicates the “most excellent of all others.”
- » The book was written in the early part of Solomon’s reign as king.
- » The book was understood by the Hebrews to be poetry containing sublime and important matter, always sung or accompanied by a harp.

#### ➔ Distinctions

- » The name of God is not found in this book.
- » The New Testament does not reference this book.

#### ➔ Various views on how to interpret the book

- » **Mr. Harmer:** “It is a poem but presents a rather straightforward statement on the marriage of Solomon to the daughter of Pharaoh, and is to be understood in no other way.”

- » **The Targumist:** “It is an allegory relative to the conduct of God towards the Hebrews (bringing them out of Egypt to the Promised Land”).
- » **Origen:** “It is intended to represent the incarnation of Jesus Christ, or his marriage with human nature, in reference to its redemption.”
- » **Dr. Gill:** “It represents Christ’s love for the Church or elected souls, and their love for him.”
- » **Catholicism:** “It is an allegorical poem on the glories of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.”
- » **Dr. Mason Good:** “It is a collection of sacred poetic references; the spiritual meaning is not agreed on.”
- » The author of this work believes Songs of Solomon has a strong eschatological message. It speaks of a Groom who loves his bride. It notes that the station of the Groom is far above that of his bride. Its story notes that the bride recognizes that she is blessed and has been chosen, but she does not remain vigilant in wisely waiting for her Groom when he is away. The book, therefore, serves as a warning to the Church to stand ready for the Groom’s return; reminiscent of Jesus’ parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25.

## SONGS OF SOLOMON CHAPTER PROFILE

### Chapter 1: The woman is enamored

- ➔ The woman speaks first. She is overwhelmed. She is impressed by his station, kindness, and loveliness. The bride exclaims, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for Thy love is better than wine.”
  - » (1:3) The bride praises the Groom. His very name is noted as beautiful “ointment poured forth.”
  - » (1:5-6) The woman confesses she is “black” (unworthy or sinful). Yet, the Bridegroom calls her “fair.” She experiences great joy, “Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved!”

## Chapter 2: The Groom offers an invitation to the bride

- The voice of the bride is heard again in the opening verses of this chapter. Some believe the Messiah is speaking of Himself as the Rose and the Lily of the Valley, but most believe the exalted phrase comes from a joyful bride. Being chosen by the Groom makes her a lily among thorns. She refers to the Groom as an apple-tree. She has no fruit herself but rests under Him as the blessed fruit-bearer. Under this tree she finds shelter and provision—*she enjoys His fruit under His shade and pleasant covering.*
  - » Then the Groom calls to her, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Be wholly for Me!” He refers to her as, “My dove.” She is overwhelmed. It is clear that the Groom longs for her and she longs for Him. His eyes are upon her, His beloved bride—she is blessed.
  - » Joyfully the bride cries out as the assurance of His love stirs her soul, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Yet the fullness of joy and their union has not yet come. There is an anticipation of a blessing yet future. “Turn my Beloved,” she calls to Him, “be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart, swift in Thy coming [Thy return]...” Here the Groom indicates his departure—the bride expresses her desire for Him to return quickly.

## Chapter 3: The departure of the Groom

- The scene changes. The bride is now alone and in the darkness of night. She seeks her Beloved but is unable to find Him. She lacks joy and comfort. She walks the streets, looking for “Him whom her soul loveth.” She seeks him but “[finds] Him not.”

## Chapter 4: Though away from the bride, she is not forgotten

- Here the Bridegroom’s love is reaffirmed. He speaks of her, who is “perfect.” He has called her “from the lion’s den, from the mountains of the leopards” (4:8). He has chosen her, and she is blessed. Though she was “black,” there are now eight descriptions of her beauty. After a notation of the beautiful attributes the bride now enjoys, the Groom states, “Thou

art all fair, my love; and there is no spot in thee.” Her attributes are His workmanship—she has not made herself fair—His grace and power have accomplished it for her.

- ➔ 4:12-15 presents a beautiful description of a garden, the land of Israel. The land is the Groom’s, and is the place where she is to wait for His return. In this land are the provisions of precious fruits, trees, and frankincense.

### **Chapter 5: The Groom returns, but the bride is not ready**

- ➔ The Bridegroom returns (as promised) with the hope that his bride is ready to receive Him. The Groom calls out, “Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly...” He continues, “I am come into My garden...[for] My spouse.”
- ➔ However, there is no response from the bride. She is not found watching or waiting or ready to receive the Groom.
- ➔ The Groom is then seen standing outside the bride’s home. In earnest humility, the Groom stands waiting outside in the cold damp air—the night dew covers his clothes and hair. He stands knocking at the door. There is no response from His bride.
- ➔ (5:9). The bride affirms the beauty of the Groom. She refers to Him as, “the chiefest among ten thousand, ” and ascribes to Him ten wonderful attributes. She references His holiness, love, sacrifice, compassion, humanity, royal nature and more. Following these praises she cries out, “Yea, He is altogether lovely...this is my friend.” However, though she recognizes His beauty, she does not remain watchful for His return or promptly responds when He knocks on her door.
- ➔ After a time of knocking and waiting with no response from the bride, the Groom leaves. The bride misses being able to share in a great blessing.

## SONGS OF SOLOMON CHAPTER PROFILE

(with an eschatological view in mind)

**Songs of Sol. 2:10-12 notes the coming of the Messiah and the invitation to enter into relationship with Him.**

- ➔ “My beloved spoke and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come.’”
- ➔ The coming of the Messiah brightens the world.

**Songs of Sol. 3:1-2 represents the Church Age (the Messiah is gone but promises to return) Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.**

- ➔ “All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So I looked for him but did not find him.”
- ➔ There is some effort on behalf of the bride—but she grows weary of waiting and does not remain in readiness for His return.

**Songs of Sol. 5:2 notes the return of the Groom, the Messiah**

- ➔ “I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking: “Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night.”
- ➔ The Groom arrives—the bride is asleep. The Groom stands outside knocking—beckoning the bride to rise—no response.
- ➔ The picture here is especially moving as the Groom stands outside, drenched by the cold mist or fog of night, but is not well or quickly received by the one He loves.

**Songs of Sol. 5:3-4 notes the bride’s slow response (Matt. 25:1-13)**

- ➔ “I have taken off my robe—must I put it on again? I have washed my feet—must I soil them again?”

### Songs of Sol. 5:5-6a notes the Groom's departure

- ➔ "I opened [the door] to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. I sought him, but found him not..."
- ➔ Matthew 25:1-13 notes a New Testament parallel teaching, the parable of the 10 Virgins.

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*"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both you and us. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut." "Later the others came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!" "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*

### Songs of Sol. 5:6 presents a warning

- ➔ "I opened [the door] for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him, but he did not answer."
- ➔ The bride finally rose to answer to the door to let the Groom in. But she was too late. She was not ready to receive him. She had been 'left behind.'
- ➔ See John 16:13; Matt. 24:37-44; 1 Thess. 5:3; Luke 21:36

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*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”  
2 Peter 3:9*

## **Summary**

Songs of Solomon can be viewed as a beautiful love story. In this story the Groom is of the highest rank—He brightens the setting by His presence. In stark contrast is the bride, who is low, unworthy and “black.” Yet she is both chosen by the Groom and made worthy by His grace.

His love for the bride is evident, but He must leave for a time. He promises to return, makes provisions (a choice setting) available for His bride, and bids her to watch and wait for Him. The bride waits for a time, but soon becomes unfaithful in her duty. The Groom arrives at an unexpected time. He is not well-received by His people or His bride. He travels to the home of His bride, knocks at the door, but she is slow to respond. When she finally opens the door, the Groom is gone.

The Church is referred to as the Bride of Christ in the New Testament. The Groom, Jesus, has come, has left, and has promised to return. The Church, the Bride of Christ is called to watch and wait for His return. In the Gospel of Matthew we read: “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the Master has put in charge of the servants in His household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose Master finds him doing so when He returns.” Matthew 24:44-46



**“When we all get to heaven, what a day  
of rejoicing that will be.”  
(See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)**

## **INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF REVELATION (4 VIEWS)**

Interpreting the book of Revelation can be a challenge. The allusions to Old Testament prophecies, the many symbols, the poetic language and the unusual wording make understanding the book difficult, but not impossible. Still, Revelation 1:3 notes that there is a blessing to those who read and hear the words. Over the ages, individuals have established four ways to interpret and understand the text. The approach one takes to read the book, will determine how they understand the book. This section notes the four primary methods for interpretation and makes a recommendation for seekers of truth today.

Interpreting the book of Revelation generally follows one of four principle views. Let me begin by sharing that I enjoy astronomy. I have a quality scope and an assortment of eyepieces and colored filters/lenses. Though the scope does not change, the eyepiece and colored filter/lens I choose to look through determines whether I see Jupiter as a small white ball (like a small moon), or as a large, majestic yellowish banded planet with famous storm spot and multiple moons.

In the same way, the approach (lens) one takes to read the book of Revelation will determine what they see in the book (and how the text applies to their life). This following pages profile the four primary ways to interpret the book of Revelation:

## | 1. THE IDEALIST VIEW

The first view or approach to interpreting the book of Revelation is the Idealist view. This approach prioritizes using an allegorical method for interpretation. The second-century church father, Origen (185-254 A.D.) introduced this method. It was later made more prominent by the notable Bishop, Augustine (354-420 A.D.). According to this method of interpretation, the events in the book of Revelation are NOT referring to (or linked to) particular historical happenings. The writing is viewed as figurative—symbolically representing the epic struggle of good versus evil (God versus Satan). In this battle, good will triumph; the followers of God are oppressed and persecuted, but will one day receive their reward. Robert Mounce summarizes the idealist view stating, “Revelation is a theological poem presenting the ageless struggle between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. It is a philosophy of history wherein Christian forces are continuously meeting and conquering the demonic forces of evil.” There are three primary concerns with interpreting the book of Revelation via the Idealist view.

1. It minimizes the gravity of the warnings presented in the book of Revelation.
2. It minimizes a call to action, and the need to prepare for future tribulation events as the references in Revelation that pertain to such things are thought to be symbolic or allegorical.
3. Though at times endorsed by prominent church leaders, this view has never been widely accepted by the Christian Church.

## | 2. TWO PRETERIST VIEWS

The second approach to interpreting the book of Revelation is the Preterist view. Preter is a Latin term meaning, “past.” There are two primary views within the Preterists approach to interpretation (Full Preterism and Partial Preterism). In general, both Preterist views hold that the book of Revelation profiles past events, and that the prophecies presented by Jesus in the Olivet discourse

(Matt. 24-25) were fulfilled primarily when the Temple was destroyed (70 A.D.). According to this view, Revelation 1-3 profiles the conditions in seven first century churches in Asia Minor before the Jewish war (AD 66-70), and chapters 4-22 (and Matthew 24-25) profiles the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple. Detailed below are the two preterist views:

- ➔ Full preterists hold that the fulfillment of **all** prophecies recorded in the book of Revelation took place by 70 A.D. (this includes all prophecies in the Olivet Discourse and all prophecies in the book of Revelation). Further, full preterist hold that humans are now living in a redeemed state, referenced in Revelation as the new heavens and the new earth.
- ➔ Partial preterists believe that the fulfillment of **most** of the prophecies recorded in the book of Revelation were fulfilled between 66—70 A.D. (during the Jewish-Roman war and subsequent destruction of the Temple). However, partial preterist hold that the final three chapters in the book of Revelation allude to future events. Partial preterists await the return of Jesus Christ (a view rejected by full preterist). The partial preterist method of interpretation is the more widely accepted of the two preterist views.
- ➔ This method of interpretation has been endorsed by notable scholars as R. C. Sproul, Hank Hanegraaff, Kenneth Gentry, and the late David Chilton (Note: Hank Hanegraaff and David Chilton rejected this position later in life). Concerns with the preterist positions include:
  - » Scripture notes that future tribulations would be markedly different than any other time in history (which was not the case with 66-70 A.D. happenings).
  - » The full preterist position does not anticipate the glorious return/ appearing of Jesus Christ.
  - » Preterist views do not adequately address references to the global power and system of the Antichrist.

### 3. THE HISTORICIST VIEW

The third approach to interpreting the book of Revelation is the Historicist view. This approach holds that the material in the book of Revelation is symbolic—representing historical events that will take place in the future (but primarily prior to the 21st century). These events include the rise of various popes, future empires, and rulers, the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, etc. This position holds that references to the Beast and Antichrist are not to be understood literally.

Many who hold this view believe chapters 1-3 represent seven periods in church history (beginning with the first-century church and ending with the Tribulation period). Further, this position holds:

- ➔ The Seals in chapters 4-7 symbolize the fall of the Roman Empire.
- ➔ The Trumpet judgments in chapters 8-10 represent various invasions of the Roman Empire.
- ➔ The Antichrist is a reference to the Pope. Chapters 11-13 point to the struggle between the Protestant Church and Roman Catholicism.
- ➔ Chapters 14-16 reference divine judgment on the Catholic Church.
- ➔ Chapters 17-19 point to the future demise of Catholicism.

Prominent scholars who have used this approach to interpret the book of Revelation include Martin Luther, George Whitefield, John Wycliffe, John Calvin, John Knox, William Tyndale, Charles Finney, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Ulrich Zwingli, C. H. Spurgeon, and Matthew Henry.

This view rose to popularity during the time of the Protestant Reformation because of the profound persecution of Protestants by the Catholic Church in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, this view has declined in prominence and is no longer a primary approach to interpreting the book of Revelation.

## 4. THE FUTURIST VIEW

The fourth approach to interpreting the book of Revelation is the futurist view. This position holds that the prophetic events profiled in the Olivet Discourse and book of Revelation (particularly chapters 4-22) will occur in the future. In general Futurists use Revelation 1:19 as a guide to divide the book into three sections: 1) “what you have seen” 2) “what is now (present) and 3) “what will take place later.” According to this school of thought, chapter 1 is a presentation of the past (“what you have seen”), chapters 2-3 are a presentation of the present (“what is now”), and the remaining chapters profile future events (“what will take place later”).

Futurists apply a literal approach to interpreting the book of Revelation. The tribulation period (as profiled in chapters 4-19) is 2520 days or 7 (Hebrew) years. The seven-year Tribulation period is viewed as Daniel’s 70th week (Dan. 9:27). During the Tribulation, the earth will experience 21 specific judgments of God (divided into three sets of seven and depicted as seals, trumpets, and bowls). The Antichrist and future global system that he leads (see chapter 13) are to be understood literally, as are the battles of Armageddon, the return of Christ, and the Millennial Kingdom. This position, and perhaps an incorporation of some aspects of the Historists view—such as thinking that the seven churches in the book of Revelation could reference actual first-century churches **and** seven future periods of Church History, is the primary approach to interpreting the book of Revelation today, and the view that the I Am A Watchman ministry holds.

One of the key arguments in support of the Futurists view is the date of the writing of the book of Revelation. Preterists argue for a pre-70 A.D date while Futurists hold to a date of approximately 95 A.D. There are good reasons to argue for a later date. For example, Irenaeus, in his work *Against Heresies*, states that John wrote Revelation at the end of Emperor Domitian’s reign, which ended in 96 A.D. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. He thus had a connection with a contemporary of the Apostle John.

Another argument for the futurist view is that the conditions of the seven churches in Revelation appear to describe a second-generation church, rather than a first-generation church. For example, John charged the Church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) with abandoning their first love and warned against embracing the Nicolaitan heresy. If John had written the book of Revelation in 65 A.D. (as Preterists allege), the book would have overlapped the timeline of Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Timothy. However, in the Apostle Paul's writing there is no mention of either the loss of a first love or the threat of the Nicolaitans. Ephesus was Paul's base of ministry for three years—surely such grave issues would have been mentioned by him. Also, the Church of Smyrna did not exist during Paul's ministry (60-64 A.D.). Polycarp, the first bishop of that city, documents this. It is also worthy to note that Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church in Revelation chapter 3 for being "lukewarm." However, when the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians (near Laodicea), he commends the church three times (2:2, 4:13, 16).

It is true that Paul wrote the book of Colossians a few years earlier than the early date Preterists suggest for the book of Revelation. However, it would likely take more than three years for the Laodicean church to decline such that there were no commendable attributes in the church (as noted in Revelation 3). Also, an earthquake in 61 A.D. left the region in ruins for some years. Thus, it is unlikely that in a ruined condition John would describe them as rich.

Preterists who argue for the 70 A.D. date for the writing of the book of Revelation pose the questions, "Why doesn't John mention the fall of the Temple in the book of Revelation?" and "Why does John reference the Temple in Revelation 11 if the Temple was destroyed 25 years earlier?" Futurists respond to these questions by noting that John's focus is future, not past events. Also, John was writing to a Gentile audience in Asia Minor, which probably was not overly distressed about a happening concerning Hebrews in Jerusalem, 25 years in the past. Concerning the Temple reference in chapter 11, Futurists argue that a reference to the Temple does not imply that it existed at the time of his writing, but rather, it is a reference to a prophesied Third Temple (see Dan. 9:26-27; Ezek. 40-48).

## **Summary**

As the structure of the Bible is much more transformational rather than informational, most scholars today encourage a Futurist approach to interpreting the book of Revelation. The Bible is not simply a record of what was—it is living Word that calls believers to action today, and provides insight into how God will work in the future. The Futurist approach, more than the other approaches to interpretation, compliments the structure and spirit of the whole of Scripture by facilitating an interpretation of the text that exhorts, engages, and encourages those who study the book.

Even if one does not hold to the Futurist approach to interpreting the book of Revelation, there is no doubt the world is not at rest, and that there will be turmoil and troubles in the days to come. Those who do not believe in a Rapture or a second coming must still believe that a time of judgment and accounting is coming. The call is to be ready.



**He has risen, and He will come again  
(See Revelation 1:7)**

## THE ANTICHRIST

The Antichrist is the Beast of the book of Revelation. He is evil personified—indwelt by Satan, ruthless and intent on destroying all that God loves. A dichotomy of character will allow this monster to garner support and move into power. He will at once, charm the crowds while planning to kill millions. He will solve global problems and appear to be good, but his agenda is evil. The scope of the pain and suffering he will inflict on the world will have no equal. The Antichrist will be a man but will be indwelt by Satan. He will lead in brokering a peace covenant with Israel, but is not a man of peace and will, in fact, usher-in a period of war that will kill billions.

He is the personification of evil and a master of deception. Like a real-life Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, or perhaps the nefarious Lex Luthor, he will be wise, polished, and professional, but malevolent and merciless.

### The Biblical Foundation for the Term Antichrist

An antichrist is one who opposes the will of Christ. However, during the Tribulation period, a great deceiver and enemy of Christ will appear (and reign) on the earth. This individual is known as the “Abomination of Desolation” and *the Antichrist*.

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify the term “antichrist.” According to the epistles of John, ***an antichrist*** is one who opposes the teachings of Christ. In this sense, many can be an antichrist—in fact, anyone who hinders the ‘Great Commission’ work and opposes the things of God is an antichrist. However, Scripture notes that during the Tribulation period, a world leader will arise. The world will praise him for leading in brokering a peace covenant in the Middle

East and solving many complex global issues. In time he will gain control of global systems. Though he will claim to be divine, he is, in fact, a man indwelt by Satan. He is **the Antichrist**. This section of the book profiles that individual, **the Antichrist** of the Tribulation period. This article will differentiate him from antichrists throughout history by referencing him with a capital “A” in his title.

- ➔ “...Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and [an] antichrist” (2 John 7).
- ➔ “...Every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world” (1 John 4:3).

### The Timing of His Coming

- ➔ “The Spirit clearly says that in **later times** some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).
- ➔ The Antichrist will initiate the seven-year Tribulation by confirming “a covenant” with Israel (Daniel 9:27).

### His Character/Nature

- ➔ The Antichrist will be a great deceiver. Displays of power, signs, and wonders will embolden his claim to be an agent of good (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- ➔ Scripture notes that seven kings or rulers will precede the Antichrist (Revelation 17:11 / Daniel 5). The empire of the Antichrist will be similar to, but different from, past empires which embraced paganism and persecuted God’s people.
- ➔ The Antichrist will be a man (Daniel 7:24-25).
- ➔ The Antichrist will have a fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23).
- ➔ His look will be “stouter than his fellows” (Daniel 7:20). This can have several meanings. It could mean the Antichrist will be larger in stature than others, older than others, have a greater following than others, or is of higher military or political rank than others, or that he is more qualified than others.

## Peculiar Aspects to His Rule

- ➔ The Antichrist will be supported by a miracle-working partner, known as the False Prophet (Revelation 13:11-12).
- ➔ The Antichrist will be unusually wise and cunning (Daniel 8:23).
- ➔ The Antichrist will prosper in everything that he does (Daniel 8:24).
- ➔ The Antichrist will not regard the desire of women (Daniel 11:37). He may like Hitler, present himself to be disinterested in relationships, or he may embrace homosexuality.
- ➔ The Antichrist will sit in the rebuilt Temple and claim to be God (2 Thess. 2:4).
- ➔ The Antichrist “will cause craft to prosper” (Daniel 8:25). It is interesting to note the definition of the word “craft” here. The word in the original Hebrew text is *mirmah* (meer-maw’), meaning deceiving; fraud, deceit, false, feigned, guile, and treachery. These will be the hallmarks of his reign.
- ➔ Revelation 17:8 notes that the Antichrist “was, and is not, and yet is.” Many believe this to be a reference to his overcoming an apparently fatal wound. Some understand this to refer to a revived political career or empire.

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*“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The world was filled with wonder and followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3)*

## The Early Years of His Rule

- ➔ The Antichrist will arise from among ten kings (Daniel 7:8).
- ➔ The Antichrist will oversee a ten-nation union, perhaps a form of a revived Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44).
- ➔ The Antichrist will uproot three kings from the ten-nation union noted above (Daniel 7:8).
- ➔ The Antichrist will ascend to power on a platform of peace (Daniel 8:25).
- ➔ The Antichrist will form a world government, which he will dominate (Revelation 13:1-2).
- ➔ The Antichrist will rule a “mighty and strong kingdom” (Daniel 7:7).
- ➔ The Antichrist will “have power over all nations” (Revelation 13:7).
- ➔ The Antichrist will lead great armies (Daniel 11:31).

- ➔ The Antichrist “will plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (Daniel 11:45). Perhaps the Antichrist will set up small fortifications between the sea and Jerusalem.

### **The Final Years of His Rule**

- ➔ The Antichrist will have an image made after him (Revelation 15:2).
- ➔ The Antichrist will assume complete control over the world government 3 1/2 years after he confirms the covenant with Israel. He then will continue to reign for 42 months (Revelation 13:5).
- ➔ The Antichrist will endorse the setting-up of the “Abomination of Desolation” (an image unto himself that all are forced to worship). This event signals the beginning of the final 42 months and the commencement of the period called the “Great Tribulation” (Daniel 9:27).
- ➔ The Antichrist will forbid daily sacrifices in the Temple (Daniel 11:31).
- ➔ The Antichrist will control the ability to buy and sell, and force all to prove allegiance to him by taking the ‘Mark of the Beast’ (Revelation 14:11).
- ➔ The antichrist will seek to kill Jews and Christians (Daniel 12:7).
- ➔ The Antichrist will wage war against Israel—culminating in the battles of Armageddon (Revelation 6-19).
  - » The focus of his rage will be God’s people, Israel and Jerusalem: “Behold, a day is coming...when the nations [will] gather against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle...” (Zechariah 14:1-2).

### **His Fate**

- ➔ The Antichrist will stand [fight] against the Prince of princes (Daniel 8:25).
- ➔ Christ will consume the Antichrist, and all enemies of God with the “spirit of his mouth,” which is the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
- ➔ The Antichrist will be “cast alive into the Lake of Fire” (Revelation 19:20).
- ➔ The Antichrist will be “tormented day and night forever” (Revelation 20:10).

## Summary

The Antichrist is an actual person (not a symbol of evil) who will seek to control government, the economy, and religion. He will be responsible for persecution, war, pain, and suffering. But there is hope—His name is Jesus the Christ. Consider this: The focus of the book of Revelation is not the power of the Antichrist, but the power of God. The book of Revelation does not center on the victories of Satan, but on the ultimate victory of God through His son Jesus. Yes, evil men and movements will come—there will be battles—but God and good will prevail. Scripture notes that Jesus is the Victor and that those who believe in Him will share in His victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Turbulent times are coming—the Antichrist is coming, but help is available; His name is Jesus Christ. There is a spiritual battle swirling about us—it will profoundly impact the earth in the days to come. The only hope is to align with Jesus and seek safety, strength, and salvation in Him. God will judge humans who, out of fear, ignorance, or false hope, decide to stand with the Antichrist. Receiving his mark is to acknowledge the world leader as your god.

Receiving the mark of the Antichrist is an unalterable decision indicating your rejection of God and His offer of salvation, forgiveness, and Heaven. The wise will seal their eternal fate now. It does not require money or special education—but there is a cost.

You must surrender your will, your priorities, and your life to God. You must believe in Him, and then accept Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior. You must allow Him to lead, and you must faithfully follow. You must confess your sins to Him, and you must both accept His forgiveness and forgive others. From these decisions flow forgiveness, joy, and hope.

- ***A link to the teaching video on the Antichrist is provided in the appendix of this book.***



**Blessed are they who faithfully watch and wait  
for the return of the Lord and King  
(See Luke 12:37-38)**

## **IS AMERICA MENTIONED IN BIBLE PROPHECY?**

Many have questioned why the United States is not clearly or prominently mentioned in Scripture. Surely such a world power would be part of any end times battles, especially being one of Israel's strongest allies. Yet, it is difficult to find clear references to America in Scripture. Europe is identifiable; references to Russia and China are pretty clear – Where is America?

America played a key role in helping Israel become a sovereign and independent nation in 1948, and has provided support to the support and a place of refuge for Jews for more than 200 years. Not only has Israel been a support the Jews and Israel, America has dominated world affairs for the last ince WWII. America has liberated countries, aided countries impacted by natural disasters, led the world in trade and technology, and sent out more missionaries to more regions than any nation in history. America has played a notable role on the world stage in the past. The question is, what role will America play in the last days? For possibilities follow:

### **America's future: Four possibilities**

1. America is not mentioned in Scripture because she is outside the focus of John's Revelation narrative, or because America plays no significant role in End Time events.
2. America is mentioned—symbolized as the great eagle in Revelation 12, or possibly Isaiah 18:1-2.
3. America is mentioned—referenced as the Daughter of Babylon and represented by the woman who rides the Beast, or the Whore of Babylon in Revelation 13, 17 and 18.
4. America is mentioned—referred to as a young lion in Ezekiel 38.

### **Option 1: America is not specifically noted in Scripture**

Some Christians believe no clearly identifiable reference to America is found in Scripture. Those who hold this position often suggest the US is simply outside the focus of the Revelation narrative (which primarily centers on Jews and Israel). It is also possible America is not mentioned because she simply plays no significant role in end-time events.

It may be the book of Revelation maintains a strict focus on Israel and the nations who have direct interaction with Israel in the last seven years of history. The absence of direct or explicit references to America in Scripture may indicate the United States will not attack Israel, provide significant support to Israel, or play a significant role in End-Time battles involving Israel.

Another option is that in the last days, America desires to support Israel, but can't because of a calamity, economic hardship, poor leadership or because she has suffered the judgment of God. Romans 1:18-23 notes that the nation who embraces wickedness and opposes or suppresses truth will eventually suffer God's judgment. Of course, that definition fits many countries, not America exclusively. (See Option 3 for additional information on God's judgment).

### **Option 2: America Is the Great Eagle Mentioned in Revelation 12**

The rescuing Eagle noted in Revelation 12:6, 14 aids and protects the Hebrew people in the last days. This idea, however, requires that America provide exceptional support to Israel in the last days—likely at significant risk and cost: transporting, supplying, and protecting several million Jews for 1260 days.

**NOTE:** Many believe the current political climate makes this option unlikely. In this writer's view, the following is more likely:

- ➔ The Eagle in Revelation 12 is linked to God's supernatural provision (see Exodus 19:4).
- ➔ The land of rescue is not the United States, but rather Petra, in the land of Jordan. Daniel 11:41 notes that this area will not come under the control of the Antichrist.

### **Option 3: America is the Whore of Babylon in Revelation 13, 17 & 18.**

The Whore of Babylon is also called the Daughter of Babylon, or the Woman Who Rides the Beast. Many Americans are quick to dismiss this option, perhaps due to the unflattering description and sobering ramifications. Though this option may seem unlikely, a study of the descriptive phrases the Bible uses to describe the attributes of the Daughter of Babylon makes this option worthy of consideration. Compare the descriptions of the Daughter of Babylon to the current condition of American culture and political structure. The nation is described as follows:

- ➔ She is noted for her architecture, buildings, and skyline (Isaiah 13:22).
- ➔ She is the lone or newest notable world power (Isaiah 47:5,8).
- ➔ She is respected and envied, yet at the same time, hated by the world (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She has a unique and remarkable beginning (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She is a “Queen among nations” (Isaiah 47:5,7; Revelation 17,18; Isaiah 13:6).
- ➔ She is called a lady (Isaiah 47:7-9).
- ➔ She is a land quartered by mighty rivers (Isaiah 18:2).
- ➔ She destroys her land, with pollution/waste (Isaiah 14:20, 18:2, 7).
- ➔ She is a democracy—ruled by many counsels (Isa. 47:13).
- ➔ Her governmental system will break down (Isaiah 47:13).
- ➔ She is known for religious confusion (Isaiah 47:12-13).
- ➔ She is a virgin nation; her lands untouched by foreign invaders (Isaiah 47:1).
- ➔ Her enemies lie on the other side of the world (Isaiah 13:5).
- ➔ Her people think they are God’s elect and chosen (Isaiah 47:7-8).
- ➔ She acts carelessly before the Lord (Isaiah 47:8).
- ➔ She is proud, haughty, and does not consider her end (Isaiah 47:7-8).
- ➔ She is the youngest and greatest of the end time nations (Jeremiah 50:12).
- ➔ She is a most powerful nation (Isaiah 47, Jeremiah 50, 51, Revelation 18).
- ➔ The strength of her armies will make her the “Hammer of the whole earth.” (Jeremiah 50:23; Revelation 18:23).
- ➔ She is a land rich in minerals (Jeremiah 51:13) and agriculture (Jeremiah 50:16,26-27; Revelation 18).

- ➔ She is a leading import/export nation. (Jeremiah 51:13, 51; Revelation 18).
- ➔ She sits upon “many waters” (Jeremiah 51:13).
- ➔ She turns on her heritage (Jeremiah 50:11-12).
- ➔ Her leaders lead their flocks astray (Jeremiah 50:6; implied Rev. 18:2).
- ➔ She has a mother nation that remains to her death (Jeremiah 50: 12).
- ➔ This mother nation has the symbol of the lion (Daniel 7:4; Ezekiel 38:13; Jeremiah 51:38; Psalms 17:12).
- ➔ She will turn against her own people (Jeremiah 50:7,33; 51:35; 39; Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7; 17:6; 18:24).
- ➔ She trades with many via ships all year round (Revelation 18:17-18).

## **JEREMIAH NOTES THE JUDGMENTS WHICH BEFALL THE NATION OR ENTITY REFERENCED ABOVE**

- ➔ JEREMIAH 50: “This is the word the Lord spoke through Jeremiah... ‘Babylon will be captured... A nation from the north will attack her and lay waste her land...So Babylonia will be plundered; all who plunder her will have their fill...’ ‘Take up your positions around Babylon, all you who draw the bow. Shoot at her! Spare no arrows for she has sinned against the Lord. She surrenders, her towers fall. The noise of battle is in the land, the noise of great destruction! How broken and shattered is the hammer of the whole earth! Come against her from afar...’ ‘See, I am against you, you arrogant one,’ declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty, ‘for your day has come...’”
- ➔ JEREMIAH 51: “See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Leb Kamai.” (this name is an athbash – an acronym or code based on numbering Hebrew letters.) The reference here is the equivalent of Chaldea, which Jeremiah 25:26 associates with Babylon. “Babylon was a gold cup in the Lord’s hand...Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Wail over her! Get balm for her pain; perhaps she can be healed. The Lord will carry out His purpose...You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your end has come...I will surely fill you with

troops...and they will shout in triumph over you..."Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trampled...Babylon will be captured, the boast of the whole earth seized!"

#### **Option 4: America is One of The Young Lions in Ezekiel 38.**

Ezekiel 38:13 states, "Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, 'Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?'"

The above passage notes that Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish resist (or at least question) the vast army of the north that is approaching Israel. The question is, Who are the people of Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish? Several plausible possibilities exist.

- ➔ Sheba and Dedan are referenced as the sons of Cush (Genesis 10:7). Sheba and Dedan could be a general reference to the people who occupy lands to the east of Israel (Genesis 25:1-6).
- ➔ Tarshish is harder to place. However, most Bible scholars believe it to be among the kingdoms in the west, including the British Isles and Spain.
- ➔ America is a young nation. Its birth has links to both Spain and Britain. Hence, some believe America could be one of Ezekiel's young lions.

#### **Summary**

The goal of this chapter is not to frighten, but to inform. Through prophecy, God provides warning and insight. Note that the Bible, with a few exceptions, does not direct believers to flee. Rather, believers are directed to take a stand and be a light. A time of tribulation and judgment is coming, but so is the Rapture. Let God's people be found faithful and active in Great Commission work when the Lord returns.

*The Lord*

**YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU**

**HE IS MIGHTY TO SAVE**

*He will take great delight in you*

**HE WILL QUIET YOU WITH HIS LOVE**

**HE WILL REJOICE OVER YOU**

*with singing*

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

## COMING TO THE EARTH

*Judgments not mentioned in the book of Revelation*

This chapter profiles a number of coming judgments not specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation. Note that these judgments will come, not because God does not care about humanity, but because humanity is willful. God knows there are times when mankind only responds to what one might call, 'divine tough love.' The verse below notes the rationale for God's actions.

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*"At night my soul longs for You. Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9)*

### Scriptural references of coming judgments

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*"Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered...The LORD will judge the ends of the earth...He will give strength to His king, and will exalt...His anointed" (1 Samuel 2:10).*

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*"[God] shakes the earth...and its pillars tremble..." (Job 9:6)*

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*"The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook" (Psalm 77:18).*

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*“...Go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs before the terror of the LORD...when He arises to make the earth tremble” (Isaiah 2:21).*

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*“He is the LORD...His judgments are [on]...the earth.” (1 Chronicles 16:14)*

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*“Mountains quake...and hills dissolve; the earth is upheaved by His presence...and the inhabitants in it” (Nahum 1:5).*

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*“Then the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare by the rebuke of the Lord...” (2 Samuel 22:16).*

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*“You have made the land quake, You have split it open; heal its breaches, for it totters” (Psalms 60:2).*

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*“Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants...The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word.” (Isaiah 24:1-6)*

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*“...the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away like a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree. For My sword...shall descend for judgment upon Edom and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction...” (Isaiah 34:4-15).*

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*“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place...” (Isaiah 13:13).*

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*“...They pour out drink offerings to other gods to spite Me... Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, My anger, and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it will burn and not be quenched’” (Jeremiah 7:18-20).*

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*“Therefore wait for Me,” declares the LORD, “For the day when I rise up as a witness indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by... fire...” (Zephaniah 3:8-9).*

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*“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard...and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again” (Isaiah 24:20).*

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*“The earth is broken asunder...split through [and]...shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard...for its transgression are heavy upon it...” (Isaiah 24:19)*

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*“Hear, O peoples...listen, O earth...and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple. For behold, the LORD is coming...He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth” (Micah 1:5-7).*

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*“Do they spite Me?” declares the LORD. “Is it not themselves they spite, to their own shame?” Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on the beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it will burn and not be quenched.” (Jeremiah 7:19-20)*

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*“For the stars of Heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine” (Isaiah 13:10).*

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*“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease...” (Isaiah 13:11).*

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*“You have made the land quake, You have split it open; heal its breaches, for it totters” (Psalm 60:2).*

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*“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem...” (Isaiah 24:23).*

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*“And when I shall put thee out, I will...make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of Heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 32:7-8).*

## THE CHURCHES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Lord's message to the seven churches in the book of Revelation may seem dated and mysterious. None of the churches mentioned are in existence today, the names and places are unfamiliar, and the writing is rich in imagery and symbolism. Nevertheless, the Lord's message to the seven churches is timeless and relevant. The Lord's message was necessary for them to hear, and is essential for us to grasp. This section is designed to encourage and inform as it profiles the Lord's message to each of the seven churches.

**A Prophetic Message:** Many Bible scholars believe that embodied in Lord's message to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, there is an application for an actual ancient Church, there is an application for the Church today, there is an application for the individual, and there is a prophetic application.

### **The application for the ancient church**

Scholars such as Sir William Ramsay have verified that the seven churches in Revelation were actual first-century churches. These churches, located in cities on the western side of present-day Turkey, lined the Roman Imperial Post Road, which connected the gateway of 'Asia' to Rome. Several of these cities were great metropolises—Ephesus, for example, had a population of about 250,000 when John wrote. Others, such as Thyatira, were more like frontier outposts than great cities. A church served each of these cities—many were likely planted by the Apostle Paul and his team when he used Ephesus as a base for his ministry for about three years.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 Jesus imparts a particular message to seven distinct churches located in seven different cities. Scholars note that there were about 100 churches in the greater 'Asian' region at the time of John's writing. So then, the question is: Why these seven churches? These churches were not the largest or most notable, or what some might call the best of the best (two of the seven churches in the book of Revelation had grave issues). Many believe Jesus chose to speak to these churches because their location and ministry were representative of both future periods in Church History (the prophetic application), and the major issues that individuals and churches struggle with very day.

- ➔ Ephesus struggled with priorities. They had "forgotten their first love" which is to say, they had neglected to demonstrate proper affection and devotion to their foremost love—Jesus Christ.
- ➔ Smyrna faced great persecution and oppression. The name of the city has a tie to the word, myrrh, which is a perfume associated with suffering and death. Note that the pleasant fragrance of myrrh is only released when it is 'crushed,' and that this correlates to the ministry of the 'suffering servant' as presented in Isaiah 53.
- ➔ Pergamum slipped into compromise. Pergamum is a compound word meaning mixed (as in a negative sense) and union. Located in a great pagan center known as, The City of Temples, this church struggled to remain pure. The Altar of Pergamos, which is infamous in history, was located there. In time, this church embraced elements of paganism.
- ➔ Thyatira represents a falling away from truth and profound apostasy. This city had ties to ancient Babylonian mythology which, in addition to being marked by violence and sensuality, had a particular ability to pervert (corrupt) true spiritual principles. For example, in Babylonian mythology, snake symbols are good (not evil). The 'star of the dawn' (see Isaiah 14) did fall from heaven because of sin and pride, the mythology teaches that his fall was an injustice—one that will be rectified in the end time. There is a chief god, but often this deity is presented as feminine. There is a son of the king associated with light and glory. The king's son, Tammuz (later called Baal), comes to power through murder and requires violence from

his followers. The ancient Babylonian religion was not just simply another faith—it was an anti-faith—a religious system built on distorted truths. Thyatira struggled with being able to discern truth from error, and allowed false teachings to enter the Church. Satan is a master deceiver and would have believers forget that a half truth is a full lie.

- ➔ Sardis was a divided city that perceived itself as being better than it was. The word ‘Sardis’ is plural. The city of Sardis had an upper and lower section—separated by a relatively short distance, but required more than an hour’s travel time. Both sections referred to themselves as Sardis. Resting atop a 1500’ cliff sat the upper portion of the city. This rather strong strategic position led city leaders to boast of their invincibility. However, their great wealth (King Midas and gold are said to have come from there) and location did not save them from military conquest (multiple times). Historians reference Sardis as a city of false pretensions. This mindset crept into the heart of the church and is reflected in Jesus’ stern exhortation: “You think that you are [have a reputation for being] alive—but you are dead” (Revelation 3:1b). The Church at Sardis was evaluating itself against man’s standards, not God’s.
- ➔ Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities noted in the book of Revelation. To this church, Jesus offered only words of commendation and promise. This church was strong, loving and faithful. In the 14th century, Philadelphia stood alone as the last Christian city in the entire region. Jesus commends this church for its ability to endure, to remain faithful to His Word, and to not deny His name. To the faithful, He promises a great reward and an escape from “the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world...” (Revelation 3:10b).
- ➔ Laodicea, like Pergamum and Sardis, is associated with apostasy. This church did not think itself significant as the Church at Sardis did—but was comfortable and complacent. This ‘lukewarm’ church was an offense to Jesus and received a stern rebuke in Revelation 3:16. Their wealth and prosperity contributed to their lack of reliance on God. The lesson here is that our security needs to be fixed on the Lord (Psalm 62:1-2), and our faith needs to be ever growing and active (James 2-3).

### **The application for the believer and Church today**

- ➔ The message to the Church at Ephesus reminds believers of the importance of demonstrating proper affection and devotion to their first love—the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ➔ The Lord’s word to the Church at Smyrna reminds believers that God can use suffering and opposition to bring about spiritual growth and an increased witness. It is important to note that though the Church of Smyrna suffered terribly under Roman persecution, it was perhaps the most vibrant and Great Commission-oriented of the churches.
- ➔ The message to the Church at Pergamum warns believers not to embrace (become in union with) the things of the world (2 Cor. 6:14).
- ➔ The message to the Church at Thyatira reminds believers that the enemy often slyly manipulates, twists and distorts the truth. Believers are enjoined to “Test all things and hold to that which is good [and true]” (1 Thess. 5:21).
- ➔ The message to the Church at Sardis reminds believers that a divided city is not a great city, that false pretensions lead to disaster, and that having a reputation for good is not the same as actually being good. It is the united and faithful church that will be blessed. In evaluating our effectiveness and spirituality believers must not seek man’s assessment, but God’s. It is God’s expectations and standards that believers must strive to meet.
- ➔ The message to the Church at Philadelphia reminds believers of the importance of love, endurance, truth and being a witness. To the faithful Jesus promises a great reward and an escape from “the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world...” (Rev. 3:10b)
- ➔ The message to the Church at Laodicea is somber and reminds believers that the ‘lukewarm’ church (and a ‘lukewarm’ faith) is not acceptable in the sight of Jesus. Believers must put their trust in the Lord, and remember that complacency is viewed as contemptable. (Psa. 62:1-2; Jas. 2-3).

### **The prophetic nature of the message to the seven churches**

Many scholars believe that the message to the seven churches in Revelation prophetically points forward to a future period in the history of the Church. Though there is some dispute on this supposition, one can see that if the message to these churches were different, or if there was a change in the order

of the messages to these churches, the supposition would have no support. It is the unique order, city history, and individual elements of each churches' history that make the theory compelling.

What follows is a brief presentation of the possible prophetic applications of the messages to the seven churches in the book of Revelation:

- ➔ The Church at Ephesus is said to represent the age of the Apostles and early expansion of the New Testament Church. There was a mighty beginning, quickly followed by a tendency to neglect to demonstrate proper affection and devotion to their first love—Jesus Christ. This church is said to represent the period from 33 A.D. to 100 A.D.
- ➔ The Church at Smyrna represents the age of persecution (primarily at the hands of 10 notorious Roman Caesars). This church represents roughly the period from 100 A.D. to 313 A.D.
- ➔ The Church at Pergamum represents the age of compromise. The first 'Christian Caesar' was Constantine. There are questions about the genuine nature of his faith, but his coming to power early in the fourth century does coincide with the reversal of many terrible laws designed to persecute and oppress Christians. This relaxing of prohibitions sounds like a great positive, but for many, the relaxing of these prohibitions coincided with a reduction of passion regarding living out one's faith. As pressure diminished, the Christian Church slid into compromise and complacency. The period of 313 A.D. to 600 A.D. saw the church weaken, and embrace worldly elements in various aspects of its government, structure, and doctrine.
- ➔ The Church at Thyatira is said to represent a period of grave apostasy. It points to a period of history (roughly 600-1517 A.D.) wherein various aspects of church doctrine, practice and motive were corrupt. The Inquisitions, the Crusades, the development of the political/military arm of 'the church,' the sale of indulgences, the elevation of the clergy, and the embracing of false doctrines took place during this dark time.
- ➔ The Church at Sardis represents the age of division, false pretention and near death (1517—1648 A.D.). It is during this church age that the Holy Roman

Empire fades and the Protestant Reformation begins. It also represents a time of false pretensions as the 16th century Catholic Church saw no need to reform. This position led to a split (Protestants and Catholics), and within 200 years the Protestant arm became fractured by the rise of various denominations. Though there are some positive happenings in this church age, it is known as a dark period in church history.

- ➔ The Church at Philadelphia is said to represent a time of love, spiritual growth, and championing the name of Christ. Between 1648 and 1900 A.D., revival broke out in many places across the globe. Great preachers such as Whitfield, Spurgeon, Sunday, Finney, and Wesley were well received and ushered-in a new era of respect for the church. There was a hunger for Bible study, and many worked to establish new Bible Colleges, seminaries, and missionary training and sending centers. This period of history marks one of the high points of the Christian Church.
- ➔ The Church at Laodicea is said to represent the last era for the current form of the Christian Church. Sadly, prophecy notes that during this period there will be complacency, compromise, and egregious apostasy. 2000 years ago, the church at Laodicea was sternly rebuked for manifesting these characteristics. The Church of the last age will suffer the same fate.

The prophetic nature of the seven churches in the book of Revelation may also point back in time to periods in Old Testament history. The simple chart on the next page notes possible future and past associations to these seven churches.

## SEVEN STAGES/AGES OF CHURCH HISTORY

<b>CHURCH</b>	<b>CHURCH HISTORY TYPIFIED</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>ISRAEL'S HISTORY TYPIFIED</b>	<b>VERSES</b>
Ephesus	The Church led by the Apostles	A.D. 30-100	The beginning (Exodus)	Rev. 2:1-7+
Smyrna	The persecuted and expanding Church	A.D. 100 - 313	Israel's wandering and entering Canaan	Rev. 2:8-11+
Pergamum	The Church of Constantine and Compromise	A.D. 313 - 600	The period of the Judges	Rev. 2:12-17+
Thyatira	The Church of the Dark Ages	A.D. 600-1517	Evil kings and Jezebel	Rev. 2:18-29+
Sardis	The Church of the Reformation	A.D. 1517-1648	The exile and return of Israel	Rev. 3:1-6+
Philadelphia	The Church of missionary movements	A.D. 1648-1900	Rebuilding projects and recommitments	Rev. 3:7-13+
Laodicea	The Church of the Apostasy	A.D. 1900-today	The silent period between the Testaments	Rev. 3:14-22+

## Summary

This section of the book was written to provide insight into an ancient message that has prophetic meaning and practical application. All of Scripture is inspired, useful and important (2 Timothy 3:16). Though the full meaning of the Lord's message to the seven churches in the book of Revelation may be difficult to grasp, it is vital that individuals today invest time in study and seek the Lord for understanding. The warnings of admonitions of yesterday apply to the church, and individuals, today.

Bible prophecy in general, and the book of Revelation in particular, reveals how God will move in the last days. The message of the book of Revelation is that God has a plan, God is good, and that in the end good will prevail.

The Lord's word to the churches in the book of Revelation likely prophetically points to future periods of persecution and apostasy. If this is true, then we are now living in the last age represented by the church of Laodicea. Jesus said that during this time there will be troubles, wars, and rumors of wars (Matt. 24).

Jesus prophesied that in the last days "love would wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). The Apostle Paul wrote of how there would be a turning away from the truth (2 Thess. 2). Let every strong believer do their part to help the Church be the light God has called it to be during this important time in history.

## THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

The Millennium and the Millennial Reign of Christ are referenced more than 2000 times in Scripture! Many view Revelation 20 as the principle (if not the sole) reference to the Millennium in the Bible. However, there are more references to the Millennium in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. Scholars note that there are more than 1800 references to the Millennium in the Old Testament and more than 300 in the New Testament. 85% of the books in the New Testament reference the Millennium. The Millennium and Millennial Reign of Christ are subjects that concern the future of the earth and believers in Christ. This section seeks to provide an informative, encouraging biblical overview of this prominent Bible subject.

### Familiar references

Many do not realize that some familiar Scripture passages are actually references to the Millennial Kingdom.

- ➔ Jesus referenced the Millennium in the Lord's Prayer when He said, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-13)
- ➔ Isaiah made reference to the Millennium in his Messianic prophecy. "For to us a child is born, to us, a son is given, **and the government will be on his shoulders**. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness.**" (Isaiah 9:6-9)

- ➔ In his vision of future kingdoms, the prophet Daniel foresaw the Millennial Kingdom and wrote: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” (Daniel 2:1-44)

References to the Millennial Kingdom flow through the Old and New Testaments. Various Millennial Views were profiled earlier (pages 76-77). This section profiles what Scripture notes we should expect during the Millennium?

## WHAT THE MILLENNIUM WILL BE LIKE (according to the premillennial view)

### **Satan will no longer oppress the earth or God’s beloved**

- ➔ “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. But after these things, he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3).

### **The earth will be restored and renewed**

- ➔ “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17-25).
- ➔ Jesus will reign as King (Isaiah 2:4; 42:1).
- ➔ The world will be at peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; 32:18).
- ➔ Jesus will serve as King and righteous judge. “He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their

swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Micah 4:3).

- ➔ Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1–3). All inhabitants will freely worship God (Isaiah 2:2-3).

### **The earth will be at peace**

- ➔ “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness’” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

### **Believers who survive the Tribulation will inhabit the New Earth. Joining them will be Tribulation period martyrs and believers who are currently in heaven.**

- ➔ Jesus will rule in love and with a “rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9 Revelation 2:27, 12:5, 19:15). Tribulation period believers will receive special honor (Matthew 25:23; Luke 19:16-19).
- ➔ Surviving believers from the tribulation period will live in renewed mortal bodies during Christ’s earthly reign (Zechariah 14:16-21; Revelation 20:7-10). Longevity will be the norm.
- ➔ Believers who are currently in heaven with Christ will reign with Him in this Kingdom (Daniel 7:18).
  - » “...For You were slain, and have redeemed us...by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue...and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).
  - » These believers will possess the Kingdom (Daniel 7:18-27).

- » These believers will lead with Christ as their King (Job 36:7).
- » These believers will serve as judges, officers, and leaders (Psalm 149; Isaiah 60:17).
- » These believers will teach truth (Psalm 37:29-31; Jeremiah 3:15).
- » "...They shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

### **Israel's borders will expand**

**Note: This could happen as a result of the wars leading up to (or in the early days of) the Tribulation.**

- ➔ The Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10)
  - » In the days of Joshua and the kings, Israel did claim some of the lands God promised to Abraham. However, Israel has never possessed all of the lands God promised in Genesis 15:18–20 and Numbers 34:1-12.
  - » On the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, God promised: "To your descendants, I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates..." Genesis 15:18-21
  - » The prophet Ezekiel reminded Israel: "Thus says the Lord God: These are the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance. This shall be the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, by the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which is on the border of Hauran). Thus, the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. This is the north side." Ezekiel 47:13-17
  - » Through the prophet Ezekiel God further promised: "On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. This is the east side. The south

side, toward the south, shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. This is the south side, toward the south. The west side shall be the Great Sea, from the southern boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This is the west side. Thus, you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel.” (Ezekiel 47:18-21)

- » Through Moses God promised: “If any of you are driven to the farthest parts...from there the LORD your God will gather you...Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you...” (Deuteronomy 30:4-6)

### **There will be a new Temple in Jerusalem**

- ➔ “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14:16-21)

### **Covenants will be fulfilled**

- ➔ God’s covenant regarding the land and future of Israel will be realized during the Millennial reign of Christ (Genesis 15:18-21).
- ➔ God’s covenant with David centers on how his heir would sit on the throne and rule Israel (2 Sam. 7:16). Jesus is the fulfillment of this covenant, which accounts for the recording of his genealogy via both His step-father (Matthew 1:1–17) and His mother (Luke 3:23–38). The Jews acknowledged the covenant when they laid down palm branches and their cloaks as Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–17). However, they wrongly expected Jesus to be a military and political leader that would liberate Israel from the Romans. They did not understand that 2000 years ago Jesus was preparing to introduce a New Covenant of Grace, not fulfill the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant will be satisfied via the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20:4,6).

## God's covenant as profiled through Jeremiah and Ezekiel

- ➔ The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33)
  - » The prophet Ezekiel provides additional details: "You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God." (Ezekiel 36:28)

## Life on earth will be different

- ➔ Longevity: "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old...they shall build houses and...plant vineyards and eat their fruit..." (Isaiah 65:20-22)
- ➔ Docile animals: "...The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' Says the LORD." (Isaiah 65:34-35)
- ➔ Peaceful coexistence: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9)
- ➔ No War: "...They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks...nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Mic. 4:3). Isaiah 2:4 is a similar passage. There the prophet notes that not only will there no longer be war, but there will be no weapons, nor will battle strategies be taught.

### **The geography and topography of the earth will be different**

- ➔ "...I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing...the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying." (Isaiah 65:17-19)
- ➔ An earthquake will divide Jerusalem into three parts (Revelation 16:18-19). The earthquake will occur when Jesus touches His foot on the Mount of Olives. Water will flow out from the city after the earthquake. (Zechariah 14:4-8). The millennial temple will stand over this river (Ezekiel 47:1-12).
- ➔ Jerusalem will be a prominent high point on Earth during the Millennium (Isaiah 2:2). The great earthquake at the Second Coming of Jesus will level mountains and make islands disappear (Revelation 16:20; Isaiah 40:4-5).
- ➔ There will be a new fountain of living water. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). Zechariah 14:8 notes where the waters will flow. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former (eastern) sea, and half of them toward the hinder (western) sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." The living waters will flow out of Jerusalem in two directions, to the west to the great sea (Mediterranean) and east to the Dead Sea (or Salt Sea). Also see Ezekiel 47:1-7.
- ➔ This new fountain/river will impact the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea has no outlet and is presently seven times saltier than the oceans. No fish live in the Dead Sea at this time. Ezekiel 47:8-11 notes, however, that the waters of the Dead Sea will be healed. "Then said he unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that...there shall be a very great multitude of fish..."

### **Worship during the Millennial Reign of Christ**

- ➔ Jerusalem will be a center for worship. "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the

families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship...on them there will be no rain..." (Zechariah 14:16-19)

- » Ezekiel 40-48 notes that God will re-institute Temple worship and sacrifices in the Millennium. Many believe the purpose for these sacrifices is to commemorate the sacrificial work of Christ. This will serve as a stark picture and solemn reminder of the penalty Christ paid in dying for our sins on the cross.
- » "But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." (Hebrews 10:3)
- ➔ Gentiles will keep the Feast of Tabernacles which was formerly a Feast just for Israel. To do so, individuals will travel to Jerusalem once each year in the fall to "worship the King." Ezekiel 43:7 notes: "And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne...[is] where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel..."
- ➔ It may be that the Feast of Tabernacles takes on a slightly different meaning during the Millennial Reign of Christ as the focus will no longer be Israel's rescue from Egypt, but rather, how Christ has saved his children from all over the world. The prophet Jeremiah notes: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST?

- ➔ **War and final judgment:** "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the

nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Rev. 20:7-10)

- ➔ **The great judgment and reward of the saints:** “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

### Characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom

ATTRIBUTE	MATTHEW 24	SCRIPTURES
Duration	One thousand years.	Rev. 20:2-5+
Theocratic Rule	God will rule in the person of Jesus on the throne of David. King David reigns as a prince under Christ.	2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:20ff Dan. 7:13-14 Isa. 24:23; Jer. 30:9, 33:15-17; Eze. 34:23-24, 45:22; Hos.3:5; Luke 1:30-33

ATTRIBUTE	MATTHEW 24	SCRIPTURES
Representative Rule	The apostles will represent Christ ruling over the twelve tribes. Church-age and Tribulation saints will represent Christ ruling over the Gentiles.	Isa. 32:1; Dan. 7:17-27; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21+; 5:10+
Universal Rule	Christ's rule will extend both spiritually and literally over the earth.	Psalm 2:6-9, 72:8; Dan. 2:44, 4:34, 7:14, 27; Mic.4:1-2; Zec. 9:10
Seat of Government	Christ will rule from Jerusalem.	Isa. 62:1; Isa. 65:18-19; Eze. 48:15-19; Luke 21:24; Rev.11:2+.
Residents	Resurrected and glorified saints will rule in the midst of Christ's "brothers" (the faithful Jewish remnant), and the "sheep" (faithful Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom to form its initial population. Children will be born to those who enter the kingdom in their natural bodies.	Dan. 12:2; Isa.26:19; Isa. 65:20, 23; Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:4+
The Curse	Many aspects of the curse (Gen. 3:15-19) will be reversed. People will live to a great age, but death will still occur. As before the flood, animals will be docile and will no longer fear man. Living waters will flow from beneath the sanctuary of the Millennial Temple bringing life to the regions they water.	Isa. 11:6-9, 65:20,25; Eze. 47:8-12; Zec. 8:4, 14:8; Rev. 21:1-2+

ATTRIBUTE	MATTHEW 24	SCRIPTURES
Productivity	The earth will be fruitful and all will enjoy the fruit of their labors. The earth will be fruitful and all will enjoy the fruit of their labors.	Psalm 67:6-7, 72:16; Isa. 35:1, 55:13,65:22; Joel 2:24-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14
Mount Zion	The region of Mount Zion will be lifted up to form the Mountain of the Lord's House.	Isa. 2:2; 56:7; Eze. 20:40, 40:2; Zec.14:4-11, Mic. 4:1
Israel	Israel will inhabit the Promised Land permanently. She will serve as the focal point of the nations because Jesus will reign from Jerusalem.	Gen. 13:15, 17:8; 1Chr.17:9; Psa.105:8-11, Isa. 60:21; Jer. 3:18, 30:3, 31:8-9; Eze. 37:25, 39:25-29; Amos 9:11-15
Peace	All implements of war will be destroyed in favor of implements of productivity. Nations will no longer go to war. Disagreements between nations will be judged by Christ from Jerusalem.	Psa.72:3+ Isa. Isa. 2:5, 9:7 Eze. 37:26; Mic. 4:3
Worship	A temple will stand in Jerusalem and all the nations will go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles.	Isa. 2:3, 56:6-7, 66:20-23; Eze. 43:20, 43:26, 45:15, 45:17- 20; Jer. 33:18; Dan. 9:24; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7+ Zec. 6:12-15, 8:20-23, 14:16-21; Mal. 3:3-4
Demonic Realm	Satan will be bound in the abyss.	Isa. 34:8-17; Rev. 18:2+, 20:3+



**“...No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart  
of man imagined, what God has prepared for  
those who love him”  
( 1 Corinthians 2:9)**

## **THE DANGER OF SETTING DATES FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST**

Predicting dates for the return of Christ or end of the world is not new. Predictions are said to come by dreams, visions, mathematical calculations, secret codes, sacred writings, angelic visitations, and more. Over the centuries many have suggested dates for these events, some have done so with great confidence and authority. However, it seems that in recent decades there has been an increase in the number of categorical statements regarding the return of Christ or the end of the world.

The Bible is a source of truth, insight, and wisdom, but it is possible to misinterpret important prophetic passages. When strong predictions from “Christian leaders” fail to unfold as predicted, the credibility of church teaching suffers. Unfortunately, a history of miscalculations has minimized the potency of wise biblically-based warnings regarding the end times. The wise do not share in the folly of date-setting mania, but do remain vigilant, and believe that the best course of action is to live as if Christ could return at any time.

Christians, and particularly Christian leaders, must be cautious about making predictions and pronouncements regarding the precise timing of end-time events. Acts 1:6.7 notes: “It is not for you to know the times or the season, which the Father hath put in His own power.” Still, this clear admonition has not stopped many from setting dates which likely discouraged believers and hindered individuals from coming to faith. The next page details a few of the more notable failed predictions.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>44</b>	Theudas declared himself the Messiah, taking 400 people with him into the desert to fight the Romans.
<b>53</b>	Before the end of the first century, there was talk that Christ's return had already taken place. The Thessalonians panicked and asked Paul for clarification when they heard a rumor that the day of the Lord was at hand, and they had missed the Rapture (see 2 Thessalonians 2).
<b>130</b>	Rabbi Jose, the Galilean, taught the Messiah would come 60 years, after the destruction of the Temple.
<b>381</b>	Tichonus, a 4th Century writer, taught the world would end in 381.
<b>400</b>	Hippolytus "calculated that 5,500 years separated Adam and Christ and that there would be 6,000 years (six full 'days') until the seventh the day of rest." His calculations in 234 indicated the world would end in 434.
<b>400</b>	Rabbi Dosa (2-3rd Century) said the Messiah would come at the end of 400 years. This was based on a wrongful interpretation of Gen. 15:13.
<b>435</b>	Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (135-220) believed the Messiah would come 365 years after the destruction of the Temple (an event that happened in the year 70).
<b>470</b>	Rabbi Hanina (3rd Century) taught that the Messiah would come 400 years after Temple Destruction. (470).
<b>500</b>	A priest and theologian in mid-third century predicted Christ would return in the year 500. He based this prediction on the dimensions of Noah's ark.
<b>950</b>	Based on a loose acrostic of the words of Christ (in Latin), Paulin Blanc predicted that the end of the world would be in 950.
<b>950</b>	<i>"A Treatise on the Antichrist"</i> by Adso of Montier-en-Der, (which referenced a variety of 10th-century woes and tribulations) predicted that the end of the world would be 950 A.D., and caused widespread fear.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1000</b>	Paris pastors taught that the Antichrist would come in the year 1000 (and that great judgment would follow). Widespread panic ensued when within a few years, the German army of Emperor Otto I lost a key battle because of a solar eclipse that the soldiers mistook as a sign of the end of the world, a supernova appeared in 1006, and the Muslim caliph, Al-Hakim, destroyed the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in 1009 A.D.
<b>1000</b>	During December 999, many were on their best behavior, church attendance increased, worldly goods were sold and given to the poor, swarms of pilgrims headed east to meet the Lord in Jerusalem, buildings went unrepaired, crops were left unplanted, and criminals were set free from jails.
<b>1000</b>	Otto returns to Aachen and exhumes Charlemagne's body on the day of Pentecost of the year 1000, in the hope of forestalling the end of the world.
<b>1003</b>	Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire writes that the Antichrist will appear in 1003.
<b>1005</b>	A terrible famine in Europe was said to launch the Tribulation period.
<b>1010</b>	Brythfird commentaries note that the 1000 years of the Apocalypse are complete ( <i>a misreading of the duration of Tribulation and Millennial periods</i> ). In this, he supports Augustine's allegorical interpretation of Revelation.
<b>1026</b>	Richard of St. Vaast leads a great pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with the expectation of meeting the returning Christ.
<b>1033</b>	This year was feared to mark the beginning of the Tribulation period because it marked 1000 years since Christ's crucifixion.
<b>1040</b>	An eclipse and massive earthquake lead to penitential processions in Jouarre-Rebais and many predictions that Jesus would return in 1040 or 1050.

DATE	THE PREDICTED EVENT
<b>1135</b>	The Calabrian monk, Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) is a key figure in medieval apocalypticism. He wrote, " <i>Exposition on Revelation</i> " and prophecy books entitled, " <i>Book of Figures</i> " and " <i>Age of the Spirit</i> ." His writings influenced a broad range of medieval happenings, including the founding of the Franciscan Order, and the belief that they would be the spiritual elite described in Joachim's " <i>Age of the Spirit</i> ." Using Joachim's hints, writers concluded that the "Age of Grace" would end and the "Age of the Spirit" would begin in 1260. This prophecy, mixed with German social unrest, created a myth surrounding Frederick II (1220 to 1250). Many believed that Frederick was the "Emperor of the Last Days" who would usher in the new Millennium. The myth gained force when Frederick seized Jerusalem in 1229. When he died in 1250, a new myth started that Frederick would return from the dead.
<b>1186</b>	The " <i>Letter of Toledo</i> " (an open letter from astrologers to the Pope) warned that most the of earth was about to be destroyed and advised individuals to hide in caves.
<b>1415</b>	The Taborites, founded in 1415, looked back to Joachim for their prophetic beliefs. They believed that once their persecutors were defeated, Christ would return and rule the world from Mount Tabor, a mountain south of Prague. Their communal activities eventually turned violent, prompted by writings with phrases such as, " <i>Accursed be the man who withholds his sword from shedding the blood of the enemies of Christ.</i> "
<b>1420</b>	The Taborites of Czechoslovakia predicted, " <i>every city would be annihilated by fire</i> " in 1420, and that only five mountain strongholds would survive the coming Tribulation period.
<b>1524</b>	Muntzer, a leader of German peasants, announced that Jesus Christ would return after he and his men destroyed the " <i>high and mighty</i> ." This belief sparked a very lopsided battle between the ill-equipped poor and well-armed government troops. Outnumbered, Muntzer rallied his men by claiming he received a vision from God promising he would catch the cannon balls of the enemy in the sleeves of his cloak. Muntzer and his followers were annihilated...by cannon fire.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1533</b>	Michael Stiefel (1486-1567) wrote that the return and judgment of Christ would take place at 8:00 AM, October 19, 1533.
<b>1534</b>	Churches in Munster, Strasbourg, and Amsterdam claim that they are the New Jerusalem and preach (on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1534) that the return of Christ is imminent.
<b>1572</b>	Benedictus Aretius of Berne (1505-1547) calculated 1260 years added to the year Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire ( $312+1260 = 1572$ ) should be the year of Christ's return.
<b>1621</b>	Sir Henry Finch's book, <i>The Calling of the Jews</i> suggests that the end of the world would come in 1621.
<b>1650</b>	The <i>Fifth Monarchy Men</i> looked for Jesus to establish a theocracy. To make ready His coming, they took up arms and tried to seize England by force. The restoration of the British monarchy led to the death of the movement in 1660.
<b>1666</b>	The bubonic plague took more than 100,000 lives in 1666. In the same year, the Great Fire of London destroyed most of the city. The fact that the year ended with the Beast's number (666) led to a belief that the Tribulation had begun and that the second coming of Christ would be in the year, 1673.
<b>1809</b>	Fortune-teller Mary Bateman claimed to have a 'magic chicken' that laid eggs with end time messages on them. One reported message claimed that Christ was coming in 1809. The uproar she created ended when she was caught forcing an egg into the hen's oviduct.
<b>1814</b>	Spiritualist Joanna Southcott made the startling claim that she, by virgin birth, would produce a second Jesus Christ. Her abdomen began to swell and so did the crowds of people around her. The time for the birth came and passed - she died soon after. An autopsy revealed it was a tumor.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1836</b>	Evangelist John Wesley wrote that “the time, times and half a time” of Revelation 12:14 was a reference to 10/18/1836 (the date of Jesus’ return).
<b>1843-1844</b>	From his studies, William Miller determined that the second coming would happen sometime between 1843-1844. A spectacular meteor shower in 1833 lent credibility to his claim. Many slept in open graves anticipating the return of Christ. The build-up of anticipation continued until March 21, 1844, when Miller’s one-year timetable ran out. Some followers set another date of Oct 22, 1844. This too failed.
<b>1874</b>	In 1874, the doctrine of an “invisible return of Christ’ was advanced by Charles Russell, founder of the Jehovah Witness Church. The 1874 date later changed to 1914 (coinciding with WWI, Influenza and several seismic anomalies). <i>Charles Russell also presented conflicting prophecies including an anticipated Rapture date of 1910, and the end of the World in 1914 (also 1918, 1925, 1941 and 1994).</i>
<b>1881</b>	“Mother Shipton” (Cir. 1520), claimed the world would end in 1881.
<b>1910</b>	The return of Haley’s comet was, for many, an indication of the Lord’s second coming.
<b>1953</b>	David Davidson wrote a book titled “ <i>The Great Pyramid, Its Divine Message.</i> ” In it, he predicted that the world would end in August of 1953.
<b>1957</b>	In January 1957, the <i>Watchtower</i> magazine printed that “ <i>Sometime between April 16 and 23, 1957, Armageddon will sweep the world! Millions of persons will perish in its flames, and the land will be scorched.</i> ”
<b>1960</b>	Piazz Smyth, a Scottish astronomer, wrote a book (circa 1860) titled, <i>Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid</i> . This work is responsible for spreading the mysticism of pyramidology throughout the world. He concluded from his research that the Millennium would start before the end of 1960.
<b>1967</b>	When the Jews reclaimed the city of Jerusalem in the summer of 1967, prophecy watchers declared that the “Time of the Gentiles” had come to an end, and looked for a rapture in the fall of that year.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1970's</b>	Moses David founded the religious group, <i>The Children of God</i> . He predicted that the comet referenced in Revelation 8 would hit the earth, probably in the mid-1970's and destroy all life in the United States.
<b>1979</b>	Walter M. Simmons wrote in his booklet, <i>The Day of the Lord</i> (1978), that the final warning sign announcing the end of the world happened on June 28, 1967. Using a peculiar numerical system, he added 12 years, 75 days to June 28, 1967, and announced the world would end on September 10, 1979.
<b>1981</b>	Hal Lindsey boldly declared that "The Rapture" would occur before Dec. 31, 1981. In part, he determined the date of Jesus' promised return by linking the "Jupiter Effect," a planetary alignment that occurs every 179 years to the date of the rebirth of Israel. He predicted that "1982 would be marked by large-scale earthquakes and nuclear plant meltdowns."
<b>1981</b>	Bill Maupin and The Lighthouse Gospel Tract Foundation first established (and printed) a Rapture date of June 28, 1981, and later changed it to May 14, 1988 (to coincide with the date of the founding of the State of Israel).
<b>1982</b>	A group called the <i>Tara Centers</i> placed full-page advertisements in many major newspapers the weekend of April 24-25, 1982 announcing: "The Christ is Now Here!" and predicted that he was to make himself known "within the next two months." After the date passed, they said that the delay was because the " <i>consciousness of the human race was not ready...</i> "
<b>1984</b>	In 1983, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Guru of the Rajneesh movement predicted massive destruction would come in 1984. Cataclysmic events were said to include as large floods and earthquakes, destructive volcanos, nuclear wars, etc. He predicted that Tokyo, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Bombay would disappear.
<b>1986</b>	Moses David of <i>The Children of God</i> faith group predicted that the Battle of Armageddon would take place in 1986. Preceding that event would be a war in which Russia defeats Israel and the United States and establishes of a worldwide Communist dictatorship.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1988</b>	The book <i>88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988</i> provoked considerable unrest in the Christian community.
<b>1988</b>	J R Church's book: <i>Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms</i> intimated that the Tribulation would begin in 1988.
<b>1989</b>	Edgar Whisenant's book, <i>89 Reasons the Rapture will be in 1989</i> argued that the Lord would return for true believers on September 11, 12 or 13 of 1989 (during the Feast of Trumpets)
<b>1995</b>	David Koresh of the Branch Davidian group in Waco Texas changed the name of their commune (1992) from <i>Mt. Carmel to Ranch Apocalypse</i> , because of his belief that the battle of Armageddon would start at the Branch Davidian compound. He calculated that the end would occur in 1995.
<b>1991</b>	A group in Australia predicted Jesus would return via Sydney Harbor at 9:00am on March 31, 1991.
<b>1991</b>	Nation of Islam Leader Louis Farrakhan proclaimed the Gulf War would to be " <i>the War of Armageddon ...</i> "
<b>1991</b>	Menachem Schneerson, a Russian born Rabbi, predicted that the Messiah would come by Sept 9, 1991.
<b>1992</b>	A Korean group called <i>Mission For The Coming Days</i> predicted Oct 28, 1992, as the time for the Rapture.
<b>1992</b>	The <i>Hyoo-go (Rapture) Movement</i> placed a full-page ad in USA Today on Oct. 20, 1991. They predicted the Tribulation would begin on Oct. 28th, 1992 stating: "50 million people will die in earthquakes, 50 million from collapsed buildings, 1.4 billion from World War III and 1.4 billion from a separate Armageddon."
<b>1993</b>	Many suggested that the Rapture would take place in 1993, thinking that the year 2000 was the end of a 6000-year (6 days for God) cycle and that God would rest after 7 years of tribulation (1993 + 7 = 2000).

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1994</b>	In the book, <i>“1994 the Year of Destiny,”</i> F. M. Riley foretold of God’s plan to rapture His people by the fall of 1994.
<b>1994</b>	Harold Camping in his book, <i>“Are You Ready?”</i> predicted the Lord’s return in September 1994. Camping arrived at his conclusions based on numerology (such as finding significance in the number of fish the disciples caught when they were fishing after the resurrection).
<b>1994</b>	When on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, John Hinkle said that God told him: <i>“The most cataclysmic experience that the world has ever known since the resurrection is going to happen...on Thursday, June the ninth.”</i> When nothing notable happened on June 9th, TBN’s Paul Crouch said, <i>“Maybe something was happening invisibly.”</i>
<b>1996</b>	California psychic Sheldon Nidle predicted the end would come when 16 million alien ships (and a host of angels) converge on the Earth on Dec. 17, 1996. Nidle explained the passing of the date by claiming the angles placed us in a holographic projection to preserve us and give us a second chance.
<b>1996</b>	The book, <i>“The Return of Jupiter: End of the world in the light of the Bible”</i> predicted disasters originating in the Pacific Ocean beginning in 1996.
<b>1996</b>	Since 1658, many Christians have accepted the calculations of James Ussher, an Irish Archbishop, who estimated that the first day of creation occurred on October 23rd, 4004 B.C. This led many to mark the time interval between the creation of the world and the birth of Christ to be precisely 4000 years, and that the end would come after 6000 years (6 days for God), which would be 1996 AD.
<b>1997</b>	When Rabin and Arafat signed their peace pact on the White House lawn on Sept 13, 1993, some saw the events as the begin of the tribulation— <i>the beginning of 7 Hebrew (360 days) years of trials, ending in the spring of the year 2000.</i>

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1997</b>	Stan Johnson of the Prophecy Club predicted a 90 percent chance that the Tribulation would start Sept 12, 1997. He based his conclusion on several end-time signs. The date of September 12 was chosen by Johnson because <i>“it will be Jesus’ 2000th birthday and it will also be the Day of Atonement.”</i>
<b>1997 or early 1998</b>	The July 29th, 1997 issue of the <i>Weekly World News</i> carried a statement by a spokesperson of the <i>International Association of Psychics</i> . It stated that 92% of their 120,000 members had the same “end time” vision. Spokesperson Madame Vredeau predicted: <i>“A rise in religious belief. Prophets and saints will appear and lead the faithful to safety. The oceans will shrink. Deserts will expand. Crops will fail; there will be massive starvation, widespread emotional and mental collapse, an increase in crime and violence, changing weather patterns, demons will appear in broad daylight, war, pestilence, and a worldwide plague. Mankind will disappear around the year 2001.”</i>
<b>1997-1999</b>	Russian scientist Vladimir Sobolyovhas of the Rerikh Academy analyzed predictions by Russian “saints, psychics, and seers” such as Nostradamus. He announced his conclusions in September 1997 that: <i>“The earth’s axis will suddenly tilt about 30 degrees before 1999.”</i> He predicted the submerging of Scandinavian countries and Britain in what he termed the <i>Armageddon Flood</i> . He predicted that aliens would intervene and lead the world <i>into the fourth dimension</i> . He argued that these aliens are on earth, but in hiding. Sobolyovhas wrote: <i>“If we completely believed in them, we would get lazy. So they are clever. They stay hidden in the fourth dimension and only show themselves from time to time.”</i>
<b>1997</b>	The Sacerdotal Knights of National Security reported that: <i>“A space alien captured at a UFO landing site in eastern Missouri cracked under interrogation by the CIA and admitted that an extraterrestrial army would attack and destroy the Earth on November 27, 1997...”</i>

DATE	THE PREDICTED EVENT
<b>1997</b>	Dan Millar, of Surrey, BC, Canada and Bob Wadsworth of the <i>Biblical Astronomy</i> newsletter predicted the arrival of the Antichrist on April 10th, 1997. Miller suggested that “we watch news from the Vatican and Jerusalem on that day because he expects some sort of coup by the Antichrist. He expected the Antichrist come to power in the Vatican as Pope Peter II. <i>He determined this, in part, by studying the intersection by two comets near the star Algol in the constellation Perseus. Comets Hyakutake and Hale-Bopp intersected the star on the same date on two consecutive years (Hyakutake in 1996 and Hale-Bopp in 1997). Plotting the two comets’ trajectories over the period APR-1 to APR-30 on the two years forms an almost perfect cross. They intersect between the eyes of the Medusa head that Perseus is holding in his left hand. “Algol” means “Demon Star” in Arabic.</i>
<b>1997</b>	<i>The Vortex of the Star of David</i> religious sect of Luskville, Quebec was quoted as predicting the end of the world on Saturday, March 8th (1997).
<b>1998</b>	Because 666 times three equals 1998 some people pointed to that year as being a prophetically significant.
<b>1998</b>	A Taiwanese cult operating out of Garland Texas predicted Christ would return on Mar 31. The group’s leader, Heng-ming Chen, announced God would return, and then invite the cult members aboard a UFO.
<b>1998</b>	Marilyn Agee predicted an apocalyptic end for humanity on May 31, 1998, in her book <i>The End of the Age</i> . She argued this date will conclude a 6000-year cycle (from the time of Adam to Pentecost, 1998). Agee looked for the Rapture to take place on Pentecost.
<b>1998</b>	Psychic Edgar Cayce predicted that a secret, underground chamber would be discovered between the paws of the Great Sphinx pyramid in Egypt. He predicted that inside this chamber there would be documents revealing the history of Atlantis and that this discovery would trigger the Second Coming of Christ.
<b>1998</b>	The <i>House of Yahweh</i> , Abilene predicted that an end-of-world scenario would unfold in October 1998. They predicted that 80% of the world's population would die by 2001 as a result of nuclear warfare.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>1999</b>	TV newscaster-turned-psyhic Charles Criswell King (in 1968) said that the world as we know it will cease to exist on August 18, 1999.
<b>1999</b>	Hon-Ming Chen founder of <i>God's Salvation Church</i> in Texas predicted that a nuclear war would destroy most of Earth in 1999. He identified a nine-year-old boy as the " <i>Jesus of the East</i> ," stating that he is a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. The group believed that if they could link him up with the " <i>Jesus of the West</i> ," then 100 million lives will be spared. The second Jesus was thought to live in Vancouver BC.
<b>1999</b>	According to the May 27th, 1997 issue of <i>Sun Magazine</i> , the Antichrist is alive today and living in the Middle East. The article predicted he would make himself known on August 11, 1999.
<b>1999</b>	<i>Sun Magazine</i> listed a prediction of "Bible expert" Dotson Meade. He predicts that " <i>something will happen in December, '99, that brings about the war which will end the world as we know it...There will be a vicious cycle of storms and earthquakes that lead to the final battle the world has awaited.</i> "
<b>2000</b>	In the Cookson Hills of eastern Oklahoma lies the fortress-town of Elohim City, where about 100 heavily armed inhabitants worked, prayed and conducted paramilitary drills in the 1990's. A former Mennonite preacher named Robert Millar, 73 envisioned a white Christian nation in North America, led Elohim City in anticipation of an Asiatic invasion of the United States. Millar, inspired by fundamentalist Christianity, KKK-style racism, and astrology, believes that Christ has been revealing himself for the last two millennia. He also predicted that a series of disasters would strike, "probably soon after the year 2000, during which time the unworthy and wicked would be cleansed from the Earth." <i>Convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh phoned friends in Elohim City before the blast.</i>
<b>2000</b>	Michael Drosnin, the author of " <i>The Bible Code</i> ," claimed to find a hidden message in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) that predicted World War III would start in 2000 (or perhaps 2006).

<b>DATE</b>	<b>THE PREDICTED EVENT</b>
<b>2000</b>	According to a November 1997 edition of Weekly World News, the CIA caught a space alien who crash-landed in June (1997) in a New Mexico desert. The report noted that <i>“He is a species that is considerably more developed, both mentally and spiritually, than earthlings. He is the only survivor of the destruction of his world - a planet some 200 light years from Earth. He reports that God is “furious with His creations everywhere.” Apparently none of the species he created turned out well. So, God is systematically working his way across the galaxies, setting fires to the planets and exploding them one by one. Earth will be next!”</i>
<b>2001</b>	<i>Sun Magazine</i> reported in its October 14th, 1997 issue that Noah’s Ark was discovered, undamaged, on a slope near Mount Ararat in Turkey. Inside were <i>“a group of 6 copper-gold-silver scrolls, each 12” square. Scroll 2 reveals that the sun will superheat the earth, melting both polar ice caps and creating a world-wide flood. Scroll 3 revealed that the world would be destroyed on January 31st, 2001.”</i>
<b>2012</b>	The Mayan calendar notes many divisions of time: months of 20 days, years of 360 days, a Katun of 7200 days and a Baktun of 144,000 days. Their calendar started on August 13th, 3114 B.C. with the “birth of Venus.” Some expected the world to end when their long-count calendar expired (12/21/2012).
<b>2014</b>	Harold Camping led tens of thousands to anticipate the rapture (spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in a warning/advertising campaign).
<b>2015</b>	Many were told to expect a rapture in September 2015 due to: a recent completion of a lunar tetrad (each blood moon falling on the days of key Hebrew Festivals), a solar eclipse, computations by Galileo, and associations with Jubilee and Shemittah cycles.
<b>2017</b>	Many were told to expect a rapture due to: a recent solar eclipse and a rare celestial alignment noted in Revelation 12.
<b>2047</b>	According to The Church of !BLAIR!, the human race will “probably be terminated at 3:28 AM (Soho, England time) September 14th, 2047.”

The most important aspect of Bible prophecy does not center on **when** something will happen, but **that** the prophesied event will happen. Prophecy will come about as foretold, but in God's way and in His time. Our calling is to have faith and believe that God will fulfill His promises (not to know *when* His promises will be fulfilled).

Eschatology is a weighty and solemn subject, but it is possible to have peace in the midst of uncertainty. The Apostle Paul wrote of a "peace that surpasses understanding" (Phil. 4:6-7). The first step toward experiencing this peace is to accept Jesus into your heart as Lord and Savior and put your faith in Him.

The timing of some key future events may be unknown, but we can know that in the end, Jesus will return and in the epic struggle of good versus evil, Good will prevail. Until that time there will be unrest. There will be wars and rumors of wars and "troubles." Are you ready? Will you commit to be ALL IN for Him? Are you committed to making serving Him, growing in Him and witnessing for Him the priority of your life? The many free resources on the [www.IAmAWatchman.com](http://www.IAmAWatchman.com) website are designed to help you on your spiritual journey.

God bless you as you strive to grow in Him!

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*"So, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns." Matthew 24:44-46*

**JESUS CHRIST**

COMING SOON

## APPENDIX

### LINKS TO FOLLOW-UP VIDEO TEACHINGS

- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 1:** This video teaching provides a general overview of the wonder and structure of Bible Prophecy. The link is noted below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxiAVPJFBVs&t=1s>
  
- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 2:** This video teaching profiles the precision of Bible Prophecy, and gives special consideration to an amazing set of prophecies found in Ezekiel 4. The link is noted below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFePRv4TjJk>
  
- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 3:** This video teaching profiles the prophecies that have been fulfilled in the last 70 years, and notes what the recent contraction of fulfilled prophecies could indicate. The link is noted below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG5zSXHEiPI>
  
- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 4:** This video teaching profiles the Rapture and provides Scriptural support for the view that a Rapture will take place prior to the rise of the Antichrist and Tribulation period. The link is noted below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wdkk2TK19Q>
  
- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 5:** This video teaching profiles the Antichrist and notes his nature, his goals, and the characteristics that will define his reign. The link is noted here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3alJnM-EVg>

## APPENDIX

### LINKS TO FOLLOW-UP VIDEO TEACHINGS

- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 6:** This video teaching profiles the Millennium and the Millennial Reign of Christ. The Millennium will follow the seven-year Tribulation period. During this time Christ will reign on earth, and the world will be restored to Eden-like conditions. The Millennium is referenced more than a thousand times in Scripture—this teaching presents an overview of the Who, What, Where, When and Why of this important coming event.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_keDDJ9EIY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_keDDJ9EIY)
  
- ➔ **Bible Prophecy Part 7:** This video teaching profiles the Psalm 83 War and what are likely to be among the next prophecies to be fulfilled in the prophetic timeline. The link is noted below:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZbL\\_dLvbyY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZbL_dLvbyY&feature=youtu.be)
  
- ➔ **What it means to be a watchman:** This video teaching presents the biblical foundation for the term Watchman and the calling to be a Watchman. Drawing primarily from Ezekiel's 33, this teaching notes the particular heart, focus, and work of a watchman. The I Am A Watchman ministry team believes that at this a crucial time in history, God is calling both men and women to serve as spiritual watchmen. The link is noted below:  
<https://vimeo.com/259965426>
  
- ➔ **How to be saved / The gift of salvation** This teaching video profiles the need to be saved, what God through Christ has done to make salvation possible, and what individuals must do to receive God's precious gift. God's greatest desire is that His people know Him and enter into relationship with Him. The link to this teaching is noted below:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWDalWOBdio&t=5s>

## **ABOUT THE I AM A WATCHMAN MINISTRY**

The I Am A Watchman ministry has been established to help individuals know the love of Jesus, enter into relationship with Jesus, live for Jesus, tell others about Jesus, and to prepare for the imminent return of Jesus. In informal language, the Watchman ministry strives to help individuals finish well (which is to live a life of meaning and purpose, and at the coming judgment hear the Lord say, “Well done my good and faithful servant”).

In more theological terms, the I Am A Watchman ministry’s focus is to help prepare the bride of Christ to meet the coming Bridegroom. This language comes from Matt. 25:1-46, Rev. 19:7-9, Rev. 21:2, John 14:1-3, and Rev. 21:9-11. The phrase is a word picture that imagines believers in Christ as the bride, who stand in readiness and purity, waiting for the Groom, who has promised to return, reward, and take his bride away.

The wise will strive to live well so they can finish well. The astute will strive to be aware of what God has done and what prophecy notes He will do in the days to come. In support of these goals, the I Am A Watchman ministry is happy to make available at no cost a wealth of discipleship, prophecy, and spiritual growth resources for those who desire to learn, and those who are called to lead. Please visit the [www.IAmAWatchman.com](http://www.IAmAWatchman.com) website to access these resources.

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A STUDY ON \_\_\_\_\_  
**BIBLE**  
\_\_\_\_\_ PROPHECY



**Gary Ray**

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