

The  
**RETURN**  
of  
**CHRIST**



J.C. James



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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**BROTHER J.C. JAMES** is widely known as an evangelist, pastor and professor. His pastoral work among the churches of the American Baptist Association has been in Arkansas and Kentucky. Many churches have called for his services as an evangelist and lecturer. His “Second Coming” messages have been well received.

As an instructor, he has served the Missionary Baptist Seminary well for a number of years. His ability in the Hebrew and Greek languages is recognized as second to none. His research in the languages has made his writing of this book most valuable. He is esteemed as a theologian of no mean ability. His work in this book is hereby recommended to the reader for study, with the admonition to weigh well this timely message as the glorious **RETURN OF CHRIST** grows near.

L.D. Capell, Dean Missionary  
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## FOREWORD

No subject captures the mind of the serious Bible student more than a study of the end time. For many years the author has devoted considerable time to the study and research of this important subject.

He has been requested to teach and lecture in churches, and seminary and Bible conferences on "The Second Coming of Jesus." The material in this treatise is a compilation of lectures given on the subject.

Much of the material contained in the discourses was gleaned by personal observation through four trips to Israel and the Bible lands.

For other material, the author is indebted to many, to all his former teachers in the Missionary Baptist Seminary, to many authors of books on the subject, to the news media in newspapers, magazines, radio and television news casts and documentaries.

## APPRECIATION

I express my gratitude to John Owen, president of the Missionary Baptist Seminary, for encouraging the printing of this book, to Dayle Capell, dean, and to Mrs. Zella Jones, faithful friend, without whose combined help in the preparation of this material for printing this work might never have been.

An attempt has been made to give credit for each source quoted directly or used in any way; however, some may have been overlooked since this material was originally prepared for oral delivery in a series of lectures.

The oral style prevails in this written presentation, though it has been adapted as much as possible to the style and form of a written dissertation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J.C. James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**J.C. James**



# CHAPTER I

## PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Titus 2:11 may I read these words:

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

With these words in our minds, may we pursue a Bible study on the subject of "The Second Coming of Jesus Christ". From His first advent, I know of no other subject that has captivated the interest of Bible-loving and God-fearing people through all the ages, more than has the anticipation of that hour when Jesus, according to His promise, shall return to this earth.

The Bible has much to say concerning this wonderful truth, and there will be many facets in this study that we will need to examine. I hope that the things I will be able to bring to your minds will give you a better understanding of the second coming and cause you to pursue an in-depth study concerning the subject on your own. I want you to understand in the beginning of these messages that I will not exhaust all the information there is to be obtained about it. My, the Bible from the book of Genesis through the book of Revelation is filled with this great truth. So you see it is almost inexhaustible in its source of material. However, the things that I do introduce to you, I hope will be helpful and will prove to be a blessing in your life for Christ.

## I. THEOLOGICAL POINTS OF VIEW CONCERNING THE MILLENNIUM

Before we begin the Bible study itself, let us notice some of the views held by theologians whose schools of thought differ on this subject, especially concerning the millennium. We will examine them and then I will point out what I believe to be fallacies of these arguments. I don't came to pursue this study from the argumentative point of view altogether, but simply to point out what I believe the Bible teaches with reference to the coming of Christ.

### **Amillennial**

First of all, let me introduce you to what is called the amillennial point of view. The amillennialists pursue the idea that **there will be no thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth:** that the resurrection of both saved and unsaved will take place at the same time and both are to be judged on the same day. In other words, they hold the old "general judgment" idea that there will be no difference between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust as far as time is concerned.

If this view is correct it would be impossible to interpret Revelation 20:4-6 which affirms that some shall rule and reign with Christ. I quote:

*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

If we have a first resurrection, surely we must have a second coming along, and these two resurrections are to be one thousand years apart. The amillennialist view, then, stresses the

idea that there will be no millennial reign, no thousand year reign.

Many people have asked me about the word “millennium”. They ask, “Where do you find that word in the Bible?” You don’t find the word “millennium”, as such, or spelled in that particular way. But you do find in Revelation, as I have just pointed out, the number “one thousand”. Millennium is a Latin word meaning one thousand. I don’t care to pursue an in-depth study of amillennialism, but simply to point out to you that there are those who hold this view.

### **Post-millennial**

We pass along to another view that has had quite a following, the post-millennialist view. The post-millennialist idea, in a nutshell, simply says that **the world is going to be won to Christ**. In other words, the Gospel will so permeate the world that there will be no sinners left upon earth for the Lord to save, **so of necessity the Lord will come back and establish His righteous rule**. Again we point up the fact that the Bible emphatically tells us in the words of Jesus Himself, “*Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*” If one will turn to the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Matthew and read the things that Jesus specifically laid down with reference to the event of the second coming, I think no one could glean the idea that the world will become a place filled with righteousness and Jesus must come to institute His reign as a result of it. But rather, the Bible teaches that the world is going to become more wicked until the Lord puts a stop to its iniquity with His return with His saints upon this earth to inaugurate His rule.

### **Pre-millennial**

Thus we enter into the third view, and I might point out that this is the view that is generally held by the Baptists of our fellowship--and it is certainly the view that I hold--the pre-millennialist idea. In this we believe that **there will be a thousand year reign of Jesus upon this earth, but before that righteous rule begins, there is to be a tribulation period to the extent of seven years**, in which iniquity shall come to its fullest and that man of sin shall have his fling at world dominion. During the latter phases of this tribulation the Lord will return to the earth with His saints to inaugurate a righteous rule.

Thus, in a nutshell, we have presented the three prevalent ideas concerning the return of Christ. If you would like to study the millennium question further, I recommend *The Millennium*

## II. TIME ELEMENT OF CHRIST'S RETURN

It is time now to consider the time element. The Bible has much to say about the time element--in fact it stresses the importance of time. It gives us a definition of time simply as "measured eternity". Let me suggest that you envision a circle, and then think of two little marks placed on its circumference. Let these two little marks and the space between them represent time, the circle representing eternity, since it is endless. With this picture in mind we conclude time has a beginning and time has an end.

There are so many people that tell me, "Oh, Preacher, I believe that time is coming to an end." My answer is no. Time will not cease until after the thousand year reign of Christ. The world is going to continue for at least one thousand years with Jesus Christ at the helm of it, bringing it into a righteous rule under God.

### Three Viewpoints

Time is an important factor, and much will be said about the time element; however, when we consider time, with reference to the return of Christ, we find even those who adopt the view of the pre-millennial coming are divided as to the precise time within that seven-year period that Jesus will return to the earth.

**Pre-tribulation.** There are those that believe in the pre-tribulation coming of Christ. By this I mean that He shall come before the seven years actually begin, and He shall inaugurate that seven-year period of tribulation upon the earth by taking all of His saints out of it. This is one idea that is held.

**Mid-tribulation.** Then there are those that believe in the mid-tribulation coming of Jesus Christ. These hold the view that in the middle of the seven-year period Jesus will return to this earth receiving out of the world His own, and these will abide with Him for the latter half of this week, less the days that He shall shorten it for the elects' sake. Then He shall descend with His saints to inaugurate the thousand year reign.

**Post-tribulation.** Still others believe in the post-tribulation idea--in other words, that everyone, saints included, will go through the entire tribulation week and that Jesus will come at

the very end of the tribulation to inaugurate His reign.

Regardless of the idea you may hold, I hope that you will give serious consideration to the subject matter that I shall present to you. I do not hesitate to state that I believe the Bible teaches Jesus will come in the middle of the week. I will elaborate this position in a later discussion.

### **God's Time Schedule**

To show the importance of the subject of the return of Jesus Christ, the Lord has mentioned it either directly or indirectly, 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. With this in mind, I think we can see the importance that is attached to the subject.

**Watchfulness admonished.** We are warned continually in the Word of God to be on guard against the hour when the Lord shall come. Recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the Lord said, "*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*" We are not going to be date-setters in our pursuit of the time for the return of the Lord; we are simply going to look at the prophecies relating to it and examine them in the light of what we understand to be fulfilled today and look into those things that we anticipate to be fulfilled. Jesus admonishes in the book of Luke, "*Lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*" (Luke 21:28). Christ did not say that all things had to come to pass, but that when they begin to come to pass we are to lift up our heads.

We are to "watch". In verse 36 of the same chapter, "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man.*" Constantly in the Word we are admonished by Christ to be on guard, to watch, against this hour.

Considering that God wants us to be aware of these things and their importance, Paul tells us in the book of First Thessalonians that we are not children of the night, that they should overtake us as a thief; we are to watch and be on guard. There are some things, then, that we can observe, which will help us understand not the day nor the hour, but the fact that the time of the return of our Lord is near.

Events prophesied. For many years I believed that the return of Jesus Christ to this earth was imminent, that He could come at any time. I believed there was nothing left in prophecy to be



fulfilled that might cause a delay in His coming, until I began to examine the book of Second Thessalonians. In II Thessalonians 2:1-3 Paul sets forth clearly two things that must come to pass:

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, by our gathering together unto him, that you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*

Then, studying in the light of what Jesus teaches in Matthew 24, we know that there are a number of things that must come to pass. But, how far along in God's time schedule are we in the development of these things, since time does play an important part?

We know that Jesus came the first time at the appointed time. According to Paul in Galatians 4:4, "*But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of woman, made under the law.*" In the light of this passage, I believe with all my heart that in the fulness of God's time Jesus will come the second time. We must be on guard.

In order to understand this, though, we must look into the purpose for the return of Jesus to this earth. He had a very definite purpose for coming the first time, and He has a very definite purpose for coming the second time. Let us look into the purpose for the return of Christ and the purpose of God in the creation of man and how we all fit together in this picture that is unfolding.

### **III. REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES CULMINATED IN CHRIST'S RETURN**

In creation, the Bible tells us that God made everything that is made. Now personally I believe that God is responsible for everything that is made. I do not leave anything to chance: I do not even give the theistic evolutionist ground to stand on. I believe that God Almighty is responsible for the entire creation, that He created it well, that He did it instantly. It was not eons of time in coming into being. Thus I believe that a definite beginning of sin brought a wrecked and ruined condition into the

creation of God. The Bible tells us about the entrance of sin and that it came through the rebellion and fall of angels.

### **God's Purpose for Creation**

Let me state a principle of law that is stated by B.H. Carroll: "Law is the purpose, or the intent, of a creator in bringing the creation into existence." [2] Now, at any time that anything fails to function in the purpose or the intent that the creator created it for, it would become a law breaker.

### **God's Purpose for Angels**

God made angels for the purpose of ministering in the realms over which He appointed them, and the Bible tells us the story of the entrance of sin through the rebellion of and choice of angels that was contrary to this divine principle of law. J. Louis Guthrie states: "...There are many verses that declare this tragedy to have happened in heaven." [3] Let us examine the story in the Bible as we find it in Jude 6.

First we find that angels had a first estate. The verse says "*the angels that kept not their first estate.*" Though they had an estate, they did not choose to keep it. Angels are intelligent spirit beings; and beings that God made to have intellect. He made with a power of choice. These can choose either to obey Him or disobey Him. God did not make robots, and God is not a tyrant who makes beings do His will. He offers to us the opportunity and then presents to us what we can expect if we do His will and what we can expect if we fail to do His will. The choice, nevertheless, is up to the intelligent creature that God made.

These angels kept not their first estate. Jesus, in Luke 10:18, tells us about the fall of angels. He said, "*I beheld Satan as lightning cast from heaven.*" Isaiah 14:12-17 tells us how Lucifer, this being that we know as the devil today, came into existence by his willful choice in saying, "*I will ascend above the other stars of God, I will become like the most High.*" Then Ezekiel further tells us about the fall in Ezekiel 28:12-19:

*Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the*

*emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God: thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. AU they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

Then in II Peter 2:4 we are told about these angels sinning: *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment."* This statement declares that angels sinned.

The sin of these angels brought a state of contamination into the creation of God. violating God's purpose for His creation, God intended it to be ruled in righteousness. These failed to rule it in righteousness; consequently, now that sin has entered into the creation of God, there must be effected a plan from God for its redemption, which redemption will culminate when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, institutes or inaugurates a righteous rule over this earth and rules it until He puts down the last enemy. We read in I Corinthians 15:20-26 these words:

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since*

*by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

The sentence and penalty that God invokes for sin is death. God said, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die,* " making death the penalty for God's broken law. Jesus, then, came into the world to pay the penalty for sin in order that He might redeem them that had been sold under the bondage of sin and at the same time prove Himself worthy to rule this earth in righteousness.

### **God's Purpose for Man**

Let us turn our thoughts to the purpose God had in the creation of man. God doesn't do things as an afterthought. He has a reason for everything that He does. When we turn to the book of Genesis and the story of the creation of man, we find that God created him in His own likeness. Of all the things that God made, only man is created in the image of God. By image, I mean man is a trinity of personality as God is a trinity of personality--God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. There is an intelligence of the Godhead, there is physical form of the Godhead, and there is the spirit of the Godhead. Man has an intelligent mind, man has a material body, and man has a spirit. It is the spirit of man that God is dealing with, particularly today, in order that this man might come to the place and accept the rightful rule that God intended for him to have when He created him.

When God made man He said, "*...Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*" (Genesis 1:26). God intended that man rule this earth in righteousness. But man did not rule in righteousness. We all know the story of man's rebellion against God; man made the choice to rebel against God, and as a result of it man gave the devil at that point the legitimate right to be called the god of this world. The devil, who has been exercising

power in this world ever since, will rise to his zenith in the man of sin at the end of this age when he will think he has really gained the victory.

Despite this, God's purpose for man is not stymied because man did not do as God intended him to do. In Hebrews 2:5-9 we find the subject stated thus:

*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou modest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. ”*

God does not intend for His creation to continue in a state of sin. Ephesians 1:10 is the key text of the entire Bible for it tells us, *"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth: even in him. "* This has ever been the purpose of God. God doesn't intend for His creation to remain in the continuing state of sin.

God has tied the redemption of this earth with the resurrection of man, and this resurrection will take place at the coming of Jesus Christ. If you will turn to Romans 8:19-22 and substitute the word "creation" for the word "creature" as you find it there, then this story will unfold itself. May God help us to understand that **His purpose in the second coming of Jesus Christ is to establish a righteous rule over this earth.**

[1] John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959).

[2] B.H. Carroll, *An Interpretation of the English Bible: Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1947), p. 146.

[3] J. Louis Guthrie, *Christ in Creation* (Little Rock, Ark.: M.B.I. Printery, [n.d.],) p. 58.

## CHAPTER II

### PURPOSE OF GOD FOR ISRAEL

I closed the last chapter with the thought that God has a distinct purpose in His creation of man. I also stated the idea that man has failed in the purpose for which God created him. Man sinning in the Garden of Eden brought the contamination of sin and death upon the whole human family and also upon the objects over which God placed him. But, I also pointed out from the writings of the book of Hebrews that there is a Redeemer. There is a Second Adam, and I would like to refer you again, to the third chapter of Genesis, to the episode following the sin of man in the Garden.

God came upon the scene and as you well remember He began to call out to man, man having hidden himself because of his condition, because of the fear that had come through his rebellion against his Creator. When the voice of God called out to man, Adam answered. God called him forth and began to speak to him and to the woman, also to the serpent that was present in the Garden. This serpent allowed Satan to enter into him for the purpose of using his material form as a means of conveyance in speaking with man and woman. Listen to the words that God spoke to man and to woman in verses eleven through thirteen:

*Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

And thus we have the old “passing the buck” game starting right in the very beginning of man’s transgression. I guess it will continue until Jesus comes back to this earth.

## I. FIRST PROMISE OF THE SECOND COMING

The next passage is the one I want us to note in particular:

*And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

A peculiar thing is observed here; we have the second coming of Christ mentioned even before the first coming of Christ is understood.

Examine these words. First of all He said to the serpent that the seed of the woman is going to "*bruise thy head*". We all know that the head of the serpent has not yet been bruised, and this event will not take place until Jesus comes with His saints to set up His righteous rule upon this earth. Then will the devil be cast out of this world; thus at this point the head of the serpent will be bruised.

A little further in this discussion I will relate how he will come back at the end of the thousand years and gather together an army to make war against Christ and he will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire at that point. But before we get to that discussion, suffice it to say that in this passage **God has predicted the second coming of Christ before the first coming.**

Now the next statement is that "*thou shalt bruise his heel*". We all understand that the heel of the Lord was bruised when He was suspended between heaven and earth upon the cross of Calvary for sin. Thus we have introduced to us in the very beginning of the transgression of man, the idea that Jesus Christ would come to this earth a second time.

Not only does God have a purpose for man but God has a purpose for the bringing into existence of the nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth, and as we begin to review what the Bible has to say about nations I would point out that the Bible tells us that there is no nation that exists without the sanction of God (Romans 13:1). God does not condone all the things that are practiced by the nations, but certainly the Bible teaches us that God uses nations and rulers to fulfill His purpose. From this point we need to study the historical background for the second

coming of Christ by reviewing the history of the nations that have come upon the earth.

## II. THREEFOLD PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

In the book of Genesis, chapter twelve, we are introduced to a character by the name of Abram, later to be known as Abraham. This particular person receives a call from God and in the call there is a distinct covenant and a promise that is threefold in content for this particular man.

Dwight Pentecost points out this threefold blessing. Number one, there is an individual promise to Abram; number two, there is a national promise to Abram; and then, number three, there is a universal promise to Abram. [1] These three ideas are brought out now as we read from Genesis 12 beginning at verse one:

### Individual Blessing

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

This individual blessing is borne out in the statement, "I will bless thee." The life of this great character, who is referred to in the New Testament as being the father of the faithful, reflects the blessings God bestowed upon him. Individually he received immense wealth. Individually he received great honor, and not only did that honor continue as Abraham lived upon the earth, but that honor will continue unto Abraham even into the ages of the ages. This man has such a prominent place in the work of God Almighty. We know, then, that the individual blessing has been given to him and is being carried out through him now.

### National Blessing

Looking at the national blessing, we find in verse seven of this same chapter, "The Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there budded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." The national stress is laid



upon this portion of the covenant, and again in chapter thirteen He confirms the covenant further with him and enlarges upon it. In verse fourteen:

*And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.*

Now these are the promises that God gave to Abraham as a national blessing. At this point one should take a map and search the land grant that God gave unto Abraham. We find it stated still further in Genesis 15 beginning at verse eighteen:

*In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

God has given to Abram an immense land, and if you will look at the map as I suggested, you will find that the land actually extends from the little river Egypt -- not the Nile River, but the little river Egypt this side of the Nile River - and would include all of this disputed land today that is called the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula and such. Then you will find that it extends all the way across to the Euphrates River, which would also include the land that we know today as Syria. Then you will observe that there is no southern boundary, so it must include all of the land called Saudi Arabia.

At the height of the Israelite empire under David's rule, though Israel had extended most of her boundaries to this great portion, she had not extended them completely. Thus we understand that this is a prophetic future, and that in the

millennium, or in the time of the righteous rule of Christ here on earth, this portion of the grant will be completed unto the people of Abraham. This gives us the extent of the national blessing.

### **Universal Blessing**

Then there is the universal blessing that is mentioned in chapter twelve, *"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."* Paul, in commenting upon this particular passage, says in Galatians 3:16, *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."* Now I believe that this is a specific reference to the second coming of Christ rather than to the first coming of Christ.

The first coming of Christ involved redemption, and certainly redemption is extended for every being upon the face of this earth. I believe that it is specifically stated in the Adamic covenant that the seed of the woman would become the one through whom man could be reconciled unto God. This promise has carried over to every offspring of Adam, not just to a select or elect group in the world. Salvation is by grace through faith, it has always been that way, it will always be that way, until Jesus comes. This grace is extended to every man as the writer tells us in the book of Hebrews that *"he by the grace of God tasted death for every man."* But in this portion of the Abrahamic covenant there is a specific promise to the nations of the earth that they will be blessed.

When Jesus came the first time *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"* (John 1:11,12). *"His own"* refers to those out of the nation of Israel. But we all know the history of the ministry of Jesus while He was here in the world, how that having presented God to Israel, having presented the covenant that God made with Israel and all the terms of it, He was rejected by the Jews. He was rejected by Israel. And then He tells us in the book of Matthew that *"the kingdom shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* (Matthew 21:43).

Now in the process of the New Testament dispensation we find that the Gentiles have become by and large the recipients of the blessings of the New Testament. But there have been Jews who have been saved and become members of the New Testament church.

I would hasten to point out that when I talk about the New

Testament church I am not alluding to all the saved or all the redeemed being a part of that body. I do not believe that. The word “ecclesia” cannot condone that particular idea or teaching, [2] even though it is prevalent among Christendom today. The New Testament idea of the church is that it is a local assembly that meets the qualifications that are specified within the confines of the New Testament. So it is this particular idea of the church that I am talking about.

Those of the Gentiles, those of the nations who are saved by the grace of God, who are scripturally baptized, who are in covenant relation with Christ by keeping the laws of the New Testament, these qualify as legitimate New Testament church members. And in this particular sense the blessing that was to be the nation of Israel’s in the institution of the kingdom of righteousness, this blessing has now passed to the New Testament church; as Paul affirms in the book of II Timothy, we shall rule and reign with Christ (II Timothy 2:12).

Let us get back, though, to the thought of this universal blessing, that is that all the nations of the earth can be blessed. There is no one who is restricted from being part of this New Testament bride; all the requirements are set forth and these requirements are to be met by each individual alike. There is not one set for me and another set for you or for someone else, but all of the requirements are alike. Simply become saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ, become scripturally baptized at the hands of the New Testament church that has the authority to administer the ordinance, and then abide in the teachings and the laws of Christ as He states them in the New Testament. By doing so we obtain the **national** and the **universal** blessings that are contained in the covenant of Abraham.

### III. CONFIRMATION OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12 in further enlarged upon in Genesis 17. In the seventeenth chapter, verses one through fourteen, God confirms this covenant again:

*And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with*

*thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised, And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*

Now specifically God is laying the standard that is characteristic--as we know it--of all the ethnic group today known to us as Jews. This, then, refers specifically to them as a nation and the national blessing.

However, the final confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant is found in Genesis 22:15-18:

*And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee,*

*and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

Again we have the confirmation in these words of the covenant that God made originally with Abraham. This was after the incident of Abraham's voluntarily offering up Isaac as God had requested in the place that God showed him. That particular mount, of course, was Mount Moriah: the place where so much of Biblical history is made; the place where the temple was built in the days of Solomon; the place that is still so very important religiously to the Jews; and the place which is important not only to the Jews, but also to the whole world as a center of religion--this mount called Mount Moriah. I will have more to say about the temple a little later, but simply say now that the covenant that God made with Abraham involved three things: individual, national, and universal blessing.

#### IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES

It would be utter and complete folly, I think, for anyone who is trying to expose the Bible teaching of "the second coming of Jesus Christ" to disregard the fact that God promised a national blessing to this people--the seed of Abraham--and to believe that this could be fulfilled without that nation being in the land at Christ's coming. This would be completely ridiculous as far as I am concerned. This would be absolutely out of kilter with all Bible teaching. We must assume, then, that **the people that God said He would raise up to this man will be in the land at the time that the entire blessing of God is to be fulfilled.**

God had a particular purpose for the nation of Israel. They were to be His priestly people unto the world; they were to represent the mercy and grace of God; they were to witness, as the New Testament church is to fitness today, that "*the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 6:23). If they had continued to do that instead of drawing to themselves the selfish conclusion that God's blessings pertained only to them, then Israel might well have understood the purpose and the spiritual coming of the Messiah the first time, before He could establish the completeness of the Abrahamic covenant with them as a nation

as He will do when He comes the second time. But this, Israel did not understand, they did not know; they did not see the significance in the offerings that were made each day and yearly for the work of atonement for sin and so forth.

If we pursue the promise to Abraham a little further we see that the promise to Abraham was fulfilled in that God literally raised up to him an enormous amount of people, many nations--not just the nation of Israel. I spoke earlier concerning two specific groups that I wanted to consider: this other group is Ishmael, or the father of the Arabic nations, along with Isaac who is today called Israel.

I now refer to Romans 9:6. Paul is specifically pointing out that they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Some have concluded that he is talking about the subject of salvation here, but actually salvation is not the subject. He is talking about an **inherited blessings** and if we can learn to distinguish when the Scriptures speak of an inherited blessing rather than a blessing of eternal life we might understand more of our Bible, as well.

But in referring to the inherited blessing, he says they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Then he says neither because they are of the seed of Abraham are they all children, "*but in Isaac shall thy seed be called,*" then referring to the episode of the birth of the sons that Isaac fathered, one by the name of Jacob and one by the name of Esau-Esau, of course being the elder of the twins as they were born. But Esau did not receive the birthright. Esau forfeited and sold the birthright (Genesis 25:27), and thus he forfeited his right to the inheritance. Though Jacob acted in a manner of trickery (Genesis 27:19)--and God certainly did not condone the deception that was practiced there--God, knowing that this thing would come about, had said that the elder should serve the younger (Genesis 25:23).

In this same context Paul quotes from the book of Malachi (1:2-3), "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,*" which has led a lot of people to the fallacy of believing that God had predestined these two men either to be accepted into His presence or else rejected. But this statement was made in the book of Malachi after both Jacob and Esau had been dead for generations, and He is talking about the descendants, the people, of the two. So we must not understand this passage to teach salvation, but rather to teach **the selection of this nation to be that peculiar blessing to the world.**

Surely God has a distinct purpose for Israel, and we must follow the history of this people, then, in order to understand His purpose for them concerning the second coming of Christ. They

will become our barometer to a true understanding of the return of Jesus.

[1] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Co., 1966), p. 72.

[2] Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 195-196.

## CHAPTER III

### DISPERSION OF ISRAEL

The last chapter closed with the idea that God has a purpose in the raising up of the nation of Israel, and also left the idea that the Abrahamic covenant predicting this nation to rise and be established in the land was not completely fulfilled with the calling of the people out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Joshua.

Let us pursue the thought now that this actual establishment of the nation leads us to an understanding of the return of Jesus Christ. The fact that God brought them into the land and established them under a theocracy is certainly worthy of consideration in view of the fact that the government which shall be instituted here upon earth at the return of Jesus Christ will also be a theocracy. Presently, there are a number of different forms of governments in the world--the autocracy, the democracy, the monarchy and so on. Theocracy simply means a government under the jurisdiction of God.

When Israel was brought into the land, they were established under the guidance of men who were chosen by the Lord Himself to be their judges; God also gave them the law. There was nothing wrong with the government of law that God established in the nation of Israel. The Psalmist tells us in the nineteenth Psalm that "*the law of the Lord is perfect.* " When we look at the law that controlled all aspects of the nation's government upon earth, there is nothing wrong with that. The thing that caused its failure was in the people, the children of Israel--they were not able to measure up to the things that God specified in His law.

#### I. PERFECT THEOCRACY REJECTED FOR MONARCHY

It was not long until Israel began to err in departing from the theocracy and desired to be established as a monarchy. They began to clamor and say, "We want a king. We want to become like the other nations." (I Samuel 8:7). Thus the Bible tells us that God gave over to their whims and established a kingdom at



that time in Israel, but this was the kingdom that man had cried for, not the kingdom of Jesus Christ, not the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of the righteous rule; it became a rule under the auspices of sinful man.

When one thinks of government, his concepts are usually political; yet, this people received a religion compatible with their political system. There was nothing wrong with the established religious code that God gave to Israel. It provided every basic need of man. If only Israel had understood it in its true import, for God had declared throughout His word: "Man, you are a sinner; man, you are in need of a mediator; you are in need of One who can substitute in your stead and pay sin's penalty for you and thus become the Atoning One." These facts were all spelled out by God when He gave to them the specific offerings and pointed up sin in each of them. All of the offerings, then, in the Old Testament simply pointed to the fulfillment of the work of the Lamb of God.

Israel had the first system of organized religion that the world ever knew, that is, as far as a theocracy was concerned, and in this the religion was perfect. It provided every basic need for man. But somebody will say, if it was perfect why didn't it succeed? Why did Israel fail under the law? Why were they unable to continue and to serve God in an acceptable way? The writer in the book of Hebrews tells us specifically why they were not able to continue and to fulfill all of God's purposes for them. The law of the Lord is perfect, a perfect God had given it, and there wasn't one inconsistency to be found in it; also the religion that God established among them was a perfect religion. So there must be a reason, then, for the failure. Hebrews 8:7-9 states:

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

## II. FAILURE AND DISPERSION PROPHESED

Their failure and their removal from the land was prophesied by their leader who was bringing them to the land for an inheritance. Remember, that in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, as stated earlier, it was said to Abraham that these seed should serve in a land that would not be theirs; however, this is not the dispersion that was prophesied through the mouth of Moses--the one who was leading them into the land. Many people fail to understand that before the nation was settled in the land, before the inheritance was divided among them, God had specifically said the nation would be dispersed into all the world. This dispersion was literally carried out in the course of a later history of Israel, at the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, but that is ahead of the present study. First consider the prophecy that God gave to Moses regarding this people. Before they were ever settled in the land, God said that they would be dispersed from the land. In Deuteronomy 28, beginning at verse sixty-two, Moses prophesied:

*And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of the heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were evenland at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.*

This is Moses speaking, before the people ever came to cross over Jordan into the land, Moses prophesying that they would be dispersed among the nations and that they would become fearful when they were dispersed among the nations. He also pointed out that this dispersion would come because they would not keep covenant relationship with God, because they would fail to live up to the measures of that covenant that God had made between Himself and them.

Reflecting back a few years, many of us can remember in our lifetime when the Nazis were trying to conquer the world, how Hitler and his forces of evil made life such a miserable thing for those Jews that were in Germany and the regions that were controlled by the Nazis. All of us have read and heard the stories of the atrocities of the Nazis, how they put to death literally millions of the Jews that were in the land. Now it has been said by some that there were over eight million Jews at the time of the beginning of the Nazi regime and at the close of that regime there were only about two million of those Jews who were left in the land-six million Jews, if you please, that were put to death by every conceivable means that you can imagine. Some of them were taken out before open ditches and machine guns were used to gun them down. Whether they were actually killed or not was of little significance. The Nazis simply took bulldozers, pushed them into the graves and then covered them over, some of them still alive. Many were put into the gas chambers. I have seen pictures of the frames and lenses of glasses, piled up in huge piles, that were taken from the eyes of Jews who were exterminated under the rule of Nazism in Germany. Surely every time they heard a knock on the door they feared to open it, for they knew that it might mean their very lives. This was at least fulfillment in part of the prophecy of Moses: that they would be dispersed; that they would become fearful among the nations; that their lives would always be fearful before them.

Today there are many areas of the world where the Jews are still being persecuted. There are those in Russia presently who persecute this people and this is causing quite a consternation among our own legislators and leaders of our government, leading some to seek negotiations involving the release of those Jews from Russia so that they might of their own free will move back to the land of Israel. But bear in mind, that this prophecy was many, many years before the people were actually dispersed from the land.

### III. REGATHERING PROPHESED

By the mouth of the same prophet, Moses, the Palestinian covenant concerning the regathering of this people was also made (Chapter 30). It has been and is God's will that even though they were dispersed into all the world, these people would be regathered. The regathering of this people is the significant thing. As I have stated before, it is the barometer to the return of Jesus. Thus we want to be careful in our understanding of what is going on in the land today.

But notice the words of Moses again in Deuteronomy 30:1-3:

*And it shall come to pass, when all of these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.*

God said that He would pluck them from off the land, but in the mouth of the same prophet there is the call of a regathering of this people. The future repentance of the nation was to bring them back into the land. Their Messiah was to come and to establish Himself with them. Continue in Deuteronomy 30:4-6:

*If any of thin\* be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

These are future spiritual blessings to be fulfilled in the nation of Israel, but we must consider first the political

regathering of them. This precedes the spiritual regathering of the people. There will be the time in the future when Israel is going to be spiritually born in a day as they have been politically born in a day. They are to be restored to the land according to the prophecies.

At this point, let us study a little about the nation and how it came to be dispersed into all the world.

#### IV. DIVISIONS LEADING TO DISPERSION

The nation was to be divided after the death of Solomon in the time of the rule of his sons. In I Kings 11:9-13 are these words:

*And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.*

The kingdom is to be divided in the days, or after the days, of Solomon's reign. At the death of Solomon the Bible reveals that Rehoboam became the king over Israel and, receiving some bad information, this king began making some decisions that were erroneous (I Kings 12). It wasn't long before Israel became a divided nation, and ten tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam became known as Israel while the two tribes under Rehoboam were known as Judah. Judah and Benjamin ruled the south portion of the land while the ten tribes known as Israel ruled the northern section of the land.

These histories are very important because they lead to the actual dispersion, to the activity of the nations that were prominent in that dispersion, and also to the prophecies regarding the regathering and fulfillment of the return of Jesus

as Messiah over the people. The ten tribes that went into northern captivity began to make war against the southern tribes. This state of affairs continued for quite some time. But history reveals that other nations began to take a part in the control of the land of Israel.

## V. TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In Luke 21 is a profound statement made by Jesus concerning a time element that must be considered in the study of the second coming. The object of this scripture is to establish the “times of the Gentiles”. Jesus said, beginning at verse twenty:

*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

This is a distinct prophecy of the Lord regarding the nation Israel, regarding the city of Jerusalem in particular; and He established a beginning point here that hereafter in this study shall be called **the times of the Gentiles**. At this point note that God deals with His creation specifically according to a time schedule, and that time schedule is known only to Him. Many people in this day and time, in recent years at least, have been setting dates for the return of the Lord Jesus and making predictions that He will return at such-and-such a time on such-and-such day. But the Bible emphatically declares that the time, the exactness of the time, is not known unto man. The angels of Heaven are not even given that information, so said the Lord in Matthew 24:36. More will be said about that later. But the idea that God is dealing specifically with the nations of the earth according to a time schedule is clearly set forth in the Scripture. More particularly when we come to study the

prophecies of the book of Daniel with reference to the return of the Lord, it will be found emphasized over and over again. "*For the time appointed.*" is an expression that is peculiar to his writings.

In the verses of Luke, Jesus talks about the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled. If there is a fulfillment of the time of the Gentiles, then of necessity there must be a beginning of the time of the Gentiles. It is necessary to learn when the time began in order to be able to understand when the time shall come to an end.

## VI. FULNESS OF THE GENTILES

First of all, there are two things in the New Testament that need to be distinguished when it comes to the subject of the Gentiles. The "*fulness of the Gentiles*" is the other expression that I would like to inject just here. In the book of Romans, Paul talks about the fulness of the Gentiles being come in. There is a difference in the "fulness of the Gentiles being come in" and the "times of the Gentiles being fulfilled". In Romans 11:13-25 Paul, exonerating himself as the apostle to the Gentiles, had this to say:

*For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall be receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee,*

*goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

I call attention to two things in this passage, first of all the statement, "*the fulness of the Gentiles.*" This is a spiritual reference to the number of Gentiles that shall be saved. Since the beginning of the church age greater numbers of Gentiles have turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, received Him as their personal Saviour, than have the Jewish people as such. But there have always been those among the Jews who have turned to the Lord and received Him. But the fulness here has reference to the end of this age when the Gentiles, as such, will come to their fulness in the reception of Jesus. Gentiles as such will begin a systematic rejection of Jesus as did the Jews.

Probably in the end time just preceding the return of the Lord, maybe even in our day (I think that even today there are many, many of the Jewish people who are actually turning in secrecy to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and also believing in the doctrines of the New Testament), more Hebrew people in proportion to Gentiles will receive Jesus as Lord.. This might be speculation on our part, we don't have the statistics to prove otherwise, but it is safe to say that there is a time coming when the fulness of the Gentiles will come in. This is said in verse fifteen, "*...the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world.*"

## **VII. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REGATHERING**

The dispersion of Israel was for the purpose of bringing the nations of the earth into reconciliation with God. This purpose has been fulfilled, but notice the next statement. He said, "*But what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*" Do you understand what he said? When these people are regathered



from the nations as Moses the prophet said in Deuteronomy 30 that they would be, then we can look forward to the time of the resurrection of the dead. God speed the day, then, when these things shall be.

Referring again to the time of the fulness of the Gentiles, I believe this day in which we live has become for us the gleaning period. There are far fewer souls being saved today than there were a number of years ago. There are those today who hear the Word but who have become calloused to the Word. They shrug off the witness of the Spirit to their spirit that they need eternal life. We are today seeing but the fragments of the Gentiles coming in. So I believe that the fulness of the Gentiles is almost here.

Returning to the thought concerning the time of the Gentiles being fulfilled, the Lord tied that time specifically with the time that Jerusalem would no longer be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. We need to establish the point in time that Jerusalem came under complete dominion of the Gentiles which no doubt occurred with the fall and dispersion of Judah. This will be done in the next study.

After the nation became divided in the days of the son of Solomon, into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom, it was then that the Gentiles began to play an important part in their history.

# CHAPTER IV

## GOD'S APPOINTED TIME SCHEDULE

The last lesson closed with the introduction of an age called "The Age of the Gentiles" or "The Times of the Gentiles". Then simply and briefly introducing you to a beginning point of that time, I will now go into detail and get the time element as the Scriptures set it forth.

In an earlier lesson the fact was introduced that God deals specifically with this creation according to a time schedule. He, of course, is the Author of it. The Bible abounds in proof of this.

### I. THE FIRST COMING IN THE FULNESS OF TIME

Paul states that God sent His Son into the world the first time when the fulness of time was come, Galatians **4:4-5**:

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Now this particular statement tells that there was a fulness of time that came to bear as God brought forth Jesus Christ into the world the first time, and I affirm that in the fulness of the time appointed, God will send forth His Son the second time into the worlds however, we need to remember the fact that Jesus Himself told us that no man knows the day nor the hour, and I do not presume to be a date setter. I am simply trying to introduce the idea that there is a time schedule that God follows, and we can know something of the schedule by the revelation that God has given to us.

Consider the substance of what Paul said here, "*In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*" What is the extent of that fulness? We can find some things here that parallel the second coming of Christ. "*In the fulness of time*", there are three things that I would like to

call your attention to, that I consider to be of profound interest in the first coming of Jesus. In these things I think there is a relationship to the fulness of time in the second coming of Christ.

**Religious conditions-Hebrew concept of God.** A look at world conditions as they were when Jesus came the first time, reveals that the Hebrew people had given to the world the concept of one God. [1] It is amazing that most people in reading the Bible simply believe that there were relatively few people who knew anything about the Bible, who actually knew anything about God, because most of the professed world at that time worshipped deities rather than the true and living God of Heaven. But there were many in the world who knew this concept of one God. The monotheistic idea of God had been given to the whole civilized world.

It has already been noted that these people had been dispersed into the world, and possibly one of the purposes of their dispersion was that they might spread abroad the knowledge of God. The Hebrews had spread the concept of one God throughout all the nations where they had been dispersed so there was knowledge of this Being, there was knowledge of His Word, there was knowledge of His promise, there was knowledge of this Messiah that should come into the world.

I sometimes wonder whether people ever stop to consider at the Christmas season how the wise men came to know that a King of the Jews was to be born. These men from the East were not of Jewish ancestry; evidently they were Gentiles. They didn't just come across the street in order to get into the land of Israel. They had come from quite a distance, "the East", evidently from a land far away, probably from the land we might know as Persia.

The Jews had gone into Babylonian captivity, into that region between the Tigris and the Euphrates River, into the vicinity of Babylon. It was these, no doubt, who had spread abroad the news of the promise that God had made to humanity. These wise men had a knowledge of that. They were not acting independently from some revelation that they had seen, but they acknowledged that they were ignorant of all the things that pertained to the birth of this Son. They were inquiring where He should be born when they came to Jerusalem; they must needs be instructed where Jesus was to be born.

Probably a period of time had elapsed from the time that they first saw the star until they made their appearance on the scene, perhaps some two years. I do not think that this would be

completely out of line considering the distance that these men had to come and the conditions under which they traveled in those days.

But to have the idea that no one in the world other than the Israelites knew about God or the promise of God would certainly limit the grace of God, limit the power of God, and certainly we do not want to do that. Our God is a great God, and the knowledge of that God has been shed abroad throughout all the face of the earth. There is no place where that knowledge has not been revealed, according to Paul in the writings in Romans, chapter one. Hebrew religion then had spread across the civilized world.

### **Social conditions--Greek contribution of common language.**

Let us come to the second aspect of this fulness of time. What was involved in it? Here we consider the involvement of the social conditions. The Greek empire under the reign of Alexander the Great had spread abroad over the face of the earth. The Greek empire had given to the world an appreciation for art, for culture, and for education. It had given the world a common language. "It was not an accident that the New Testament was written in Greek...which is adapted to be the instrument of education for all nations." [2]

**Political conditions--Roman idea of law. We begin to look at** the third thing that was involved in the first coming of Jesus Christ. In this we find that the Roman empire had given to the world the idea of law. Conybeare and Howson state that the idea of law had grown up with the growth of the Romans.[3] The law that we know today is generally received from that which Rome introduced in the Roman empire.

**Summary.** Let us go back and look at these things in detail. The Greek empire had given to the world an appreciation for art, for culture, and for education. The common language of the world was Greek.

One might wonder at the reason behind the world having one common language, one manner of expression, but the Greek language is the only language in the world that can adequately express itself, "the language which can best express the highest thoughts and worthiest feelings of the intellect and heart." [4] It can give complete expression to the mind and the heart. I don't think there is any coincidence that the New Testament, then, was written in the Greek language.

Many people fail to understand that the English Bible we use was not inspired and given of God in English, but the English version is simply a translation from the original inspired writing in the Hebrew tongue of the Old Testament and the Greek tongue of the New Testament. For emphasis let me restate that the Greeks had given to the world an appreciation for social culture.

The idea of law had grown up with the Romans. Wherever they went, they carried this idea with them. Their whole purpose was universal conquest and permanent occupation. Too, they were great builders. They built many roads, they built mighty buildings; but, their chief contribution to the age was the concept of law.

Summarizing these things, we have religion, we have social structure, and we have political structure instituted in a full concept at the time that Jesus came the first time. These three things had found a common meeting ground in the city of Jerusalem, and so it was that **religion, culture, and law had found a common denominator**. Conybeare and Howson state that the Christian “sees the Greek and Roman elements brought into remarkable union with the older and more sacred elements of Judaism.”[5]

When we begin to make a parallel out of this with reference to the second coming of Christ (which we will do with more detail later), we turn to what is said concerning the man of sin, the condition of the empire at the end of this age, and the time of the Gentiles being fulfilled. There will be religion, culture, and politics all formulated again in one package, and this will constitute the beast empire of the man of sin at the close of this age. But again, this is not to get ahead of the subject, but simply to bear in mind that there are parallels in the history of the past that coincide with the prophetic future. With this in mind, let us give our attention to a better study of the time element that is involved in the coming of our Lord.

## II. TIME ELEMENT INVOLVED IN THE SECOND COMING

We are told that there is a determined week that is to be exercised upon the people of God. The man of sin-as we refer to him from the book of Daniel-is going to make a covenant with the people, Daniel’s people, for that last week; and this last week, as we will determine from the teaching of the Scripture, is actually going to be a period of seven years. It is written in Daniel 9:24-27;

*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and, understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not of himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

In this passage the number seven is introduced, or specifically, seventy weeks. In the Hebrew text, actually the word “week” is a translation of the Hebrew word “seven”, according to the *New American Standard Version*. [6] The Hebrew scriptures actually say *"seventy sevens are determined upon Daniel's people."* This might refer to a week, it might refer to a year, or a number of years. We must look a little more carefully into the Word to determine just exactly what is under consideration when we mention seventy sevens being determined upon the people of Daniel.

If we reduce our thoughts to the fact that there is but one seventy week period in the Bible, then we are going to miss one of the great teachings concerning the time element. Actually, the Bible tells us about four seventy week periods that have been determined upon the people of Daniel, or the Jewish nation. Remember that this nation is the barometer to the return of Christ and that all prophecy is centered around and upon them; therefore, in our interpretation we must deal with them specifically.

## **First Seventy Week Period**

Reading from Genesis 12 which we covered previously, noticing again the fourth verse, we find that at the time of the call of Abraham as he left Ur of the Chaldees, his age was about seventy-five years, as is also stated by Larkin.[7] In the New Testament, Paul in Galatians 3:17 mentions this call of Abraham, the giving of the covenant to Abraham and a promise, and he says the promise was not annulled by law that was four hundred thirty years later. Now the point is this. Abraham was seventy-five years old at the time that he was called to come out of Ur of the Chaldees; the law that was given on Mount Sinai actually came four hundred thirty years after this call. These two figures added together, come up with a sum total of five hundred and five years. We are setting a precedent for the time schedule; the precedent is that God began to mark off seventy sevens against Daniel's people with the call of Abraham. Seventy sevens would be a period of four hundred and ninety years, and thus we have the sum here of five hundred and five years. Another thought to inject at this point is that God only marks off this seventy week period as He deals specifically with this covenanted man and covenanted people, as Larkin states, not reckoning the time during that period that the Children of Israel were out of favor with God.[8] Thus, looking again to the book of Genesis, from the account of the birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16 :16) until the time of the birth of Isaac (Genesis 25) you will find a space of about fifteen years being covered. This, of course, was a period of time when Abraham sought to get God to receive the efforts of his own hand and receive Ishmael as the promised seed. But God had given to Abraham a specific promise that his seed should come from Sarah, and not from Sarah's handmaid.

There is something that needs to be understood here to help in appreciating the efforts of Abraham at least in this situation. Joseph Free states that the source of the idea probably came from the laws and customs of the old land out of which he had come.[9] Under the laws of the day of Abraham, land could not be transferred, or sold, in other words, from one hand to another; goods must pass from father to son. Suppose, then, that a man had no sons. The law of that day made provisions by which a man who had goods but had no children-had no sons to receive the inheritance-might by the process of adoption take one of his brother's children, a son, or, should there be no near kinsmen that he wished to receive, he could take a neighbor's son, and could adopt this child and the child would become his very own.

Then the adopted son would be the recipient of his material blessings.

When Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees into the land that he expected to receive by promise of this covenant that God had made with him, he still had no children. This led him to register a complaint to God that Eliezer, who was his chief servant, would be his legal inheritor. Another aspect of the law provided that if the owner of the property failed to make proper adoption, then the chief servant of that man would receive the title deed to his property. So it was that Abraham was trying to say, "Now look, God, I simply want this thing to be hurried up. I don't have an heir, I'm getting old, and no one but this Eliezer is going to inherit my property. I don't have a child."

Still another aspect of the law of that day provided that the wife, if she wished, could submit her handmaid unto her husband and if a conception came about as a result of that, the baby, if it were a male, would not be the son of the handmaid but rather would become the property and legal son of the wife and thus it would become heir apparent to the goods of the father. This probably was the situation as Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, was given unto Abraham and a conception occurred; but, instead of the baby becoming Sarah's, it seems that Hagar laid claim to the baby herself, thus nullifying the law. And Sarah, dependent upon the promise of God, received the fulfillment of God's promise with the birth of Isaac. The son Isaac became the legitimate heir.

Now the law also of that day stated specifically that in the event there was a son adopted, if a natural son should be born of the union of this husband and wife, then the natural son would take precedence over any adopted child. This brings about the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac; now that Isaac is born he takes precedence over the adopted son, who is Ishmael.

According to Larkin, the period of time was fifteen years from the birth of Ishmael to the birth of Isaac. Subtracting this fifteen years from the five hundred and five year total, leaves four hundred and ninety years. [10] This was the first four hundred and ninety year period that God began to mark off with this people whom He had promised to raise up of the loins of Abraham.

## **Second Seventy Week Period**

In our search for the second four hundred and ninety year period, we begin with I Kings 6:1. It is stated here that it was four hundred and eighty years from the exodus of the people



from Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon's reign. In the fourth year of Solomon's reign the temple was begun. However, making a comparison of this statement in I Kings 6:1 with Paul's statement in Acts 13:18-21, we find there is a different chronology concerning this event. According to Paul, God suffered the manners of Israel for forty years in the wilderness. They then occupied the land and judges were appointed over them for about four hundred and fifty years. Notice Paul does not give an exact figure here. Some calculate this to be four hundred and forty-seven years until Samuel the prophet, who also judged for twenty years. Samuel anointed Saul who ruled forty years until David. David ruled forty years until Solomon. Then in the fourth year of Solomon's reign the temple was begun.

Now sum up these years:  $404-447+204-404-40+4=591$ . This total is 101 years more than the 490. Let us again note that God seems to count time in His chronological scale only as He is dealing specifically with Israel. During the time of the judges, Israel was subjected to six periods of servitude to the people of the land whom they failed to drive out as they had been commanded to do.

Larkin lists the six periods of servitude. Judges 3:8 tells of eight years of servitude to Mesopotamia. In Judges 3:12-14 there is an eighteen year period of servitude to the Moabites. Then Judges 4:2,3 tells of a twenty year period in servitude to the Canaanites. And in Judges 6:1, a seven year period is mentioned of servitude to the Midianites. Then to the Philistines and the Amorites in Judges 10:7-8 is another eighteen year period. Then last, Judges 13:1 tells of a forty year period of servitude to the Philistines. These all total up to a sum of one hundred and eleven years. Subtracting the one hundred and eleven, then, from the five hundred and ninety-one, gives a four hundred and eighty year period. The completion of the temple and all of the vessels for its service required another ten years (I Kings 6:38; 7:13-51). Added to the four hundred and eighty years, they complete another definite four hundred and ninety year period from the exodus to the temple dedication.[11]

### **Third Seventy Week Period**

The next episode of four hundred and ninety years begins from the time of the dedication of the temple and brings up the time of the Gentiles. Once again Israel comes into subjection. In this period the Bible reveals that they were in servitude during

Babylonian captivity until the edict went out under Artaxerxes that they should return and build the walls of Jerusalem. Larkin dates the dedication of the temple at B.C. 1005 and the edict of Artaxerxes at B.C. 445. [12] From the dedication of the temple to the building of the walls of Jerusalem, subtracting the number of years that Israel was in dispersion (seventy years according to Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 25:11), these people again come under a four hundred and ninety year period.

#### **Fourth Seventy Week Period**

Now we are able to discuss Daniel's writings concerning this last seven year period. So from the going back, the edict under Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the cutting off of Messiah was actually sixty-nine weeks, or a period of four hundred and eighty-three years. This leaves the problem of a seven year period that has not yet been fulfilled. This is what theologians refer to as Daniel's seventieth week, or the week of the tribulation.

These figures definitely show that God does deal specifically according to time schedule. The beginning of the time of the Gentiles and the approximate end of that time must be established in order that we might understand what Jesus means in Luke 21:28 when He says concerning all of these signs, "*When these things begin to come to pass. then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*" We cannot know the exact time, but we certainly can know when the time draws nigh, and the Lord would certainly have us do this.

Let us get back to the thought of the time of the beginning of the Gentiles. The ten tribes were carried away into Assyrian captivity somewhere around the year 725 by Sargon, and then some nearly two hundred years later the last two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were carried into captivity under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar and the rise of the Babylonian empire. These figures are only approximately correct to the actual historic time and serve here only to establish the beginning of the Gentile age. This I believe to have begun with the dispersion into Babylon.

[1] W.J. Conybeare and J.S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 4-6.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 8,13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[4] Ibid., p. 8.

[5] Ibid., p. 3.

[6] New American Standard Bible. (Reference ed.; La Habra, Calif.: Foundation Press Publications, 1973), p. 1252.

(71 Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel* (Philadelphia: Clarence Larkin Est., 1956), p. 201.

[I] Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[9] Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1972), p. 59.

[10] Larkin, loc. cit.

[II] Ibid., p. 202.

[12] Ibid., p. 205.

## CHAPTER V

### DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH WEEK

The last lesson ended with the thought of the dispersion of the tribes and the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. It might be hard to actually fix a time for the beginning of the Gentile period. From the dispersion of the last two tribes, under Nebuchadnezzar, I think would be the most probable date. We will conclude that the times of the Gentiles began, then, with the downfall of the nation along about 587 B.C. Scholars do not agree as to the exactness of such dates so I present these as problematical dates. But it was somewhere in the vicinity of 587 B.C. that the last two tribes were taken out of the land. This is also the date used by Tenney in *New Testament Survey*.

[1]

Other historical events were connected with the period. The nation of Samaritans came into existence as a direct result of the ten tribes going into Assyrian captivity. Some other Bible kingdoms, or Bible nations, come upon the scene as far as the nation of Israel is concerned.

Now consider the purpose of seventy weeks being determined upon the people of Daniel. Again refer to Daniel 9:24; here the writer explicitly tells that within the course of these seventy weeks a number of things are going to transpire, and I will note those things again and try to fill in the details concerning them as I go along.

First of all he says that it would be a time to finish the transgression; secondly, to make an end of sin; thirdly, to make reconciliation for iniquity; fourthly, to bring in everlasting righteousness; fifthly, to seal up the vision and prophecy; and sixthly, to anoint the Most Holy. Now all of these things are to transpire within that scope of the last seventy weeks that have been determined upon Daniel's people.

But from the time of the dispersion of Israel in the days of Nebuchadnezzar until May, 1948, there was no nation of Israel. We must conclude we are in that period of time that is delegated the "times of the Gentiles", and for the present it has lasted nearly twenty-five hundred years. How much longer? We don't

know, but as we examine prophecy in the light of present day happenings in our future lessons, I think that we can determine that it shall not be as long as many think.

## I. BIBLE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE WEEK

As we begin to comprehend all of the things that are related to the seventieth week, let us consider some things the Bible tells us about that week, what to expect, and some words that are used with reference to it in order that you might make a further study.

**A time of wrath.** The Bible describes it as being a period of wrath. In Revelation 6:16, 17 we are told:

*And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

Again the Revelator in Revelation 11:18 said:

*And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

Again in Revelation 14:19 he said, "*And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*"

Then in I Thessalonians 1:9,10, Paul wrote:

*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

A time of judgment. Not only does the Bible describe this last week as a period of wrath, but it also describes it as a period of

judgment. The Revelator gives the following:

*Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:7).*

*Who shall fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:4).*

*And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. (Revelation 16:5-7).*

*For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (Revelation 19:2).*

A time of indignation. Then the Bible describes this as being a period of time of great indignation. Isaiah 26:20,21 says:

*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

Again Isaiah 34:1-3 states:

*Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and*

*their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.*

**A time of punishment.** Then the Bible describes this as being a period of punishment. Again from Isaiah 24:20,21:

*The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.*

**A time of trial.** Then the Bible describes it as being an hour of trial, Revelation 3:10:

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

Then the prophet Jeremiah describes it as a period of trouble, Jeremiah 30:7, *“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”*

**A time of destruction.** Then Joel the prophet describes it as a time of destruction, Joel 1:15: *“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.”* Then he further describes it as being a period of darkness. In Joel 2:2:

*A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.*

Then Amos describes this further, Amos 5:18, *“Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.”*

So when we begin to discuss this period called Daniel’s

seventieth week, or as the prophet here describes it, "*the time of Jacob's trouble*", and knowing how the Bible describes it, we should be very, very much concerned with whether we are able to recognize that period when it comes upon the earth.

There are some things that need to be considered in the realm of the times of the Gentiles because we have already asserted that we are living in that particular time which the Bible has relegated to the times of the Gentiles and we are approaching that period mentioned earlier, the fulness of the Gentiles being come in. We do not believe that the times of the Gentiles will be consummated, actually come to an end in other words, until the last effort of man's attempt to rule the earth is carried out in the efforts of the man of sin.

## II. SATAN'S ATTEMPTS TO DEFEAT GOD'S PURPOSE

At this point, consider the history of this personality that is to come upon the earth and notice some attempts that he has made already to become the victor, or the ruler of this world.

**In the fall of man.** In the lesson concerning the fall of man, it was pointed out that it must have been the philosophy of Satan to say, "If I can destroy this creature that God has made who is to be the Lord of the earth, if I can get him to rebel against God, God must of necessity destroy him according to the workings of His own divine law, and thus I will be the lord of the earth. There will be no beings standing in my way." He got Adam to sin against God, but at that particular point he was not thinking about the fact that God is not going to be overcome by Satan, and that God had in redemption all the elements necessary to still fulfill His purpose for man. But we see the devil still contingent upon the idea that he can defeat the purpose of God and that he can defeat man.

Thus, he began to make his inroads into the hearts of men, turning men and the sons of God into a relationship with each other that was not compatible with the will of God for His children (Genesis 6:5-7). God never wants His children to compromise with the world and to enter into a relationship with the world, because the Bible teaches us that the world is enmity against God, that it is not subject to the laws of God, and we know that the world does not want to conform to Godliness (I John 2:15-17). So God is not pleased when we conform to the practices of the world.



**In the judgment of the flood.** Then this led up to the great judgment in the time of Noah, and here again is another parallel of this period of time that we are rapidly coming to, which prophecy declares as the seventieth week of Daniel. The flood in the day of Noah was a period of judgment, a judgment that was exercised upon flesh. Notice specifically that the coming tribulation judgment is a judgment that will be executed only upon people who are alive in their natural bodies here upon this earth at the time that this period begins. So we do not expect the dead to be raised up to go into the tribulation. The fact of the matter is, when death comes to a person, he is already facing his judgment. The Bible tells us that it is appointed unto men once to die and after death the judgment, so when physical death comes, man goes right on then to his judgment (Hebrews 10:27).

Certainly, I don't imply that there will not be a Great White Throne Judgment at the resurrection of the unsaved dead. I would not want to give you that idea, but the point is that when men die they have faced their record, they are now waiting the ultimate of God's decision in their behalf, and they cannot suffer any more physically (Luke 16:19-31). Death, when it comes, ends all physical walks of life, but it does not end life. There is the consciousness of man that goes on beyond the grave and in the presence of the Lord for whatever disposition God is pleased to make with it. If he is an unsaved person, he goes into the place called Hell. If he is saved, he is caught up into the paradise of God. So these things we want to keep in mind as we make this study.

Remember that Satan thought he had gained the victory because God said, "*I will destroy man from off the face of the earth*" (Genesis 6:7). Then remember what Jesus said about the second coming of Christ, "*As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man*" (Matthew 24:27). In the days of Noah, people were not disturbed, they were not reading the signs of the times, they were not listening to the message that Noah, the man of God and the preacher of righteousness, was bringing unto them; but rather they were following their own pernicious ways and were instituting their own designs upon things so that that day came upon them unaware. Satan was defeated in that attempt because Noah and his family were preserved and his attempt, then, to gain control of the earth failed because God raised up seed unto man on this side of the flood. As Free states, "God laid down the principles for the continuation of life upon the earth." [2]

**In the Seed Himself.** Another attempt of Satan's is found in his trying to get Abraham to act independent of God in the birth of Ishmael, and still further attempts after the nation was born. The seed came forth from the loins of Abraham. God allowed Pharaoh to cut off all the male children from the nation of Israel while they were in bondage in Egypt, and yet at the same time He preserved Moses as the leader of that people through all this. So one by one we could say that down to the time of the cross Satan had made every attempt to gain authority and control of this world, and yet even in the death of Christ he must have thought, "Surely now I have the Seed Himself before me." Death comes, and in the second chapter of Hebrews we are told that Satan at this particular moment had the keys of Hell and death, and it was in death that Jesus conquered him that had the keys of Hell and death. Thus the Revelator portrays Jesus as being the One, now, who has the keys of Hell and death at His side; therefore He is the One who can liberate all the souls that are kept in that region of the dead.

**As the Man of Sin.** We find Satan foiled again, but he has not given up his plan. He still has one more last fling. That is going to come when he comes down to earth in the Man of Sin incarnate and begins to take over the rule of this world. So this is a very, very important thing for us to discover.

In his coming kingdom, we find the parallel and the prophecies relating to it in the Bible. In particular the book of Daniel deals with the political aspect of the end time, while Revelation deals more specifically with the spiritual aspect of the end time. Yet both of these books harmonize one with the other. In other words, there are spiritual aspects in Daniel's writings as well as political aspects in the book of Revelation, and we will notice the two.

### III. DANIEL'S VISION OF THE GENTILE AGE

Notice the vision that is related in the book of Daniel concerning the period of the time of the Gentiles, beginning in Daniel 2:31:

*Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his*

*thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

Daniel is interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar that none of his wise men or soothsayers were able to interpret. Daniel simply is telling him that God has given him a preview of the entire Gentile age, to be consummated with the establishment of the righteous rule of Christ here upon this earth, that stone that was cut out without hands that smote the image.

However, there are some things about this nondescript beast that Nebuchadnezzar saw that Daniel tells a little more about in the second chapter, verses 39-43, describing that the head of gold is the first empire, which has reference to Babylon. He says:

*And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*

Now to hurriedly recap the Gentile period of time, there was the rise of the Babylonian empire, corresponding to the head of

gold. The arms and shoulder part were made of silver, a little inferior to the gold as far as quality of metal is concerned, and this refers to the Medo-Persian empire, a divided empire. Then there was the trunk or the torso part of brass which refers to the empire of Alexander the Great, or the Grecian empire. After this was the thigh and leg part that is of iron. This corresponds to the Roman empire. Remember that the Roman empire was divided and ultimately consumed along about the tenth century A.D.

Again notice the feet upon which this beast stands; they are made of clay and iron. This is a preview of the final forms of Gentile world power. This is the coming kingdom of the beast. John tells in Revelation 13:1 that he sees this beast coming up out of the earth.

It is important to recognize that figures of speech in the Bible are used to convey truths, sometimes to hide truth from man, and unless a person really wants to know these prophecies and what these truths are, he is not likely to take the time to try to solve the mystery of the figures. But the word "beast" is a symbol or emblem of government, as stated by Stevenson. So this beast empire is not the Man of Sin, the character who will be the leader or helmsman of it, but rather "the beast" refers to the empire itself. [3]

In Revelation 13:1,2 (concerning the same thing that Daniel has given a preview of) John states it thus:

*And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

This is about the same thing that Daniel sees in the ten toes and the feet that are made of iron and clay. Anyone that works with iron and clay knows that the two of them can be molded together, but iron does not actually give any strength to clay. If iron was put in concrete, it would add strength, but iron does not give strength to clay.

This final kingdom will have form. There will be a semblance of power in it, but it is not going to have the power that the legs of iron had. In other words, the revived Roman empire, the last days of Gentile world power, is not going to be in the strength

and power of the old Roman empire. Scofield states that the image gives “the imposing outward greatness and splendor of the Gentile world-power.”[4] It is only going to be in form. It is a mixture of autocracy and democracy, as stated in *Things to Come*. [5] Because the two are so different in their forms of government, they are not compatible, and about the only thing that can bring the two together is their need of dependency upon each other as far as economic conditions are concerned.

This is going to be a period of time, the end of this age, when certain nations are going to join themselves together. It seems there are going to be ten of them that are represented by the ten toes, and they are going to be joined together in a coalition government that will seem to have power but it is going to be an unnatural mixture and therefore there will be a possibility of disintegration of it. Daniel tells a little further that three of these are going to be overcome by the seven. Yet John tells that this is a seven-headed being (the number seven indicating completeness) and it has ten horns, or ten crowns. So it tells that it will be the final phase of Gentile world power, that a composite of ten nations will formulate it as such and that these are going to be joined together for a particular purpose. They will fulfill Daniel's seventieth week, which will bring us to the end of the times of the Gentiles, “the end of Gentile world power”, [6] when Jesus is going to manifest Himself and institute His government so that the stone that is cut out without hands will destroy that final form of man's attempt to rule the world.

There are a great number of things that must be considered that will lead up to the time of Daniel's seventieth week. This whole period that we are in now, that has lasted for something like twenty-five hundred years, in the times of the Gentiles. All the things that are stated in Daniel 9:24 are about to be consummated in that final form, or in that final week.

[1] Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p. 20.

[2] Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1972), p. 43.

[3] Fred G. Stevenson, *A Commentary on Revelation, II* (Little Rock, Ark.: Seminary Press, 1960), p. 154.

[4] *The Scofield Reference Bible*, C.I. Scofield, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 901.

[5] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, Dunham Publishing Co., 1966), p. 319.

[6] Scofield, *op. cit.*, p. 911.

## CHAPTER VI

### REGATHERING OF ISRAEL

This study has been based on the fact that God is dealing with His creation according to a definite time schedule, and it has been noted that in determining part of this time schedule, God deals with His people in a specific way and according to these four hundred and ninety year periods. Also it has been pointed out that God apparently does not count time, according to His schedule when He is not dealing specifically with His people Israel. We come to the conclusion that for quite some time now we have been in the period known as “the time of the Gentiles” - a time for an interval that began when God allowed Israel to go into Babylonian captivity and will culminate with the regathering of these people into the land. After this event, He will re-establish His time schedule with them as He once more begins to mark off time in what has been determined to be Daniel’s seventieth week.

Let us consider the regathering of these people to see if we are coming to the end of the Gentile period, and when we might anticipate the beginning of this seventieth week.

#### I. DISPERSION FULFILLED

Give attention again to the book of Deuteronomy. In a previous discussion I pointed out in the twenty-eighth chapter that by the lips of Moses, God made prediction that Israel would be sold into bondage, that they would serve other nations, and that in the midst of those nations they were going to be severely persecuted. But with the promise of that dispersion, God gave a promise of the regathering. Deuteronomy 29:22-28 foretells the dispersion:

*So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from afar land, shall say, when they see the plagues of the land, and the sickness which the*

*Lord hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom,...which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say. Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.*

Now, this has literally been fulfilled. No one could deny that Israel has been dispersed, but as we read on in chapter thirty, we see the promise that God gave through Moses of the regathering of this people. Notice verses one through three:

*And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.*

There are definite promises in the Word of God concerning the regathering of these people. These will be noted in particular.

But now reflect just a little over the history of Israel and its dispersion (Genesis 43 through the book of Exodus). Israel went into Egyptian bondage and when the taskmasters began to inflict

upon them great punishment and great tasks, requiring great feats of labor, Israel began to cry out and God sent forth a deliverer. This time they were delivered by the hand of Moses; however it was during a period when Israel acknowledged its need and its dependence upon God that God came through and answered. It might be said that the modern regathering of Israel is similar, at least, to the time that He gathered those people and called them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the promised land to begin with.

## II. HISTORY OF THE REGATHERING

The history of the regathering of the people of Israel is quite a study, and I want to give just a few statistics that I hope will excite you to study more about it. There are many good books that have been written on the rise of Israel. If no other source is available, a good encyclopedia, under the history of the Jewish state, will provide ample material about the regathering of this people.

I want to note just a few of the highlights, and then get into the Biblical prophecy concerning the regathering of the nation. Israel now has been in bondage for something like twenty-five hundred years, and one of the most momentous things, as far as prophecy is concerned, has happened in many of our lifetimes. In 1948 we saw the regathering of this people Israel. I am quite certain that we were so wrapped up and concerned with other problems of life that many did not give any significance or importance to the regathering of this particular nation. But this nation, promised by the Word of God to be called from all the people of the earth, had begun to assemble in the land. And then on that fourteenth day of May, 1948, the word went out as a proclamation all over the world: "Israel today declares itself to be a sovereign nation under God!" First the United States and then the other major powers accepted her sovereignty.

Notice a little of the history that led up to this great event. We said there is a similarity in the cry of Israel while in Egyptian bondage that led to their deliverance then, and in the cry of these persecuted people in the nations of the earth today that has led them to be regathered by the power of God Almighty back into the land that God gave to Abraham by promise.

And I inject again, that to suppose that Jesus, the Son of God, would come and the people not be regathered into the land would be utter folly as far as I am concerned. The certainty of the coming of the Lord is seen in the regathering of these people.



**Zionist movement.** Along about the end of the nineteenth century a movement called "Zionism" began. [1] It takes its name, of course, from the fact that Jerusalem is known as the city of Zion and the place where the temple was built and is the center of Jewish religion. The Jews have always had a link with that place, but they have not had a state that they could call their own. They were dispersed among all the nations. They simply took identities as citizens of those nations into which they had been dispersed, but no doubt the longing of their heart was about to be realized. Here in the birth of this movement along about the early portion of the twentieth century, actually the closing of the nineteenth century, many of these Jews realized that the only salvation for them was to be put into a state of their very own where they could be delivered from the hand of the oppressor and the hand of the persecutor. Persecution had certainly followed them wherever they had gone in keeping with what Moses had told them would be their portion in the earth if they disobeyed God. And these began to cry out; they began to raise their voice, they began to find a unified effort, and they began to work together. And so in the country of Switzerland about 1897, the Zionist movement actually had its origin.

Moving on from there we come to the promised land itself. Remember, it is still not the land that belongs to the state of Israel, but it is a land that is still controlled by the Gentiles, still under Gentile dominion, and we are discussing the time of the Gentiles.

**First pilgrims.** These people began to gather funds, and they began to organize, and many pilgrims began to return to the land. [2] One of the very first settlements in the land was Degoniah which, when translated, means "the cornflower". This was founded somewhere around 1909 and then from that little group there were others that began to come into the land. One of the first places to be settled, of course, was the Valley of Jezreel, the valley that at the time the pilgrims began to settle was virtually a swamp. (I am calling these early Jews, pilgrims, because in a sense they were. They were comparable to the forefathers who came over to America and eked out of the wilderness this great nation of ours.) These entered into the land and bought the Valley of Jezreel.

They began to work and they began to labor against the odds of making that swamp into a fertile and useful valley. They began to drain its tepid waters, they began to fight the malaria mosquito, and all of the other hardships that they had. It is quite

a story to read of these pilgrims as they began to carve a home out of a promised land that had now come under the dominion of the anger of God because of their disobedience. Once more, they were having to eke out a bare living and conquer the land that God had promised to them as a gift, and they were having to buy the territory. And this they did, and as that colony began to grow there were other settlements that began to be made known in the land.

**Tel Aviv, first all-Jewish settlement.** From about 1910, the first all-Jewish settlement actually began in what is know today as the city of Tel Aviv.[3] This of course is the ancient city of Joppa. This is the Old Testament city, the seaport, that carried on the commercial trade that entered into the land. This is the port through which they brought the cedars of Lebanon and transported them overland to Mount Moriah and there constructed the great temple.

So Joppa became known as Tel Aviv, and this was the first all-Jewish settlement in the land. Then by somewhere around 1914 there were quite a number of other Jewish settlements that began to spring up all over the land, most of the land being purchased by the Jewish national fund.

**Controlling dominions until 1947.** At this particular time, Turkey controlled the land. Before it came under the dominion of the Turks it had been under the dominion of the Ottoman and Moslem empires for quite a number of years, dating all the way back to the Crusader period as is related in *Israel and the Holy Land*. [4] And then came World War I. In World War I, Turkey aligned itself with Germany and at the close of World War I in 1917, or 1918, with the help of the British government, the Jews, for their contribution and effort in World War I, were given a favor.

As the British took over the mandate of the land of Palestine at that time, these Jews were looked upon favorably by the British government. Thus they began to increase their population in the land. However, the land was still under the British mandate up until 1947, when the British began to withdraw from the land.

Israel, a sovereign nation. There was a recommendation at that time through the United Nations that the land be divided, that there be a Jewish state and also that there be an Arab state. This proposal was made, and on May 13, 1948, the British

actually withdrew on that date. David Ben Gurion with shining face declared for the whole world the sovereignty of the nation of Israel.

My, what a history was involved in the upheaval that brought about the independent state of Israel! A look at some of the episodes that took place during and after those terrible times serves as a reminder of how God led them to victory after victory in the Old Testament. Along the highway that leads from Tel Aviv into Jerusalem can be seen the discarded hulks of rusted bodies of makeshift armament and armored cars and trucks that these Jews used to try to run the gauntlet between those hills to get supplies to the inhabitants and citizens in the city of Jerusalem. Many, many, many brave Jewish lads gave their lives. If you travel through the land today you will notice these hulks left there as monuments to the bravery, to the terrible cost of Israel procuring her independence from those that had sought to turn her from the state and to run her into the Mediterranean Sea. But God was with them, and God delivered, and Israel became a nation in 1948, one of the most momentous things in the prophecy of the Bible, and happening, incidentally, in our time.

Now Israel is in the land today. Evidently a lot of people are skeptical about whether or not these are actually Jews who are in the land. There are those who seem to be Anti-Semitists, and some want to say that these are not Jews. It is an amazing thing to me; all the people I talked to over there thought they were Jews. Many of them are willing to die for the fact that they believe they are Jews. Someone who has this information surely ought to go over there and tell those people that they are not Israelites, not Jews, and therefore they have no right to the land! You can believe that if you want to, but I believe that this is the nation that God said that He would gather from the four corners of the earth, bring into the land, and establish once more.

### **III. ISAIAH S PROPHECIES OF GOD'S HAND IN THE REGATHERING**

Let us now study the prophecies that are directly related to the regathering of these people. First of all in Isaiah 11:11-13 are these words:

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to*

*recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*

Notice that passage in particular because more will be said about it in relation to the fact that the whole nation has been regathered into the land. One of the things that impressed this prophecy upon my mind more vividly, I suppose, than any other occurred as I was driving along one sunny morning down through the south section of Israel, through the Negev Desert. I came upon an old Egyptian fortress that had been taken during the Six Day War by the Israeli forces. My gaze was fixed upon the flagstaff where, floating in the gentle breeze of that morning, was the white bunting bordered in blue with the six-pointed Star of David in the middle! I had known that Israel was a nation, that they had declared themselves a sovereign government, but somehow or other, like almost every other person, I suppose, I had not realized the impact of this until that memorable day. Then I thought, "Oh, my! What my eyes have been able to see. Surely there is the ensign that God said He would erect, that He would hoist, in order that all the eyes of the world might behold it."

I tell you today, in the land of promise, the land of covenant, the land that God gave to Abraham, there is the people regathered as has been promised by the Word of God. The dispersed of Israel have once more been brought back into the land.

Now our study goes further into the writings of Isaiah. Incidentally, for those who are interested in this portion of Bible study, Isaiah is contemporary with the dispersion of the ten tribes. In other words, Isaiah is contemporary with the tribes that went into Assyrian captivity something like two hundred years before the final two tribes were carried into Babylonian captivity. So Isaiah was prophesying some nearly twenty-seven hundred years ago, telling about the regathering of these people. God said, "I will bring them into the land."

In the forty-first chapter he gives quite a wonderful prophecy concerning these people, that when they would begin to cry out to Him, He would hear their cries and He would bring them into this period of restoration. This is the prophecy in Isaiah 41:6-19:

*They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved. But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish, Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold., I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs*

*of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine and box tree together.*

Before making any lengthy comment on this particular passage, I reiterate a fact now that God said, "Israel, I am for thee." Their coming into this land is an amazing thing when you stop to think about it. Just a little handful of these Jews had come back into the land. Some were being smuggled into the land even during the time of the British mandate, and these were poorly, very poorly armed. They were not a nation; there was no government on earth that would recognize them as a nation. Consequently, they couldn't appeal to a government as such and say, "Now, we would like to sign an arms agreement with you and we would like for you to furnish us artillery and the weapons of warfare." They simply had to get those things that were available to them, many of them antiquated, old and discarded. And so they began to use these as they began to fight with the odds that numbered better than thirty-five to one.

What I am trying to impress upon you is the fact that these people could not by virtue of their own strength have been brought back into this land. They can not claim credit for the fact that their sovereignty and independence today is won by the valor of Israel, although there are many of them that want to accept this position; but it takes the power of the divine hand of God as He promised to bring them there and establish them there in the face of their enemies.

Notice again one of the verses just read in this particular context. Verse eleven: *"Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish."* A lot of people in the world are amazed at the strength of this small people who have been able to hold off such great odds in the wars that have ensued from the time of this date in 1948 up until the present time. These people literally fought in many cases with sticks and stones. They went to war with nothing in their hand but a tool. By the power of God and the fact that God is with them and has brought them back into the land, they were able to successfully overcome their enemies, and they have been able to keep their property and to keep themselves from being driven into the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. So I see, without any question, that the hand of the Divine God of Heaven who promised to help them has been manifest to them, whether they

are willing to acknowledge it or not. I am quite sure that when they come to face God in the day of Judgment they will acknowledge then that it was His strength and power alone that gave them deliverance. When David fought with Goliath out near the River Shaaraim, I am quite sure that David didn't think that he had gained the victory through the strength of his own right arm, and the fact that he was quite adept with the sling. I believe as he picked up five stones from the brook it was symbolic of the fact that he had his trust in God, five being the Bible number associated with grace. David, trusting in the grace and strength of God to give him the victory, overcame the giant and gave the victory unto Israel.

I believe that the power and the grace of God has intervened in the needs of these people, and as they are regathering into the land that it is God and the strength of God that is sustaining them there.

[1] James Hefley and Marti Hefley, *Where In the World are the Jews Today?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1974), pp. 146-148.

[2] Rinna Samuel, *Israel and the Holy Land* (New York: Golden Press, 1967), p. 69.

[3] Zev Vilnay, *The Guide to Israel* (Jerusalem: Da'at Press, 1969), p. 179.

[4] Samuel, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

## CHAPTER VII

# BLESSING PLACED UPON THE LAND IN THE REGATHERING

To continue the story of the regathering of these people of Israel, notice again from Isaiah 43:5,6:

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

### I. PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH

Give attention now to the writings of Jeremiah, remembering that Jeremiah is contemporary with the dispersion of the last two tribes out of the land, and of course this is during the time of the Babylonian captivity. Through two prophets, God is dealing with the same subject, the regathering of these people: Isaiah, dealing with the regathering as far back as something like twenty-seven hundred years ago; Jeremiah, dealing with the regathering of the people something like twenty-five hundred years ago.

In Jeremiah 32:37-39 God promised:

*Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.*

The people have now been regathered politically, but as far as the nation is concerned, they have not been regathered



spiritually unto the Lord. That is yet to come. One of the things that is quite noticeable today is their unity. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied that God would give them one mind and one heart and that they would be unified.

Now that literally is an astounding thing. It seems that one of the reasons that people respect the nation so much today is the fact that they are so welded and unified into solidarity as far as a nation is concerned. These people were dispersed into all the nations of the earth because of the fact that they were divided. Perhaps this was what Jesus was talking about when He chided them by saying that "*a house divided against itself shall not stand*" (Mark 3:26), thus reminding them that because of their division as a nation they brought these destructions upon themselves. But they are now regathered with an evident spirit of unity. I was amazed as I travelled through the land to hear them speak always in the plural, never in the singular, of what "we" are doing. It does not matter whether you are talking to them about a service station or about the petroleum industry, it is what "we" are doing. If you are talking about the citrus growing and the agricultural industry, it is always what "we" are doing. Maybe the person you are talking with does not have any direct connection with that particular industry at all, but each has a definite interest and a definite part in everything that is going on in the land. That is what the prophets were foretelling would be the status quo of this nation as it was brought back into the land.

This unity and common interest among the people is also pointed out by the prophet Ezekiel.

## II. PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel is also a contemporary of Jeremiah in the period of the dispersion. Ezekiel is one of the prophets actually in the dispersion and therefore, prophesying from deep in the midst of Babylon, we hear the old prophet giving out words of encouragement for the people. A dismal picture is given in Ezekiel 34:5,6:

*And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all*

*the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.*

After this dismal note, Ezekiel gives God's words of encouragement in verses eleven through fourteen:

*For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.*

Now this is a distinct promise concerning the regathering of the people, and also there is a promise of restoration of the fatness of the land. Up to this point this study has been concerned about the land revealing the curse and the anger of God. He was angry with the people as He dispersed them throughout the world. The land became eroded, the land became desolate, the land became barren and untilled. Notice what the prophet says in chapter thirty-six. The people have been regathered into the land or, rather are in the process of being regathered into the land, and yet at the same time the prophecy and the promise of God is not so much to the people as they first are gathered into the land, because Israel has not yet acknowledged their God. They have not yet received the Messiah, the Son of God, and therefore they have not yet received the spiritual blessing. But I would point out that before there can be a spiritual birth there is of necessity a fleshly birth. So what we are beholding now is the political birth of the nation, i.e., the fleshly birth of the nation. But God has promised before that He will deal with the land before the blessings spiritually shall come upon the people. This is the key, now, to whether or not God is actually in the movement of the regathering of the people.

From Ezekiel 36:4, listen to these words: "*Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God.*" I stop here long enough to point out that the word "mountain", when it is used figuratively in the Bible, generally refers to a government. But many times God is not using figurative language, therefore we are not to take the figurative approach to interpretation, and thus end up spiritualizing, but we are to interpret literally wherever a literal interpretation does not violate another passage of scripture or conflict in any way with an interpretation of other matter. Here He is not talking about a government, but He is talking about the literal land itself, and He will say that in just a moment, but listen to His words now in Ezekiel 36:4-12:

*Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word <>f the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be budded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that*

*I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.*

Note in particular that last clause, “*thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.*” Again I emphasize that there are forces today that work contrary to the good of the establishment of this people, and those today that would seek to destroy them. Let them take warning that God said, “When I set my hand the second time to regather this people that I will establish them in the land with the security of the power of God.” There may be those in the world who are skeptical enough to believe that the nation of Israel cannot stand, but here is one Baptist preacher that believes that they will be a government until Jesus Christ comes the second time in all of His glory.

### **III. FULFILLED PROPHECIES**

#### **Wasteland Tilled**

These promises are concerning the land of Israel. I said we could determine whether or not the people are actually in the land by whether or not these prophecies have actually been fulfilled, and I can witness to you that my own eyes have seen that Israel today is literally a land that is flowing with milk and honey. It is amazing what has been produced and done in the land in so short a period of time. True, it is not a large land. But when you look back at it as it resembled everything God said it would when He put His curse upon it, and then see it today with its beautiful young forests, and its fields of agricultural products, and know that God is blessing the land, it is a sight to behold. Thus it completes what God said concerning this very thing. Every section of Israel that is tillable, every section that can produce, is being utilized by the people of Israel today. They are producing something upon that soil!

It is amazing as you drive by and see the young forests that they have planted. Actually, on many of the barren hills where erosion has swept away all, or at least most of the dirt, I am told they take pneumatic drills, drill into the limestone rock, and then put a seedling tree into that hole with a little dirt. With my own eyes I saw growing on the tops of those barren hills, beautiful young trees of the kind that they have found to be favorably adapted to the land. This within itself is nothing more than a fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied in the thirty-fifth chapter of

the book of Isaiah. Notice verse one:

*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.*

Literally a thing to behold, then, is the fulfillment of this particular prophecy. Now an amazing thing, the biggest part of the land is controlled by the wastelands of the south, and it looks as if that land would be as unproductive as any piece of ground that this earth has ever had. But it is amazing to see what they have done by providing irrigation and by moving sediments into the area of the Negev. They have reclaimed acre after acre of that ground. They have pipelined water from the Sea of Galilee. I saw a section of that pipeline that is over nine feet in diameter. Other irrigation is by natural ditch and concrete drainage, but most of it is from the Sea of Galilee.

The remarkable ingenuity of these people is evidenced. The water of the Sea of Galilee was not altogether good for irrigation. Some toxic springs in the bottom of the lake were giving off water unfit for irrigation. But these people, by their ingenuity, sent divers to the bottom of the lake to locate and seal off all the toxic springs. Thus they increased their flow of good, wholesome irrigation water and they have watered the desert so that it is literally blossoming as a rose today. Thousands and thousands of acres are thus being reclaimed and utilized that one might have thought were altogether lost as far as agriculture is concerned.

These people knew that the history of the past described it as a land flowing with milk and honey. They knew that it was a land that had been productive. All they had to do was to get at the job of bringing it forth. The hand of God is moving upon the land. It is being restored to the beauty it once had in the days long ago when Father Abraham actually came there and God told him to walk throughout the length and the breadth of it to see what He would give him as a possession.

### **Cities Built**

It is a fact that the land is productive, and the people are multiplying upon the land. But there is something else that prophecy said would also be restored in the land, and that is that

the desolate wastes would be tilled and that the cities would be built. Read further from Ezekiel 36:33-35:

*Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tided, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.*

Earlier in this study it was mentioned that the first Jewish settlement in the land was in the ancient city of Joppa, and this has become the greatest city of all of Israel today. Tel Aviv has by far the greatest population of all of the land. It has grown into such greatness mostly in the last quarter century since the time that Israel declared itself to be a sovereign nation under God.

Not only that, but in that last quarter century they have moved into other areas and they have literally built cities overnight. There is but one natural seaport in all the land of Israel today, the city of Haifa. That city, sitting on the coast, was an Arab village of something like thirty-five hundred population at the establishment of the nation of Israel, and today it has spread up over the face of Mount Carmel, although the city does not spread its whole length. (Mount Carmel is not just a small mountain, but it runs along the coastline for nearly twenty miles.) Haifa today is a city that is thriving and prosperous, having grown to something like a quarter of a million in population. That is quite a sizeable growth to have been accomplished within the last twenty-five years or so.

Another city worthy of notice is the city of Beersheba out in the desert where just a few years ago, perhaps twenty-five years ago, there was nothing more than a camel stop for the caravans on their way from Egypt up through the north and to the east. It was a wasteland, providing only water for travelers, the place where Abraham digged the wells and inhabited the land for quite some time. But these people have put together a modern city called Beersheba that has now something like sixty thousand population of Arab and Israeli people. It has become one of the great manufacturing cities. There they produce some of the fine ceramics that they not only use in their own building expansion, but also export throughout the world. So the

prophecy is fulfilled regarding the land. God said that He would turn to the land, that He would bless it, and that He would cause it to be tilled and to be sown, and literally so, and also that He would rebuild these wasted cities.

### **Whole House Regathered**

Now consider again the people who populate this land. As has already been mentioned, they are in the land; politically they are there, and they are thriving as such. But here is a prophecy concerning their spiritual needs and the regathering of them spiritually, in Ezekiel 37:1-14:

*The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus*

*saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.*

Notice what the prophet had been told to prophesy concerning the valley of bones. As these bones were brought together, they formed the carcass and then there was flesh, tissue, that came upon the bones, and the bones became a body. But verse eight states that *"there was no breath in them."* In other words, the spirit of God has not yet come into these people. Physically they are alive, politically they are a nation, but there is still something to be wrought in the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the nation of Israel that has yet to be fulfilled with the coming of the Son of man. These things will be discussed in particular in this study.

It should be re-emphasized that God said in verse eleven, *"These bones are the whole house of Israel."* I have noted there are those who try to establish the fact that in the dispersion of Israel ten tribes became lost. I have said the Bible does not know anything about "lost tribes". God does not know anything about "lost tribes". Certainly His Word does not tell us anything about any "lost tribes". God knows who they are, and He knows where they are, and He also knows that He has regathered all of them. The "whole house of Israel" has been gathered.

It is amazing that the people in Israel do not put importance on tribal ancestry today. Most Gentiles who visit the land are inclined to inquire of the Jews that they meet, "To what tribe of Israel do you belong?" Even if they know they usually give an answer such as this: "What difference does it make? I am an Israelite. I am a citizen of the nation of Israel." They are one in the land. That is exactly what Ezekiel the prophet is telling about the regathering of them. Notice what he said about the two sticks in verses fifteen through seventeen:

*The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another*



*stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.*

Now notice in verse twenty-one:

*And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.*

Certainly God has fulfilled this part of the covenant.

# CHAPTER VIII

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The last lesson considered the regathering of Israel into the land and the blessing on the land prophesied by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel upon the regathering. How wonderful it is to be able to look at those things with our very own eyes and know that God has once more begun to deal with His people. The greatest fulfillment of Bible prophecy that man has ever seen has come to pass in our very own day.

But I want to reemphasize that this is a political regathering of the nation of Israel, for up to this point, spiritually we cannot say that Israel has been born from above. She is in the land, she is there politically. God said that He would bless the land. This He is doing, and He is multiplying the men upon the land just as He promised that He would, but all of these spiritual things are yet to be fulfilled.

The prophet of old told about the birth of the nation in a day in Isaiah 66:5-9:

*Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendered recompence to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.*

The nation certainly was born in a day. Remember again that memorable day in May, 1948, when the old silver-haired David Ben Gurion stood before the world and proclaimed to the world the sovereignty of the nation of Israel. Born in a day! One day not a nation, now a nation.

If we could just simply capture the importance of this in our minds, surely it would brighten our expectancy of the Lord's second coming. Israel is the very key to the signs of the times. Let me emphasize that. The nation of **Israel is the key to the signs of the times**, which concerns this study now.

The political regathering was discussed in the last lesson, and we are now interested in finding out what the Bible teaches about the spiritual birth of this nation; for connected with the spiritual birth of this nation is the return of our blessed Lord for His people. This coming is not in glory-the glory coming will be at the time He comes with His saints-but it is the coming of our Lord for His saints. More will be said about that later.

## I. TWO EVENTS IN THE RETURN OF CHRIST

There are two important stages or events that are connected with the return of Christ. Regardless of what one believes concerning the actual time the Lord will come, I think that everyone must concede that there are two specific things the Bible teaches regarding the second coming of Christ. Number one is that Jesus is coming **for His saints**, and then Jesus is coming **with His saints**. Now there is a difference of opinion as to the time these events will take place. There are those that believe that He will come for His saints at the very beginning of what we are calling Daniel's seventieth week. And then there are those-and this is my view, incidentally--who believe that Jesus will come in the middle of that week and receive out of the world His saints. And then there are those, of course, who hold the opinion that He will not come until the end of the tribulation week. So regardless of what our views about the time element might be, we must believe, if we believe the teaching of the Bible, that there are these two phases, or events, that are connected with the second coming of Christ.

Now let me give you the scripture that teaches these things specifically. First, He comes for His saints. When we turn to Matthew's writings we find Jesus talking about the second coming. In Matthew 24:3 He had this to say, "*And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be ? and what shall be the*

*sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"*

Notice immediately that there is a three-fold question asked the Lord here in this particular passage. Jesus then began to answer and said unto them, *"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."*

He tells us that the coming of Christ is going to be for His saints, In Matthew 24:24-28:

*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

This is one aspect of His coming. And then notice in verse twenty-nine He says, *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."* Now after the tribulation of what days? He is talking about the great tribulation that is coming upon the earth, but He is going to come and receive His saints out of the world before this tribulation.

Then He tells in the next verse, *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* Now this is the second aspect of that coming.

### **The Coming for His Saints**

Read what Paul tells in I Corinthians 15:23 regarding the coming of the Lord for His saints. *"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* Now he has just entered into a discussion here concerning the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead is certainly tied intimately with the return of Christ for His saints. He is going to catch those who are alive out of the world, but at the same time all those who are dead in Christ are

going to be resurrected out of the world. And so he said here, *"Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* So at the coming of Christ we expect the resurrection to occur, and that resurrection incidentally will be during the time that He comes for His saints.

I Thessalonians 2:19 reads: *"For what is our hope, or joy; or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* Paul was saying to these Thessalonians, "When the Lord comes for His saints, then you are going to be our crown of rejoicing, those of you whom He shall catch away out of the world."

Then again he emphasizes that in chapter three, verse thirteen. He said, *"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."* Now here he puts the emphasis on the Lord coming with all His saints, not for His saints, but with all of His saints. So he thus makes the difference between these two.

Many had become alarmed in Thessalonica because someone had erroneously taught them that the resurrection was past already, so Paul begins a discussion concerning the resurrection of the dead. In I Thessalonians 4:13-18 he says:

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

Notice in particular here that Paul emphasizes this is a catching out of the world and a gathering unto the Lord in the air. The kingdom of Christ is going to be instituted here on this

earth, and when He comes with His saints, then, at His glory coming, He is going to institute that righteous rule. So the catching out of the world into the air is the coming for His saints-and incidentally, there are two books that specifically deal with the second coming of Christ in the New Testament. These are the books of First and Second Thessalonians. First Thessalonians deals principally with the Lord coming for His saints, and the second epistle deals primarily with the Lord coming with His saints, although both ideas are set forth in the first letter and in the second letter.

But notice now what Paul said in II Thessalonians 2:1 regarding the Lord coming for His saints: *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him."* This first event, then, is going to be a gathering together unto Him. Then, after the Lord has caught His saints out of the world, I believe there will be a period of three and one-half years, as I have stated my convictions that He will catch these out in the middle of the week.

Now there is a reason for our gathering together unto Him and for the three and one-half year period. Often we never stop to think that the Lord taught His disciples and trained them while He was here during His earthly ministry for something like three and one-half years. He had to teach them what He wanted them to do. And so it is, that when Paul was converted, he also had to be instructed. He did not enter into the ministry immediately. He was caught away in Arabia and there he learned what the Lord wanted him to do. When we are caught out of this world, translated into the presence of the Lord, resurrected out of the dead to be with Him in the presence of the Lord, then He is going to teach us what He wants us to do. This is a training period for the saints of God to learn what the Lord expects out of them.

### **The Coming with His Saints**

In the second event, Christ is coming with His saints in glory. A few more scriptures should be added to those already mentioned for your Bible study. In Matthew 16:27, the Lord Himself talking, said, *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."* At this point He is coming back to institute that righteous rule here upon earth. Those who are going to rule and reign with Him will have received their reward and they will know exactly and specifically what the Lord wants them to do.

Now notice also some of the passages already referred to. Note again in Matthew 24:30, "*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* "

The important thing to distinguish between these two events is that not all the world is going to see the Lord when He comes the first time, that is when He comes for His saints, but the world, those that are alive at that time, will behold the Son of man coming in the power and glory the second time. So here the Lord is talking about His glory appearing.

Then in Matthew 25:31-33 He tells us:

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.* "

This is the time of the judgment of the nations. The Lord is inaugurating, or instituting, at this present time, His righteous rule. He is beginning to reign. He will have the nations brought before Him to judge.

In II Thessalonians 1:7-10 are these words:

*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe [because our testimony among you was believed] in that day.*

Notice especially the last of those verses. This tells that He is coming with His saints to inaugurate His righteous rule. And then of course there are many other passages that could be referred to, but in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word can be established.

## II. KEYS UNLOCKING SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Now to continue looking at the keys that unlock the signs of the times, at this particular point notice the key that unlocks Bible prophecy. Many people are just simply befuddled whenever they begin to try to analyze or interpret Bible prophecy, and certainly this is not to say that Bible prophecy is all that easy to deal with, because so much of it is veiled in figurative language. But there is a key to the interpretation of it, and this key is given by the Lord Himself.

### **Double Reference of Prophecy**

In Luke 4:16-21 is related the occasion of the Lord coming to Nazareth:

*...and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

The prophecy in Isaiah's writings that Jesus had read from, is in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. Note in particular what the Lord did in reading this particular portion, because the Lord did not read a complete sentence. That is the point that I want to make as the valuable key in interpreting Bible prophecy. In one sentence in prophecy, two or more events may be recorded, and these events may be separated as far as time is concerned by thousands of years. Pentecost, in *Things To Come*, refers to this as the law of double reference. He says few laws are more important to interpretation of prophecy than this. [1]

The law of double reference is referred to here. The fallacy of



men today is to read into Bible prophecy two events, when actually only one should be considered. This is why I have pointed out that there are two aspects to the coming of the Lord, the coming for His saints, and the coming with His saints. We must, as we study this particular event, keep in mind which one of these we are studying about.

In Isaiah 61:1-3 is the very passage the Lord was reading from:

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*

Now this passage is the entire sentence, but notice that in quoting the prophecy, Jesus stopped in verse two of this reading at a comma, where it said, "*To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,...*" Why did the Lord stop there? He went on to point out in Luke's writings, "*This day is this passage fulfilled in your ears.*" But notice the rest of that sentence, "*...and the day of vengeance of our God;...*" Vengeance has not come yet. "*...to comfort all that mourn.*" That day has not come yet. Then in verse three, "*To appoint them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes,...*" That day has not come yet. And so we have been going along now for nearly two thousand years since the literal fulfilling of the first portion of this sentence and expecting the other portion to be fulfilled.

In the study of prophecy, there is the historical past that must be considered, and then there is always that situation that the prophet was immediately involved in. He may be relating to both past and present. However, the prophetic future is also taken into consideration, so in our study we must be careful to look into the past history and see if a portion has been fulfilled, to see what the situation was at the time the prophet was writing, and then to carry it on into the prophetic future. Pentecost states

that the prophet brought two widely separate events together because “the prophet has a message for his own day as well as for a future time.”[2] So this passage teaches us that there was a historical past; it was completed at the time Jesus was here the first time, and the next time He comes the other is going to be completed. So we have the key, now, to understanding Bible prophecy.

### **Paul’s Reference to the Coming as Sudden, not Imminent**

Then there are some specific keys concerning the second coming of Christ that unlock this event. Now Paul did not tell the Thessalonians that the return of Christ was imminent. He in the first letter pointed out the suddenness of that return. For a long time I, along with many, believed that the Lord could come at any specific time. I thought that Paul even believed that Christ could come in his day, until I notice what he said in the book of Second Thessalonians. If you will be careful to observe what he said there, you will not be carried away by believing that Paul looked for the Lord’s return in the first letter.

Use of personal pronoun. Now many say, “Why did he use the personal pronoun ‘we\*?’” He said, “*We that are alive and look for him.*” Yes, but he used it in the same sense of the word that you and I might use it when we say, “We Americans won the Revolutionary War. We won our independence. We became a nation.” Well, I was not born then and neither were you, and we did not fire a shot in the Revolution, but because we are Americans and are associated with the event, we can use the personal pronoun. And certainly Paul was associated with the event of the coming of the Lord.

**Apostasy and revealing of the man of sin to precede the coming.** Now, notice what he says in the second letter, II Thessalonians 2:1-3:

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: For that day shall not come, except there*

*come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:*

Two things are specifically pointed out here that must come to pass before that day can come, and that is the apostasy of the church, of the Lord's people, and the revealing of the man of sin. In Matthew twenty-four, Jesus gave a number of things that must come to pass, and the apostles knew that these things had not yet come to pass, so they were not looking for the imminent return. But they taught that Jesus would come suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Now notice the words of Christ, Matthew 24:5, "*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ.*" Well they had not done that in Paul's day. Then in verse six He says, "*Wars and rumours of wars.*" Those wars had not been fought in Paul's day. Rome still controlled the world and no one had arisen to challenge her right. "*Nation shall rise against nation,*" He says in verse seven, "*and kingdom against kingdom...famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places.*" And Jesus said:

*All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offered, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

These events had not come to pass in Paul's day, and he very well knew that. Jesus said, "*Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*" This is what Paul is talking about here as a key that unlocks the second coming of Christ. These things must come to pass. More will be said about that in another lesson.

Then another thing, the battle of Gog and Magog must precede these things, for out of the battle of Gog and Magog there is going to come the revelation of the man of sin. Now I make a distinction between the battle of Gog and Magog and the battle of Armageddon. Some do not. I will later point out the difference and the reason I believe there is such distinction.

The next lesson will be dealing specifically with the apostasy of the church and the revelation of the man of sin, at which time I will draw out some of these particular events that I have just noted. But these are the keys to the signs of the times.

[1] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Co., 1966L p. 4L

[2] *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER IX

### APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH

The last lesson brought this study to the thought, found in the book of Second Thessalonians, that there are two distinct signs the Lord has given with reference to the body presence, or His coming back in body presence, here upon this earth. To reiterate these two things that will be discussed in this and the following lesson, look again at the book of Second Thessalonians and from chapter two remember the words of Paul as he expresses himself thus:

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shad not come, except there come a fading away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*

Expressed in these words are two conditions that must be met before the return of Jesus to this earth. First of all, the apostasy or the standing off or the falling away, and then the revelation, the unveiling of the man of sin.

Many people erroneously believe that apostasy means a condition in which one who is saved may depart from the Lord to the extent that God cuts him off from the inheritance of eternal life. But nowhere in the Bible is this doctrine taught, and the plainest doctrine to be held in the Scriptures is the doctrine of the preservation of the saints. The Lord never anywhere says that He gives limited salvation, nor does He say that He gives eternal life until you commit such an error that would separate you. If that were the case, then certainly life would not be eternal. But in each place that salvation is mentioned, the Lord specifically points out that it is everlasting, that it is eternal, that it never ends, "*they shad never perish*", and so on. But I do not want to get into a discussion on the security of the believer,

but certainly anyone who has any doubts about it can't help but be persuaded of this particular doctrine if the Scriptures are read with open mind and prayerfully considered.

But this discussion concerns an apostasy that can occur.

## **I. PRINCIPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION (SALVATION AND INHERITED BLESSINGS)**

There are two basic principles of interpretation that must be dealt with in the New Testament. This is not concerning prophecies but is concerning interpretation of the New Testament. Number one is that there is a portion of the New Testament that deals with **the specific needs of the individual for salvation** or eternal life. And then the greater portion of it is a **rule of conduct for the person who has eternal life** as he relates to the new covenant which is the New Testament church. And so I say the new covenant embraces the New Testament church. One who has been saved by the grace of God may affiliate with the New Testament church. When one follows still further the law of the New Testament which requires him to be scripturally baptized by the proper authority, then that individual is commanded to walk in the laws of Christ as they are specifically laid down in the New Testament as the church's book of instruction. If one fails in this department, that is in walking in these instructions, that man does not sever his relationship from God.

In Romans 8:38-39 Paul mentions a number of things that might be considered as possibly separating you from the love of God which is in Christ; however, his conclusion is that none of these can separate. In II Thessalonians, chapter two, he is not talking about losing one's eternal salvation, but as in many places in the New Testament he is talking about losing our relationship to Christ in this new covenant, which simply means that we are cut off from an inheritance. Individuals, then, may fail to keep covenant relationship with the Lord and as a result of that they lose an inheritance, not eternal life.

For instance, a man has a son. This son is an heir to all of the father's goods. Thus the father makes out a will, a covenant, a testament as we call it sometimes, and in this he specifically points out that this son is to become the inheritor of his earthly possessions. Upon his death, all that the man has is to pass over in legal ownership to the son. Now this son may be required, however, by the father to do certain things in order to comply with the terms of that will so that he might receive the full

inheritance. If the son does those things the father lays down for him to do, he gets the whole thing. And, on the other hand, if he does not do the things that the father wants him to do, the son is not named in the will. In other words, the father changes the will; the son loses his inheritance. He cannot lose his relationship to that father. No matter what the son does as far as this life is concerned, he can not destroy the relationship that he has as father and son. A born son is a born son. A man who is born of the Spirit of God is a child of God, and forever remains in that relation. But unless we measure up to the principles of the New Testament, we can certainly lose the inheritance that God has provided for us if we meet the requirements.

That is all centered in our relationship to Him in the New Testament church. When I am using the term "New Testament church" I am not talking about an institution that includes all the saved of all the ages, nor am I talking about an institution that includes all the saved of this age. But I am talking about the New Testament order of organization, a church that was founded by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself during His personal ministry. And anything founded this side is too late; even on the day of Pentecost is fifty days too late for it to be a New Testament church. And certainly anything, then, that came into existence during the rise of Protestant Reformation could not comply with the New Testament order and design of the church. So I am talking about an institution that can measure up to that founded by Jesus Christ in every compliance with the laws of the New Testament, a local, visible body. That is all the word "ecclesia" means according to Thayer;[1] and that is the only interpretation that you can place upon it. The Bible does not tell us about a universal, invisible church, but it simply tells us about that local, individual church. Vincent states that "*all the building*" in Ephesians 2:21 literally means "every building," or "each several building." [2] When the end of this age comes, the end that we are talking about now, the Lord will take "each several church"-in other words, each individual church--to make up the bride of Christ, just as each of us who compose that one particular body, that meets in that one particular locale, is a part of that body. We are not the body. We are only a part of that body, but we make the body as a whole. Then, at the end of the age, each several church will go to make up that bride of Christ, as Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians.

It is not my purpose to dwell on the subject of the church and the organization of it, etc., but I do want to deal specifically with the fact that one loses his inherited blessings if he fails to keep

church relationship. Now whether that church may exclude you because of some immoral act, or some act that it considers to be unscriptural and non-conforming to the laws of the New Testament, or whether the church fails to take action against you even though you are guilty, I believe in my heart that the Lord Himself takes action against you. Also, churches, then, may lose their status quo as an inheritor, as part of the bride of Christ, just as an individual may lose his status quo as an individual member. Now this is what is meant by the apostasy. Churches can apostatize so that they lose their right to be called a New Testament church. It doesn't mean that they have no building and that they are not having services, but it does mean that they will have disqualified themselves as part of that body that will make up the bride of Christ at the end of this age. So the apostasy, the day of the apostasy, does not concern these Protestant denominations that have come into existence, not anything that might have been born out of Catholicism from the year 251 A.D., but it is related to something that qualified itself originally, measured up in every detail. One of these can so leave the faith to the point of becoming impure and therefore a castaway as far as the Lord is concerned. This is the apostasy, and this is what this study deals with in particular.

I shall point out a few things concerning this apostasy that are found written in the Word'. In the book of Matthew the Lord Jesus Himself tells us that these things can come upon the church, Matthew 24:10-12:

*And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

The Lord was talking about the end of this age, the age when iniquity would abound. And this iniquity would not affect the world. The world does not have any love for God. The world does not care one thing about God. But we who claim to be the sons of God are the ones who are mentioned here. It is our love that can grow cold, and the reason that it grows cold is because we become so contaminated with the world that we simply lose our zeal for the Lord. And this is a thing that is happening in our age.

## II. THE APOSTASY PORTRAYED IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

The book of Revelation deals specifically with the end time. It begins in chapter two by setting forth messages specifically directed to seven churches. These churches were all located in what is known as Asia Minor today, actually in the country that we know as Turkey, in the Lycaish Valley. Each one of them was a New Testament church. Each one of them conformed to New Testament principles and law. Each one of them was considered as such by the Lord, because He addresses the messages unto the angel, or messenger. And here we perhaps need to spend more time explaining words than we do explaining doctrine. The word "angel" does not necessarily mean a cherub or a spirit being that has wings and flies around in Heaven. The word refers also to anyone who carries a message for the Lord. The word can just simply mean "a messenger". So in this particular, I think, if we interpret correctly, He is speaking unto the messenger of the church, and in that sense He would be speaking unto the pastor, because the pastor is charged with the responsibility of seeing that these churches remain faithful, seeing that these churches are properly indoctrinated, and that these churches walk in the faith once delivered unto the saints.

The messages begin with the message to the angel at the church of Ephesus, then to the church in Smyrna, the one on Pergamos, the one in Thyatira, the one in Sardis, the one in Philadelphia, and finally the message to the church at Laodicea. Now each one of these were churches in existence at the time that these messages were written unto them. The fact of the matter is, the book of Revelation, according to most scholars, was written somewhere in the closing period of the first century according to *The Student's Chronological New Testament*.<sup>[3]</sup> Many place the time of its writing around 95 A.D. John the Apostle, the beloved apostle, exiled to the Isle of Patmos, received the revelation of the Lord. It is not John's revelation, but it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and these messages are messages that are coming from Him who is the Head of the body, the church, as Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians (Ephesians 1:21-22), and He is telling these churches that He knows specifically what they are doing. He knows the things that are right, He knows the things that are wrong, and in almost each one of these there is a caution to improve the thing that is lacking on the part of that church.

Now, many tell us, and I take this view, that these, being



seven, are not messages altogether just for the benefit of the churches to whom they were written. But seven being the number of completeness (the importance of which has already been noted in this study and will be further discussed), and the fact that these are seven indicates that it is a message to the church in the entire church age.

Seiss states that these churches are to be viewed as “literal historical churches, existing at the same time John wrote, but at the same time, representative and comprehensive of all other churches of all nations, places and ages--a complete sample of the whole body, in the entirety of its character and career.”[4] These churches were examples of things that would come to pass historically in the church age. Many of these have already come to pass. We come down to what specifically is the latter portion of this testimony, the church at Laodicea receiving the last message, and we know that these things apply to the whole church age and any particular church, then, may apply these messages to itself. And these are told in the fourth message, the church at Sardis.

In Revelation 3:2-3 are these words as the Lord says:

*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Now these are the words of Jesus to His church, and He is telling them that He is going to come to them in an hour that they think not; and if He does, then certainly they are going to be the loser. These churches and the messages to them will be noted in particular a little later; however, note in the letter to the Church at Ephesus that Jesus points out that churches can lose their status quo as a New Testament church.

Consider another thing that is mentioned here. Jesus says that He is coming instantly. He is coming in an hour that we think not. Again I refer us back to the book of Matthew to a statement of the Lord in the twenty-fourth chapter concerning the suddenness of His appearance. Not the imminence of His appearance, but the suddenness of it.

In verse thirty-six, He said, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father*

only. ” He tells us specifically here that we cannot ascertain the exact day, the exact hour. But He did not tell us that we were to be ignorant of the events that lead up to that coming, and thus He gives us here the sign of the apostasy of the church, the standing off of God’s people, the standing away from the truth, the standing away from their committal to do the service of God, the losing of their first love as He said before, that because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Notice what He says specifically in the very first message to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-5):

*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast bourne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

What significance does this have? The fact that churches can lose their position in the bride of Christ at the end of the age.

A figure of speech is employed here, about removing the candlestick. He interprets that figure of speech for us in the first chapter of Revelation by stating in verse twenty, “*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches,* ” in other words, the pastors, “*and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* ” Stevenson says the mystery of the seven stars is that they are the angels or messengers. Evidently the messengers here are the pastors or spokesmen of the churches.[5]

Now what is it that the Lord said He would remove? “*I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* ” Now the charge that was brought against this church was that they had left their first love. Even though I think this was characteristic of the church of Ephesus, I believe that it is also a

characteristic of the condition of the church throughout the church age, for that matter, but more particularly when it comes to the end of that church age. We are living in a time when you, I think, will admit in your own mind, "I have not the spiritual blessings and joys that I have had in my Christian life." Very few people can actually say that today they have more zeal, more enthusiasm, more Christian joy than they have had at any time in their Christian life. Someone that has just recently been converted might be able to say that, but I am talking about those of us who have now been with the Lord for quite a number of years. It certainly is not Christ's fault that we do not have that joy. It is not the Spirit's fault that we do not have that joy. It is not the Word's fault that we do not have that joy. It must be a condition that we have allowed ourselves to come into.

I use this little illustration to try to get across what I think He was talking about here in the condition of leaving the first love. Number one, this church still loved the doctrine, they loved the truth. They tried those who said that they were preaching it and were not. They were laboring. They were doing something for the Lord. They were not just entering into it halfheartedly. They were actively engaged in service, if you will notice what He says in verses two and three. But then verse four, "What I have against you is that you have left your first love."

Now, you can remember back to the time when as a boy you made your journey across the dusty roads in the evening to court that little girl. It did not matter how hard you had worked for five and one half or six days. Maybe Saturday noon you quit the field, you came in, you spruced up. And oh, my, it did not get too cold, it was not too hot, the weather was not too bad for you to make that journey over to that little girl's house. When you got there, everything that she wanted was your desire as well. All she had to do was mention it. You could not lavish enough love, and you could not bestow upon her enough of the things that you considered to be good things of life. Presents? My, you just wished that you had more money to buy even more expensive things to give her.

Well, by and by you got married, and after the first week, my, you just sought every opportunity to help her. It was "Honey, this" and "Honey, that", and "Oh, Honey, let's do this and let's do that." But then those weeks wore into months and those months began to wear into years. And finally "Honey" comes up to you one day and she says, "Honey, let's go." "Let's go? All you think about is going. Don't you know I've been working all day? Don't you know I'm tired? I'm too tired to go!"

Well, what am I talking about? Where is that first love? Where is that that you had when you courted her? After you had worked hard five days a week, you were not too tired to go then.

Then she comes up to you and she says, "Honey, I need a new ... won't you buy me a new..." "Buy you--that's all you think about, spend my money! Don't you know I have to work hard?" Oh, you still love her. Sure you still love her, but where is that zeal of that first love?

Now that is what the Lord was saying to this church here. "You have lost the enthusiasm of that first love that would cause you to do anything you could think of that could be done that would further the service of the Lord." Churches today are still in the business of the Lord. They still love the truth. They still love lost souls, but how many are as energetic as they were when they first began? How many are as enthusiastic in preaching the gospel of Christ as they once were? How many of the membership now find every excuse that they can make to stay away from the house of the Lord instead of trying to find a reason to go to the house of God?

This is what I am talking about. The apostasy at the end of this age is brought about because our love has dimmed, our love for the Lord has grown cold.

If we continue to read these messages unto the churches, you will find that there were commendable things said to the churches. God knows their works; they were in the same condition we are today as we read to the church at Pergamos, He had these words to say (Rev. 2:13-14):

*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

But then He says:

*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*

What is He saying here? We are living in an age when people

want to compromise the truth. That is exactly what Balaam tried to get the children of Israel to do. He offered them a spirit of compromise. He told the king, “Go out there and intermarry with their women, and get their men to marry your women. Thus you can bring about a compromising position.” He taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock unto the children and to eat things sacrificed to idols. When we begin to do those compromising things, we begin to participate in the idolatrous religions of this world, that is an affront to Christ. And as a result of it, we are going to be cut off. This is the apostasy, the first sign with reference to the second coming. The next lesson will deal with the second sign, the revealing of the man of sin following the apostasy.

[1] Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Marshalltown, Del.: National Foundation for Christian Education, [n.d.]), pp. 195-196.

[2] Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. III. *The Epistles of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 380.

[3] Archibald T. Robertson, *The Student's Chronological New Testament: With Introductory Historical Notes and Outlines* (London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), p. I xv.

[4] J.A. Selss, *The Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 68.

[5] Fred G. Stevenson, *A Commentary on Revelation, I* (Little Rock, Ark.: Seminary Press, 1955), pp. 55-56.

# CHAPTER X

## MAN OF SIN

The last lesson dealt with the apostasy of the church. Remember that Paul said that that day of the coming of Christ shall not come except there come the falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

I stated the fact that in the apostasy of the church there is a position that the church can lose, as well as a position in the church that an individual can lose. But this has to do with the inherited blessing, and this inheritance has to do with the reign of Christ, the righteous rule of Christ, and the fact that the church is going to rule and reign with Him.

Israel forfeited its right to rule and reign with Christ in the righteous rule of God during the millennium, and Jesus mentioned that fact in the book of Matthew where He was chiding these people because they had failed to receive Him. He says in Matthew 21:43, *"Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."* Because Israel forfeited her right Jesus was making a promise to the New Testament church that her noble position would be one of being kings and priests with Him in this millennium that is to come.

I think none would disagree as to the fact that we are living in the days of the apostasy which the Laodicean church letter describes in the book of Revelation. This, then completes the first condition set forth by Paul in II Thessalonians 2.

### I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAN OF SIN

Now I shall pursue the fact that the Antichrist is to be revealed before the coming of our blessed Lord. A study of some of the things the Bible tells about this person will enable us to recognize him and his work a little more clearly.

First of all, he is **a man**. Now many people have the mistaken notion that this will be the devil incarnated, in flesh, at his first revelation, but actually the Bible does not declare that. But he

will be a man who is completely dominated and influenced by the devil, but not until Satan is cast out of Heaven in the middle of the week will he come down and indwell this individual. But first of all, he is a man. Paul says, "*Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come unless there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed.*" Then Jesus tells us in John 5:43, "*I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*"

Not only will he be a man, but he will be a man who possesses **super intelligence**. According to Daniel 8:23, "*And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.*" A man who will possess super intelligence, understanding the world's problems, will offer a solution. He will be able to solve these difficult problems because the wisdom of Satan will be partly his to choose from.

We are told in the book of Ezekiel that the devil himself, before his transgressions and even now, is full of wisdom. For Ezekiel had to say, in Ezekiel 28:12, "*Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyras, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.*" It is my opinion that Satan was the most beautiful thing that was created in God's creation, and certainly he was wise and he retains that wisdom today, although he is not all-wise.

Then the man of sin is going to **be a great orator**. Daniel 7:20 describes him thus:

*And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.*

His "*mouth that spake very great things*". This is going to be a super orator, in other words. He is going to be able to move men by the power of his speech.

Then he is going to be a **super politician**. Daniel 11:21 states: "*And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.*" One of the tactics that most politicians learn early in life is that flattery is a thing that sways people and moves them to their position. So this man, by using flatteries, is going to be able to obtain his

position as the head of the beast empire.

Then he is going to be a wizard in economics. How the world is looking for such a character right now! "If we could only have one," the world says, "who would come upon the scene and solve the ills, who could re-establish the value of currency and who could bring this inflation under control and all of the ills that go with it..." That man would certainly be a welcome sight as far as the world is concerned. The man of sin is going to emerge and be able to do exactly that. Daniel 8:25 says:

*And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.*

Then John tells in Revelation thirteen that this character is going to be a world ruler who will be able, by his wisdom and his ingenuity, to bring the world under his control. It is going to be the time of the mark of the beast. It is going to be a time when men are going to succumb to that mark. We have many today who are moving in that very direction, and I will have more to say about that when I have the next lesson on the political situation of the end time.

Then he is going to be able to control the world's commerce. This will be the time when he causes everyone, small and great, to take the mark of the beast so that no man can sell save he have that mark.

Then he will be a military genius. Revelation 13:4, ".And they worshipped the dragons which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Now, not only will he be an ingenious person, but he will have the power to lead the armies in victory as he takes his place in the world of power.

Then he is going to be a religious leader. In a study of the Scripture and especially the book of Revelation, we are introduced to the idea of the beast and the false prophet, false religion that gives its consent to the power of the beast. I reiterate here that the beast refers to the government, and this man of sin is the head of the government. Sometimes he is called the antichrist; certainly he is anti-Christ, but this is really a misnomer as far as this character is concerned. The Bible calls him a number of things, but never the antichrist. There may be one exception to this statement found in I John 2:22.



## II. DOCTRINE OF THE MAN OF SIN

In the book of First John the word antichrist is used, and it refers to any person who denies that Jesus is come in the flesh. Pentecost states that John is concerned “with an immediate doctrinal error.... The emphasis is not on a future revelation of an individual, but rather on the present manifestation of false doctrine.”[1] The doctrine of the man of sin, then, is anti-Christ. This man is going to lead the religion that will ultimately result in his declaring himself to be God, and demanding that people worship him. As Paul tells in II Thessalonians 2:4, “*Who opposeth and exalteth himself about all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*” Then Revelation 13:15 says, “*And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*” Now that spirit of antichrist is already in the world today, and certainly the stage is being set.

In every dispensational change in the Bible, there has always been a rather intensifying of involvement of demon spirits and the activity of Satan here in the world. This thing is being noticed more and more today. There are those today who are trying to lay claims to the pentecostal power. There are those today who are carried away with the charismatic movement in believing that they are reviving the speaking in tongues gift. The Bible does not talk about a language that cannot be understood, but the gift of tongues that was given unto the church in its early ministry, a language that was known and could be understood by man. And yet today this movement is carrying many, many, people in its sway.

How can this thing come about? How will the man of sin be able to use and utilize these things? Paul gives the answer in I Timothy 4:1-2:

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*

There is actually a better translation of this in the *New American Standard Version*:

*But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.*

What he actually says is that the Spirit itself is declaring that in these latter times the apostasy that I mentioned earlier would take place, and many will fall away from the faith. Many churches will fall away from the faith. Many churches, who were New Testament churches, will depart from the faith, being deceived by the demons posing as teachers. As is stated in *Pastoral Epistles*, they are not teaching about demons, but these are actually demons who are doing the teaching. The Scripture is plainly telling that there will be a period of time in the end time when men will become demon possessed more readily, perhaps, than at other times. In verse two he says, "*By the hypocrisy of liars,*" these liars whose conscience is seared with a branding iron.[2] If you cauterize something, you sear it over, you do it instantly, and men who become callous to the teaching, an erroneous teaching, are going to fall victim to this man, so that Paul, as he continues his writing in the book of Second Thessalonians, states that this individual is going to lead astray many. This is what he states in II Thessalonians 2:8-12:

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

### **III. ADVENT OF THE MAN OF SIN**

This character, according to the Revelator, is going to have

the power of a false religious group that will help him be enthroned as the leader of the nations of the world. There are a number of things to consider that give a clue as to his revelation. When will he come? In Daniel 9:27 we are told:

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

This states that his advent will actually begin as he makes the covenant that corresponds to the last seven years of Daniel's seventieth week, the last seven years that are to be determined upon the people of God. Remember that God marks off time as far as His time schedule concerning the second advent and the establishment of the kingdom is concerned, only when He is dealing in particular with the nation called Israel. So when this man makes the covenant with them for seven years, then we will know that the last portion of that time period that is allotted unto the world is actually coming to an end. In other words, the fulness of the Gentile regime and the Gentile age and the Gentile power, all Gentile government, will have its culmination in the beast empire of the man of sin. But there are many things that enter into this to make it what it is, and this study will deal with this along with the political aspect, as has already been mentioned.

Making the covenant with Israel involves a number of things. When is this going to be? The Bible has much to say with reference to the Jews being regathered into the land, as has already been pointed out. The Bible also has something to say about this particular time when they are going to enter into the land and they are going to feel that they are safe because that covenant has been made with them.

It is well recognized that the place in the world today that commands the most attention is that little land called Israel; the whole eye of the world is focused upon them and upon those nations that surround them. Many are talking about the oil situation, the energy crisis, etc., and wonder why all of a sudden this thing has come to be. Have you ever stopped to think? "Oh," someone will say, "it is simply just coincidental." This study will be dealing with some more "coincidences", but I don't think it is altogether coincidental that the nations that surround the little

land of Israel today control most of the energy used by the engineering and civilized world in their industrial powers, so that they could put a stranglehold upon the industrial nations and cause one of the greatest calamities imaginable. Some of our own government officials, Secretary of State Kissinger and President Ford themselves went on record as saying that one of the things that might contribute to a war between the United States and those nations would be that those nations would become involved in trying to strangle the industrial powers of the world. So the situation is critical, and people today are concerned about the crises that could develop from it.

What makes all of this? Why? I noted a passage in Daniel's writing concerning the advent of the man of sin. A passage in chapter eight leads into the discussion of the political situation of the end time and is another key to the understanding of God's time schedule.

Daniel 8:20-22 reads:

*The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.*

This is the verse that I want to give particular attention to (verse 23): "*And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.*" This gives a very definite clue as to the time of the revelation of the man of sin.

It may have seemed that all those history lessons in the beginning of this study had no particular bearing upon the coming of Christ, but they have a definite place and here the importance of the historical background becomes evident. At the close of the Medo-Persian rule upon the earth, Alexander the Great became the conquerer of the world. He conquered the world in a very short order, and died while yet a young man. This man had done a tremendous job in leading his forces to conquer the entire civilized world during his period of history, but at his death the empire was divided among four of his generals. That division became what is known today as Egypt, Syria, Macedonia or Greece, and a little country just to the north

and east of Greece called Thrace. Those are the four divisions of that kingdom.

These continued until the close of the Grecian Empire, at which time the rise of the Roman Empire put down the last phases of the Grecian Empire. Out of the Grecian Empire, though, and its divisions, Egypt and Syria began to make the little land called Palestine something of what we would think of as a football field, with their arguments and their wars. First it was under the control of Egypt, then it passed to the hands of the Seleucid in Syria. These two nations have come back into importance today, and the little land of Israel is still the football field between them.

Now, what significance does this have? *"In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up."* For all of the years since the beginning of the Roman Empire up until 1917, these nations were under the dominion of other governments. Egypt and Syria and Greece and Thrace were under the control of the Roman Empire until the cessation of the Roman Empire along about the Tenth Century, then parts of it began to fall victim to other empires, the Ottoman Empire that controlled Syria and Greece and so on, but in our day (you might say some of us have lived in that day) there has been a revival of these nations. They have come back into existence. Today Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Thrace each stands as a sovereign nation. So in the latter time of these kings, or this kingdom, we have literally seen them slip back into the history of mankind, the revival of these nations out of whom the man of sin is going to come.

The Bible depicts the working of this man of sin, in the latter phases of the Grecian Empire. The country we know as Syria was under Greek control at that time, and under Antiochus the Fourth, the ruler of this section, the temple was desecrated. Actually, Antiochus made an attempt to stamp out the religion of the Jews. He hated these people with a passion, and he sought to put their religion down. That is characteristic of this man of sin, who opposes God and exalteth himself and declares himself to be a god and seeks men to worship him as such.

Jesus tells about the desecration of the temple again when the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stands in the holy place. This is all yet to come. But Antiochus, being a type of that person, as presented in Larkin's *The Book of Daniel*, caused an altar to be built upon the great altar in front of the temple. He had one of his "generals" offer a hog upon the altar

(certainly a most abominable act as far as a Jew was concerned since swine flesh was absolutely forbidden to the Jew). He then had the broth of this hog strewed upon the walls inside the holy place, thus desecrating that beautiful and magnificent temple that had been dedicated unto the service of God Almighty.[3]

This is typical of the rise of the man of sin. I am not going to say positively where this man is going to originate, but I would advise you today to keep your mind centered upon the happenings in the country of Greece and also in the happenings of the country of Italy, because Daniel tells us that he is the prince of the people that shall come (Daniel 9:26). And when the revival of the old Roman Empire and the political situation is considered in the next lesson, it will be evident that this man could rise up out of the coalition government that will come out of the nations that compose the old Roman Empire, of which Greece is a part. Now Antiochus was a Greek. Antiochus was the man who desecrated the temple. So it might well be that we could look for him to appear out of Greece.

There are those people today who take the position that he must be an apostate Jew, but if that is so, then certainly Daniel's writings have not given the clue as to the individual to look for, because Daniel said that this character would rise up out of the prince of the people that were to come, and these were the Roman Empire. Jerusalem was destroyed under the leadership of Titus in A.D. 70, and the Roman Empire exercised authority over that land.

We should look for this man to make a soon appearance. The amazing thing is that prophecy is being fulfilled, literally every day, and it is being done in such a normal manner that no one is actually getting excited about it. Now these nations have come back into existence. The world, the political situation of the world, the religious situation of the world, is such today that the man of sin could be revealed, and certainly I am looking for him in our day.

There is a situation that must be considered that will develop and will bring about his revelation completely and that is what we want to consider in the following lesson on the subject of the Battle of Gog and Magog, for he will be the leader of the forces that will guarantee Israel this victory over the forces of the north and over the forces of Russia.

[1] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Co., 1964), p. 337.

[2] Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), pp. 149-150

[3] Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel* (Philadelphia: Rev. Clarence Larkin Est., 1956), pp. 237-242.

# CHAPTER XI

## BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG

In continuing this study of the second coming of Christ, realizing how important the time sequence is, let us search the prophecies to seek a parallel in the present political situation the world finds itself in and what the prophets of old have told us. AU are aware that many things have changed and changed rapidly within the last number of years. Many of us served our country during World War Two, in which there were great changes boundary-wise; nations fell, boundaries were changed, and the whole scope of the world politics seemed to reverse itself in many areas.

And then a little later on, other developments have contributed to a change in the political scene of the world. Are these just coincidental? Are they things that just simply happened and without any purpose? I think not. I think that we can substantiate by a study of the Word that the things that are now transpiring in the world have a very definite bearing on the subject of the return of Jesus Christ.

### I. EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NATIONS IN THE END TIME BEING FULFILLED

With the book of Ezekiel for a beginning point, notice the arrangement that the prophet makes of the nations in the end time and what they are supposed to do with reference to the regathering of these people called Israel back into the land, Ezekiel 38:1-8:

*And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring*



*thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.*

Notice verse sixteen of this same chapter:

*And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*

## **Russia and the Middle East**

According to the scholars that I have investigated, most of those that deal with the Hebrew language say that this is a direct prophecy concerning the rise of the nations that we know today as Russia. Pentecost says this identification of modern Russia seems well authenticated and generally accepted.[1] We are given a list of her allies. History has contributed to the fulfillment of this prophecy. Certainly in Ezekiel's day there was no nation known as Russia. There were people in this sector of the world, but they were not known as Russia. But here, the prophet speaking around 500 B.C., tells about the rise in the latter days of a nation who would have allies who would be coming against the revived nation Israel as it is restored in the land, and thus bring to a culmination its contribution to the end time.

Consider some of these things in detail. Russia has come into existence. Russia has become one of the great dread powers of

all the earth today. Most of us can remember back to the World War Two days, when Russia came into its zenith of power, mostly through a contribution made by the Allies. It is an amazing thing (here again we get into dealing with the things that seem to be coincidental) that the Allied commanders and leaders of nations would make the contribution to Russia that they did, even to the division of the nation of Germany into its eastern and western division. Why? Again I refer to the fact that Russia controlling East Germany has caused Germany to be segmented much after the same order as it was during the time of the Roman Empire. Thus two things are seen working here: the contribution that Russia is going to make to this end time situation, and the fact that the old Roman Empire is being revived boundary-wise today as well as being revived politically and economically.

We are confronted now with a power that is playing quite an important role in the place called the Middle East. Most of us are much concerned about the things that are going on there. Recently, under President Nixon, there was an all-out alert of all American forces all over the world. A lot of people thought, "Well, he's just playing politics," but I absolutely shook in my boots. I thought, "This is it. This may well mark the beginning of the battle of Gog and Magog." That battle will pit the forces of Russia against the Allied or western world as we know the old Roman Empire's part or contribution in it, and this will bring us to the revelation of the man of sin and the time when he makes the covenant with Israel at the defeat of Russia on the battlefields of Israel in or during this particular war.

How easily could that battle begin? I pointed out that the interest of the world is all centered today on the Middle East. Most of the diversionary wars that are being fought or have been fought recently, I think, were nothing more than to take the world's eyes off of the important developments that were coming to pass in and around the land of Israel. Remember that Israel is the barometer to the Lord's fulfillment of prophecy and especially to the coming of Jesus Christ the second time.

The war in Viet Nam, the war that arose in Korea and other places over the world were simply diversifications of the devil to keep our minds off this region. At the same time there was a tremendous build-up of power, supported by the Soviet Union, among the Arab nations. The Arab nations were well equipped to begin their wars with Israel. They were going to endeavor to drive them out of the country. They were going to endeavor to take again the land that God promised by prophecy and by

covenant unto the people of Abraham. So as Russia supplied the material in the Six Day War of 1967, the Arab countries would have liked to have brought her into that confrontation. But the time was not right. The time was not yet. That is not the time that Ezekiel was telling about. It was simply a prelude to it. Russia lost tremendously in that short engagement in the Six Day War of Israel. It lost heavily in equipment, and it lost prestige as it supplied and supported the Arab cause and that cause became an utter failure. Israel managed in six days to capture great quantities of the armament that was in the hands of the Egyptian forces, and they have that armament today. As I drove along through the Negev Desert I saw row upon row of these captured vehicles. I was told that there is nothing in the world wrong with them; in many cases the Arabs operating them simply fled, leaving the motors running, and leaving ammunition behind. That is somewhat reminiscent of the time when Gideon and his small army were able to put the Philistine army to flight. I tell you that God is putting His hand a second time into this world situation, and things that are happening today are not just simply coincidental, but they have the directive of the all-wise, all-powerful God of Heaven.

Thus Israel was able to match wits with its foes, and they were able to conquer them; and as a result of it they have come out with a tremendous supply of weapons and armament that they did not need to make or buy from anyone. And they feel just a little bit cocky about that situation in many cases. I suppose we could not blame them from that point of view.

But Russia lost tremendously there, and in the ensuing years, they began to build up their forces again as they began to equip Egypt and Syria and Jordan and these nations around the little land of Israel. Then came the October war of 1973, again a defeat at the hands of this little handful of Jews; and again they were losing tremendously as far as equipment and prestige is concerned. And so it was that they began to seek a way and to join in a way of ending that war and bringing about a peaceful solution in the land. Thus for a while the people who were involved in the conflict there, that is the Israelis and the Arab nations, have been coming together in various meetings and trying to work out some suitable peace solution. All the while the newsgatherers tell us that Russia is again equipping and again enforcing and re-enforcing these nations, apparently at least, for an all-out combat that will either make or break the situation in the land.

Is that what Ezekiel is telling us here? I think it is. I think that

we are now seeing the battle of Gog and Magog shape up. Let us look at the allies that Russia has as recorded here in the book of Ezekiel.

### **Allies of Russia**

First of all, there is Persia. The land that Persia or the Persian Empire controlled was the land of Iraq and Iran. These two nations today are aligning themselves with the Arab federation, the Arab federation is in league with the Soviet Union, and certainly when the thing boils down they are going to have their part as an ally of Russia.

I am told, and it was reported in the *Arkansas Gazette* not many months ago, and no doubt in other news sources also, that the engineers who built the Naiswan Dam across the Nile River in Egypt moved over after Russia made its overtures and peace treaty with these nations that I just mentioned, those that composed of the Persian Empire, and they began a dam across the Euphrates River. You say, "Big deal! What's to get excited about there? What does that have to do with prophecy?" It has a lot to do with prophecy, as will be seen further in this study as the book of Revelation is considered in developing this political process. Suffice it now to say that the Euphrates dam project has probably been completed at this time and its importance to the development of the nations will be discussed later.

Then there is the country called Ethiopia. Most of us think of it as the land that is in the news today, one of the African nations. However, Ethiopia does not seem to be the better translation of the word "Cush" in the Hebrew text. It probably refers to the land that we know as Lower Arabia, Saudi Arabia. That country catches our interest. It is one that figures very prominently in the current news because it is the place where most of the oil is. We are going to see how the oil situation has not just all of a sudden come to the forefront of world economics. It has a definite place figuring in the prophecies of the end time.

There is Persia, Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. Libya used to be a problem, and one could wonder how in the world Libya, over to the west of the land of Israel, even on the other side of Egypt, can figure into this thing. But remember that during the 1973 war that occurred again in this land, it was Libya that was beating the war drums the loudest to drive the Israelis into the sea. They were seeking a merger with the nation of Egypt in order that they might form one government and thus strengthen both nations. Libya has very definitely tied itself to those who are allied against Israel.

Then there is Gomer. Gomer, scholars say, referred to Germany, and certainly that portion of Germany that belongs to Russia, or at least is an ally of Russia, that being East Germany.

Next we find the word "Togarmah", which actually incorporates the land I suppose we would know today as Turkey. Although Turkey has not signed a formal agreement with Russia, at least none that we know about, the developments of today may very well push them into Russia's corner. In fact, the little island of Cypress has become a very controversial spot in the world of politics. And Greece and Turkey, as they have been enemies for ages, are once more enemies-both of these supposed to be allies of the western world, both of them tied up with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But there is a wedge that is being driven now into that organization, and it seems that it is likely that Turkey, being a Moslem nation, will certainly be driven into the corner of the Arab world, and who knows the agreements that they have with the Russians already, because the Russian submarine fleet seems to be able to sail in and out of its Black Sea quarters without any restriction and into the Mediterranean area. In order to do that they have to have the consent of Turkey. So Turkey and Russia already have some kind of an agreement. Thus it would not be surprising in the least to see that Turkey would sign a formal relation, or formal agreement, with Russia.

In the latter days, when Israel is established in the land, these are going to be brought against her, and those things are shaping up right before our very eyes. "*It will be in the latter days,*" the prophet said. "*I will bring thee against my land that the heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*"

## **n. THE POLITICAL SITUATION TODAY**

Let us recapitulate just a little the political situation as we know it today in the world. Number one, Israel has been gathered again into the land, it is a nation. For the first time in twenty-five hundred years, today the nation of Israel exists. Then, we find that the allies of this prophecy of Russia have all fallen into her corner with perhaps the exception of Turkey, but these things could happen and could happen very rapidly.

Now, the full attention of the world is against the two major powers, Russia and the western world, in what seems to be an inevitable confrontation in this area. Our President has spoken his alarm. Other world leaders today have spoken their alarm.

The world is conscious of a confrontation that could begin immediately.

I made reference to the time in President Nixon's administration when it seemed that that confrontation had erupted. I was afraid that it had erupted. Now, just one little spark could begin that holocaust that is going to make quite a contribution to the agonies of this world. And when you begin to think about how these things are developing, they are not coming in an out-of-the-ordinary way, they are not of the supernatural way, in other words, as most people think of prophecy being fulfilled and the end time coming about. But the oil situation is such that if the Arabs, controlling the energy of the world, should suddenly stifle that oil supply, it would immediately call for a confrontation.

Now the other political situation concerns the revived Roman Empire. John and Daniel tell about that ten-toed and that ten-horned beast that is going to arise. If we look at the nations today that have entered into agreement as far as economy is concerned, we find the Common Market nations making out a general boundary of the old Roman Empire. At the present time there are only nine of these that have entered into an agreement, but it is certainly conceivable that the tenth could enter in and probably will because Greece is the one today that has a working agreement with them but not a voting agreement with them. At this time, it is not a bona fide part of the Common Market group.

Notice the nations that compose the Common Market group. First there is France, West Germany, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Ireland, and Denmark. Things are happening in the little country of Greece. They have had a change in government just recently. These nations came into being just prior to World War One, and then some of these came into being after World War One. I have pointed out that the actual re-establishing of the kingdom, the revived Alexandrian or Grecian Empire, brought Egypt into existence, brought Syria into existence, brought Greece into existence, and then of course Thrace. Thrace has never figured prominently in Bible prophecy, and so at this point there is no need to be much concerned with it or its position. But these are now already in the world as governments, and today they are figuring in the news. They are important.

Greece, probably for its own economic benefit, will enter into this Common Market agreement. The thing that binds these nations together is not love and appreciation for the peoples or for the philosophies of government; it is purely an economic

binding. So there is seen the clay and the iron. The thing seems to have strength, but it does not have a great deal of strength.

If the Arab nations suddenly stifle the oil supply to these industrial powers that have bound themselves together, there is but one alternative and that is to enter the land by force. The armies of the world are pointing their artilleries toward this land, and certainly this thing could erupt at any time. It is true that men are working on solutions to the problems, but the problems are still there. And God said it is going to come to pass, because He said, *"I will put hooks in thy jaws."* He is going to bring Russia into this land.

Then in the thirty-ninth chapter, He tells how Russia is going to be defeated in the land. Many suppose that the battle of Gog and Magog mentioned in the book of Revelation and this Gog and Magog are one and the same conflict. But that can not be, because Gog and Magog mentioned in Revelation comes at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ, while this one comes at the beginning or preceding the thousand year reign of Christ. In the one in Revelation, the Lord puts a stop to that battle with the fire of His mouth. Here they are going to be burying the dead for seven months in the land. And so we are building up to the thousand year reign at this point, but Gog and Magog are going to be defeated; however, this will not altogether be by the power of these Common Market nations of the western world. Out of them will come the man who will head them up, the military genius, similar to the Supreme Allied Commander of World War Two. Look for that man to come - a military genius as we are told that the man of sin will be, a political genius, a man who will have a solution to the economic problems of the world. And the world today is looking for that more, perhaps, than anything else. Look for these things because they are about to take place.

However, Russia will also get tidings out of the north (Daniel 11:40). China figures very definitely today in the plans of the nations and the end time. The sixteenth chapter of the book of Revelation tells that it is the way of the kings of the east that is prepared, not the kings of the north, not Russia, not the kings of the western world, but the kings of the east. I mentioned that a dam has been built across the Euphrates River. The Euphrates River is spoken of as being dried up that the way for the kings of the east might be prepared. This once presented a problem. I did not think for one minute that they could put a dam across that river. But with the dam that is now there, they could shut off the supply or flow of water from above, at least long enough for a great army to cross over in its absence.

These things are literally happening right before our very eyes. This battle will come. Russia may also be invaded, probably from China on the south; she will have to commit her forces to the Middle East. This will weaken her Manchurian border so as to allow this invasion. We will have to commit our forces to the Middle East, and this is going to bring about another condition that will lead up to the Battle of Armageddon. But I will not discuss that further at this point, but rather review the political situations as we see them now.

First of all remember that there are but four industrial powers in this world, in our present world, that are capable of sustaining a war machine that would make world conquest. Many, perhaps, have wondered why Russia with its overtures of world conquest has not launched out on a military campaign. They started this, but when it proved to be unpopular with the world, then they began to try to sow the world down with the philosophy of Communism, and thus to take over the world by that means. But there is another reason. When there are three industrial powers allied against one, three-to-one is not a very good odd to go up against.

When we consider the industrial powers as they are in the world, we have the United States, number one; we have Japan, number two; we have West Germany, number three; and then of course number four is Russia itself. So with these three, the United States, Japan, and West Germany allied together, she certainly would not have much chance at making war in a military fashion.

But these conditions are changing now with this oil situation such as it is. These things will be considered next as this study takes up the end time proper, the coming of Christ, the rapture of the saints, the resurrection, and then of course the Battle of Armageddon.

[1] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 326-328.



## CHAPTER XII

### MARK OF THE BEAST

The last lesson closed with the thought that with the ending of the battle of Gog and Magog, the revelation of the man of sin would come into the picture. And we believe that the political forces today are about to assemble and begin that battle.

In a previous lesson it was pointed out that this man would be a Gentile, out of the revived Roman Empire, and it was also noticed how the Common Market nations of Europe are fitting in the pattern of the empire that we believe will be the revived Roman Empire. So from amidst those nations there will emerge, no doubt, one who will fill the bill as far as the man of sin is concerned.

#### I. THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

Again I refer to the book of Daniel, chapter nine, in which Daniel gave the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks that are determined upon the people. I stated that all but one of those weeks have been finished, with one seven-year period yet to begin. It will be at the close of the battle of Gog and Magog that the man of sin will make a covenant with the people of Israel.

Daniel gives this prophecy in Daniel 9:25-26:

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;...*

Now this part of the prophecy, of course, was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus came into the city. But this is a figure of the one

who is going to come. Notice it said the prince of the people that shall come, the people out of the Roman Empire that shall come.

Daniel goes on to say, continuing with verses 26 through 27:

*And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

Notice that he makes the covenant at the beginning of the week. It is not until the middle of the week that he actually breaks that covenant and at that point causes the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

Now at the close, then, of the battle of Gog and Magog, Israel will have made a covenant with the force that lent to her the support she needed to establish the victory in the land. No doubt at this time the allies of Russia, being the Arabic nations, will be defeated. The beast will have accomplished what he needs as far as energy source is concerned. He will also make it possible for Israel to remove the remains of the Mosque of Omar that stands on top of Mount Moriah at this time. The temple will be built in the early phases of the three and one-half year period.

As we come to look into the tribulation week which this begins, we find that the man of sin does not make war with the nations of the earth, but rather he makes war with the saints of God. At this point, we have the war that he is going to make against those saints, as we are told in the book of Revelation and also in the book of Daniel. Before discussing this, notice in chapter thirteen of Revelation how he is going to begin working in his new government.

## **II. GOVERNMENT OF THE MAN OF SIN**

John states that this government will come up out of the sea, meaning masses of humanity-I can not go into the explanation of many of these figures in this limited study; I merely give my explanation of them. None of these lessons are exhaustive. They have not by any means covered in detail all of the possibilities and all the things that need to be covered in this study of the second coming. However, I hope that I have introduced some

ideas that will encourage further study and give basis for thought on this subject. It certainly has not been exhausted in these lessons.

John said (Revelation 13:1-3):

*And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was heeded: and all the world wondered after the beast.*

John is talking about this beast empire, or this government, and again I call attention to the fact that the government is meant here, not the man who is the head of it, when reference is made to the beast, and he compares this to beasts that were representative of world empires that at one time have influenced the land of Israel. Going back in our history, now, first is the Babylonian Empire, which was first to exercise dominion over the whole land; then is the Medo-Persian Empire; and then the Grecian Empire; and finally the Roman Empire-these four that have exercised authority, complete dominion over the land. Daniel's prophecy tells that each of these empires was represented by the beast, the leopard and the bear and the lion. The leopard represented the Grecian Empire, the bear represented the Medo-Persian Empire, and the lion represented the Babylonian Empire.

The purpose of naming the beasts as representative of the nations is simply to relate the characteristics of those beasts to this coming government: it will come swiftly, it will be powerful, and it will be a ruling affair that will control or dominate much of the world.

Here I want to inject this thought. Most people think that the man of sin is going to control the whole world. No, the Bible does not say that he is going to rule over the whole world, but he is going to control this portion of the world that will have caused the defeat, now, of the nations and the allies of Russia. But that still leaves the eastern world. That still leaves China, and her place to fulfill in these prophetic statements.

Look further at this man. Out of this empire there is going to be one who rises up. This empire will have power to do great things. John continues (Revelation 13:5-8):

*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Then John continues in verse eleven, "*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*" Now this is the rise of the false prophet, the empire of the false prophet. Just as there will be a political regime, there will be a religious regime that will rise up at the same time. The religious regime is going to be that of the false prophet. It is this regime that will bring much of the world into subjection, or at least the world that the man of sin is going to control. Revelation 13:12-14:

*And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

The religious world today is swept away by the charismatic movement and by the fact that they think people are performing

miracles and doing feats in the healing field. There have been those who have been sallying forth now for numbers of years claiming they have the power to perform miracles of healing and various other things, and these things are going to intensify as this age comes to an end. So we look for these things. But remember, God is not in the miracle-working business. God is not in the "speaking in tongues" movement. Those things are strictly influenced by Satanic power and these are going to fall victim to the rise of this religious domination that will come up at the end of the age when this empire of the beast is set up.

We see two forces working here. I again refer to the statement of Paul, concerning the first coming, that Christ came at the appointed time (Galatians 4:4). And I believe that He is coming again exactly at the appointed time. Now again I say we do not know the exact day or hour; these are simply signs that lead up to His coming. But when we look back at that history of His first coming, we find that the world had received a religion, or at least a religious concept of God, through the Hebrew people. The world had been given an appreciation for art and culture through the Greek regime. And then the world had been given the idea of universal law with the coming of the Romans. And the same thing is coming to pass again in the end.

Concerning the mark of the beast that is mentioned here, many make a mistake in that they are looking for a man who has this number. I offer a translation of verse seventeen, reading it first from the *King James Version*.

*And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

If you multiply to the third power the number six, you will not come up with six hundred sixty-six. But here is what he actually said. There is no indefinite article "a" in the Greek language, although it is permissible to use it, but this simply says, "This is man's number," in the genitive. So we are not looking for a man who has this specific number tied to him, but we are looking for the things that are associated with man's number. Man is associated with the number six, it is stamped all over him. So what he is actually saying here is that this will be the culmination of the political regime of man. This will be the culmination of the

social regime of man. This will be the culmination of the religious regime of man.

Now go back over them: political, religious, and social, all tied up in the last empire that is going to come upon this earth. Thus, at the end of this tribulation week, it is the beast and the false prophet, it is the political and it is the spiritual that is cast into the lake of fire. Of course, in the middle of the week the beast is going to turn against the false religious forces and will devour them, but the false religion of the world will make the contribution to his rise to power.

### III. MARK OF THE BEAST APPLIED

William Cantelon, in *The Day The Dollar Dies*, discusses the European Common Market and the impending new world money system. He reminds the reader of some meaningful quotations:

“...the words of Meyer Amschel Rothschild: Give me control over a nation’s economy and I care not who writes its laws.

And the words of Lord Gladstone: The government...in the matters of finance must leave the money power supreme and unquestioned.

And the words of chancellor Reginald McKenna: They who control the credit of a nation direct the policy of the governments and hold in the hollow of their hand the destiny of the people.

And Karl Marx, who said in his Manifesto, Money plays the largest part in determining the course of history.”[1]

This European Common Market in Brussels, Belgium, is a new world power rapidly taking shape. It will play a key role in events shortly preceding the second coming of Christ. Some say it may easily have become the most powerful union, economically, politically, and militarily, on the face of the earth.

It has been suggested that a gigantic computer could be utilized by such a power, possibly giving a digital number to every human being on earth, a number to be used in buying and selling. (Certainly we are associated with numbers today, Social Security numbers, bank account numbers, etc.) Your number would be invisibly tattooed by laser beam on your forehead or on your hand. Your employer would punch a button to assign your wages to your bank. Thus the usage of currency could be eliminated. The computer has brought about the possibility of the mark of the beast. Already many are employing computer systems.

The little markings on cans and packages in the grocery stores today indicate that a computer checkout system is being

set up. Your articles purchased will be pushed through the scanner which will check them out and total your bill. To pay, if this system goes that far, you would show your number under the scanner and it would automatically deduct the amount of purchase from your bank account. If that amount is not in your account, the computer would refuse to honor the purchase. You simply would not get anything if you had no money in your account.

But the point is that the time is coming when you can neither buy nor sell, save you have the mark, and this is the way this thing can come about. I have already pointed out that these things will happen in such a normal way that most people will not get excited about it.

Mr. Cantelon also tells of suggestions that each man be given a lifetime number to be permanently impressed on his flesh. He tells of progress being made in laboratories in developing an invisible, nontoxic ink for this purpose.[2] Thus every person in the world would be issued a number which, being photographically impressed upon forehead and wrist, visible only under ultraviolet light, would be insured against loss, theft or forgery.

You could not buy under this system, according to this theory, except you had been assigned such a mark by this beast, this computer system. That is exactly what this Book that I have before me says in Revelation 13:16-17:

*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

This will take place during the first half of that tribulation week. The world will condone it because of convenience; you will not need to carry a wallet or credit cards; you will not have to carry anything. It will simplify many things, do away with a lot of red tape, and so it will be the answer to the economic problem of the world today, the currency problem. All of these nations could have a common currency level. They would not have to worry about each one having to float finance against the other and so on. It is the answer to the problem, and it will come to be.

#### **IV. THE TWO WITNESSES**

But what we are looking for is that this beast will be making

war with the saints during this time. There are going to be faithful witnesses here on this earth who are going to give him trouble. And these two witnesses, as I interpret the book of Revelation in chapter eleven, which are going to witness for three and one-half years will be the church, the New Testament church, and the nation of Israel (the people of which are going to be killed throughout that time). Now both of these have a faithful testimony that they are going to bear. Daniel tells us about these people in Daniel 11:33-35:

*And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.*

These people are going to be the faithful among Israel that are saved, that recognize the man of sin, that realize what is coming to pass. The book of Revelation tells about the sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand, in the seventh chapter, a lot of people have a misconception of what it actually says. But I am indebted to Doctor Seiss and his book, *The Apocalypse*, and his understanding and introduction to these things. As I looked into it, the key to it is that Judah stands first in this summary; Dan is left out because the name Dan means "judge". Each Hebrew name has a definite meaning, and a look at the meanings of these Hebrew names in the arrangement that they give here, will give the clue to the rebirth of Israel spiritually .[3]

## V. THE RAPTURE

The last week will come with the covenant that national Israel will make with the man of sin, but the time of the rapture, the time of the resurrection, the time of the catching of the saints out of this world, will come in the middle of the week when Jesus makes an appearance and stands at that time upon the Mount of Olives.

A lot of people read the fourteenth chapter of the book of Zechariah and read into it the last clause of that passage that says that He shall come with His saints, and in so doing they do



as I pointed out earlier, they make a fallacy of prophecy, because prophecy reads into one statement two events. And in verse five it closes by saying, "*And the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee.*" When He stands on the Mount of Olives is not the time when He comes with all of His saints. It is the time of the sealing of this hundred forty-four thousand, twelve being a multiple of the completeness of the nation, not each Jew, but at least the nation as a whole.

Now notice these names, hurriedly as Seiss gives them: Judah means "confession of God"; Reuben, "viewing the Son"; Gad, "a company"; Asher, "blessed"; Nephthalim, "a wrestler"; Manasses, "forgetfulness"; Simeon, "hearing and obeying"; Levi, "joining or cleaving to"; Issachar, "reward"; Zebulon, "a home or dwelling-place"; Joseph, "added" or "an addition"; Benjamin, "a son of the right hand". If all of these are put together in their order, what kind of prophecy can we come up with? We come up with this: confessors of God, viewing the Son, a company of blessed ones, striving with forgetfulness, who hearing and obeying joined themselves to a reward of a home or dwelling-place, those who are added as sons of God in the extremity of this age. (4)

What is this all about? This is telling about the time that they shall behold Him whom they pierced (Revelation 1:7). They will forget their ideas concerning the Messiah and this Christ that we have been trying to tell them about, and they will receive Him and believe on Him. Now when that happens, they flee into a place that is prepared for them (Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 12:6-14). I have asked the question numerous times, if He is standing on the Mount of Olives at the time the Lord sets up His kingdom, why does Israel want to run off into a place and hide? Well, you can see that it is not the time He sets up the kingdom. It is in the middle of the week that this event will take place. At this point the resurrection of the dead will occur, at this point those who are alive of the saved of the Christian people will be caught up together (I Thessalonians 4:15-17), and then for three and one-half years the man of sin will have sway over the flings of the earth (Revelation 13:5).

## VI. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Now during this period we are going to have the great tribulation such as never was nor ever shall be (Revelation 16:1-21). This will be the time when nothing but unsaved people will be here on earth, and God will begin to pour out His

vengeance upon all the inhabitants. It will be at this point that the man of sin will have broken his covenant because he has received tidings of those that are making overtures out of the east. And when we go back we find that China, a nation that has been dormant for all these years, has now arisen to cause the world a great deal of consternation as to their motives and intent. Well, certainly they have world conquest on their mind. The only thing in the world that those people are lacking in is industrial capability of launching an attack. They have the manpower.

Revelation 9:15 mentions the four angels:

*And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.*

This phenomenal number multiplies to two hundred million men--the size of all the population of the United States of America, if you could just see them congregated in one army. After Mr. Nixon's visit to China and Chou En Lai was entertaining the western newsmen, he made the boast that China has available under arms and trained, the phenomenal army of two hundred million men. Now it is just coincidental that he happened to use this figure, I suppose. Since he is to the east of the Euphrates River and the way for the kings of the east in chapter sixteen must be prepared, I think that it is inevitable that you can see that the Battle of Armageddon will occur when his forces begin to march. Now his conquest, his outlook, is upon these new nations of Africa. There is but one way he can come. He cannot come by air. He cannot come by sea. He is going to have to come by land, and he will have to come right through the little land of Palestine.

The western world under the dominion of the man of sin is not going to like that, and so they meet together in the last great conflict, the Battle of Armageddon, on the shores of Israel. I think it will embrace the whole world. This battle will be stopped with the coming of the Lord with His saints back to this earth in order that He might establish His righteous rule. Then we will bring about the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-33), and set up the righteous rule of Almighty God. God will have fulfilled His purpose for man as we mentioned in the very beginning. He

had a purpose, a righteous rule over the earth, and man will rule and reign with Christ to fulfill that purpose. As John said, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"

[1] William Cantelon, *The Day the Dollar Dies* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1973), p. 72.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[3] J.A. Selss, *The Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 163.

[4] *Ibid.*

