

# **What in the World is Going On?**

**an explanation of why the world is like it is  
and where it will end up**

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**December 2018**

## **Note to the Reader**

*You are not obligated to read this book just because I wrote it and gave it to you. If you are interested, then please read it. If you are not interested, then save it. When the world gets crazy enough that you are worried or even scared, then that is the time to read it. The book is intended to explain how we got in this mess and what will happen in the future to fix it.*

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## Preface

I just returned from a funeral in which a mother of four boys was laid to rest. This family could have won “the most wholesome family in the world” award. They were dedicated Christians with a record of self-discipline and self-sacrifice for, serving others for the joy of it. Yet, she died of cancer at a young age.

While attempting to change a tire, a young pastor is sucked beneath the wheels of a tractor-trailer truck as his family watches from their car. The husband and father of a missionary family in Mongolia is struck down with colon cancer and wastes away incontinent, in a wheelchair, until the certain end. A fine Christian son chokes to death at home while his parents are away, unable to help. These are just a few of the many examples of my acquaintance with death when good people are provoked with evil in this world. What is going on?

World history is full of hideous evil perpetrated by humans on other humans. We saw this in the recent history of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). There was the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide and myriads of other examples going back to the beginning of recorded history. Can there be a God who made a world like this? What can explain this? When we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that humanity is not getting better; evil in the world has been more or less constant since the beginning.

Within the last four or five years or so, however, it seems that the world has gone even more crazy. Long accepted realities are being rejected in favor of destructive new fantasies without reason. Consider some of these recent changes in our society, both in the U.S. and worldwide (see text box on the next page).

- The sexual revolution has evolved to the point that:
  - Many academics and radical feminists believe that there is no difference between men and women, leading to a plethora of abominations.

- The idea of transgenderism has arisen from a rare mental disorder to something celebrated and valued. Some parents are requesting and getting transgender surgery for their confused children.
  - Public schools and other institutions are requiring common bathroom and shower facilities for both males and females.
  - There are now as many as 63 genders and anyone can identify as whichever one they please, despite the evidence of biology.
- It is possible for honest people to have a variety of opinions on the topics identified in these bullets. Many bullet items require a more nuanced discussion than is provided here. The bullets are merely identifying areas where extreme positions are damaging our society.
- Public policy and government has degenerated to the point that:
    - Muslim immigration in Europe has been welcomed and encouraged to the point that Western Civilization is being slowly eliminated.
    - Rape of women and young girls by Muslim men is not investigated. Sharia law is embraced by Western European governments.
    - Political parties consider adherents to the opposing party as evil and are hated with alarming passion.
    - Despite evidence to the contrary (the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this discussion), the world has been convinced that global warming is an existential threat requiring draconian measures that limit the freedom of citizens.
    - The killing of babies *in utero* (and even *ex utero*) is promoted with a zeal that defies reason. Euthanasia of

older people, sick people, and unwanted children is coming.

- Police, once respected elements of a civil society, are now considered evil, worthy of death just for being the police.
- The first amendment, once treasured as one value that made America great, is now under attack. Once is no longer free to criticize some things. In many countries, including Canada, some free speech is considered a crime. Elimination of the free exercise clause is also being sought.
- Police are now called, and arrests made when a small child eats his bread into the shape of a gun.
- Society has degraded such that:
  - There has been a sudden development of intolerance of Christianity. Antisemitism has abounded. Morals are considered hateful.
  - College campuses have gone especially insane with certain formerly mainstream ideas shouted down and forbidden to be discussed.
  - Safe spaces and trigger warning have become required because everyone is so eager to be offended.
  - Curricula have been watered down into protest studies; study of Western Civilization has been eliminated; capitalism has been replaced by failed Marxism.
  - History of unpleasant topics is being erased.
  - Mass shootings are increasing.
  - There is a fury that arises over trivial things that are now forbidden.
  - Normal families with a father and mother (married to each other) and children are despised.
  - Use of social media has become a contact sport with personal destruction the seeming goal.

- Mobs harass public servants in public places.

Clearly, society and government are collapsing at an alarming rate. Can human civilization continue with the rate of decline we are seeing? Is this what our Creator had in mind when He made us?

There are answers to these questions. The Bible not only gives understanding about all the evil in the world, but it also shows where everything is going and what the ultimate solution will be.

This book will try to illuminate what the Bible says about the future of this planet and the humans that occupy it. My earlier booklet, *Why I Believe*, is a prerequisite to this book. That is because I will not attempt to reestablish here the evidence that there is a God, that He created the world and everything in it, and that the Bible is God's revelation of His overall plan.

Knowing what is coming for humanity is important because 1) it is edifying to see the overall plan and the reasons for the degradation all around us, 2) it helps us to not be deceived into nihilism (and other deceptions we will discuss), and 3) it builds faith in God to see the intricacy and amazing internal consistency in His plans for a solution to evil.

As important as it is to understand what the Bible says about the future, it is even more important to gain a saving relationship with our Creator so that we can cooperate with Him in saving humanity from itself and be personally saved. However, the spiritual concepts of salvation are beyond the scope of this book. Nevertheless, the faith that one gets from understanding the causes and remedies for evil will lead one to seek that saving relationship.

In one sentence, the cause of the evil in the world is due to a huge controversy in the invisible universe, actual warfare, the effects of which are reflected in our reality. We will establish the evidence for this great controversy as we progress through this book.



## 1. Cosmic Warfare: Bigger Than Star Wars

We discussed the topic of cosmic warfare in *Why I Believe*, but the topic is the central governing theme that brings coherence to every biblical topic, including answering the question of why we need redemption. Therefore, we will cover it again in a slightly different way. Everything in the Bible should be understood in light of this warfare. The books of Daniel and Revelation are dedicated to the subject. Every other book in the Bible is better understood with a proper understanding of the spiritual warfare context.

The most direct statement in the Bible about this warfare is found in Revelation.

And here was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

There are two opposing forces: Michael and the dragon. Later we will establish that Michael is Jesus. This text plainly tells us that the dragon is Satan. Each side has an army. In the first battle of the war, Jesus wins and throws Satan and his followers out of heaven to the Earth. (“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” Luke 10:18.) We know this occurred before Adam and Eve were in the garden because Satan is referred to as “that old Serpent” who was already there to tempt the first humans.

Now what were the issues of this war that developed in, of all places, heaven? The Bible does not give all the details of the origins of the heavenly conflict, but we are provided a glimpse into the situation in the book of Isaiah.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cast down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the

sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high. (Isaiah 14:12)

Most commentators agree that Lucifer is a name referring to Satan before he was cast down to the Earth. Although a created being himself, Lucifer desired to be like God. He apparently campaigned for greater status, taking for himself the prerogatives of God. He was able to convince a large number of angels to follow his twisted thinking.

Again, in Ezekiel we see that Lucifer, “the anointed cherub that covereth” (v. 28:14), became proud and desired to be like God. When his misrepresentations about God were unmasked in heaven, he was cast down to Earth.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ... 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 ....” (Ezekiel 28:15)

After being cast to the Earth, the conflict opens in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 2:17, God had warned Adam, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” God knew what Adam and Eve could not fully comprehend: there was a cancer in the universe. Sin had been born because of the free will instilled in all the angels, including Lucifer. God did not desire automatons. Everyone must have a choice to obey or disobey. Satan chose to disobey.

God could not just eliminate the cancer. That would have invalidated His free-will design, and it might have validated some of Lucifer’s misrepresentations. Therefore, God needed a plan to fully reveal the rottenness of sin to the extent that his created beings would forever turn from it and serve Him of their own free will with love.

Therefore, Satan was provided a forum to work out the principles of his kingdom. God did not just turn over humanity to Satan. He provided a test - a very trivial test. Can humans obey God because they love Him, not fully understanding all the implications of God’s requirements? The tree was not essential for food or their happiness, and God asked them to stay away. But there, Satan deceived Eve with

arguments more clever than she had anticipated. (Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8)

In Genesis chapter 3, we see the serpent, who was “more subtle than any beast of the field,” questioning God’s command, “thou shalt not eat of it.” Despite God’s clear instructions, the serpent argued three points of worldly sophistry. First, it was good for food, second, it was pleasant to the eyes, and third, it was desired to make one wise. The serpent misrepresented God as withholding a higher plane of existence from humankind (“your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods”).

In God’s great love, he did not execute the death sentence immediately. Adam and Eve began to die that day, but they would live for many hundreds of years. But on the very day they sinned, a way was provided for them to have eternal life. Only a hint was given at first. “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” (Genesis 3:15). The rest of Scriptures amplify the plan of salvation by which the holy requirements of God’s laws can be maintained while the penalty for our failure is paid in full by Christ himself. This verse also explains that warfare (enmity) will continue.

Satan continues to misrepresent the plan of salvation, claiming that Christ’s death on the cross did away with the law, where in reality, Christ’s death establishes the immutability of God’s law. If the law could be done away with, Christ would not have had to die, paying our penalty. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

Therefore, when we see tragedy and misery strike God’s people, one of two reasons are behind it. First, God has set up a world of cause and effect. If it were not so, there would be chaos, and no one would learn from their mistakes. Therefore, when someone gets careless and falls off a building, unless God intervenes in a miraculous way, the consequences await at the bottom regardless of the individual’s standing before God.

The second reason, more important to the theme of this discussion, is that we are in the middle of a giant cosmic conflict between Christ

and Satan. A window on the spiritual world and how it is involved in human suffering is opened to us in the book of Job. Job was a rich but upright man who served God. His story is remarkable. It begins in Job 1:6 that states, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.”

Although we don’t know the particulars of this meeting, it is logical to think that perhaps the sons of God are the representatives of the worlds God has created. Adam, sometimes described as the son of God, would have been Earth’s representative, but his sin eliminated him from the councils of heaven. Apparently, Satan, claiming to represent the humankind that he had conquered, was allowed to attend. Satan (verses 9-11) makes the charge that the only reason Job lives for God is because God protects and blesses Job. As events unfold from there, we see God allowing Satan to cause Job’s suffering to test and perhaps purify Job.

Notice that Satan does the attack, but God is in control and allows things to happen for the fulfillment of his infinite purposes. One of God’s purposes is to reveal the sickness of Satan’s way of government. Another is to purify and prepare a people fit for eternal life. (“All things work together for good for them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose,” Romans 8:28.) Nothing can happen to us that God does not know about and allows for our best good. Even the most terrible suffering can result in good on a cosmic scale, in a way we cannot discern because of our limited spiritual insights.

Sometimes God elects to deliver His people from the trials. The three Hebrew young men thrown into the fiery furnace were delivered from pain and destruction but not from the spiritual and psychological trauma. But Jesus himself was in the furnace with them to sustain their faith (Daniel 4:25). Other times, there is no deliverance, but Jesus himself is still there praying to the Father on our behalf to strengthen us. With regard to trials Peter was to undergo, Jesus said, “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31, 32). Note that Jesus didn’t pray to deliver Peter from the trial, but that Peter might be sustained

through the trial. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,” (Isaiah 43:2).

It is obviously in God’s purposes to use trials as His instruments of instruction. Man was created in the image of God. But when man sinned, the image of God was partially replaced with the image of Satan. Mankind is inherently selfish. (“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9) Man needed a different instructor than was originally planned. “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee” (Genesis 3:18). God didn’t curse the ground in a fit of rage, but in His infinite and loving wisdom, provided for mankind just what the sickness of sin needed: trials and tribulation.

If we understand this great controversy between Christ and Satan, we can have faith that all things do indeed work together for good and we, like Peter and Paul, who understood the concept of cosmic conflict, can rejoice in trials and sorrows:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3-5)



## **2. The End of the World: The Type**

Jesus said in Matthew 24:37, “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” This gives us a hint that the worldwide flood of Noah’s day is a “type” of the second coming of Jesus. In Biblical studies, studying the type leads to greater understanding of the antitype. Two elements of the typology of Noah’s flood are plain: 1) the world was wicked then and it is wicked now and 2) the world was destroyed then, and it will be destroyed at the second coming. Is there anything else? Before answering that question, we need to examine the events leading up to the flood described in Genesis 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

In Chapter 1 we learned what led to the world being evil: Satan is engaged in warfare against Christ in the theater of the Earth. The consequences of that warfare are visibly manifested in many ways to people on the Earth. We also learned, in Genesis 3:15, what God’s plan for dealing with the warfare would be. However, Chapter 1 did not expound on the meaning of Genesis 3:15.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

There are five elements represented in this verse:

1. the woman
2. the serpent
3. the woman’s Seed
4. the serpent’s seed
5. enmity – conflict, controversy

The woman, in the immediate sense is, of course, Eve. However, in the Bible, a woman is symbolic of the church. We could cite several Bible verses to establish that, but we will not do that now (but will in subsequent chapters). The serpent, as established in Chapter 1, is Satan, “that old serpent.” The woman’s seed would be the descendants of Eve, but in the greater sense are the followers of God. In yet a third sense, the Seed is Jesus, as established by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:16. The serpent’s seed are the followers of Satan.

Finally, enmity is the conflict, controversy, warfare discussed in Chapter 1.

Therefore, we could rewrite Genesis 3: 15 to read as follows:

And I will put enmity between Satan and Eve, and between Satan's followers and Eve's descendants who are God's people; one of those descendants, Jesus, shall bruise Satan's head, resulting in a deadly wound, and Satan shall bruise Jesus' heel, from which He will recover. (Genesis 3:15)

A similar statement is made in Revelation regarding the time near the end of Earth's history, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17)

Clearly, this means that just before Jesus returns, Satan will conduct warfare against God's people who are characterized as keeping God's commandments and having the teachings of Jesus.

The next thing to happen in Genesis (chapter 4) is the story of Eve's descendants, Cain and Abel. We have the same elements in this story as were in Genesis 3:15. Although the woman is not specifically mentioned, her descendants are there. The two men also represent the church, because they were both worshipping. Satan is also not specifically mentioned, but his spirit of conflict was urged on Cain, the murderer, "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one" (1 John 3:12). The enmity was there too.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (Genesis 4:8)

Cain, "who was of that wicked one," was of the seed of the serpent. Abel was of the seed of the woman, notwithstanding that they were both genetically of the same woman. Genetics does not determine of which seed we are. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). Eve, herself, recognized that Cain was not of the spiritual seed that was promised, "For God has appointed another seed (Seth, her third born son) for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed" (Genesis 4:25).



She considered only Abel and Seth to be the seed of the woman. This is the first of many conflicts between the two seeds.

Next, Genesis 4:16-22 lists the descendants of Cain, and Genesis 5:6-32 lists the descendants of Seth. While reading these lists may be boring, they are given for an important reason: to emphasize the two lines of descendants – the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Genesis chapter 6 begins with a discussion that people love to misunderstand:

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (Genesis 6:1-4)

Some say this is about angels mating with humans, but Jesus tells us that angels do not reproduce (Matthew 22:30). Others think it is about aliens. There is nothing special about giants on the Earth; Caleb and Joshua and the other ten spies brought back word that there were giants in Canaan. Those “giants” were later defeated by the Israelites.

These verses are merely continuing the discussion since Genesis 3:15 that there are two lines: 1) sons of God who are the seed of the woman or Seth’s descendants and 2) daughters of men who are of the seed of the serpent or Cain’s descendants. God’s followers are sometimes referred to as sons and daughters of God.

The problem came when these two lines started intermarrying, causing the spiritual decline of the seed of the woman. This brought about a condition where, after 120 years of probation accompanied by spiritual warnings, God would intervene.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So, God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. (Genesis 6:11-12)

So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:7)

The remainder of chapter 6 plus chapter 7 tell of Noah building the ark, God sending the animals into the ark, Noah and his family entering the ark, and God closing the door of the ark. We learn in Peter’s second epistle that while Noah was building, he preached to the people, warning them of destruction to come, “[God] did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5).

After Noah was sealed in the ark, God waited seven days before starting the flood. During that time, those outside the ark may have been a little nervous, but they continued to live as they always had lived:

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away. (Matthew 24:37-39)

When the flood began, it rained for 40 days and nights, and the fountains of the deep spewed water onto the earth and the windows of heaven rained water down. Water covered the highest mountains, and everything died that could not live in the water – except for those in the ark. The Earth was totally destroyed, but a remnant was saved.

What can we learn from this story?

1. The limit of God's longsuffering can be reached, and judgment will eventually come. Revelation states that immediately before Jesus comes . . .

Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:14-17)

2. Noah dedicated all his time and all his resources to performing the work that God gave him. Was there any reason to hold back his 401(k), given everything was to be destroyed? As we approach the second end of the world (see Chapter 13), of which Noah's flood was a type, should we not have increasing dedication to finishing God's work and forsaking all our worldly connections?

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:11-12)

3. As we have seen, God appointed a period of probation of 120 years in which the wicked people were warned and God's people prepared for the end. At the end of that period, Noah and his family entered the ark and God shut them in. After that door shut, there was no more warning. Probation had ended; judgment was certain. The people did not realize it because they continued life as usual. In the antitypical end of the world, there will be a time when the last warning is given, and judgment will come. The book of Revelation tells of that close of probation, "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11). Will we have heeded the warning, or will we be continuing life as usual?

4. God gave a dramatic demonstration of the truth of Noah's message before probation ended when, contrary to all previous human experience, animals began moving of their own accord into the ark. "Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive" (Genesis 6:20). There is evidence, which we will explore in a subsequent chapter, that God will again provide a dramatic demonstration that people should heed the warning. In Noah's time, the demonstration did not result in changed hearts. Is your heart too hard in rebellion against God to sense His yearning that we be warned?

5. The ark was the only instrument, the one of God's choosing, that brought salvation to all who would go into it. Before, the world ends again, there is an entity into which God calls His people for salvation. It is not a perfect entity, but it is the one of God's choosing: the church, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ. Do we treat it with respect? Do we help to build it as Noah and his sons built the ark? Or, maybe we are busy criticizing it and tearing it down (not that it does not need some constructive criticism).

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God's message of warning before the destruction of the world is summarized in Revelation 14 (see Chapter 10). When warnings are persistently rejected, God will perform "His strange act" and bring destruction so He can recreate "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). We will be exploring those warning messages later in this book.

### 3. The Warfare Resumes

In Chapter 1, we stated that the great controversy is the dominant theme in all the Bible. We showed that it certainly dominates the first seven chapters of the book of Genesis. If this proposition is true, we should see it illustrated throughout the Bible.

In this chapter we will very briefly highlight of few of the more dramatic Bible stories that continue the warfare theme. There are many more such stories but space (and perhaps the readers' patience) does not permit a discussion of each.

#### The Call of Abraham

Abraham was born in the lower part of Mesopotamia (Sumerian civilization) near the Euphrates River in the city of Ur (southern Iraq today) approximately 1950 BC. He was a contemporary of Hammurabi and likely lived during the same time as the sons of Noah.

God called him to go to the land of Canaan and promised him that his descendants would eventually own the land. God would bless Abraham and multiply his descendants. It was God's plan that through Abraham, all the nations would be blessed.

God made a covenant with Abraham in which He said:

I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:6-8)

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, had 12 sons that became the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel was greatly blessed as long as they lived in accordance with God's commandments. God intended that Israel be a source of light and redemption to all nations.

Israel ultimately failed, even to the point of killing Jesus, the Son of God. The covenant passed on to those who follow Jesus. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul states, “And if you are Christ's, then

you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

The covenant promise is indeed an everlasting covenant and the inheritance of land is an everlasting possession. This is because the final solution to the warfare is the eradication of Satan's government and deceptions and the establishment of God's people in a heavenly Canaan forever. This blessing come to us through the merits of the perfect life and atoning death of one of Abraham's descendants, Jesus, a descendant of King David, a descendant of Judah, a son of Jacob.

### Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah

Abraham was 75 years old when God promised that He would make a great nation from Abraham. As Abraham continued to age, the promise of a son was repeated many times. It was not until Abraham was 100 and his wife, Sarah, was 90 that the promise was fulfilled. However, when the promised son was perhaps 20 years old God decided to test Abraham.

While the experience truly was a test, I believe the larger intent was to provide a lesson for Christians down through the ages. God told Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Genesis 22:2). This is in violation of all previous teaching from God.

It was a three-day journey to Mount Moriah. Abraham left with Isaac and wood for the burnt offering. On the way up the mountain, Isaac realized something was amiss. "He spoke to Abraham and said, 'My father!' and He said, 'Here I am, my son.' Then he said "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7).

Abraham must have been in agony as he considered the question. How could he tell his son what God had commanded? How easy it would have been to rationalize this command away, but He maintained His faith in God and answered, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."

Abraham proceeded to bind his son and place him on the altar. Clearly, the young man, strong enough to have carried the wood up

the mountain, could have overpowered his father, but he did not resist. As Abraham raised the knife to cut the boy's throat, God said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Genesis 22:12).

The next thing to happen is a beautiful illustration of the gospel. "Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So, Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (Genesis 22:13). Abraham's answer to Isaac's question was prophetic for two reasons. First, God provided a literal lamb (ram) as a substitute for the offering. Second, God would provide His own Son, the "Lamb of God," to die for the world, becoming the innocent substitute for sinful humans.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

## Job

Job may have lived about the same time as Abraham. He was "the greatest of all the people of the East" (Job 1:3) and was "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (verse 1).

As described in Chapter 1, God had convened a celestial meeting, and Satan came representing the Earth. At the meeting God extolled the virtues of Job as an example that not everyone on Earth submits to Satan's rule. Satan replied that God had bribed Job into compliance with great blessings.

With the sophisticated, rebellious arguments of Satan still ringing in the ears of the "Sons of God" at the meeting, God was intent on demonstrating the righteousness of His Holy principles through Job. God was sensitive to the necessity of letting Satan's principles play out in comparison to God's principles in the lives of those on Earth. Therefore, He allowed Job to be tested with adversity by Satan, except "do not lay a hand on his person" (Job 1:12).

Loss of his children and all he owned did not turn Job to rebellion against God:

And he said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. (Job 1:21, 22)

At the next meeting, Satan claimed that if only he could cause physical suffering, Job would turn against God. “And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life” (Job 2:6). Painful boils then covered Job from head to toe. The rest of the book of Job is about Job’s grappling with this situation. Job, clearly, did not understand what was going on, and sometimes he seemed to be angry with God, but his conclusion was, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).

The story of Job lays open for all to see the conflict between God and Satan. While not every bad thing that happens to us is the result of a demonstration like the one Job experienced, it does make plain that there is a lot going on in this warfare that is invisible to us. The ramifications are intended for God’s glory. More importantly, God intends to glorify us if we are faithful. At the end of the book, Job was blessed:

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; (verse 12) ... After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. (Job 42:16)

Job’s restoration and blessing is a type of what God has in store for His faithful people.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

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

### Called out of Egypt

Humanity has a problem. It has degraded because of Adam and Eve’s rebellion in the garden and continuing relationship with sin. That’s the nature of sin; it degrades. The problem is serious because



the more people seek their own way, the deeper in slavery to sin they become. Furthermore, people have a hard time recognizing that they have a problem.

When Jacob, his sons, and their families went to Egypt because of a famine, they prospered for a while but eventually ended up as slaves in Egypt. Through a series of remarkable events, God delivered His people from Egypt and brought them to the promised inheritance. Egypt is sometimes used as a symbol of sin in the Bible. There are no short, pithy quotes to prove it, but the concept is there in lengthy metaphors such as in 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 3 and 4.

Given the ancient Hebrews are types of God's New Testament church, having received the covenant promise as discussed above, the Egypt story teaches that modern-day Christians can become slaves to sin. For example, "Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34). The whole purpose of God's plan, which was so briefly outlined in Genesis 3, is to solve this sin problem in which humans are enslaved.

The process of saving people is enacted in the story of slavery in Egypt, the ten plagues, the Passover, deliverance from Egypt, the wilderness wandering, being miraculously fed bread and water in the wilderness, and crossing over the Jordan River into the promised land. All during these events, Satan was warring against God's people through Pharaoh, the Amalekites, Balaam, and others. He also worked to create discontent and rebellion among the Israelites. These stories are rich in types regarding salvation from sin and receiving an eternal reward.

### The Sacrificial System in the Old Testament Sanctuary

The Old Testament system for God's people to obtain forgiveness of sins was to offer an animal sacrifice. Satan has clouded its meaning by making animal and even human sacrifices a part of many pagan religions. Thus, people today might be excused for thinking animal sacrifices are just some unpleasant and primitive ceremony. Although the gruesomeness of an animal sacrifice is intended to impress the mind with the horrific nature of sin, the truth is that the sacrifice of an

innocent lamb is a beautiful representation of what God does for the repenting sinner.

God, Himself, performed the first sacrifice of an innocent animal for the sins of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 3, we read that when Adam and Eve sinned, they recognized their nakedness (clothing represents righteousness in the Bible). Thus, they “sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Genesis 3:7). Later, “for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). Ever since, sinners have tried to create their own righteousness, rather than depend on that which comes from God.

In Genesis 4, we read:

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. (Genesis 4:3-5)

Clearly, God gave instruction to Adam and Eve, who instructed their sons on sacrificial offerings. It was God’s plan that the sacrifice be an innocent animal to pay the penalty of death that had been pronounced on humanity. The innocent is a substitute for the guilty. This was to teach that the innocent Seed of the woman (Jesus) would bear the sins of the guilty (seed of the woman) and pay the penalty on the cross. “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Cain’s offering of vegetables could not represent what Jesus would do because “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Again, in Cain we see a persistent characteristic of fallen humanity to devise ways of justifying themselves without God.

Hundreds of years later, as slaves in Egypt, about to be delivered from bondage, God brought ten plagues upon Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. The last plague was death of all the firstborn. Before this plague fell, God instructed the Hebrews on how to avoid this plague. They were to make the sacrifice of a lamb and paint the blood on the doorposts of their homes. God said, “Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13). This has

meaning today, when God sees the blood of Jesus symbolically on the doorposts of our heart, his judgment will pass over us and we have access to eternal life.

Shortly after leaving Egypt God gave his law to the Hebrews and established a complete system of sacrifices and specified the design of a portable sanctuary for their journeys in the wilderness. God told Moses:

And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. (Exodus 25:8)

As we read in the book of Hebrews, there is a sanctuary in heaven in which Jesus is the High Priest. The one Moses was to build was a miniature, simplified model of it. The services carried out in the earthly sanctuary were representations of the plan of salvation being worked out in our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.

The main features of the services were the daily sacrifice for individual sins (carried out in the compartment known as the “Holy Place”) and the yearly sacrifice to cleanse the sanctuary of the accumulated sins transferred by individuals to the sanctuary (carried out in the compartment known as the “Most Holy Place”). The sacrificial lamb is Jesus. John the Baptist said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Jesus is also the High Priest:

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:11, 12)

Satan’s rebellion in heaven resulted in the rebellion of our planet. But before the world was created, God the Father and His Son, Jesus, devised a plan, revealed ever so slightly in Genesis 3:15, that would redeem humanity from Satan’s grasp. Jesus, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8), would die for the guilty,

restoring eternal life to all who would yield to His will and accept the merits of the blood of Jesus.

### Elijah on Mount Carmel

The kingdom of Israel in the promised land sometimes succeeded when they lived in accordance with God's covenant and sometimes miserably failed. There came a time when the people were fed up with their king, and ten tribes in the northern part of the kingdom separated to form a new kingdom. This became known as Israel, with the remaining two tribes in the south called Judah.

The northern kingdom of Israel wanted to distinguish themselves from Judah and immediately began deviating in the worship that God had prescribed. In fact, it soon became idolatry, following gods of the surrounding nations. Satan had succeeded in dividing God's people and diverting many of them to satanic worship.

In His longsuffering, God sent Israel the prophet Elijah to speak to the King of Israel, Ahab. King Ahab's wife was Jezebel, the daughter of a nearby pagan king. She influenced Ahab to abandon worship of God and begin worshipping Baal and Asherah. Jezebel became a sponsor of the false religion, persecuting the prophets of God and establishing prophets of Baal.

Elijah said to Ahab that it would not rain for 3 ½ years because Ahab had "forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals" (1 Kings 18:18, cf. 1 Kings 17:1). God then directed Elijah to hide in the wilderness where He would take care of him. Ahab and Jezebel searched for Elijah to kill him during those 3 ½ years.

At the end of the 3 ½ years, Elijah appeared to Ahab and challenged him to a confrontation on Mount Carmel:

Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. (1 Kings 18:19)

On Mount Carmel, Elijah issued the appeal to God's apostate people, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). The book of Revelation tells us that there is coming a time when people

who claim to be God's own will have to make the same binary decision: whether to follow God completely, regardless of circumstances or whether to drift somewhere between obedience to God and obedience to Satan. Those who make the right decision will receive the Seal of God; those who make the wrong decision receive the mark of the beast (see Chapter 7).

Next came the challenge, "you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God" (1 Kings 18:24). This may be the most direct, visible battle between God and Satan in all the Old Testament. Of course, God easily won the contest. Read the entire story for yourself in 1 Kings 18.

The books of Daniel and Revelation speak of a conflict on Earth in the last days started by an alliance of a political power and apostate religion to force God's people regarding false worship. King Ahab represents the political power; Jezebel represents the apostate religious power. Daniel and Revelation also speak of a period of 3 ½ years (these are prophetic years that are 360 times 3 ½ years – more on this to come in Chapter 4) in which an alliance of political power and apostate religion persecute God's people. Revelation 12:6 says, "Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days." Remember that the "woman" in prophecy represents the church. The woman was fed by God in the wilderness for 3 ½ prophetic years just like Elijah.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. (Malachi 4:5)

### Jehoshaphat's Choir

Jehoshaphat was one of the few good kings of Judah:

the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David [actually, 5<sup>th</sup> from David]; he did not seek the Baals but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. (2 Chronicles 17:3-4)

He also strengthen Judah militarily, but did not place his trust in fortifications and soldiers – only in God. The nations around recognized the strength of Judah and would not attack. However, a three-fold union finally did attack: the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Edomites. The power of this confederacy was, in theory, too strong for King Jehoshaphat.

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. (2 Chronicles 20:3-4)

When Judah came together, Jehoshaphat offered a beautiful prayer; you should read it in 2 Chronicles 20. He spoke of the leading of God in the past and His many blessings for His people. Then he closed with, “For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

God answered through the prophet, Jahaziel:

Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God’s. … You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:16-17)

There are times when our troubles make us feel powerless; we don’t know what to do. We would do well to turn our eyes to God and trust in His goodness. He is more eager to bless than we are willing to ask. It takes faith to stand still and see God’s salvation. Such faith comes by learning to trust Him in small things. When the major crisis occurs, we will have an omnipotent arm on our side.

When Jehoshaphat deployed his troops to position before the enemy, he set a choir in the front of his column. When they came to a place where they could see the expected battle field, they found that the soldiers of each of the three countries had fought the soldiers of the other countries. The Bible says that when Jehoshaphat’s choir began to sing, the killing began; not one soldier remained.

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was

quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. (2 Chronicles 20:29-30)

In the last days, just before Jesus returns, God will pour out His judgments on the Earth in the form of the seven last plagues. During the sixth plague, the battle of Armageddon takes place where Satan and all his followers gather to wipe out God's people who have stood firm and have not received the mark of the beast. It is at this time that a three-fold union gathers to attack God's people. Clearly, in theory, this is a force that the few people of God cannot resist. Their eyes are on God.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16:13-14)

It is at this time that God delivers His people as in Jehoshaphat's day.

### Assyria Attacks Jerusalem

Assyria was the most powerful empire on Earth. During the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, Assyria had already conquered the northern kingdom, Israel, and dispersed its population. The total elimination of Israel was a judgment from God because of their idolatry. God used Assyria to execute the judgment. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation" (Isaiah 10:5).

It was a short distance from Israel to Judah, with Jerusalem only 50 miles from Israel's capital, Samaria. The Assyrian army moved south for what should have been an exceedingly easy defeat of Judah. King Hezekiah knew that Assyria, despite appearances, would not conquer Jerusalem. During the reign of the previous king, Ahaz, Isaiah had prophesied, "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders" (Isaiah

14:25). Nevertheless, Hezekiah had done everything in his power to prepare the country for Assyrian invasion.

Hezekiah told his people:

Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:

“With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. (2 Chronicles 32:7-8)

When the Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem, the Assyrian king’s representative told the people in Jerusalem, “Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us Judah (Isaiah 36:14-15).

But Isaiah strengthened the faith of Hezekiah with the message:

Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. (2 Kings 19:6-7)

So, when Jerusalem still did not surrender, the king of Assyria sent a letter to Hezekiah: “As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand (2 Chronicles 32:17).

Again, Isaiah strengthened Hezekiah, “For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake” (2 Kings 19:34). Then God, delivered His people:

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.



And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. (2 Kings 19:35-37)

Assyria was a nation that had received great blessings. During the time of Jonah, they repented of their sins and were saved from destruction. Over the years, God had shown an interest in Assyria as many prophets, in addition to Isaiah, had words to say about it such as Nahum, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. Yet they came with arrogance against the God that had so blessed them.

The amount of space given to Assyria and especially the Assyrian invasion of Israel and Judah hint that there might be something special about Assyria in last day prophecies. Students of the book of Isaiah understand that Assyria is a type of Babylon. Some prophetic statements on Assyria seem to merge with statements about Babylon. Furthermore, Babylon is a “type” of a religious system in the last days that engages in warfare against God’s remnant people. Therefore, the destruction of Assyria in Isaiah and 1 Kings, and 2 Chronicles is somehow connected with the destruction of Babylon recorded in Revelation 18. Chapter 6 of this book (and other chapters) will speak more to the antitypical Babylon. We can be sure that when under attack in the last days, as with Jerusalem of old, God will deliver us from the antitypical Assyria (Babylon) that seeks our destruction.

### Daniel in Babylon

Before the Babylonian Empire was even established (it was a minor entity ruled by Assyria at the time), the prophet Isaiah warned King Hezekiah, “Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the Lord” (2 Kings 20:17). The Babylonian captivity was to be a wakeup call to the Hebrews in Judah. The captivity did not begin until the reign of King Jehoiakim. Shortly before the captivity began, the prophet Jeremiah told the king that the captivity would last 70 years. An aristocratic

youth named Daniel was one of the people taken captive in the first invasion.

While in captivity, Daniel wrote a book of 12 chapters. The first six chapters were historical in nature and were written in Chaldean (except for part of chapter 1), the language of intellectual Babylonians. The last six chapters are prophetic and written in Hebrew. This current discussion will be on the historic chapters and will briefly summarize each chapter but focus on Daniel Chapter 3, which has a very striking similarity to last day events. A separate chapter of this book is devoted to the prophecies of Daniel, “Daniel Sees the End.”

Chapter 1 describes how Daniel and his three friends were set aside in the Babylonian palace for special instruction in the Babylonian sciences and public policy. They were to be given King Nebuchadnezzar’s food as a benefit to their development. However, the God of the Hebrews knew better and had already specified the food best for development; it did not include the unclean meats and alcohol of the king’s table. Daniel and his friends risked all to be true to God and received the opportunity to prove themselves. The king examined them, “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who were in all his realm” (Daniel 1:20).

Chapter 2 is actually prophetic, but it describes a dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar, which Daniel interpreted. Therefore, it is also historic in nature.

The king had a vision, the contents of which he could not remember. Under threat of death for all the wise men, Daniel prayed to God for wisdom, saying in his prayer, “[God] reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him” (Daniel 2:22). After hearing from God, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the dream’s contents and then interpreted it. Daniel did not claim the credit for his understanding, “But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). So, the dream’ meaning carries down the last days of Earth’s history.

Daniel explained that the dream was about an image of a man composed of various metals, that the head of gold represented King

Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian Empire), the head and shoulders of silver represented the next empire to replace Babylon, the belly and thighs of brass represented a third empire, the legs of iron the fourth empire, and the feet and toes of mixed iron and clay the result of dissolution of the fourth and last empire into ten smaller kingdoms. Finally, a great stone not made with hands struck the image at the feet and toes. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44).

We will examine the meaning of this prophecy in the next chapter on Daniel’s visions.

Chapter 3 sees Nebuchadnezzar apparently discontent that the image of his dream was not totally gold, which would depict the continuation of his throne forever. So, he made an actual image of a man made entirely of gold and commanded everyone to worship the image of gold.

Daniel is not mentioned in the ensuing violation of God’s second commandment, perhaps he was the only one running the empire during the ceremony. However, his three friends were there, and they refused to bow down, even on pain of death. The king gave the three a second chance, but they would not compromise. “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve can deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:16-18). So, Nebuchadnezzar threw them into a furnace.

But God did preserve these three Hebrews. Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25). Then Nebuchadnezzar praised God.

The issue was worship. The government tried to force false worship on God’s faithful people. As we will see later in the book of Revelation, this occurs again in the last days when an unholy combination of secular and religious power “cause[s] as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed (Revelation 13:15).

Chapter 4 appears to have been written by Nebuchadnezzar and included in the book by Daniel. It begins with these words:

Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. How great *are* His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion *is* from generation to generation.

Nebuchadnezzar had learned to submit His life to the Almighty God. The rest of the chapter tells of a new dream, Daniel's interpretation of the dream, and the events that transpired in accordance with the prophecy in the dream. Although Nebuchadnezzar had, at the end of the fiery furnace episode, acknowledged and praised God, he had not yet surrendered. He was still proud and rebellious. In Daniel Chapter 4, we learn that Nebuchadnezzar became as a mindless beast of the field for seven years. At the end of the time, Nebuchadnezzar's senses returned to him as did his throne. If Nebuchadnezzar could be saved from himself, then anyone can.

Chapter 5 covers the fall of the Babylonian Empire under King Belshazzar. Isaiah had prophesied about the fall of Babylon before it was an important nation. Jeremiah also prophesied that Babylon would fall at the end of the 70-year captivity. Isaiah said, "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them" (Isaiah 13:17). The Medes were also a weak power at that time. Of course, Daniel had promised that another kingdom would take over, the silver kingdom of the image. This was to be the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians.

Belshazzar was having a riotous feast in which the vessels taken from the Jerusalem temple were brought in for the worship of heathen entities. Suddenly, the fingers of a hand appeared writing on the wall, an occurrence from which we get the saying, "the handwriting was on the wall." Daniel was called to interpret and pronounced the doom of the Babylonian Empire.

That very night Cyrus the Great diverted the River Euphrates and came into the city under the wall. He found the gates open inside because the guards were drunk because of the feast. He was able to

easily take the city and began the Medo-Persian Empire. Over a hundred years before the birth of Cyrus, Isaiah had prophesied in detail this exact sequence of events and even called out Cyrus by name. The fall of Babylon is used by New Testament writers as a type of what will happen in the last days.

Chapter 6 is a much beloved children's story in which Daniel was faithful to his religion in the face of death. Darius the Mede was now king of the Medo-Persian Empire, and Daniel was still living and well regarded by the new masters. However, Darius was tricked by the nobility to proclaim that anyone who worshipped any deity than Darius would be thrown into the lion's den. of course, Daniel remained faithful and was thrown into the den.

Darius was distraught that he had done this to Daniel, but in the morning opened the den and said:

“Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” Now the king was exceedingly glad for him. (Daniel 6:20-23)

All these six chapters show attempts to defeat God's purposes with his chosen people. In every case, God wins in the controversy.

### Baby Jesus Attacked

Everyone knows the story of the wise men from the east that came to worship Baby Jesus. Apparently, they had been studying the Hebrew prophecies, and when they saw the star, they took it as a sign of His birth. So, they traveled to Jerusalem to see this Messiah and inquired of those whom they presumed to be experts. The experts knew little, but stated that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

The Roman King of Judea, Herod the Great, (a Jew forming something of a Vichy government) inquired of the wise men, asking when they had first seen the star. He feigned a desire to worship the king and asked the wise men to stop by on their way back to describe

what they learned. But, the wise men were warned by God to not visit with Herod afterward, so they went home another way.

Herod was incensed and ordered all the children in Bethlehem under two years old to be killed, the age based on when the wise men first saw the star. This tells us that the wise men showed up a considerable time after the birth of Jesus. Perhaps they were continuing to study the prophecies to be sure of their meaning or they were preparing for the trip or just delayed the decision to travel. They were probably traveling from Mesopotamia. Also, we are told that they visited the child in a house, not a barn.

Matthew attributes the massacre of the children in Bethlehem to fulfillment of a prophecy in Jeremiah, “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more” (Matthew 2:18). Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died in childbirth on the way to the location of what became Jerusalem and was buried near Rama. Some scholars believe that during the Babylonian exile, Rama was a staging point for exporting the captives to Babylon. She is, thus, representative as a mother of all Israel, grieving over the loss of Hebrew children.

The massacre at Bethlehem is mentioned in the prophecy of Revelation 12:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

As we have mentioned, a woman represents the church. This is made plain with the twelve stars, a number that is associated with the church (12 tribes, 12 disciples/apostles, 12 foundations and 12 gates

in New Jerusalem, etc.). The woman giving birth would be the Seed of the woman. Jesus was the Seed with a capital “S.” Jesus is the entity on which Satan has the greatest enmity. We already know that the dragon is “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (verse 8). The seven heads and ten horns are characteristics of the Roman Empire, as we shall see in subsequent chapters devoted to prophecy.

Therefore, we see the Roman Empire, under inspiration from Satan, desired to attack the promised Seed of the Woman as soon as He was born. Satan’s conflict is with Jesus. The only reason he attacks the church is because the church is the “body of Christ.” It was to be through the church that the Seed was to be born. For centuries, Satan did not know when or how Jesus would come to His church, but it became more and more plain as the Old Testament prophecies were proclaimed. By the time Jesus was born, there was no uncertainty; Satan was ready for Him. But Jesus was protected:

Now when they [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.” (Matthew 2:13-15)

### The Wilderness Temptation

The wilderness temptation is the most explicit attack on Jesus by Satan; they confronted each other face-to-face, except that Jesus was weakened by appearing in His humanity, dependent on prayer and His connection with the Father. The story is told in Luke 4.

Jesus was led to the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. It was God’s plan that Jesus be victorious on the same three temptations upon which Eve failed. Recall that Eve’s temptations were that the forbidden fruit was 1) good for food, 2) pleasant to the eyes, and 3) desired to make one wise.

Jesus fasted for 40 days and was hungry. Satan appeared, perhaps as an angel of light rather than a degraded enemy, saying “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread” (verse 3). Notice the “if” – a subtle insinuation that maybe Jesus was not the Son of God. Jesus responded, “It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (verse 4). Jesus did not perform miracles for His own behalf. He did not perform carnival acts to impress anyone. He was solely devoted to saving humanity. He responded with the Word of God. This temptation corresponds to Eve’s first temptation, “good for food.” Mankind today still shows a great weakness when it comes to appetite. We engage in self-destructive behaviors for the sake of a few moments of taste.

Next, Satan, abandoning the pretense of a benevolent angel, took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world over all time, saying that all could be His if He would worship Satan. Jesus responded with, “Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (verse 8). Again, Jesus responds with Scripture. Satan had some claim to the kingdom of the world. Even Jesus called Satan the ruler of this world, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). However, as Creator and Redeemer, Jesus is the real ruler of this world. What Jesus saw was likely pleasant to behold, “pleasant to the eyes,” but Jesus was not deceived like Eve.

Satan tried again for a third time.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Luke 4:9-11)

This time Satan decided to quote Scripture in hope of winning the argument.

Jesus answered with Scripture, “It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (verse 12). Jesus would not be presumptuous with the



blessings and protection of the Father. To do so would be to show a level of pride, self-importance, that was like Eve's "desired to make on wise."

Jesus was victorious where mankind continually fails. He gives the record of His perfect life to be written in place of our failed life. He died the death that was ours that we might live the life that was His. When Satan tried to destroy us, Jesus provided all that was needed for us to prosper.

### The Cross

When Jesus died on the cross, the promise of salvation offered by the Old Testament sacrificial service was fulfilled. Type was met by antitype. There was now an assured path to eternal life to those people who, by faith, had in the past and would in the future access it by surrendering their lives to Jesus. Surrender means accepting His will as superior to our own. It means living by His commandments, even though the commandments are not the means of salvation. It means accepting by faith His righteous life to stand in place of ours and to accepting by faith His death on the cross as a substitute for the death sentence we had earned.

The cross ended any hope that the adversary of God could triumph in the end. Satan continues to inflict as much damage as possible, attempting to minimize the efficacy of the cross by leading people to ruin. The great controversy is not over, but the conclusion of it is assured. The cross gives believers evidence that God will end the battle in our favor because the victory has been won. Now, each of us, individually, have a battle with self to be victorious.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)



## 4. Daniel Sees the End

The books of Daniel and Revelation go hand in hand. They are both prophetic of the last days (apocryphal) and they use similar symbols. We will cover Daniel Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9 here.

### Daniel Chapter 2

In the previous chapter, we described Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it. Daniel explained that starting with Babylon there would be four empires then the fourth empire would disintegrate into the toes and feet of the image, which would not cling together. "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" (Daniel 2:43). During the time of the feet and toes, an everlasting kingdom would be set up.

Babylon ruled from 605 BC to 539 BC. Then, in 539 BC Cyrus the Great dried up the River Euphrates and entered the City of Babylon through the underground river bed. Approximately 150 years before the birth of Cyrus, Isaiah (Chapter 45) identified him by name as the one to conquer Babylon. The actual fall of Babylon is described in Daniel Chapter 5. The resulting Medo-Persian Empire lasted until 331 BC when Alexander the Great defeated Persia in battle. The Greek Empire lasted until Rome conquered it in 168 BC.

The legs of iron, represent Rome. This empire is called "the Iron monarchy of Rome" by historian Edward Gibbon in his six-volume series, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The fall of the Roman Empire occurred in the year 476 AD, as dated by Gibbon. Because of barbarian invasions, Rome dissolved into ten separate kingdoms:

Ostrogoths	Visigoths
Franks	Vandals
Suevi	Alamanni
Anglo-Saxon	Heruli
Lombards	Burgundians

These tribes are the precursors of what would be known as Western Europe. Daniel says the ten divisions would never unite. Wars, royal marriage, and political arrangements never succeeded in uniting Western Europe, as foretold by Daniel. There has never been another empire that replaced Rome. We are still in the period of a divided Europe.

The stone cut out without hands may come soon to set up an everlasting kingdom. In both Old and New Testament, Jesus is represented as a Rock. The stone cut without hands striking the feet is clearly the second coming of Jesus, establishing God's everlasting kingdom. Although the rise and fall of empires appears to depend on the will of men, the word of God shows that God is working His own will.

### Daniel 7

Right from the beginning, we will establish that Daniel 7 covers the same historical ground as does Daniel 2. However, it provides more details, designed to establish faith in the prophecy, given the remarkable fulfillment of these details. More importantly, it gives emphasis to the fourth and last empire (Rome), which plays an important role in the plan of salvation as both a literal and figurative enemy of God's people until Jesus comes. Recall from the last chapter that it was Rome, working in the dragon's (Satan's) behalf, that was ready to devour Jesus at His birth.

As the chapter opens, Daniel has been captive in Babylon, serving in the king's court since 605 BC. He received the vision of Chapter 7 in the first year of King Belshazzar, which would be 553 BC, 42 years after being taken captive. He would be about 60 years old. Babylon will fall in 539 BC, 14 years after this vision.

In his dream, Daniel saw "four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (Daniel 7:2). The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. The second was like a bear, and it raised itself up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth. The third was like a leopard with four wings on its back. It also had four heads. The fourth beast was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue

with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (Daniel 7:7).

In verse 17, an angel explains to Daniel that the four beasts are four kings or kingdoms that shall arise – just like in Daniel 2. Notice here also, that the fourth beast has ten horns as does the Chapter 2 image have ten toes that derive from the fourth kingdom. However, there is some new information about the horns:

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Daniel 7:8)

The angel does not name the kingdoms. In fact, Daniel shows no interest in the first three and wants to know more about the fourth beast. Nevertheless, there are interesting details about the other three kingdoms that we can discuss.

Paralleling Daniel 2, the lion would be Babylon. Lion images are found in the ruins of ancient Babylon. One lion found at the Processional Way leading to the Ishtar Gate in ancient Babylon has four wings. The lion is universally known as a symbol of Babylon.

The bear would be the Medo-Persian Empire. The Medes and Persians had a combined empire. Daniel 7:5 states the bear was higher on one side than the other, indicating that the Persians were the stronger part of the empire. Daniel 7:5 also says the bear was devouring 3 ribs. Medo-Persia had to defeat Lydia (547 BC), Babylon (539 BC), and Egypt (525 BC) to gain control of the known, civilized world.

Greece would be the third kingdom. Daniel 7:6 states that the leopard had wings, indicating speed of conquest. Alexander conquered from Egypt to the Indus Valley in India in just 3 years. Nebuchadnezzar took 13 years and still did not conquer Tyre. Daniel 7:6 states that the leopard had 4 heads. At Alexander’s early death, Greece was divided among his 4 generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

Daniel asks about the fourth beast, his question itself giving even more details about the beast. We know that it must be Rome.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 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. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. (Daniel 7:19-22)

The angel begins the explanation:

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings *that* shall arise ... Daniel 7:24

This information tells us what we learned of the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2. Note the repetition of the metal “iron.” But the angel continues:

and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:24-25)

We now have enough information to identify the Little Horn. There are ten features.

1. Rising from Rome, it would be expected to have Roman characteristics. Like the part iron feet of Daniel 2.
2. Its location would be Western Europe, where Rome was.
3. The Little Horn arises after the ten horns, which were complete in 476 AD (see Chapter 2 of this book). Therefore, the Little Horn arose after that date.
4. The Little Horn overthrows 3 kingdoms of Western Europe sometime after 476 AD. In the Daniel 2 section, we identified the

ten kingdoms arising from the Roman Empire. Three of those no longer exist: Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths. The seven others continued under newer names.

5. The Little Horn would speak blasphemy against God.
6. This power would persecute God's people.
7. The Little Horn meddles with God's laws and times.
8. The Little Horn is of a different nature than the seven remaining horns.
9. The Little Horn would have power for a time, times, and a dividing of time.
10. The Little Horn has eyes like a man – associated with a man.

A knowledge of the history of this time (post 476 AD) suggests an identity. We can postulate that the Little Horn is the Roman church or the papal system that developed from the Bishop of Rome. Then we can check each of the ten characteristics, and if all ten characteristics match, then there is high probability that our postulate is correct.

1. Characteristics of Rome: The church is called "Roman Catholic Church." The church headquarters is in the City of Rome. The architecture of the Vatican is Roman. Roman Emperor Constantine brought many pagan Roman symbols and practices into the church at Rome in the 300's AD. The official language of the church is Latin, and it uses Roman numerals.
2. Location in Western Europe: The church headquarters is in the City of Rome. For centuries, countries of Western Europe submitted to the authority of the Pope. Places where the papal system extends beyond Western Europe are countries that were colonies of Western European powers.
- 3&4. Arose After 476 AD and Overthrows 3 Kingdoms: Seven of the ten kings of Europe became Christian. Three kingdoms refused the Pope's authority (regarding Arianism). The authority of the Pope was in doubt as long as there was rebellion. These kingdoms were exterminated by 538 AD. The remaining seven kingdoms evolved into countries still in existence today.

5. Speaks Blasphemy Against God: Here is a small sampling of the statements regarding papal equality with God.
- “For thou art the shepherd, thou art the physician, thou art the director, thou art the husbandman; finally, thou art another God on earth.” *Fifth Lateran Council*
  - “The pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth . . . He is the infallible ruler, . . .the judge of all, being judged by no one, God himself on earth.” *New York Catechism*
  - “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.” Pope Leo XIII
  - “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.” *Roman Catholic Encyclopedia*
6. Persecutes God’s People: During the Inquisitions, thousands were tortured and executed in gruesome ways, as documented in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs. Many others had their homes confiscated from their heirs after burning at the stake. During the Protestant Reformation, leaders such as Huss and Jerome, were burned at the stake. William Tyndale was tried for the heresy of translating the Bible into English and strangled to death while on the stake to be burned.
7. Thinks to Change Times and Laws: The Catholic Catechism eliminates the 2nd Commandment forbidding the worship of idols. This is because the Church has many idols in the churches and homes. Use of these idols was started when Emperor Constantine ordered the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity in which statues of Roman gods were renamed to Christian characters. To keep the number of commandments at ten, the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment was divided into two commandments: #9 prohibits coveting neighbor’s wife, #10 prohibits coveting neighbor’s goods. See the following website:
- ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/command.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/command.htm))



The Catholic Catechism contains the following question and answer:

“Question: Which is the Sabbath day? Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”

See also this quotation:

“What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope authority to change a command of God? If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew. But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine, infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, which in Apostolic times made Sunday the day of rest to honor our Lord’s resurrection on that day and to mark off clearly the Jew from the Christian.” Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box Answers*, (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 254, 255. This book has a preface by James Cardinal Gibbons.

8. Diverse from the Others: The papacy is a very small entity compared to the countries of Western Europe. It is a religious power. How did the papacy have the power to depose kings, murder thousands of Christians, and to wage religious wars in Europe? It used the political power first of Rome and then of the European nations. This is an unholy combination of church and state that is against God’s principle of free will.
9. Has Power for a Time, Times, and a Dividing of Time: This period is mentioned in the Bible several times:
  - Daniel 7:25 – and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.
  - Revelation 12:14 – The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

- Revelation 12:6 – And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.
- Revelation 11:2-3 – But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.
- Revelation 13:5 – 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.

A Hebrew year is composed of 360 days, divided into 12 months of 30 days each. Therefore, 1,260 days is 42 months. A time, times, and dividing of times is clearly the same as a time, times, and half a time or 2 ½ times. If a time is taken as a year, then 2 ½ times is 42 months or 1,260 days.

In Bible prophecy, a day represents a year.

- Ezekiel 4:6 – “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”
- Numbers 14:34 – “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.”

More importantly, it works for the 1,260-day prophecy and more dramatically, the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9. The 1,260-day prophecy would be for 1,260 years, but when did the time start? Perhaps the overthrow of 3 kings is a hint. This occurred in 538 AD when political opposition to the papacy ended. Then, 1,260 years from 538 AD is 1798. In 1798, Napoleon’s general took the pope prisoner and Papal States were taken. The papacy was not restored until 1929.

10. Has the Eyes of a Man: The Little Horn power is associated with a man.

- “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; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
- “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man.” (Revelation 13:18)

We have seen that the fourth kingdom, political Rome, evolved into a religious Rome, the Little Horn, that was the enemy of God, being a blasphemous and persecuting power that attempts to deceive the world by changing God’s law. However, we know this condition will not stand:

But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Daniel 7:26-27)

Since the inception of sin in heaven, there has been an invisible, cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan. Although this is a heavenly conflict, it is reflected on Earth in a visible battle between the followers of Christ and the followers of Satan. During this battle, Satan and his wicked followers have appeared to prevail over God and his people, but in the end God and his people will prevail because He controls and guides history to its desired end.

## Daniel 8

Daniel 8 covers some of the same history as Daniel 2 and 7, but the emphasis is on the Old Testament sanctuary services. The beasts of Daniel 7 are wild beasts, suitable for symbolizing political powers striving for mastery. The beasts of Daniel 8 are those used in the Old Testament sanctuary service. The ram was used in the daily service as a sacrifice prefiguring the forgiveness of sins in which the death of Jesus is substituted for our own. The goat was used in the yearly

service illustrating that judgment will eventually find the saints not only forgiven (daily) but ultimately made fit for eternity.

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. (Daniel 8:3-4)

The angel Gabriel explains the meaning of this. Gabriel is the highest-ranking angel in heaven. “The ram which you saw having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia” (Daniel 8:20). Remember that the bear representing Media and Persia was also lifted up on one side. Now we get confirmation of the interpretation that one kingdom (Persia) was the dominant partner. Notice that this prophecy begins with Medo-Persia, because the Babylonian Empire is nearly ended.

Daniel continues describing what he saw. “And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes” (Daniel 8:6). Gabriel explains, “And the <sup>1</sup>male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king” (Daniel 8:21). This is consistent with what we know about Alexander the Great, certainly a notable king who conquered with great speed. This prophecy was given in 550 BC, but Alexander ruled 336 BC to 323 BC, over 200 years later.

Daniel then describes that the goat struck the ram and utterly defeated it. “Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven” (Daniel 8:8). This describes what we learned in Daniel 7 about the early death of Alexander and the rise to power of his four generals. Gabriel confirms it, “As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power” (Daniel 8:22).

Next, “And out of one of them (one of the four horns) came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land” (Daniel 8:9). Is this

“Little Horn” the same entity as the Little Horn of Daniel 7? Let us look closer.

Daniel had previously described this little horn as follows:

And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. (Daniel 8:10-12)

This behavior is the same as that of the Little Horn of Daniel 7. Gabriel also has this to say about the Little Horn, which is also like the Daniel 7 Little Horn:

And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.

Let’s compare the two Little Horns:

Little Horn of Daniel 7

Little Horn of Daniel 8

Identified as a little horn  
(Daniel 7:8)

Identified as a little horn  
(Daniel 8:9)

Starts little but becomes great  
(Daniel 7:30)

Starts little but becomes great  
(Daniel 8:9)

Persecutes “people of the  
saints” (Daniel 7:21, 25, 27)

Persecutes “people of the  
saints” (Daniel 8:24)

Identified as self-exalting and blasphemous (Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25)	Identified as self-exalting and blasphemous (Daniel 8:10-12, 25)
Has crafty intelligence (Daniel 8 'eyes of a man')	Has crafty intelligence (Daniel 8:23-25 'riddles, cunning, deceit')
Activities extend to time of end (Daniel 7:25-26)	Activities extend to time of end (Daniel 8:17-19)
Supernaturally destroyed (Daniel 7:11, 26)	Supernaturally destroyed (Daniel 8:25)

As we will see, the prophecy is primarily about the sanctuary, not the rise and fall of kingdoms, which were covered in Daniel 2 and 7. There are two principle sanctuary services: the daily (ram) and the yearly (goat). There is no room for a third beast/kingdom. Daniel 7 represented the two characteristics of Rome as follows: pagan Rome as a dragon and papal Rome as a little horn. Daniel 8 represents both characteristics as a little horn. Daniel 8:9-10 is about pagan Rome and versus 11 and 12 are about papal Rome. So, Rome is not excluded. In some ways, Rome was an extension of Greece in culture, government, religion, geography.

Now for the most fascinating part of Daniel 8:

Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed. (Daniel 8:13, 14)

Gabriel says that the vision of the 2,300 days applies a long time in the future. "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days." (Daniel 8:26). What is the vision of the evening and morning? Daniel 8:14 mentioned 2,300 days. The original Hebrew

says “2300 evenings-morning.” The Bible translators used “days” because Genesis 1 states that evening and morning is a day. Gabriel draws Daniel’s attention to it because he states it is true but does not interpret it.

The interpretation is found in Daniel 9. The interpretation was interrupted because Daniel was so shocked by it he got sick. “And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it” (Daniel 8:27).

The vision of the ram and goat offer little that was not learned in Daniel 2 and 7. However, the 2300-day vision of cleansing the sanctuary is new and left unexplained. There is an important message about the daily and yearly service. It is important for Christians because Daniel is told that the vision is for the last days. The answer to the question, “What is the cleaning of the sanctuary?” is found in a study of the yearly Old Testament service. Daniel 9 will answer this question.

### Daniel 9

Daniel 9 contains the interpretation of the 2,300-day prophecy along with an astounding prophecy giving the dates of the baptism of Jesus, His death, and the beginning of proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles. It is important to remember the “day-for-a-year” principle we learned when discussing the 1,260-day prophecy.

Daniel has been captive in Babylon, serving in the king’s court since 605 BC. He received the vision of Chapter 9 in the first year of King Darius, which would be 538 BC, 67 years after being taken captive; 11 years after the vision of Daniel 7. He would be about 74 years old. Babylon fell in 539 BC, shortly before this vision. The Medo-Persian empire now ruled Babylon. The promised end of the 70 years of captivity of the Jews was at hand.

Daniel 8 ended with the 2300-day (year) prophecy unexplained. Daniel fell sick, so the interpretation was interrupted. God allowed 11 years to pass – to the time when the 70-year captivity prophesied by Jeremiah is to end. The end of the captivity was weighing heavily on Daniel:

In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. (Daniel 9:2)

It seems that Daniel was concerned that perhaps God was dissatisfied with the results of the 70-year captivity. He wondered if God wanted the Jews to be in captivity for 2,300 years. Accordingly, Daniel offers a heart-felt prayer in Daniel 9:4-19 that requests God's favor on Jerusalem and the sanctuary. At the end of the prayer, the very same angel shows up to relieve Daniel of his concerns:

while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. (Daniel 9:21-22)

Gabriel continues, "I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Daniel 9:23). What vision? There is no vision in Chapter 9. Clearly, Gabriel is referring to the same vision that Gabriel had not finished explaining from Chapter 8. A study of the original Hebrew confirms that fact.

The explanation of the 2,300 days starts with, "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" (Daniel 9:24). The Hebrew word for "determined" can be translated "cut off." Cut off from what? The only thing left from the Daniel 8 vision is the 2,300 days. This is 70 weeks or 490 years by the year-day principle. Consider the "70-Week Timeline" chart on the next page as this prophecy is explained.



## 70-Week Timeline



So, when do the 70 weeks start, which would be the same starting point for the 2,300 days? “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” Daniel 9:25. This is 69 weeks or 483 years by the year-day principle.

The commandment to send the Jews back to Jerusalem and to fund building the city and the wall occurred in 457 BC. Earlier, Cyrus the Great issued a decree that ended the 70-year captivity but provided no funding to rebuild the city. Ezra and II Chronicles describe these decrees. The word “Messiah” in the prophecy means “anointed one.” Jesus was baptized or anointed at the end of the 69 weeks (7 + 62 weeks) in 27 AD. From 457 BC to 27 AD is 483 years (year zero does not exist).

The next part of the prophecy gives the year of Jesus’ death on the cross. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself” (Daniel 9:26). So, after the threescore and two weeks the Messiah would be cut off. That would be during the 70th week. But when during the 70<sup>th</sup> week? “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....” (Daniel 9:26-27). In the midst of the week the sacrifice ceases; that would be 31 AD. The crucifixion was 3 ½ years after Jesus was baptized. The

temple sacrifices would cease because the death of Jesus obviated the need for animal sacrifices.

It says he would confirm the covenant for one week (70<sup>th</sup> week). The covenant is the original agreement with Abraham to make his descendants a special people. The gospel went to the gentiles, roughly concurrent with the stoning of Stephen in 34 AD, the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The timing matches the prophecy even to the season of the year.

Now, what about the end of the 2,300 days (years)? The 2,300-year period after 457 BC ends in 1844 AD (again, ignoring the zero year). This is when the prophecy says the sanctuary would be cleansed. What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? This refers to the Old Testament yearly service called the Day of Atonement (see previous chapter).

The Jewish Day of Atonement, the yearly sacrificial service, is important in the Christian era, because the earthly sanctuary was just a pattern of the one shown to Moses (Exodus 25:8). The heavenly sanctuary is the real sanctuary discussed in the books of Hebrews and Revelation, written for Christians. The daily Old Testament sacrifice represented the death of Jesus as an atonement for our sins. The yearly Old Testament service then also represents something important to Christians. The daily service was conducted in the outer court and in the first compartment. It represented reconciliation or forgiveness of sins. The yearly service was conducted primarily in the second compartment and by the high priest only. It represents the final resolution of the sin problem for the earth – the blotting out of sins.

The Day of Atonement (yearly service) involved two goats: 1) the Lord's goat and 2) the scapegoat. The Lord's goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people that had accumulated in the sanctuary. Thus, the sanctuary needed cleaning because the daily service ceremonially collected the sins of the people in the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:15-16). The scapegoat received the sins that were transferred from the sanctuary in its cleansing (Leviticus 16:20-12).

The scapegoat represented that the responsibility for the sins of God's people would eventually be placed on Satan. The Day of Atonement was a symbolic day of judgment in which the cumulative sins of the people, while forgiven in the daily, were eradicated forever.

The people were required to afflict their souls to ensure every sin was confessed. Thus, it was a day of self-examination or judgment. The people were symbolically judged to be clean and fit for eternity. Their sins and all traces of them were symbolically gone forever.

So, why is this judgment needed before Jesus returns? The second coming irrevocably fixes the destiny of every person. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). Therefore, the determination of guilt or innocence by the blood of Jesus is made before He comes. Mankind is unaware when it occurs. It is a formal and transparent determination that can be examined by the saints afterward in heaven (see Chapter 14).

Daniel describes this judgment in Daniel 7:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:9-10)

So, what happened in 1844? Nothing on earth. The need for the earthly sanctuary was eliminated at the cross. The earthly sanctuary was just a pattern of the one shown to Moses (Exodus 25:8). Just as the daily service was a foreshadowing of Jesus dying for our sins, the yearly Day of Atonement foreshadowed the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus our High Priest in ministering for us. The heavenly sanctuary is the real sanctuary discussed in the books of Hebrews and Revelation.

Daniel 8 started a vision about the daily and yearly sanctuary service. Daniel 9 completed the interpretation of the vision. Jesus’ death on the cross marked the end of the daily service. Jesus beginning his High Priest duties for the heavenly Day of Atonement marks the final phase of the close of the Plan of Salvation. God’s people are determined fit for heaven in this judgment. Jesus comes to bring His reward.



## 5. John Sees the End

After examining the major prophecies of Daniel, we now turn to end time prophecies in Revelation. This chapter focuses on Revelation 12. Before starting, this would be a good time to establish that a woman in the Bible often represents God's church. We postulated this in Chapters 1 and 2 when discussing Eve in Genesis and the attack on Baby Jesus in Revelation 12, respectively. There are many texts that demonstrate this symbology. Here are just four of them. The "daughter of Zion" and "Jerusalem" are substitute words for God's people.

I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman. (Jeremiah 6:2).

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7, 8).

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

I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2)

So, when we discussed the attack on Baby Jesus, we saw "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1). The number 12 represents the church as well, in this case, the work of the 12 disciples. One could interpret the woman as Mary, the mother of Jesus, since this woman delivers the Baby, but that is a narrow interpretation that misses the larger message of Revelation 12. One is also led to consider the woman Eve, who would be the progenitor of the Seed, but the church is most relevant.

In Revelation 12:3 we see the dragon, which we already know is Satan (verse 9), ready to devour the Child. This dragon has seven heads and ten horns. The beast of Daniel 7, pagan Rome, had ten

horns also. In our previous study of these passages in Revelation 12, we noted that it was Satan behind the Roman King of Judea, Herod the Great, that tried to kill Jesus when He was born, so this fits. But, what are the seven heads? The Bible often interprets itself: “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (Revelation 17:9). [As we will see in another chapter, the woman in this case is an apostate church, an enemy of the true church.] So, this dragon is characterized by seven mountains or seven hills. You likely know that Rome is called the “City of Seven Hills.”

At some point after the failed attempt to kill Jesus and after the resurrection of Jesus, it says that the woman fled into a wilderness prepared by God, where she was cared for 1, 260 days (years). We know from Daniel 7, that this period was from 538 AD to 1798 AD, when the papacy had supremacy in Europe and persecuted God’s church. What was the wilderness?

The term “wilderness” refers to unpopulated places on earth where God’s people could escape the persecution. History tells of the Waldenses, who hid in the mountains. The message of salvation spread to Ireland, known as Hibernia by the Romans who would not even go there. Many fled persecution by crossing the ocean to what would become the United States. God’s people would have been erased from the earth had not some fled and preserved the knowledge of true, apostolic religion.

Next, Revelation 12 tells about Satan thrown out of heaven. As the Bible often does, it reflects the different sense of chronology that was held by the ancient world, and perhaps the Hebrews in particular. Thus, this is a description of what occurred before the Earth was made. We have already covered this material. However, the last sentence of the section offers interesting insight, “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Revelation 12:12). This is the theme of what follows: the persecution of the woman. It begins by restating the 1,260-year prophecy of persecution in Europe (the

land of the ten toes and ten horns), but then moves to the persecution in the last days.

First, we'll provide the text for the 1,260-year persecution, identified as "time and times, and half a time" here.

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So, the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. (Revelation 12:13-16)

After the power of the papacy received a "deadly" wound (as described in Revelation 13) in 1798, Satan was enraged and began planning his persecution for the last days. See this important text; a "remnant" is the last part of something.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

This language is very similar to that of Genesis 3:15 where God said there would be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The remnant of the seed of the woman would be God's people in the last days. The seed of the serpent (dragon) would be those people who aligned themselves either wittingly or unwittingly with Satan – those who persecute God's people like was done during the Dark Ages. These people are those who think they do God's service but are actually worshipping Satan in a false system of worship known in Revelation as "Babylon." Babylon is the subject of the next chapter.

Notice the characteristics of God's people in the last days: 1) they keep the commandments of God and 2) have the testimony of Jesus Christ. You may have noticed that keeping God's commandments,

especially regarding worship, has been a continuing issue throughout the great controversy.



## 6. Alas, Alas that Great City Babylon

Before Babylon was an empire, the king of Babylon heard that King Hezekiah of Judah had been ill, so he sent envoys and presents. Hezekiah showed the visiting Babylonians everything he had, including all his treasures and the temple treasures. He had just been cured from a mortal illness by God. That blessing should have been Hezekiah's focus of the visit, but Hezekiah erred in his pride of possessions.

Isaiah the prophet came and said:

Hear the word of the LORD: Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

But Isaiah also proclaimed doom on the Babylonians, prophesying the fall of Babylon:

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them ... Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. (Isaiah 13:17-20)

The Assyrians controlled Babylon at this time; the Medes were a weak power. Why was this prophecy given about a kingdom that had little significance to the Hebrews? The answer is that Babylon would eventually cause the most traumatic event ever to occur to the Hebrew nation. Also, New Testament writers would cite Isaiah 13 as prophetic to the last days. God, knowing the end from the beginning, set up all the conditions He wanted to call His people out of last-days Babylon.

About 92 years after Isaiah's prophecy of the fall of Babylon, Jeremiah warned Judah that Babylon would take Judah captive for 70 years.

Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them ... I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the Lord, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. . . . And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:6-11)

The issue was worship, something to be remembered when we look at New Testament Babylon. We have already encountered worship as a last-days issue in Daniel's prophecies.

Jeremiah went on to say that when the 70 years of captivity were completed, God would punish Babylon and make it a perpetual desolation. Isaiah prophesied the fall of Babylon and called out Cyrus the Great to do the job before Cyrus was born. He even said Cyrus would dry up the Euphrates River and would find the double doors from the river into the city unlocked. This is exactly what happened. Although Babylon was occupied until Roman times, the city has been in perpetual desolation ever since then.

The author of Revelation, John, writes, "And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:8). Why write that in the first century AD when Babylon is already desolate? Imagine the reaction of the first century Jewish Christian who recognizes the quote, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" from Isaiah 21:9. This demonstrates that it is difficult to understand much of the New Testament without the Old Testament. The literal fall of Babylon is described in Daniel 5, with the episode of the writing on the wall (Chapter 2 of this book). Recall that the issue then was worship.

John has more to say about Babylon:

Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of

blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth. (Revelation 17:1-5)

In the Bible, wine is sometimes the symbol of doctrine. Wine that makes one drunk is wrong doctrine and confusion. The very name, Babylon, is derived from “Babel,” as in the tower of Babel where the language was confused. It simply means confusion.

Notice that Babylon is a harlot. If a pure woman in the Bible represents a pure church, then a harlot represents a corrupt church. God often speaks to his erring people worshipping other gods as committing adultery because they are supposed to be solely devoted to Him. Notice also that Babylon has some of the same characteristics of the Little Horn in Daniel 7, most notably ten horns. It has the same appearance as the dragon we studied in Revelation 12, which represented Satan working through the Roman civil government. Clearly, Babylon is a religious system controlled by Satan, allied with civil power such as Rome, and is, indeed, the papal system.

This is the same power that has persecuted God’s people in the Dark Ages and will persecute God’s people in the end times. Notice that Babylon has daughters that are also corrupt churches that have adopted some of the ways of their mother, Babylon. Could this be some of the churches of Protestantism? During the reformation and even into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the reformers and the prominent Protestant churches in America believed that the papacy was the beast, the little horn, Babylon. They believed the prophecies much as has been described in this book. But now, they are adopting the ways of the Mother of Harlots and for the sake of ecumenism, reject the concept of the papacy as Babylon.

Babylon will fall as predicted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice,

saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. (Revelation 18:1-3)

The fornication is the unholy alliance of the fallen church with governments of the earth, just as the papacy has always done to achieve her ends.

The people in the fallen churches are not evil. Even the Pope has opportunity for salvation if he surrenders to Jesus. God has His people in Babylon and the daughters of Babylon. “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Revelation 18:4-5).

As is often portrayed in the Bible, the ultimate decision is between two choices: 1) following Jesus, making Him the Lord of our lives and keeping His commandments and 2) not following Jesus. Elijah said, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” In the last days, there will be these two classes of people, what Jesus calls sheep and goats, members of the remnant church and members of Babylon. There is still time to choose. The “door of the ark” has not closed. Which side will you be on?

## 7. There is a Retest

Do you remember one of those rare times in school when you did so poorly on a test that the teacher announced there would be a retest, a chance to get right what you messed up before? Humanity gets that chance. In the end times, there is a test coming for those then living. Of course, salvation has already been earned by Jesus for all people of all ages who will accept it. The test is a demonstration to the universe that humanity can live by God's commandments. This test is described in Revelation 13.

The chapter describes two beasts: a "beast rising up out of the sea" and "a beast coming up out of the earth." We will refer to them as the sea beast and the land beast. The sea describes populated places such as Western Europe (Isaiah 17:12-13, Revelation 17:15). Remember that the beasts in Daniel 7 (representing Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) also arose from the sea. By analogy, the land would then represent places that are not highly populated.

Verse 1 of Revelation 13 tells us that the sea beast has 7 heads and ten horns. The 4th beast of Daniel 7 also had ten horns. The sum of the heads of the four beasts of Daniel 7 was 7 heads, just like the sea beast of Revelation 13. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 was also blasphemous. The sea beast is beginning to look like papal Rome. Note also that the sea beast has the same number of heads and horns as the dragon in Revelation 12.

Verse 2 says, "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." The beasts described in Daniel 7 are the same as those beasts contributing to the composite beast in Revelation 13 – except that they are in reverse order, because John, looking through history, saw them in an order reverse that of Daniel, who was looking into the future. As we learned in Revelation 12, the dragon (Satan) gave authority to both pagan and papal Rome.

Verse 3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Did papal Rome receive a deadly wound? Yes, we learned in Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 that, in 1798 (at the end of the 1,260

years), French General Berthier captured the pope and took him prisoner to France where he died. There was no successor. The Papal States were later seized. Was the deadly wound healed? Yes, in 1929, the Pope was restored by the Lateran Treaty. When persecution is restored in the future by the papacy teaming with political power, a further healing will occur.

It says, “all the world wondered after the beast.” Today the Vatican operates as an independent country. The U.S. exchanges ambassadors with the Vatican. The Pope is the most influential religious person on the planet. The world press covers every visit the Pope makes. The wonder will increase. Revelation 13:8 states, “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.”

Verse 5: “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.” We know this period from Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 and Revelation 12 as “time, times, dividing of time” or “1,260 days,” or “42 months.” This penultimate characteristic of the sea beast should seal its identification as the papal power.

Verse 7: “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.” The persecution of God’s people by the papal power has already been covered. Revelation 13 will show that this persecution will arise again.

Much of what we learned about the sea beast we have already learned in Daniel 7 and 8 and Revelation 12. The healing of the deadly wound is new information, but what makes this important is the relationship to the land beast.

The land beast arises after the 42 months of Revelation 13:5 or approximately 1798. We have already seen the United States was one of the wildernesses that helped the woman during the 1,260 years. Given beasts represent political powers, could the United States be the land beast?

Verse 11 says John saw the land beast had two horns like a lamb but spoke like a dragon. The United States is the only country to arise around 1798 and become a significant world power. It is symbolized

by a lamb-like beast with two horns, a buffalo. It is the only country of that time already alluded to in prophecy – the wilderness that helped the woman. The U.S. was founded on noble principles of 1) religious liberty and 2) civil liberty. Could these be the two horns? The U.S. has been a peaceful country, for the most part not engaged in conquering other nations for gain, perhaps like a lamb.

The U.S. was founded largely by Christians, and although granting religious freedom, was initially governed on Judeo-Christian principles. In recent years, the U.S. has been departing from the values of its founding, embracing deviant, pathological behavior, exercising excessive control over its citizens, suppressing religious and political freedom, departing from principles in the Bill of Rights, stretching the constitution beyond its intended limits. Is the U.S. slowly converting from a lamb-like beast to a dragon? How far will this conversion go? The next verse of Revelation 13 suggests it will achieve the extreme of papal Rome's persecution.

Verse 12: "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." The land beast "speaks" like a dragon. A political entity speaks through its laws. This will be how it exercises the power of the sea beast. It appears that laws will be passed regarding worship – worship that honors the papal system in some way. Remember that worship has been a central theme in all the prophecies we have studied. The land beast uses its influence to cause other nations to honor the sea beast.

Verse 14: "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of ... 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." An image to the sea beast? An image is a likeness. What was it that the sea beast (Little Horn) tried to do? Change times and laws. Verses 4, 8, and 12 tell us the issue is worship. What laws could the U.S. pass that would nullify God's law and honor the papal changing of God's law?

This has happened before. In Daniel 3 (see Chapter 3 of this book), we saw that Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold

and caused everyone to worship it. King Nebuchadnezzar did not like the silver, bronze, and iron kingdoms coming after him. He wanted the gold of Babylon forever. There was a death decree for those who would not worship. A faithful few would not worship as ordered. Why was this story included in Daniel?

Back to Revelation 13, verse 15 states, "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." The image speaks and causes a death decree for failing to worship the sea beast. Again, we see a law with a death penalty for failing to worship in a special way that honors the papacy. In Daniel 7 we saw that the Roman church changed God's fourth commandment regarding the day of worship.

Should the U.S. pass a law forcing observance of Sunday as a day of worship it would be acting like the papacy and would be honoring the papacy – making an image of it in the land of the free. See this from a major Catholic publication:

Protestants . . . accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change . . . But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in accepting the Bible, in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." (*Our Sunday Visitor*, Feb. 5, 1950)

Forcing Sunday worship would be opposing God's law, as were King Ahab, Jezebel, and the prophets of Baal. It would be like King Nebuchadnezzar trying to force his people to worship the image he created. Sunday laws have been passed in many states over the years. There is a lobbying effort now to get a national Sunday law. Some countries already have mild Sunday laws. Will the U.S. eventually, fully speak like a dragon and pass such a law on pain of death? Could such a move be precipitated by natural disasters, economic collapse, terrorist attack, social and political disintegration - by a nation wanting to return to God to save themselves from perceived judgments? Satan's enmity with God's people knows no bounds.

Verses 16-17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their



foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Perhaps there are two phases in enforcement of the change of God’s law: one prohibiting buying and selling and a death decree for those who are intransigent. Remember Revelation 12:17 tells us that the wrath of Satan is directed against those who keep God’s commandments.

What is this “mark of the beast”? The answer is clear but will take a few paragraphs to address. The great controversy between Christ and Satan has many antithetical components. One is the mark of the beast versus the seal of God. To most easily understand the mark of the beast, one must first understand the seal of God.

The prophet Ezekiel lived in Babylon at the same time as Daniel. Daniel ministered to the royal court and Ezekiel ministered to the Hebrew captives. Ezekiel describes something very similar in these verses:

So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east. (Ezekiel 8:16, 17)

and the Lord said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.’ (Ezekiel 9:4)

God was placing a mark on some of those few Hebrews that had remained in Jerusalem during the captivity. Those who were faithful and not worshipping the sun in God’s temple were marked in the forehead to be protected from judgment. This is a mark in the forehead (the center of judgment and conscience) provided by God as a sign or seal that they are His people, protected from judgment.

There are two texts that discuss a sign or seal of God that is placed on people:

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. (Revelation 7:2-3)

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. (Romans 4:11)

In the quote from Revelation 7, there is a seal on the foreheads of God's people as an indicator that they are His and exempt from the judgments soon to fall. This is just like Ezekiel. In the quote from Romans, circumcision was placed as a sign or seal (equivalent meaning in the verse) on Hebrews to indicate that they were God's people.

Given that the issue is worship, that change of the Sabbath to Sunday is called out in Daniel and Revelation, that Ezekiel's abominations were about sun worship, we should look for an indication that Sabbath might also be a sign. We find these verses, which both state that the Sabbath is a sign:

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (Exodus 31:16-17)

Moreover, also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. (Ezekiel 20:12)

In government today, we find many signs or seals to certify the truth of documents. These seals all have the name of the person, the title of the person, and the dominion of the person. We find all three of these characteristics in the Sabbath Commandment:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the **LORD thy God**: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For in six days the LORD **made heaven and earth**, the

sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8-11)

The name of our Creator is identified as “the LORD thy God.” His title is “Creator,” indicated by the word, “made.” His dominion is “heaven and earth.”

Summarizing our logic regarding the seal of God we see that God has a seal or a sign with which He symbolically marks His people on their foreheads just before the seven last plagues (Revelation 7:1-2). This is analogous to the sign of circumcision God used to mark His people in the Old Testament. (Romans 4:11). Ezekiel’s vision has a last-days application in that God placed a mark on the forehead of His people before judgment for the sin of sun worship. The indicator or sign of God’s people in the last days is that they keep God’s commandments. (Revelation 12:17). God has called His Sabbath a sign (Ezekiel 20:12, Exodus 31:16-17). The Sabbath commandment has all the elements of a legal seal (Exodus 20:8-11).

Now to the verses on the mark of the beast:

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. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads (Revelation 13:15-16)

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God (Revelation 14:9-10)

Just as God sealed His people in the forehead before the plagues, the beast (Satan) will symbolically mark his people in the forehead or the hand. In Ezekiel’s vision, the people of God were marked in their forehead but those not marked (or not sealed) were distinguished by sun worship. God’s seal is about worship, about keeping the commandments, in particular, the fourth commandment about Sabbath. Therefore, the mark of the beast is applied to those who refuse to keep God’s Sabbath but keep the counterfeit Sabbath of the beast. Indeed, the Catholic Church has claimed, "Of course the

Catholic Church claims that the change was her act . . . and the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power." (Office of Cardinal Gibbons, through Chancellor H.F. Thomas, November 11, 1895)

Why is the mark in either the forehead or right hand? The forehead, the frontal lobe of the brain, is where the will, the conscience, the spiritual powers reside. God wants people to make a conscientious decision to obey His commandments. Satan would like people to decide to follow him, but he is content for people to just follow the crowd, to unthinkingly obey him. The right hand is a symbol of what people do rather than think.

Now, back to verse 17, for which we did not finish the explanation of the number of his name. Let us state verse 17 again along with verse 18:

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. (Revelation 13:17-18)

Many theories and formulations have been advanced over the centuries. We have already identified the beast as the papacy. What title does the Pope have in his own language (Latin) that has numbers in the name? The formal title of the Pope is "Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, Servant of the Servants of God."

The November 15, 1914, issue of the Catholic publication, "Our Sunday Visitor," states, "The title of the Pope in Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei. This has been inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals and add them together they come to 666." I will leave the computation as an exercise for the reader, but remember that in Latin there is no letter "U"; it is a "V."

We have seen that the papal power, renewed with strength, joins with the United States to enforce a false Sabbath in violation of God's clear command. This act honors and obeys the historic position of the papacy. The methods of the inquisition will be used to force

compliance, except that the last-days remnant of God resist, like Daniel's friends. Either the seal of God or the mark of the Beast is eventually upon every person on Earth (but not now). Jesus delivers those that are sealed and destroys those that are marked by the beast when he comes in His glory.

We see that humanity in the last days is subjected to a test much like the test in Eden. In Eden, the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil had no health detriment. It was not the fruit but God's judgment that brought the detriment. Logic said that it made no difference what tree was used for food. The only difference was God's command.

Unlike the other nine commandments, the fourth commandment on the Sabbath makes no logical sense. If one keeps holy one day in seven, it meets all the requirements of logic. The only difference is that God commanded it a very specific way. We get to decide if we do what God says because He said it, or do we substitute our own reasoning in place of His. In this regard the test in Eden and the test in the last days are identical. The only question is, who will submit to God's will over their own?



## 8. Satan's Deceptions – Part 1

Nearly the entire Christian world keeps for Sabbath the day that Babylon selected in defiance of God's law. Given that so few keep the seventh day of the ten commandments, many people have questions such as:

- Is the Sabbath just a Jewish construct?
- Was the Sabbath nailed to the cross?
- Does it matter which day we keep?
- Is the Sabbath rest just a symbolic rest from the condemnation from sin but not a requirement from God?
- Does salvation by grace alone eliminate the need to keep God's commandments?
- When is the Sabbath?

If the Sabbath truth is as plain as I am implying it is, why are so many not seeing it? This is because the great test of the last days is about the Sabbath. Satan wants to deceive us into violating God's commandment and to get us so invested with it that when the evidence becomes plain, we cannot give it up. This is deception number one for the last days. Deception number two is the next chapter.

So, let us begin to learn what the Bible says about the Sabbath. John, in the beginning of Revelation, states, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). This term, "Lord's day" is in common usage by those who worship on Sunday. This usage in Revelation is the only place in the Bible that uses the term.

What was John thinking when he said, "the Lord's day"? The answer is in Matthew 12:8, "For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." Which day is the Sabbath? The commandment tells us, "the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God" (Exodus 20:10). We will now look at the origin of the Sabbath, the Sabbath before the formal giving of the law, the Sabbath in the law, the Sabbath in the New Testament, and the Sabbath in eternity.

The Sabbath originated when the Earth was created: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God

blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:2-3). So, God made it, rested first, then “sanctified” it or set it apart to be holy. Certainly, God did not rest because He was tired (Isaiah 40:28). He did not need to remember Creation or whom He should worship. He made it for mankind. “And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). Now, who was mankind – a bunch of Jews? No, Adam and Eve were not Jews; they were the progenitors of the entire human race.

The Sabbath is not mentioned again until the Exodus. This does not mean that God’s people did not keep it. There are many examples that the people knew about God’s laws. Sabbath keeping was just not an issue then. However, after 400 years of captivity in Egypt, the Jewish people had forgotten much about God and His requirements. So, shortly after they left on their exodus, they got instruction from God about the Sabbath, just before it was enshrined in the formal giving of the law.

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

In Exodus 16, God gave a demonstration of His seriousness about keeping the Sabbath. He told the people that He would provide bread from heaven (symbol of Jesus) for them to eat in the wilderness. During the week, the first five days, manna would fall in just the right amount to feed the people. They were not to store it up. Those who tried found it stank and bred worms. However, on the sixth day, a double portion would fall, part of which could be stored for the



Sabbath day. Those who went out on Sabbath to collect manna found none.

This demonstration not only taught the people about the Sabbath they had largely forgotten, it was prophetic of Jesus, the Bread of Life. After His crucifixion, He was laid in the tomb to rest for the Sabbath day. He rose on the first day of the week, what we call Sunday. His body, the bread of life did not stink or breed worms on the Sabbath. This was prophesied:

Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ (Acts 13:35)

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm 16:10)

That he should still live forever, and not see corruption. Psalm (49:9)

Next, the Sabbath was included in the Ten Commandments. The commandment says the Sabbath is a memorial of creation. God says to “remember” because we are prone to forget that He is our creator. We have seen in Revelation 13 that in the last days the Sabbath will be a test, distinguishing those who receive the Seal of God from those who receive the Mark of the Beast. Yet, many dismiss the Sabbath commandment as no longer binding.

Is it still against God’s law to commit adultery? Is it still against God’s law to commit murder? Why is it OK to abolish God’s Sabbath from the law? Is there anywhere in the Bible where God abolishes the Sabbath commandment? Do we now have 9 commandments? Let us look at what New Testament writers have said on the subject.

The New Testament tells us that Jesus kept the Sabbath. “As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day” (Luke 4:16). As we have already seen, Jesus even kept the Sabbath in His death (Luke 2:52-23:2). Paul and Barnabus kept the Sabbath, “But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down” (Acts 13:14). In verse 42 of the same chapter, “And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.” In verse 44, “And the

next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.”

The giving of the Ten Commandments was done in a very dramatic way with lots of noise and light; God wrote in the rock with His own finger. If the Sabbath had been done away with, there should be a dramatic and plain announcement to that effect. There are eight “first-day” texts in the New Testament. Let us look at them.

1. “Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.”( Luke 24:1-2)

Numbers 2 through 5 essentially the same usage

2. Matthew 28:1

3. Mark 16:1-3

4. Mark 16:9

5. John 20:1

6. “Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” (John 20:19)

7. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

8. “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” (Acts 20:7)

Not one of these 8 texts states that the commandment given by the voice of God and written in stone has been changed. The reasons given for assembly on Sabbath or the collection of offerings is given in the verses; it does not even hint that it was a worship day.

So how did almost the entire Christian world change to Sunday worship? Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the fourth century AD. He ordered large numbers of sun worshippers into the Christian church. He took idols for Roman gods and renamed them for Christian heroes, like Peter for Zeus (Jupiter). Tensions regarding Jewish people created a desire to separate from Judaism. The Venerable Day of the Sun was declared to be the day of worship.

We get our name for the first day of the week from sun worship. Later the Bishop of Rome (later the title changed to Pope) formalized the change, which we have studied in the presentations on Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. The *Catholic Mirror* of September 23, 1894, puts it this way: “The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.”

Did the Apostle Paul really say that the law has been done away with, nailed to the cross?

Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. . . . So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:14-17)

The huge issue faced by the early church was what to do with the ceremonial parts of the Mosaic law, especially circumcision. Many wanted the new converts from the Gentiles to become circumcised and perform other rites in the Old Testament system. Most of the Old Testament ceremonial laws were designed to teach of a Savior to come. Once that Savior came, there was no need to keep those laws. Early Jewish Christians had a difficult time accepting that. This is what Paul was talking about in Colossians. Various sabbaths, not the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath, were part of the ceremonial law and were nailed to the cross. . However, there was never an issue about the Ten Commandments.

If the Sabbath was to be done away with, why did Jesus tell his disciples, “if you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Why did the Revelation of Jesus Christ say that last-day Christians

would keep God's commandments? "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

What about calendar changes? Is Sunday the real day that the early Christians kept? The calendar was changed once, in 1582, from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian. Thursday, October 4, was followed by Friday, October 15. No change has ever affected the weekly sequence. Most calendars still show Saturday as the seventh day.

It is interesting that in over 100 languages the name for the seventh day, or Saturday, is "the Sabbath." For example, Saturday in Spanish is "Sabado," in Italian, "Sabbato," in Russian, "Subbota," in Polish, "Sobota." This is true even in ancient languages.

Finally, the Bible tells us that after Jesus comes we will receive a new Earth (see Chapter 15) and will keep the Sabbath for all eternity. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1). It would be illogical to think that this re-creation will be anything other than a six-day creation followed by a Sabbath. This is especially true given there will be a weekly Sabbath.

For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:22-23)

In summary, what many call "the Lord's Day" is a counterfeit Sabbath, the first day of the week in honor of the sun god. There has been no change to the calendar since the time of Jesus that interrupted the seven-day cycle of the week. While the Sabbath was "made for man," it is "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." We are not free to change God's design. The Sabbath is not Jewish law; it is part of God's enduring Ten Commandments. The Commandments were not nailed to the cross.

There is no command or hint in the New Testament that God changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week. The first century

Christians kept the Sabbath. The Sabbath began to be changed by the Roman government in the fourth century AD, and then Sunday worship became part of the beliefs of the dominating church at that time. In the last days, the Sabbath will become a test that discriminates between those who have the Seal of God and the mark of the beast.

Before the Sabbath test, people are not lost because they are wrong about God's commandments, unless it is willful rebellion. All who surrender their lives to Jesus have a saving relationship with him, despite being wrong. It is not what one knows but who one knows that matters. However, in the last days, the conflict will become so intense that the issues will be made crystal clear; there will be no excuse for being wrong. Only those who rebel against God regarding His commandments will receive the mark of the beast. In my opinion, we are very near the last days now.



## 9. Satan's Deceptions – Part 2

In the last chapter, we saw that, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, nearly the entire Christian world worships on a day established to worship the sun god. It seems so illogical that so many would be deceived. We can only understand it in light of the deceiving power of Satan. In this chapter, we will examine another deception nearly as remarkable. Despite strong biblical evidence, most Christians believe another deception.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan approached Eve with the first lie ever uttered on Earth, “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). It was only because of the plan of salvation, with a substitute to experience the death, that Adam and Eve did not die that very day. They began to die that day, and they eventually died instead of living forever as originally planned.

In this study, we must first discover the fundamental nature of humanity. Many believe that humans have natural immortality such that after they die either 1) they go to heaven instantly and live forever or 2) they go to hell to burn for all eternity. Of course, there are variations on that theme, such as purgatory. But the Bible explains the fundamental nature as follows:

And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

Notice there is almost a mathematical formula here: body plus breath of life equals living being. Some other versions say, “man became a living soul.” A soul is a living being, which is composed of two components: body (dust of the ground) and breath from God that infused life into the lifeless body.

So, what does the Bible say happens when we die? “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it” Ecclesiastes 12:7). So, the formula goes in reverse: a living being or soul becomes two separate components, a dead body and the breath of life returning to God. It appears that we become just as we were before we were made: we cease to exist.

But, what is the spirit everyone talks about? The Hebrew or Greek word translated “spirit” is the same word as for “breath.”

For the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26)

All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils (Job 27:3)

Many people are under the impression that the soul lives on forever, but clearly, you are a soul, not that you have a soul. The truth is that souls die.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. (Ezekiel 18:20)

every living soul died in the sea (Revelation 16:20)

Furthermore, the Bible is specific that people do not go to heaven (or hell) when they die. They are eventually resurrected.

“the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29)

David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ... For David is not ascended into the heavens (Acts 2:29, 34)

While in the grave, the dead are totally unconscious, as if they had never lived:

The living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun. ... There is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10).

The dead do not praise the Lord (Psalm 115:17).

Man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. ... His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it. (Job 14:12, 21).



Before Jesus went to raise Lazarus from the dead, He said that Lazarus was sleeping. That is why many today say a person is sleeping with Jesus. Notice that He could not be more plain:

Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. (John 11:11-14)

At His second coming, Jesus raises the righteous from the grave; He calls them forth from the grave with the trump of God:

“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout. ... And the dead in Christ will rise. ... And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

“We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ... and the dead will be raised incorruptible. ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (1 Corinthians 15:51–53)

Would it not be strange, if the righteous dead were already in heaven, but when Jesus comes, He must put them in the grave so that they can be resurrected? Notice they “put on immortality”; they do not have it naturally.

But, someone might say that the thief on the cross went straight to heaven. Jesus told him, “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (John 23:43). If you are a careful observer, you might notice that I have moved the comma from after “today” to after “thee.” There are no commas in the early texts. The comma was placed by the publishers of the various Bibles. It would be inconsistent with the Bible teaching we have just studied to think that the comma implies that the thief would be in heaven with Jesus that very day.

In fact, Jesus, Himself, did not go to heaven that very day. On Sunday morning, at the open tomb, Jesus told Mary, “I have not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17). How could He have been in heaven with the thief on Friday?

Many object to this understanding of the state of the dead claiming that Jesus told a story of a rich man who died and went to hell but held

a conversation with a righteous man who had died and gone to heaven. The story is very interesting; you should read it in Luke 16:19-31. The story is a parable based on some common beliefs of the time. There are many things wrong with the story if one is to take it literally. Can you spot them yourself? If not, ask me about it.

So why is a wrong understanding of the state of the dead such a great satanic deception? Satan uses messages from the dead to deceive people. The story of King Saul is one of them. The story of the witch of Endor summoning Samuel is recorded in 1 Samuel 28:7-20. This is the only biblical account of someone supposedly being visited by someone who was dead. Many people believe in mediums with their whole heart. If a medium called up one of your loved ones with messages contrary to the Bible, would you be tempted to believe it? We know that Satan can cause these deceptions, which will increase in the last days. You will not be able to detect the illusion.

False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:24)

## 10. The Final Messages of Warning

Revelation 14:6-12 gives a series of messages to warn the world before the close of probation and the second coming of Jesus. The three messages are known as the three angels' messages, because Revelation 14 portrays them as being given by angels. However, the Greek word translated "angel" actually means "messenger." In the Bible we find a few instances where angels gave messages to an individual, but then the individual is charged with giving the message to humanity. It is God's plan to save humanity by the efforts of humanity, aided by the Holy Spirit and by angels. Therefore, these are messages that people must give.

### First Angel's Message

The first message is as follows; we will discuss it phrase by phrase.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people — saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water. (Revelation 14:6-7)

It begins with the words, "another angel" but the numbering of the angels later shows that this is the first of the three angels' messages. He is flying in the "midst of heaven," indicating that it is of heavenly origin.

This angel has the "everlasting gospel." We have been discussing in this book the gospel, but we have not defined that word yet. It just means "good news," but it is more precisely the good news that there is a plan of salvation to remedy the sin problem that demands the death of the sinner. The warnings will have no value without the gospel.

As we have seen, the plan of salvation was designed before the world was created. It lasts until God's people are saved and the sin problem is solved (eliminated from the universe). Even after that, it continues to be good news for which the saved will be eternally

grateful. The apostle Peter captures the idea of the gospel as well as its origin:

knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20)

The warning message is to be preached “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” This means that it is a world-wide effort, requiring the pooled resources and the organization that only a church can provide. Of course, individuals have a responsibility to be warned and to warn. The warning is going forth as you read this book.

The message itself begins with “Fear God.” I am sure it is obvious, but I will say it anyway. Fearing God has nothing to do with being afraid of Him; it is respecting and worshipping Him. In the Psalms, King David said we should simultaneously fear and rejoice: “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling” (Psalm 2:11). His son said in Proverbs: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). These texts do not sound like being afraid.

The same sentence says to give God glory. We can probably agree that God is glorious but how could sinful people give Him glory? Jesus said that we glorify Him by being His. “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them” (John 17:9-10). Remember God came under accusation before the universe, and we validate His goodness and the righteousness of His law when we surrender to Him, thus, nullifying the accusation. Again, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:8).

The reason we should respect God and give Him glory is that “the hour of His judgment has come.” We have not discussed much about judgment so far, except in the Daniel 9 discussion in Chapter 4. So, let’s do a little on judgment now.

There are three formal times of judgment identified in the Bible. The first is the one we are discussing now, “the hour of His judgment.” This, clearly, is a judgment that occurs before the second coming of Jesus, because the warning is given then. The second is during the millennium, which will be covered in Chapter 14. The third and final judgment is the one after the millennium, which will also be covered in Chapter 14.

In Chapter 4, we learned that there is a judgment before the second coming because Jesus comes with decisions of salvation already in hand. We learned that this judgment occurs in the heavenly sanctuary during the antitypical day of atonement that began in 1844. Here are some texts that speak of this pre-advent judgment, sometimes referred to as the investigative judgment.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Notice that both saved and lost “appear” in this judgment, but they are unaware of it because it is done in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. Many undergoing this judgment are already dead, from the beginning of human history.

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36, 37)

The “Day of Judgment” is a poetic expression just like “the hour of God’s judgment.” This judgment has been going on for nearly 175 years.

Fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14)

Notice the similarity in wording with the first angel’s message: “Fear God and Keep His commandments,” especially since we glorify God by keeping His commandments.

The Bible often speaks of books from which people are judged. This is how we appear before the judgment seat of Christ even though we might be dead - our record appears. Daniel describes this investigative judgment:

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him [angels]. The court was seated, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10)

Here are seven more verses that mention the record books: Revelation 20:12, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, Revelation 13:8, Exodus 32:31-32, Daniel 12:1, 2 Corinthians 5:10. Apparently, God did not want us to miss this important point.

The final part of the first angel's message is "worship Him who made heaven and earth." It seems very few people today understand that God is our Creator. Science, falsely called, coupled with the propaganda of the media has convinced nearly everyone that we made ourselves through impossible processes that no one has ever observed. (See my book, *Science or Philosophy: A Perspective on the Evolution of Life*, which explores this topic in detail.) Clearly, the last days need a warning to return to recognizing our Creator.

Remember from our studies that worship is the key issue of the last days. Satan's number one deception is that we forget where God said, "Remember the Sabbath day ... for in six days the Lord made ...". Notice that the last words of the first angel's message are, "who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." This is nearly a word-for-word quote from the Sabbath commandment.

### The Second Angel's Message

The second angel's message:

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

We discussed Babylon a lot in Chapters 3 and 4 but devoted the entire chapter to it in Chapter 6. Re-read the pertinent sections if you need to refresh. We learned, among other things, that Babylon represents a false system of worship and that the wine associated with her is false doctrines. Babylon is depicted as a harlot engaged in fornication because she has left God, her first love, for false gods. We understand that the papal system of false religion and apostate Protestantism is the fulfillment of the symbol, Babylon, but Babylon is instigated and inspired by Satan.

Revelation 18 also discusses the fall of Babylon and says:

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. (Revelation 18:2-3)

Why did Babylon fall? She lured all nations to turn from God. She had an unholy relationship with the kings of the earth, which means she, like the papal system of the Dark Ages, used the power of government to force false worship on God's people. She changed God's holy Sabbath; she created a system of priests to hear confession as only Jesus can do; she has a multitude of abominations designed to make Christians drunk or confused about the religion of the Bible.

The most wonderful thing about this warning message is that God has people in Babylon. Indeed, one of the most devoted Christians I have ever known is a Catholic. I would rejoice to have a practical Christianity as vibrant as hers. Before, the judgments set to fall at the second coming occur, God wants His people in Babylon and in the daughters of Babylon to be warned and taught God's true system of worship. He wants them to come out of Babylon and joint with the remnant the seed of the woman.

### Third Angel's Message

The third angel's message is perhaps the most serious warning in all the Bible. If one does not know who the beast is, what his image is,

and what his mark is, it is possible to end up worshipping the beast. Let us read it now.

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:9-11)

Perhaps the first thing you noticed is that the last words of this wording does not seem to comport with what we studied about the state of the dead in the last chapter. We will address that seeming inconsistency in due course.

We now see the numbering scheme, given this angel is the third angel. The first angel was the one identified as “another angel.” Also, we already studied in Chapter 7 what it means to worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in the forehead or hand. It is essentially deciding to follow Satan instead of God by accepting the sign or mark of the beast’s authority, the false Sabbath that he made in violation of God’s law.

The message states that those who receive the mark of the beast “drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” So, what does the Bible say is the “wrath of God.” These next verses tell us that the wrath of God is “poured out” during the seven last plagues (studied in the next chapter). Notice how similar the language is to that in the third angel’s message.

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues for in them the wrath of God is complete. (Revelation 15:1)

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth. (Revelation 16:1)

We will see in Chapters 14 and 15, that after Jesus takes His people to heaven for a millennium, He and God’s people return to the



Earth for God to make a new Earth and to make a final disposition of the sin problem. At that time, the wicked dead are resurrected (the second resurrection) and then cast into the lake of fire (the final, executive judgment) for eternal destruction (second death). Eternal destruction means that the effects of the destruction last forever, not that the destructing process lasts forever. We will see in those chapters why this event must take place. The final component of the wrath of God is the second death, described as follows:

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14-15)

So fire is the method of the final destruction of the wicked. There are many verses that seem to indicate that this fire burns them for all eternity – an unbelievably horrid punishment for a short period of sin. This does not seem to be consistent with the character of God. Let us look at some of these verses.

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25:46)

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

What does eternal fire mean? “as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them ... are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Are Sodom and Gomorrah still burning? This text provides the obvious answer, “and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly.” (2 Peter 2:6). Clearly not, they are ashes.

Hebrews tells us that God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Malachi tells us what the consuming fire does to the wicked. “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming

shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, That will leave them neither root nor branch. ... You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this, says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 4:1, 3)

At the final, executive judgment, the wicked are devoured:

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:9)

Jonah says he was in the fish forever (Jonah 2:60, but he clearly was not. The use of the language "forever," "everlasting," "eternal," "unquenchable," "forever and ever" are poetic and mean that the fire cannot be put out or the fire will work to completion, will last until the job is done. God does not even grant eternal life to the wicked so they can suffer for eternity. No one has eternal life until God gives it to them as a reward. The wicked perish, are devoured, are burned up.

The principle warning of the third angel is that it is not worth it to compromise under pressure in the last days. We should stay faithful to God, even when we cannot buy or sell, even when we are threatened to be killed. Rejoice in the seal of God, and eschew the mark of the beast. God has a wonderful future for those who serve Him.

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

## 11. A Season of Calamity

We saw in the last chapter that God's wrath that will be poured out on those with the mark of the beast is in the seven last plagues. In this chapter, we will look more closely at those plagues. Although the third angel's message in Revelation 14 alluded to the plagues, they are explicitly introduced in Revelation 15:

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:1-3)

John saw two things: 1) the angels about to pour out the seven last plagues and 2) those with the seal of God standing on a sea of glass in heaven. As is often the case, ancient Hebrew way of expressing chronology is different than ours. The sealed of God do not arrive in heaven until after the second coming, but the plagues are poured out just before the coming. Nevertheless, there is a clear relationship between these two events in that God's seal protects His people during the plagues. "No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways (Psalm 91:10-11).

Now, what does Moses have to do with the plagues and God's people being protected during them? It should be obvious that the ten plagues in Egypt (see Chapter 3, section "Called Out of Egypt") are types of the seven last plagues. Ten plagues fell on Egypt: the first three fell on both the Egyptians and the Israelites but the last seven fell only on the Egyptians. At the end time, the seven last plagues fall only on the wicked while the righteous, still on earth, are protected. Here are just a few parallels:

- Exodus 5:1-4 - Moses wanted Israel to celebrate the Sabbath in the wilderness. The government (Pharaoh) refused to allow Sabbath worship. In the last days, the government is used by the beast to forbid Sabbath worship (see Chapter 7).

- Exodus 10:28-29 – Probation closed for Pharaoh when he told Moses to see his face no more. In the last days, probation closes (see Chapters 2 and 10) when the warning messages are fully rejected, just before the plagues.
- Exodus 12:7, 13 – The Hebrews were protected from the last plague by the blood on the doorposts. This is God’s sign (seal) to the angels to Passover the house. In the last days, God’s people receive the seal of God (see Chapter 7) as an indication that they belong to Him and are not to receive the plagues.

Daniel Chapter 4, the story of worshipping the golden image and the fiery furnace (Chapter 3 of this book), is also a type of the seven last plagues. The government wanted to put God’s people to death. The issue was worship then as in the last days. They went through a great tribulation, but the fires of tribulation could not touch them. Jesus was with them through it.

The plagues are described in Revelation 16. Often God brings trouble on people to turn their hearts. We saw that in the Assyrian invasion of Israel and the Babylonian invasion of Judah. However, these seven last plagues are not redemptive but retributive. They serve to further distinguish those with the seal of God from those with the mark of the beast. “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth’” (Revelation 16:1). Here is a list of the plagues poured out on Babylon and on those who received the mark of the beast.

1. Grievous sore
2. Sea of blood
3. Rivers and springs of waters as blood
4. Sun scorching people
5. Darkness and pain
6. Euphrates River dried up
7. “It is done,” earthquake, hail

Except for the seven last plagues, there are perhaps no penalties in the Bible falling on people that are pure retribution. There are some that are retribution for the person who receives them but redemptive to those who observe the penalty (Ananias and Sapphira, for example).

In the case of the seven last plagues, the plagues fall only on those who are 1) alive at that time and 2) are trying to kill God's people. These plagues are often referred to as "God's strange work," because they are so different than God's attitude toward sinners, "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

The time of these plagues is called a great tribulation and a time of trouble. There was a period of tribulation from 538 AD to 1798 AD in which the beast persecuted God's people, but this tribulation will be "such as has not been since the beginning of the world" (Matthew 24:21).

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:21-22)

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

When Michael stands up, He ceases His work of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary, so the start is the close of probation. The culmination of this time of trouble is the second coming (as seen in the seventh plague).

It is not important in this context to go into the details of the seven plagues and their symbolism. What is important is that there is an end to the misery on this Earth. God's people are delivered. Those who could have been saved but refused it are killed (but await the second death in the grave). The seventh plague is, basically, the second coming of Jesus. It has many parallels with the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet of Revelation. We see in the seventh seal the following:

Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings

of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:14-17)

## 12. Armageddon: God's People Delivered

Armageddon is a topic for which there is a lot of confusion. Perhaps I am confused too, but what I will say makes such perfect sense that I am confident about it. Many think it is a literal battle, with literal armies, in a literal place, but how much of Revelation is meant to be taken literally? – not much.

The preparation for Armageddon occurs during the sixth plague and its execution occurs during the seventh plague and the second coming when God's people are delivered. So why do God's people need to be delivered? Look at these last-days texts giving the answer:

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Revelation 13:15)

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. (Revelation 17:13-14)

So, we see that Satan is very angry and makes war with the last-days church because it keeps the commandments of God as a sign of their allegiance to Christ. He gets so angry that he arranges for Babylon to influence the nations of the Earth to make laws forbidding Sabbath worship and requiring Sunday worship. Failure to comply results in a death sentence. The kings of the Earth give their power and authority to the beast since the beast only has religious authority. Therefore, we can see that there is a great alliance of powers on Earth against God's people. The alliance will attempt to exterminate all of them.

This is analogous to what happened in Esther's day, which is a type of the last-days death decree. A Jewish man who worked at the gate of the palace of King Ahasuerus of the Persian Empire would not bow down to a high ranking official. The official went to the King saying, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore, it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed" (Esther 3:8-9). The king signed the death decree and a date was set to allow the citizens of the country to kill any Jewish person and take their possessions. Esther, the queen, a Jewish woman, sought God's intervention, which worked out in a very interesting way. Read the story.

Similarly, there is a three-fold alliance, using the power of the governments of the world, that is out to get God's people. Satan is working behind the scenes to make it happen. In the paragraph about the sixth plague it says, "three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14).

This is Satan's final attempt, his last stand, to defeat God by defeating His people. Without His people, the unjust claims against God by Lucifer cannot be rebutted. So, every power Satan can bring together is arrayed against a few helpless people with no power - - - except the power of the Almighty God.

The sixth plague wording continues, "And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon" (Revelation 16:16). It is interesting that the word, Armageddon, is only found this one time in all the Bible. There is planned ambiguity here that seems to be an attempt to drive us to deeper study.

It is important to remember that place names in the Bible are often symbolic. For example, Sodom, Egypt, Mount Zion, Euphrates River, and Babylon are sometimes literal but many times symbolic. This is



most likely true of Armageddon. Some scholars say that the word “Armageddon” comes from the Hebrew “Har Megiddo,” meaning “mountain of assembly.” Some focus on Mount Megiddo, but there is no mountain of that name. Some say the current and ancient area of Megiddo – the Megiddo Pass or Plain of Megiddo – is where all the literal armies of the world gather for warfare. Some who have seen it state that it is too small for the army of any one nation to be arrayed.

The wording in Revelation 16 is very similar to Joel 3:2, “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.” There is no Valley of Jehoshaphat; is it, too, a symbolic place name? What happened with Jehoshaphat?

Recall that we studied in Chapter 3 of this book that Jehoshaphat fought a three-fold army comprised of Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. The situation was hopeless, but God fought for them and delivered His people. “Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about” (Joel 23:2). It will be the same in the last days.

What else happened in the area of Megiddo? During the days of Deborah, a judge of Israel, a powerful king in Canaan came against them with nine hundred chariots of iron (Judges 4:2-3). The Israelites faced overwhelming odds, but the children of Israel cried unto the Lord and God delivered His people. Also, God fought against Baal on Mount Carmel (Chapter 3), Gideon fought against the Midianites with only 300 hundred soldiers, but God fought for him.

In the last days, when the armies are all arrayed, we can be certain that God will fight for His people. The death decree will not be carried out. In that dark time, God’s people are encouraged by the words uttered in the sixth plague, “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” Those who have the proper garments (Chapter 3), the righteousness of Christ, have nothing to fear.

In the sixth plague, the battle is set. In the seventh plague, the announcement is made from heaven, “It is done.” Now is the time to deliver God’s people. Jesus comes to bring retribution on the armies

arrayed against His people. The armies are not literal armies, but people around the world who, under the influence of Satan, are closing in to kill God's people in accordance with the death decree, like in Esther's day. Here is His response:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

The Savior has arrived at the last minute before the execution of His people. What does He do?

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:19-21)

### **13. The End of the World: The Antitype**

Jesus is coming again. The Bible is very plain in telling us this. “Christ ... will appear a second time” (Hebrews 9:28). “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again” (John 14:3). Although, the wording of the seventh plague never explicitly states that it was coincident with the second coming, the second coming is not much different than coming in glory to deliver God’s people.

The second coming may be more like a process that occurs over some period of time. First, He comes and delivers His people. This deliverance may be like similar times in the Old Testament when God turned His enemies on each other, as with Jehoshaphat’s choir. It might not be the visual appearance of Jesus, at that point. Those who were engaged in attempting to kill the Body of Christ, His church, are killed. This event, according to Revelation 16 is accompanied by unimaginable earthquakes and giant hail.

During the process every other unsaved person not killed by the earthquakes, hail, and the deliverance of God’s people, is slain. We know this because it says “At that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth” (Jeremiah 25:33). Also, the brightness of His coming is lethal (2 Thessalonians 2:8):

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand? (Revelation 6:15-17)

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

Graves are opened and those who died in the faith of Jesus are resurrected:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:52)

Those faithful who were delivered by Jesus are raised to meet Him in the air:

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, ... and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

What happens to the earth at this time? “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

All the hail and earthquake, trumpets blowing, graves opening, people rising into the air, earth melting seem to create quite an event, not compatible with a secret rapture. The second coming is a big deal with lots of noise and show. Did I forget to mention all the angels of heaven? “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matthew 25:31) The Bible tells us that is more than 100 million angels. See these verses too:

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7).

As the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matthew 24:27).

There are some Bible texts that seem, to some, to indicate that Jesus is coming secretly, but that idea is totally at odds with what we have read. In fact, Jesus, Himself, warns us not to believe any sightings of Him not accompanied by what we have seen will happen:

Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if

possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:23-27)

An important thing to know is to be ready. Jesus says that, although we do not know when it will happen, we are to be continually prepared:

Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Matthew 24:44).

Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly (Luke 21:34).



## 14. The Millennium

The Bible speaks of a 1,000-year period following the second coming of Jesus. What is its purpose? What happens then? What happens when it is over? This chapter will attempt to answer these questions.

Recall from the last chapter that the dead in Christ rise to meet Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then the faithful living join them in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). They go to heaven to live in the mansions that Jesus prepared for them (John 14:2-3). Those who have refused salvation are all destroyed by the glory or brightness of His coming (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Therefore, there is not one living human on the entire earth.

The Earth itself is desolated. We learned that the elements melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:10). In the seventh plague a mighty earthquake, “such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth ... Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found” (Revelation 16:18-20). The prophet Jeremiah describes the resulting condition of the earth:

I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void;  
And the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains,  
and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and  
forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds  
of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land  
was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the  
presence of the Lord, By His fierce anger. For thus says the  
Lord: “The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make  
a full end. (Jeremiah 4:23-27)

Only Satan and his evil angels remain on the Earth. Revelation tells us:

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

years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (Revelation 20:1-3)

The term “bottomless pit” has identical meaning to “without form and void,” the condition of the Earth before the work of creation started (Genesis 1:1). This is the same wording used by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 4:23 above. So, Satan is stuck on Earth, characterized as being bound because he cannot leave, and he has nothing to do, no one to tempt, no havoc to wreck.

In heaven, the righteous are busy:

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4)

The saints live and reign with Christ. They have thrones and issue judgment. What does this mean? Remember that this is one step of a process lasting for thousands of years. Satan made charges against God before he was cast out of heaven. There was a great test in Eden to see if humanity could live in harmony with the laws of heaven. After mankind was degraded by sin, they could only live righteous lives based on the merits of Jesus’ perfect life and atoning death.

Now is the time for everyone to see clearly what has been going on. Why were some of my loved ones or respected spiritual leaders not saved? Why were some I thought unworthy saved? Is God just? Do Satan and his angels deserve eternal death? These are judgments that vindicate the character of God and establish forever that God is loving and just, so that sin will not rise again in all eternity. This millennial judgment is the second one we identified in Chapter 10.

Imagine the education we will get in that time. Everything in the Bible will be made plain to us. All the Providences of God through human history will be revealed. The ministry of angels in our behalf become visible. The great disappointments in life will be shown to be the greatest of blessings.



The apostle Paul knew these things when he said, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

So, what happens after the 1,000 years of learning and judgment? We already saw that Satan “should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:3). Satan gets released to deceive! How can that be? Reading further in Revelation 20, “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5). So, the dead on the Earth get resurrected at the end of 1,000 years.

The Bible speaks of a first death and a second death and a first resurrection and a second resurrection. The first death is obviously the normal death that everyone experiences. The first resurrection is obviously the resurrection of the just at the second coming.

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (John 5:28-29)

Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

So, everyone will be raised from the dead, some at the coming of Jesus and some at the end of the 1,000 years (Revelation 12:5, above). However, there are different destinies for the just and unjust after their respective resurrections. The second death would then be the re-death of the wicked after the 1,000 years:

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14-15)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

So, why do the wicked die a second time? It will take a little time to explain this. Jesus, with the saints, and the entire physical city of New Jerusalem (the capital of God's kingdom) come to the Earth at the end of the millennium. The center of the universe is now the Earth, which was already the center of interest in the great controversy since Eden.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:2-4)

What does Satan do at this time, with his resurrected followers and God's capital city in front of him?

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9)

When they are devoured in the lake of fire, this is the third judgment, the post-millennial judgment (executive judgment), of which we spoke in Chapter 10.

Perhaps during this time, there is a realization among Satan and the wicked that God is just and that the fault lies with those who rejected His love and care. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he states, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). While Paul does not say when this occurs, the surrounding of New Jerusalem seems to be the only time where it might happen.

So, the Earth, still pretty much a cinder now, is free from the plague of sin. The entire universe is free from sin. Harmony spreads everywhere. God's people have received new and glorious bodies, perhaps like Adam and Eve had in the beginning (1 John 3:2). But our home is a charred mess. What happens next is the subject of our last chapter.



## 15. A New Heaven and New Earth

With sin gone forever, God now remakes the Earth in the same beauty that it existed in the beginning. All has been restored: our characters and our home. John was given a glimpse of the future regarding the New Jerusalem. In these and subsequent verses, continuing into Chapter 21, John describes what he saw.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. (Revelation 21:9-11)

Here are a few facts about the new heaven and new Earth that we will discover:

God will live there.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (John 21:3)

There will never be sorrow.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

We will have better bodies.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (Philippians 3:21)

Deserts will be replaced with gardens	The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Isaiah 35:1)
Animals will be tame and not carnivores.	The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. (Isaiah 11:6)
Even with new bodies, we will recognize each other.	Then I shall know just as I also am known (1 Corinthians 13:12).
It will have never-fading flowers and trees.	Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.” (Ezekiel 47:12)
We will have energy for any endeavor.	But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)
We will hear God sing.	He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)

Some think that it will be boring. I see studying mathematics, physics, and astronomy. You may see studying music or anatomy and physiology. We will all have an interest in learning the details of salvation history. Our minds will be able to grasp the most complex concepts. We will have access to infinite knowledge.

We will be musicians. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10)

We will worship every Sabbath. “For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another; All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:22-23)

We will build our own houses; plant gardens. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat ... and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands (Isaiah 65:21, 22).

We will visit with the great characters of the Bible. And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 8:11)

We can pursue any honorable goal. Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).





## Final Thoughts

If you are reading this section, I assume you actually read the book. Something must have worried you about the future. I am glad you read it. There are three benefits from having read it: 1) you learned a lot about the Bible (unless you were a Bible student already), 2) you learned that there was a plan designed before the world was created and that the plan was rigged in your favor, and 3) you gained an appreciation for the fact that the Bible is a very complex but cohesive message; everything from Genesis to Revelation is interconnected and consistent, working toward one end: the salvation of humanity.

The plan of salvation was necessary because of God's fundamental postulate that intelligent, created beings must have free will. Without free-will, God has only a manufactured machine. With free will, there is the risk that rebellion could eventually occur. God took that risk, and with His omnipotence, He knew that rebellion would indeed occur. Thus, the plan was devised beforehand and put into action as soon as it was needed.

Now, what are you going to do with the information you have gained. Unless you cooperate with the plan, there is no value in knowing about it. Believe me, life is far superior cooperating with God than in resisting Him. The blessings He offers by living in accordance with His will are beyond measure. His laws are designed as they are because they prescribe a way of living that brings the best happiness for mankind. It always pays to follow the owner's manual.

I suggest that you study the Bible for yourself. There is an abundance of material that we did not cover in this book. There are still greater depths to explore. Commit your ways to God, and He will direct your paths.