

To John Lemley 10-24-88

by Stanley Kauer

## **BIBLE PROPHECIES**

A Study By  
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We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place..." (Second Peter 1:19).

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Bible Prophecy, What And Why?

Among the books held sacred by the religions of the world, only the Bible contains accurate prophecy of future world events. This is because only the Bible is the revealed Word of the true God, the Creator, and the Sustainer of the Universe. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9,10).

### **Why Bible Prophecy?**

It may be easy to accept that God has the power of prophecy, of foretelling the future, but the question may remain as to why He has done so in the Bible. What is the benefit of prophecy to the Christian? To understand this we must look at prophecies fulfilled in the past to see how they benefited God's people.

Abraham was called to go into a strange land to live. Perhaps this seemed like the end of all hope for prosperity and for the future development of his family. But God said: "...I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great. . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2,3). Abraham believed God and he was blessed and we are blessed in the fulfillment of that promise.

God warned Noah that there was to be a great flood on the earth. Noah believed God and built the ark, and so he and his family were saved. God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. God revealed to Moses just how this would all work out, even including the resistance of Pharaoh to the plagues. Because of this prophecy, the faith of Moses and of the people continued to be strong even when Pharaoh refused to let them go. They knew God's promises were sure and that they would be set free even as promised.

### **First Advent Prophecies**

The promise of salvation through a coming redeemer was first given to Eve in Genesis 3:15. "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." This is the first of a long series of prophecies of the first advent of Christ. By these, ample proof was given that Jesus was truly the promised Messiah. Let us notice some of these very plain prophecies.

Moses said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus said to the Pharisees, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). In Acts 3:22, the apostle Peter quoted these same words of Moses and declared they refer to Jesus. The fact that Jesus was to have a human mother of the tribe of Judah is seen in Genesis 49:10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The "sceptre" indicates a king and the coming King was to be of the lineage of Judah, and so it was. The fact that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem is prophesied in Micah 5:2. That His mother would be a virgin, is indicated in Isaiah 7:14. That he would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey but be hailed as a King, is mentioned in Zechariah 9:9. That he

would be rejected by the people of Israel, the Jews, and would be a man of sorrow, and would be put to death and counted as one of the criminals, is described in Isaiah Fifty-three. That men would divide His garments among them and cast lots for his cloak, is foretold in Psalm 22:18. The very time He would come, and that His ministry would be three and a half years is foretold in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel. With these and many other prophecies recorded in the Old Scriptures concerning the first advent of Christ, there was no good reason why He should not have been recognized and accepted when He appeared. Those who read, understood, and believed, surely received a great blessing.

### **Prophecies of the Second Advent**

God in His great love provided prophecies of the first advent of Christ so that the people would know just about **when** He would come, and **how**, and **why**. Those who were truly wise, who read and prayed and believed, recognized Him. God in His love has also given many prophecies regarding the time, manner and purpose of the second advent of Christ. He has told us of events which will happen in the world preceeding the time of His coming. Some of these events have already taken place, some are now in progress and others are yet future. Specific historical events are described and form the foundation for correct understanding of God's Word. We shall examine these as we study various Bible prophecy chapters.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, the disciples asked Jesus about signs of His second advent. "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). Jesus could have answered that there would be no signs, that signs would be of little or no importance and that His followers should just always be

ready. That is what some people think and say today. But Jesus emphasized the importance of signs by His answer, describing specific events that would be signs of the nearness of His second coming. We shall study these in chapter eight of this book.

### **Is Bible Prophecy Important?**

Surely we can see that God included prophecy in His Word for our good and to increase our faith. Bible prophecy covers many chapters of the Word; God has made it important for us to study and understand. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled much prophecy at His first advent. He emphasized the importance of the prophecies of His second advent, and world events today fulfill His Word and help us understand what is going on. Thanks be to God!

# CHAPTER TWO

## Daniel Two:

### A Key To All Bible Prophecy

Many people think that we cannot understand the meaning of Bible prophecy because much of it is given in symbols. They think no one knows how to interpret these strange things or what they represent. For this reason, it is well to begin our study of symbolic Bible prophecy with the second chapter of the book of the prophet Daniel.

In the history of Israel there were three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon. Then the kingdom divided into two parts with the northern part being called Israel, and the southern part, Judah. God had said that if His people failed to obey Him and went into sin, they would be punished with captivity. The northern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria in 721 B.C. The southern kingdom had more righteous people and kings but they too departed from the way of the Lord and were made captive by Babylon in 586 B.C.

Among the captives of Judah taken to Babylon were a number of young men of exceptional ability and mentality, one of these was Daniel. He and his three friends were being trained to become special advisors to the king. It was during this time that the King, Nebachadnezzar, had a strange dream. He awoke with a very strong impression of the dream and a feeling that it was very important, its meaning must be understood. But he could not remember the details of the dream. He called his experienced, older advisors and asked them to tell him what he had dreamed and what it meant. This they of course, were unable to do. If he would tell them the dream, they could make up an interpretation. But they dared not invent a story or attempt to deceive the king in that way. Because of their failure the king decreed that they



# Daniel Two - Prophecy of The Image

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Babylon 606 - 538 B.C.

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Media & Persia 538 - 331 B.C.

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Grecia 331 - 168 B.C.

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Rome 46 B.C. - 476 A.D.



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No World Empire 476 A.D. - 2nd Advent

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Kingdom of Christ - 2nd Coming



should all be put to death, including the young men in training, even though they knew nothing of what had happened. Daniel made an appeal for additional time. "Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation" (Daniel 2:16).

Daniel recognized that only the God of heaven could reveal the secret of the dream and so he and his friends engaged in special prayer. God answered with a special revelation to Daniel. When Daniel came before the king, he gave God all the credit for what had been revealed. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days..." (Daniel 2:28).

### **The King's Dream**

In his dream the king had seen a huge statue of a man. The head of the statue (referred to in the Bible as an Image), was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron mingled with clay.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:34,35).

The king at once recognized that this was exactly what he had seen in his dream. But what could it mean? We might also wonder and never know, except that a full explanation follows which is quite easy for us to comprehend.

The image represented four great nations of ancient history. Two great world powers, Egypt and Assyria, had already ruled and declined. The dream's interpretation

begins with the time of Daniel, in the empire of Babylon. The head of gold represented Babylon under its great king, Nebuchadnezzar. It was the most powerful nation of the time and also the most glorious. The great high walls of the city of Babylon, and its artificial mountains with the "hanging gardens", were wonders of the world. Babylonian science and religion were also world famous, centering around the worship of the sun. Daniel said to the king, "Thou art this head of gold" (Daniel 2:38).

The image then became a prophecy of three great powerful nations which would follow after Babylon. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth" (Daniel 2:39). In history, we learn that the Persians conquered Babylon and ruled as a great middle-eastern power, but were unable to conquer Greece. Out of Greece came Alexander the Great who conquered Persia and literally extended his rule to all the known civilized world.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron..." (Daniel 2:40). After the downfall of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided among his four leading generals. But none of them was able to establish a great world dominating power, for at the same time Rome was rising and expanding. Crushing all opposition, the Roman legions subjugated country after country until Rome was master of the world.

All of the things mentioned thus far happened in ancient history. But Daniel told the king that the dream foretold what was to happen "in the latter days", far in the future of that time. The last part of the image was the feet. They were not of one solid metal, but rather of iron mingled with clay — a very strong material, weakened by being mixed with clay. This was the last part of the statue which evidently represented the history of the nations of the world. It clearly says that after Rome, no empire will ever again dominate the world. "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (Daniel 2:43). The history of the world after

Rome would be of strong and weak nations and every effort to unite them into one great power would fail. We have seen this come true. Powerful leaders such as Napoleon and Hitler have tried to bring the world under their rule, but have failed. Efforts have been made to get the nations to work together for world peace. There was the League of Nations, and now the United Nations. But the first failed and disintegrated, and the United Nations is a debating group which has been unable to prevent war or to dominate the world. Russia is now trying to get control and be the one great superpower of the world. They have not been able to do so and will **never** be able to accomplish their goal. They will make a great final attempt at Armageddon. This will be studied in a later chapter of this book.

The prophecy clearly shows that there will continue to be stronger and weaker nations in the world until a great and final change! "And in the days of these kings (represented by the iron and the clay) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

In the symbolic representation of the Image, its destruction is described as being caused by a stone. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (Daniel 2:34). As we have seen in verse forty-four, this "stone" represents the setting up of a kingdom by God. This was to happen **after** the end of the Roman empire, during the time when there would be no single great world power, but strong and weak nations. Thus it is clear that this event has not yet taken place. From other Bible passages we can see that this "stone" represents Christ. The striking of the image represents His second advent. The kingdom to be established will be that of Christ. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matthew 25:31).

## **How Is The Image Destroyed?**

In the description of the destruction of the image we find something which may seem impossible and thus very difficult to understand. This is found in verse thirty-five where we read, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them..." The four great empires, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, each came to an end at a different time and in succession. Yet this verse declares that the entire image is destroyed at one time when struck by the stone. How can this be possible?

In our answer, we recognize that there are two different parts to every nation. There is the political, material, organized part of a nation, and there is the culture part of that nation. The political rule of these great nations came to an end as each was conquered or passed away. But the cultures of all of those nations remain within the culture of our modern nations. Our present civilization, with its culture, is built upon the knowledge and customs of the past. Some of this is good and some bad. The Babylonians divided the circle into 360 parts and we still use that today, there is nothing bad about it. But some of the customs of Babylonian sun worship remain an evil aspect of some religions today. The Persian art of weaving beautiful things, such as carpets, remains in our culture. Our democratic government is based on Greek ideas of democracy; Greek architecture is considered classic and beautiful, and is still used. Roman law is the basis for much of our basic law today. In the Roman legislature there was a "Senate" and we still use that term in our congress. But many things from pagan Roman religion remain in the beliefs and practices of some churches in our culture.

When Christ comes to establish His kingdom, He will not build on the knowledge or culture of the past. There will be no need, for He has all wisdom and knowledge. Even as the great nations of the past ended politically, so all the ac-

cumulated cultural ideas from these nations will suddenly and completely vanish as Christ comes as "king of kings and lord of lords". Thus the prophecy of Daniel Two will find a complete fulfillment. In our time, we see the signs which show that Christ will soon come to set up His kingdom which will fill all the earth. "...the stone which smote that image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35).

# CHAPTER THREE

## Daniel Seven and Revelation Thirteen

In the book of the prophet Daniel, the first chapter is the story of a test of the faithfulness of Daniel and his three Hebrew friends. The second chapter is the prophecy we have studied in the previous chapter of this book. The third through the sixth chapters of Daniel tell of historical events in connection with Daniel, his friends, and the king. These include the experience of the fiery furnace, King Nebuchadnezzar losing his mind and being deposed for seven years, the feast of Belshazzar and the handwriting on the wall, and Daniel in the lions' den. Then we come to chapter seven which contains more symbolic prophecy.

### **The Four Beasts**

While in the second chapter the king had the symbolic dream, in the seventh chapter it is Daniel who has a dream or direct revelation from God. The dream was about a statue of a man in chapter two, in chapter seven it is four great animals or beasts. The appearance of the beasts and the actions pertaining to them are given in detail. It is stated in verse seventeen, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth". It is easy to see that these are the same four kings or kingdoms represented by parts of the statue in chapter two. No explanation is given in connection with the first three beasts. Knowing the history of these nations, it is quite easy to see

what the beast symbols represent. A more detailed description is given of the fourth beast, what would happen after its time, and events leading to the second advent of Christ and His Kingdom on earth.

The first beast was like a lion which is considered to be king of beasts. This corresponds to the image's head of gold. The lion had eagle's wings. An eagle does not fly fast but does fly very high. Babylon attained a very high place as the greatest nation of its time. Its wings were taken away and it was made to stand as a man. This refers to the experience of King Nebuchadnezzar as recorded in Daniel Four. His glory was taken away and he was made to realize his human frailty.

The second beast was like a bear. It raised itself up on one side before the other and had three ribs in its mouth. The bear is slow and ponderous, but very powerful. This well describes the nation which overthrew Babylon. It was a combination of two peoples, the Medes and the Persians. At first the Median side was dominant, but later the nation became the empire of Persia. As it arose, it conquered three smaller nations, Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.

The third nation, represented by the leopard, was Greece. The leopard is a swift cat. The wings of a fowl upon it — such as those of a prairie chicken or pheasant, represent very fast, short flight. Alexander the Great conquered the then known world in a short time, but when he died, his kingdom fell apart. Verse six states further, "...the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it". The Greek empire of Alexander was divided into four parts by four of his generals who continued in power for some time.

### **The Fourth Beast**

The emphasis of this prophecy is upon the fourth beast and what follows.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, 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).

Daniel had a special desire to know about this beast and God told him about it.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others...and of the ten horns that were in his head... 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 the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise... (Daniel 7:19,20,23,24).

The Greek empire was conquered by the Romans and the Roman empire spread over the known world. The previous empires had subjugated countries and exacted taxes from them, but Rome went further. It brought the lands it conquered under complete subjection and rule. It established Roman colonies in other lands and sought to make them Roman in speech, religion, and culture. In this way it "devoured" the lands and destroyed their native cultures. The Romans also took people of the conquered lands for slaves. The agriculture and business of the empire was soon worked by these slaves while the native Romans lived in luxury and leisure. As a result, Rome weakened. The uncivilized tribes of northern and eastern Europe, and some from Asia, invaded the empire and brought about its downfall. The empire became divided among these invaders who established their own nations. Ten of the nations stand out as dominant. These include the West Goths (Visigoths), the East Goths (Ostergoths), the Vandals, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Lombards, the Anglo-Saxons, the Heruli, the Alamanni, and the Suevi.

### **The Little Horn**

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... And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: 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... (Daniel 7:8,24,25).

As Daniel observed, the ten horns represented the ten countries which would replace the Roman empire. He saw another power arise which made great claims, which was different in some respects from the other rulers, and which caused three of the ten nations to lose their power. This was to become a dominate power over peoples of the earth.

With the historical basis of the prophecy clearly given, there can be no doubt as to the identity of the ten nations or of the "little horn" which arose. In Daniel Two and now in Daniel Seven, we have the foundation of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and then the ten kingdoms taking over Rome. At that time, there arises another, different kind of power, which causes three of the ten to lose power. This different power speaks "great things" in that it makes great claims of authority, and comes to dominate the people of the known civilized world. This new power was the Papacy. It was different in that it claimed to be a religious rather than a secular power.

To show the rise of this power, what it did, and how great it became, we quote from some college history books.

...[W]hen the Theodosian dynasty came into power, the papal influence continued to increase. The last Western emperor of that family in 445 issued an edict ordering other churches to recognize as supreme the authority of the apostolic see at Rome... The Bishop of Rome at this time was Leo the Great who is often regarded as the first to try to raise that office to something like the power of later times. He not only claimed to be sole head of the Church, but by his participation in the embassy to Attila left a precedent for the political activity of his successors (*History of Medieval Europe*, page 107).

As the old pagan Roman Empire decayed, there grew up in its midst a new spiritual empire which in course of time was to replace it in the West... When that empire disappeared, the church, so far as possible, took its place; the popes took over the universal authority of the emperors... In the West where

the imperial power was being weakened and finally destroyed under the shock of successive barbarian invasions, the Latin Church was growing rapidly in organization, independence, and authority. With a theology peculiarly its own, it came under the leadership of the bishops of Rome, who fell heir to the universal authority abdicated by the emperors (*A Survey of European Civilization*, pages 84,91,92).

This "different" power arose at the very time predicted by the prophet Daniel. History shows its rise, its power, and its claims to power which became very great. Note that the "little horn" grew up on the head of the fourth beast which was the Roman Empire. This power was to develop from the "beast" and become greater than any of the remaining "horns" or kingdoms. It was "diverse". It was never merely a secular kingdom as were the other "horns", but became a combination of secular and religious power. It grew out of the Roman "beast" but is never referred to as a "beast". That term always refers to a purely secular power. How the papacy (Bishop of Rome) developed in the city of Rome and in the empire is told in history.

As head of the Christian community in the ancient capital of the empire, the Bishop of Rome occupied a position of great political influence at home and of prestige abroad. Already in the fourth century, the pagan Ammianus Marcellinus had noted, with a mixture of admiration and contempt, the wealth, pomp, and power of the Roman bishops. Their importance was greatly increased after 402, when the emperor deserted the capital to establish his court in the impregnable city of Ravenna, sheltered by its impassable marshes. Thereafter the bishops became the most powerful officials in the city. After the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, Bishop Innocent I took the lead in directing and aiding reconstruction. It was Innocent, too, who first defiantly asserted his right to supremacy in the Western Church. From the beginning of his reign, he claimed that all the churches of the West owed obedience to the Roman bishop and that in all matters of discipline and usage they should accept his decisions and follow the customs of the Roman Church (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 93).

## The Papal Time of Special Power

Let us examine Daniel 7:25,26:

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. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

We read that this power will speak against the "most high" which is God. To "speak against" means to speak to the contrary, or in opposition. How has the papacy done this? It has done so in many ways. The papal system of worship and most of its doctrinal teaching is not only different, but contrary to the Word of God and thus against God Himself. The Mass, with the broken wafer, is said to be a "sacrifice" which is acceptable to God. But Christ made the one great sacrifice for us. The sacrifice He asks of us is ourselves. God said in His Word "there is one mediator between God and man" but the papal system claims many mediators - priests, the pope, and individuals who have died and have been declared "saints" . These saints, including Mary the mother of Jesus, are proclaimed by the papal system to receive man's prayer. These are a few of many things which are "against the most High" .

### Wearing Out the Saints

When the Roman emperor, Constantine, professed to become a Christian, he promoted the adoption of many pagan practices and beliefs. This consisted in merely changing the names associated with them to make them "Christian" . His purpose was to unite the people of his empire. As the dominant Church developed, it promulgated many of these teachings which are not according to the Bible. It labeled all who did not accept its teachings, as heretics. The

“Church” promoted the persecution of those who insisted on following only the Bible. Among these “heretics” were the Albigensians and the Waldensians. They were accused by the dominant “church” of teaching wicked doctrines and being immoral and wicked. These people were true “saints”, holding to Bible teachings as opposed to the papacy. As a result, the popes promoted warfare against them. This reached a high point during the papacy of Innocent III, in the 13th century. History records how this was carried out.

Throughout the twelfth century the church had made fitful efforts to suppress heretics, but it was Innocent III who first devoted the full authority of the papacy to the task of destroying these enemies of the faith. In 1207 he summoned the chivalry of Europe to take part in a crusade against the Albigenses. The northern knights laid waste the rich lands of southern France and slaughtered thousands.

In 1233 Pope Gregory IX gave a permanent commission to regular inquisitors who were to set up special courts...for the discovery and trial of heretics. The methods of the Inquisition — the secrecy of the trials, the refusal to divulge the names of the accusers so that the accused might answer them...and the use of torture to extort confessions — inspired dread wherever the institution was established, and in the long run succeeded in stamping out most open heresy... Stubborn heretics who refused to recant or those who later relapsed into heresy, were turned over to the secular government to be burned at the stake (*Survey of European Civilization*, page 247).

In different ways and to different degrees of severity, the papal church has always persecuted those who hold only to the Bible. The greatest power of the popes to do this was in the Middle Ages (800 - 1600 A.D.). In our time, the papal power to “wear out” or persecute the true people of God continues to be seen in nations that are predominately Roman Catholic.

The papal domination over the nations of Europe was of limited duration.

The great age of the medieval papacy fell within the two centuries after the accession of Gregory VII. During that time

\* successive popes built up for the Roman See a spiritual monarchy over all western Christendom, a hegemony based on canon law, on a highly centralized administrative system, and on claims, often put into practice, to supremacy over secular rulers...(but) By the end of the thirteenth century, the time had passed when any pope could exercise authority over French and English kings, as Innocent III had done. When Boniface VIII tried to do so, stating his claims to supremacy more strongly than even Innocent had done, he failed disastrously. From that moment the power of the popes began to decline...until, by the middle of the fifteenth century, the pope was little more than an Italian prince who was also the administrative head of the (Catholic) church (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 287).

This college history textbook goes on to describe what happened to Pope Boniface VIII. The pope issued the "Unam Sanctum" in which he said "for every human creature it is absolutely necessary for salvation to be subject to the Roman Pontiff". The pope demanded that King Philip the Fair submit to him. The king sent armed forces to Italy to arrest the pope.

They had little difficulty in breaking into the town and seizing Boniface, whom they found deserted by his court, but arrayed in all the dignity of his pontifical robes... The aged pope died within the month as the result of shock and chagrin. And with him died the medieval papacy (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 289).

This was not the end of the papal institution for a pope was elected to replace Boniface and there has been a continuous line of popes to the present time. But their absolute power over nations and peoples within nations who are not Catholics, ended as described above, and the date was 1302 A.D.

### **Changing Times and Laws**

The power we identify as the papacy wielded great power and influence over the civilized world for many centuries, in fact for about a thousand years — from approximately 300 -

1300 A.D. During this time, the papacy and church councils proclaimed many doctrines and regulations which were contrary to the Bible. One was the proclaiming of the Roman “venerable day of the sun” as the day of Christian rest in place of the seventh day Sabbath. Consult any Catholic book which discusses Sabbath and Sunday, and you will find this to be the case. Most of the so-called “Christian world” accepts this attempt to change the Ten Commandment law of God. Another doctrine teaches that the time Christ was in the tomb was from Friday evening to Sunday morning, a period of only two nights and one day. This contradicts these words of Christ, “So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40).

Our calendar uses Roman time. It begins with January and uses Roman names for months and days of the week. This calendar originated in the time of the Roman Empire before the papacy came to power. But when the papacy was in power over the kings of Europe, it accepted and perpetuated this time arrangement. The same is true about changing the beginning of the twenty-four hour day from sundown (as taught in the Bible) to midnight. The nations generally accept the International Date Line in mid-Pacific Ocean as decreed by the pope. The Bible sets no time for the birthday of Christ, but in 350 A.D. Pope Victor proclaimed that the birthday of Christ should be celebrated on December 25. This date had been observed for centuries by pagan Rome as the re-birth of the sun. In the northern hemisphere, where the Roman Empire was located, it was apparent that the winter solstice had passed and the days were beginning to lengthen. These are some of the “times and laws” this power thought to change or establish.

### **A Time and Times and the Dividing of Times**

Let us again look at Daniel 7:25. “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.” .

In Revelation Thirteen we find the description of a beast having the characteristics of the four beasts of Daniel Seven. The beast has ten horns, as in Daniel Seven, but instead of describing a “little horn” , it says, “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” (Revelation 13:5).

It is evident that this is the same power called a “little horn” , having eyes and a mouth speaking great things in Daniel 7:8,20,25. The period of time, forty-two months, is three and a half years and so we learn the meaning of a time (one year), times (two years), and the dividing of time (half a time or six months). Accepting the principle that a day represents a year in Bible prophecy, we find this period of 1260 days to be 1260 years.

What was to happen during this time? Daniel 7:25 says “they shall be given into his hand” for this time. Who is referred to by “they” ? Grammatically, it would be the last plural entity previously mentioned. This would be the “times and laws” . The power was to “think to change times and laws” . When did the papacy **cease** to so think? Anyone who studies history or follows the news of the world knows the papacy **never did** cease to do so. It still has most of the so-called Christians agreeing to observe the times and laws it has changed or established. Since the time it was to do this is 1260 years, it follows that this period includes the present, and that it will continue as long as the papacy continues with its present attitudes and powers.

How does this compare with the parallel prophecy in Revelation Thirteen? “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” (Revelation 13:5). This might be interpreted either to mean that the “mouth” would **speak great things** for forty-two months, or that the “mouth” **would exist** for that time. The New American Standard Bible takes the latter



view. "And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him" . It appears that the papacy was to be given a special power or authority that would last for the stated period of time.

It has been suggested by some that the forty-two months or 1260 years was the time the papal power would "wear out the saints of the most high" (Daniel 7:25). In Revelation 13:7 it also says, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them..." A careful study of the way these statements are used and the context will show they are **not** connected with the 1260 year time period. It has been taught that this time period lasted from 538 to 1798 A.D. But there is nothing in history to indicate that any special power was given to the papacy in 538 A.D. during the reign of the Roman emperor, Justinian. We will now quote from two college history textbooks.

Almost the first act of Justinian's reign was a reconciliation with the Papacy... Justinian felt that the support of the Pope was necessary in his reconquering of the West. As soon, however, as his generals had gained a foothold in Italy and control of the city of Rome, it became evident that Justinian intended to be master even in ecclesiastical matters... When Pope Vigilius opposed Justinian's edict, the imperial troops removed him from Rome... He was kept a virtual prisoner at Constantinople... In short, Justinian was as autocratic in religious as in political matters and acted as if supreme head of the Church (*History of Medieval Europe*, page 133).

He (Justinian) asserted the right of the emperor to decide disputed points of dogma himself and to force acceptance of his opinions on the church and the people. He thus became the effective head of the church in matters of faith as well as of government... (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 115).

To say that the power of the papacy was recognized, established or made greater by Justinian, does not agree with the facts of history. The "little horn" power - the power of

the popes of Rome, was **weakened** by the reign of Justinian.

After the death of Justinian, history records what happened.

Within three years after the death of Justinian, another great change took place. A new nation of barbarian invaders, the Lombards, swept down into Italy and opened a new chapter in its history... The emperors made some attempt to check the Lombards, but in vain... Out of the chaos of this last barbarian invasion, one Italian power, the Roman papacy, rose with greater authority than ever before. The popes had lost much of their prestige since the days of Leo the Great... The restoration of imperial rule in Italy had been a serious blow to their authority, for Justinian had introduced that domination of the church by the state which had long been recognized in the Eastern Empire, but had never been enforced in the West... But the Lombard conquests broke the power of the emperor over the pope, and in 590 the Roman Church found in Pope Gregory the Great, a leader who was to set the papacy back again on the road to independence and spiritual dominion in the West (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 137).

With Pope Gregory in 590 A.D. the “little horn” began to again “speak great words” and to regain spiritual power over the people. But there was no great persecution of true people of God at this time, for the pope had little political power.

Rome was constantly in danger from the Lombards who surrounded the Roman territory... It was the pope who undertook the defense of the city, negotiated with the Lombards, and used his resources to maintain public works and relieve the poor. Though still recognizing the overlordship of the emperor, Gregory made himself the practical ruler of Rome and the land about it (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 138).

Thus by 590 A.D. the popes were gaining in power but they did not yet have any real political power over people who were not in the church. The papacy was a spiritual but **not** a temporal power. We shall now see how this “little

horn" , speaking great words, became a temporal power with sovereign rule over territory. This included power to dominate the people and persecute any who did not accept his rule and religion.

### **The Papacy Gains Temporal Power**

Meanwhile (in 753 A.D.) the pope's position was growing more desperate. The Lombards were threatening to take from him his independent government of the land about Rome. (Note: the Pope had assumed this rule, but had no legal right to it.) In the winter of 753-754, Pope Stephen III journeyed to the Frankish court to make a personal appeal to Pepin (king of the Franks) for aid. There he reconsecrated Pepin, giving the Carolingian house the full sanction of the Roman Church. In return, Pepin made two expeditions against the Lombards, in 754 and 756, both of which were successful. After the second, he forced the Lombard king to give up to the pope, not only the Roman lands, but also the land of the late exarchate. The gift of this land, stretching from Rome to Ravenna, clear across central Italy, is known as the "donation of Pepin" ... Thus was founded an independent principality in Italy under the rule of the Pope and known as the "Papal States" ... With minor changes it lasted until the unification of Italy in 1870 (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 140).

This was the beginning of the temporal power of the papacy which gave the pope power over all the people in his domain and enabled him to force people to be Catholics or else be persecuted. This papal power centered in Rome, the "seat of the beast" of the Old Roman Empire. From this time on, the popes made even greater claims and boasts. On December 25, 800 A.D. the pope placed a crown on the head of Charlemagne and proclaimed him Emperor of the Romans. By 1200 A.D. Pope Innocent III was dominating the greatest kings of Europe.

"...and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months" (Revelation 13:5). The temporal power of the

papacy, as we have noted, began in 754 A.D. It was interrupted in 1870 when Italy became a nation and was restored in 1929 when Mussolini gave the pope the land of the Vatican City. The pope still rules this land and issues his own postage stamps. Most of the nations of the world have ambassadors at Vatican City. The "power" has continued. The prophecy said that power was to continue "forty and two months" (Revelation 13:5). In prophetic time that is 1260 years and so if we count the beginning of this power as 754 A.D. it would last until 2014.

The "times and laws" which this power sought to change and which were "given into his hand" are **still in his hand** as much as they have ever been. Papal power in general has been greatly reduced and while the pope is still looked up to by the millions of Catholics all over the world, his political power among the nations is small. Even in Italy the pope has little political influence. The communist party is strong there. The prophecy indicates that the papal power will continue to decrease. This agrees with Revelation 17:16,17 where we find the ten powers turning against the Church of Rome. We will discuss this in more detail when we take up the study of Revelation Seventeen.

The papacy evidently will continue to exist and have some general powers as it has today, but with a gradual decrease. It will last until the second advent of Christ and the establishing of His kingdom as is shown in Daniel 7:27. This verse agrees with other Bible passages, it teaches that when Christ returns He will establish His kingdom and reign with the saints "under the whole heaven", and not up **in** heaven. This phase of the kingdom will last for one thousand years, but is everlasting in that it is never overthrown. When the one thousand years are ended and a special work of that time completed, Christ will turn over the finished work to God the Father. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:24).

## **Revelation Thirteen**

It is wonderful how God has given the prophecies. One passage gives a certain amount of information and the next repeats a part of that and goes on with additional points. We found this to be true in the comparison of Daniel two with Daniel seven and now we find the same is true of Daniel seven compared with Revelation Thirteen.

Daniel saw four beasts come up out of the sea, John sees one beast come out of the sea, but it has the characteristics of the four which Daniel saw. This beast of Revelation Thirteen has "seven heads and ten horns" which is also true of the four beasts of Daniel Seven. In Daniel Seven, we find seven heads by counting the four heads on the leopard with one head each on the lion, bear, and the fourth "terrible beast". The nations represented by the image of Daniel Two, and the four beasts of Daniel Seven, begin with the time of Daniel and Babylon. But Babylon was not the first great world dominating empire. In history we find that the first was Egypt and the second was Assyria. Both had a close and oppressive connection with Israel. When we come to the composite beast of Revelation Thirteen, we are not bound to include the four divisions of the empire of Alexander the Great, as four of the seven heads. The composite beast of Revelation Thirteen represents the great powers who were dominated by the "dragon" or Satan. Their religion was pagan, a worship of created things in the world rather than the Creator of the world.

Just as we found help for the interpretation of Daniel Seven, the introduction of the composite beast in Revelation Thirteen with the characteristics of the four beasts in Daniel Seven gives us an historical foundation for the interpretation of the prophecy. It is easy to see that the four beasts of Daniel Seven represent Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The ten horns represent the ten barbarian divisions of the Roman Empire. Revelation Thirteen goes at once to the heads of the beast and has one head gravely wounded. Since

the beast represents a progression of nations in history, the wounded head would seem to be that of the last phase or the last of the beast nations, the Roman Empire. Daniel Seven has a "litte horn" rising after the fall of the Roman Empire — it rises among the ten horns or barbarian nations. Comparing this with Revelaton Thirteen, we conclude it is the Roman Empire which received the "deadly wound" . This is because right after this wound and its healing, a "mouth speaking great things" arises which compares to the description of the "little horn" of Daniel Seven.

### **The Deadly Wound and the Healing**

Note again that the deadly wound and the healing come **before** the rise of the "mouth speaking great things" . Since we identify that "mouth" as being of the papacy, the wound and healing come **before** the rise of the papacy. Observing this order prevents us from making the mistake of trying to find the wound and healing in recent times or the future as some have taught. It is very important to pay close attention to the historical foundation and progression of all the prophecies.

With these things in mind, we look for a "deadly wound" to the Roman Empire a short time previous to the greater development of the papacy. The Roman Empire existed for just about one thousand years. It was about 500 B.C. that the nation had its beginnings with the Etruscans and Latins near the Tiber river. It was around the middle of Roman history that Christ was born during the glorious reign of Augustus Ceasar. Rome continued with its emperors ruling for almost 500 years longer. About the year 378 A.D. Rome was so weak that the barbarian tribes of the north were able to begin invasions. These continued until in the year 476 the empire, with headquarters at the city of Rome, came to an end. For about 500 years, from the time of Julius Caesar, there had always been an emperor of the empire. But, in 476 A.D. the

leader of a Barbarian tribe, the Heruli, was able to depose Romulus Augustulus and there was no successor at Rome. Without an emperor there could be no empire. The loss of the position of emperor was a "deadly wound" to that great pagan secular system.

" From 476 to 800 there was no other Roman emperor than the one reigning at Constantinople. Since Constantinople was not Rome, nor its inhabitants in any true sense Romans...it is legitimate to speak of the Roman Empire as now at an end" (*History of Medieval Europe*, page 86). If the beast of Revelation Thirteen is the Roman Empire, the above reference from history shows that the loss of the emperor in 476 A.D. was surely a "deadly wound". It meant practically the death of the "beast". But the prophecy also says the wound was to be healed. What happened in history which fulfilled this? A deadly wound would be a cause of death. In the case of an empire, the **end** of that empire. A healing would be something which would prevent that death or cause the empire to be in some way restored or revitalized. We look at history for what happened in connection with the Roman empire after 476 A.D.

### **The Healing of the Wound**

We have previously noted the gradual rise of the power of the Bishop of Rome. At the time of the ending of the empire in the west there were five bishops all claiming special power. These were the bishops of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome. The claim of the Bishop of Rome to supremacy was greatly advanced by Gregory who was pope from 590 to 604 A.D. The lack of an emperor at Rome left a vacuum in political power in that city and by the time of Gregory the pope was beginning to fill this. History tells us that "Gregory, after he became pope, tried to feed the hungry populace, to relieve the sufferings of the city poor and of the war refugees...and in consequence the pope's political influence increased" (*History of Medieval*

*Europe*, page 155). Gregory “abated none of the papal claims in theory and advanced them greatly in practice by his energetic activity throughout the West” (*History of Medieval Europe*, page 156).

Various historians have pointed out that after there was no longer an emperor at Rome, the city and the western empire were saved from anarchy by the rise of papal power. In many ways the pope took the place of the emperor as he established political as well as religious powers. And so the great “wound” caused by the ending of the imperial throne at Rome, was “healed” by the gradual taking over of imperial powers, by the Bishops of Rome, the Popes. The old Roman pagan religion was continued by the papacy under different names. While the pagans had a “god” for everything such as of spring, the home and travel, the church now claimed “saints” for all these positions and many more. The days and seasons once honored for the pagan sun-god were now made into “Christian” holy days. The “venerable day of the sun”, Sunday, became the “Lord’s Day” to be observed instead of the Bible Sabbath. The celebration of the re-birth of the sun on December 25th, now became an observance of the birthday of the Son of God. It continued the use of the old pagan decorations. All these things contributed to the healing of the wound pagan Rome had suffered. The world in general, again looked to Rome as the center of civil power and also religious power.

“...and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Revelation 13:3,4). The New American Standard Bible helps our understanding of this as we read: “...And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast...” (Revelation 13:3,4 NASB).

By accepting pagan practices and substituting pagan teachings for the true teachings of God, people were in effect worshipping Satan. Paganism is worshipping the created



things rather than the Creator. Most of the so-called Christian world, yet today includes some of these pagan related observances in its worship. In doing this, they continue to "follow after the beast"

### **The Mouth and the Power**

"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" (Revelation 13:5). The same power which brought about the healing of the wound of the pagan beast-empire, now is described as a "mouth speaking great things". From very early times the Bishop of Rome made claims to special holiness and power. By the time of Gregory in 590 A.D. these claims began to be accepted by the other bishops and by the people. Although there is no record that the apostle Peter ever went to Rome, it is claimed that he was the first Bishop of Rome. Matthew 16:18,19 is interpreted to mean that Peter alone was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and that the popes are the successors of Peter and thus continue to have those keys. It is held that verse nineteen gives the pope the right to add to or change the Bible and that such changes or additions are "bound in heaven", that is, accepted and approved by God. People who have died, who the Bible teaches are unconscious in their graves, are said to be in heaven. The pope is even said to have the power to make them "saints", and as such give them mediatorial power to help living people who pray to them. The bones of dead "saints" are said to have special powers for those who touch them or revere them. The Lord's supper is said to be a sacrifice and the unleavened bread has become a wafer, round like the sun. The preachers are said to be "priests" with power to absolve those who confess their sins to them. All of these things when compared to the plain teachings of the Bible are seen to be very wrong, even what the Bible calls "blasphemy". "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God..." (Revelation 13:6).

## **Power Given to Him**

While prophecy does not always come in the order given, here it seems that the mouth speaks the great things **before** he received special power. This was certainly true of the papacy. The "great things" spoken by the popes were at first concerned with religious things - teachings and practices, and control of the people of the church. This was later expanded to include rule over a definite territory and then a claim to authority over the kings of other lands.

We previously noted the special claims of papal power made by Gregory who became pope in 590 A.D. The popes after Gregory continued to make increasingly greater claims to both religious and political power. This reached a climax in the papacy of Innocent III in 1200 A.D. The "mouth speaking great things" became evident to all the western world.

We also noted that the time period of special power of the papacy was to be 1260 years. With the so-called Donation of Pepin in 754 A.D. the papal power in the temporal sense began. Counting 1260 years from 754 A.D. brings us to the year 2014 A.D. This does not mean that we are setting an exact date for the second advent of Christ, but it seems that He would probably come during that general time. Papal power gradually decreases according to the prophecy, but to some degree it will continue to the coming of Christ at the end of this age.

As this is being written, President Reagan of the United States has just announced that he is appointing an ambassador to the Vatican in spite of protestant opposition. This will be the first time the United States has had diplomatic relations with the papacy since 1867. Never before has there been a full exchange of ambassadors. It seems to be an increase in papal temporal power. We will watch to see how it works out.

## The Two Horned Beast

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed (Revelation 13:11,12).

The four beasts of Daniel Seven come up from the **sea** after it was blown by the four winds of heaven. In prophetic language, these nations arose as the result of war among the peoples. But the two horned beast in Revelation Thirteen comes up from the **earth**, a stable situation and not war.

It is taught by some that this two horned beast represents the United States of America. Such an interpretation takes this beast completely out of its historical setting. It also ignores the fact that the United States became a nation as the result of a war.

Revelation Thirteen is a prophetic record of historical events. The composite beast is the old Roman Empire. The deadly wound is the loss of its emperor which in effect ended the empire. The wound was healed by the pope taking over powers and activities of the former emperors. The papacy increased in power and persecuted the true Christians. Then history records the rise of an empire which took the place of the old Roman Empire. It came into existence not as the result of war but by a combined action of the pope and the king of the Franks. History records how this action of pope and king, two horns as it were, became a nation.

The Church gave unity to Catholic Christendom, but many medieval thinkers felt that the divine scheme called for some secular counterpart, a political empire and a temporal ruler who would hold secular authority over all Christians, as the pope held spiritual authority... The obvious solution was to make the Frankish king emperor of a revived Roman Empire. On Christmas day of the year 800, as Charles knelt before the altar of St. Peter's Church...Pope Leo III placed an imperial crown on his head and hailed him emperor amidst the shouts of the people... An empire had been created, Roman in name

but more than half German in fact and inseparably linked to the Catholic Church (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 143).

This new "empire" was a combination of the religious and secular. It was ruled by the emperor and the pope working together to enforce the beliefs and practices of Catholicism. This included many things which came directly from the pagan religion of the old Roman Empire. Thus this "two horned beast" caused people to "worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed".

The following quotations from *A Survey of European Civilization* show how in the years from about 800 to 1200 A.D. the popes and the emperors worked together.

The church and the monarchy worked closely together to their mutual advantage (page 169). For nearly a century from the imperial coronation of Otto the Great to the death of Henry III, the emperors were the dominant members of the papal-imperial partnership which claimed universal rule over all Christendom (page 174). The emperor admitted the universal spiritual authority of the pope, while the pope, in turn, admitted the universal secular authority of the emperor. They had parallel powers, both divinely ordained (page 178).

This combination of religious and secular power enforced belief in the Catholic doctrines. This is shown by what happened to a Bohemian university teacher named John Huss. He was called "a dangerous opponent of the papacy and the empire". "In 1414, Huss was summoned to appear before the general council called by emperor Sigismund at Constance to answer charges of heresy. He was tried and condemned, and after refusing to recant was burned at the stake in July 1415" (*A Survey of European Civilization*, page 294).

Thus the highest authorities, pope and emperor, met their opposition with the use of fire. Scripture says of this two-horned power: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." (Revelation 13:13). Thus, symbolically, fire came down from "heaven".

## The Image of the Beast

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live (Revelation 13:14).

We must keep in mind that the beast which was wounded, was the old pagan Roman Empire. The "image" must be something which looked like that empire. Thus it could not be a statue or picture. How did the two-horned beast (emperor and pope) make an "image" of the Roman Empire? History gives us the true answer.

During the first part of the time of the two horned beast power, from 800 to 1200 A.D., the papacy directed the organization of the hierarchy. The hierarchy of the Catholic organization was patterned directly on the system of the old pagan Roman Empire. To confirm this we turn again history.

In many ways, indeed, the Church was comparable to the Roman Empire of old, whose territorial and administrative organization it had taken over and whose official language, Latin, it still maintained in its services, records, and literature. Both were international in character. Everyone recognized the pope as everyone had worshiped the emperor. The Church had its legal system and courts... Its missionaries and crusaders on the frontiers of Christendom were like the ancient Legionaries on the Roman borders. Its monasteries were scattered over the face of the land as thickly as had been the Roman military camps and colonies. Its secular clergy corresponded to the administrative bureaucracy of the Empire. And at the head and center of it all, watching over the whole world, interfering in everything, exercising temporal as well as spiritual power, receiving reports and questions and appeals from all quarters, and reserving to himself the settlement of all questions in the last resort, sat Innocent III (the pope) with an authority quite comparable to that of a Trajan or a Diocletian (Roman emperors). (*History of Medieval Europe*, page 435).

The term "diocese" was the name for a district of the old

Roman Empire. This term was, and still is, used for a district of the Catholic church. Thus we see that the hierarchy which developed was in fact an image or copy of the old pagan Roman Empire. The hierarchy included arch-bishops and bishops with the power of life and death over the people. Everyone was forced to belong to the Church. Those who would not go along were excommunicated or put out of the Church, making them outcasts. No one spoke to one who was put out. He could not buy or sell anything. It became practically impossible to live without making peace with the church. And as we have seen, in many cases the dissenter was put to death.

“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” (Revelation 13:15). People were forced to acknowledge belief in the pagan doctrines of the church, and to observe the holy days and special practices imposed by the Church. The belief was a “mark” in the forehead and the practice was a “mark” in the hand. “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” (Revelation 13:16,17).

As we have seen in history, this all took place during the Middle Ages, between about 800 and 1600 A.D. in the center of the civilized world, Europe. It all goes back to the old Roman Empire, the last great world power on earth before the second advent of Christ.

### **The Number 666**

“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 three score and six” (Revelation 13:18). We note that this is the number of the **beast** and

remember that a beast in prophecy represents a kingdom or empire. Going back to verse 14, we see that the beast is the one who had the deadly wound and yet lived — the old Roman Empire. The number is connected with the Roman Empire, but is also the number of a man. The Roman Empire was the Latin nation, the nation of the Latin Man. In Roman history, traditionally, the latin man, founder of the empire, was named "LATEINOS". Revelation was written originally in Greek, and each letter of the Greek alphabet has a numerical value. When this word is spelled with the Greek letters we find the following: **L** = 30; **A** = 1; **T** = 300; **E** = 5; **I** = 10; **N** = 50; **O** = 70; **S** = 200. These values add up to 666. This further identifies the "beast" as old Rome, the Latin nation. The enforcement of the "mark" was by the Catholic hierarchy or image of the Roman beast. The Catholic church also uses Latin as its official language. Thus the old pagan Roman beast carries over into the "image", and so all of Revelation Thirteen is history.

### **What About the Future?**

While the record of Revelation Thirteen is history, the subject of the "mark of the beast" does not close there. In Revelation Fourteen, the message of the third angel shows that there will be those who have this "mark of the beast" up to the time of the second advent of Christ. Since the Middle Ages and even in our present time, there are people who "...worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand..." (Revelation 14:9). It is written that the wrath of God will be upon them — they will be among the lost.

Many people do not see that giving Christian names to pagan ideas and practices is such an evil thing. People celebrate the birth of Christ by admiring a pagan decorated evergreen tree. The tree is beautiful so why not have it? And why not celebrate the birthday of Christ, even though the Bible does not reveal the date? Why not use the date which

the old Roman Empire used in the worship of the sun? Each year December 25th was regarded as the time of the rebirth of the sun-god. But people today do not worship the sun, on that day they think of the birth of the Son of God. They think this is good and proper.

Man's reasoning often runs counter to the teachings of the Bible. The Bible record shows that God has always rejected the mixing of heathen ideas or practices, with worship of God. What God has said is evil, we have no right to call good. Our beliefs and practices in worship are to be only those found in the Word of God. True Christians are called upon to warn mankind of the terrible consequences of adding to God's Word and following the beliefs and ways of the old Roman Empire.



# CHAPTER FOUR

## The Great Falling Away and The Anti-Christ

In our study of the seven seals of Revelation, we find in Revelation Six the white horse representing the purity of the early church during the first century. With the opening of the third seal, we see a black horse representing darkness, and wheat, oil and wine, representing the Word of God and His Holy Spirit as very costly or hard to obtain. This was during the time of the Roman emperor, Constantine, in the fourth century after Christ. In order to unify the people of the empire, Constantine professed to accept Christianity, but proceeded to mix it with paganism. For the Sabbath of God he instituted the Sun-day, which was already being venerated by the sun worshippers. The pagan customs and observances were adopted over a period of time. It was not until 350 A.D. that the Roman festival at the winter solstice in honor of the re-birth of the sun as the days began to lengthen, was proclaimed to be the birthday of Christ. Christmas with all its pagan symbols then began to be celebrated. This mixing of heathenism with Bible teachings was a significant departure from the teachings of Christ and the apostles. The apostle Paul had warned that this would happen.

### **The Falling Away and the Man of Sin**

In his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, the apostle Paul told them about the second advent of Christ and admonished them to be watching for that great event. They got the idea that the second advent would be in their time and

very soon. Some ceased their regular work and sat down to wait. Paul wrote the second epistle to that church to correct the false ideas that had developed. He again told of the glory of the second advent and of their need to be ready "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed)... Wherefore also we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling..." (II Thessalonians 1:10,11).

Having said this, Paul gives them a special warning against thinking the second advent was to be immediate. "Now we beseech you, brethren... That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (II Thessalonians 2:1,2). Here Paul refers to what he had told them in his other letter, which they had misunderstood. He tells them of things which were going to take place before the second advent of Christ.

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... Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (II Thessalonians 2:3,9,10,11).

There was to come after the time of Paul and these brethren, a great "falling away" or apostasy. As we read on, we find the context clearly shows this to be a falling away from the truths of God's Word. There would be a great deceit and a strong delusion upon those who did not love God's truth. This is exactly what has happened beginning in the second century, reaching a climax about the year 1200 A.D. and continuing on to the present time.

As we have already noted there was a mixing of heathenism with Bible teachings. There developed a false church system with paraphernalia, teachings, and forms of worship

which are not found in the Bible. Neither the apostle Paul nor any of the apostles were in any sense "priests" but rather they were ministers, and preachers. They taught prayer to God only through Christ, never through any "saints" who were living in heaven and acting as mediators between Man and God. We could go on and on with the great list of false teachings of this religious system called Catholicism. It controls the mind of many millions of people. It adapts itself to the situations it finds in different nations. In the United States it appears to be moderate and liberal. Catholic laity have much to say in the affairs of their churches and carry on various social programs. The priests take part in the special church services of protestant denominations. One example is the union Thanksgiving service in which the priest may preach the Thanksgiving sermon in a protestant church. But in Roman Catholic nations there is no such cooperation. In most of South America protestants are persecuted, often suffering violence at the hands of Catholics with the promotion or consent of the priests. The domination of the priests over the people is often severe. It often amounts to extortion. The church, through the priests, demands a high payment for such services as marriages and funerals. The system which declares itself a protector of the poor actually does the opposite where it has gained power. The whole system is a great deception. Outwardly it may appear to be doing good, but actually it is corrupt and often immoral.

The many millions of Catholics the world over, are led and dominated by one man, the pope. The papacy is self-perpetuating. There is always a pope. Many of the popes have been wicked which Catholics will admit. Others may be men who apparently tried to do good, but each is the head of a false, unbiblical system. Therefore we believe that in the following texts, Paul was referring to the papacy.

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 worship-

ped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (II Thessalonians 2:3,4,9,10).

### **What About the Anti-Christ?**

Some teachers of Bible prophecy apply the passage in Second Thessalonians Two, concerning the "man of sin", to a future individual called the "antichrist". We consider it to be both in the past and present. It begins with the great "falling away" from Bible truth that we find to be part of history.

There is a Bible term, the "antichrist". We will now consider what this may mean. The term "antichrist" is found only in the First and Second Epistles of the apostle John. We quote these verses.

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time (I John 2:18). Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son (I John 2:22). And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (I John 4:3). For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist (II John 7).

A careful reading of these verses shows that John said there had been a teaching given that an antichrist was to come. John does not comment on that future possibility, but rather declares that there were already those who denied the divinity of Christ. They were antichrists. There is nothing to indicate whether or not John was making any reference to the "man of sin" found in Second Thessalonians Two.

In our study of Revelation Seventeen we will note that there is to arise an "eighth head" which is called the

“beast”. Some teach that this is the “antichrist” and the “man of sin” of Second Thessalonians Two. Note that the “beast” of Revelation 17:12,13, will, according to verses fourteen to sixteen, go against **all** religion. Against the true people of God and against the great false religious system symbolized by the wicked woman. But the “man of sin” in Second Thessalonians Two is a religious power with great deception. The two powers are very different. We conclude that the great “falling away” and the revelation of the “man of sin” are part of history, but the “beast” of the eighth head in Revelation Seventeen is still future.

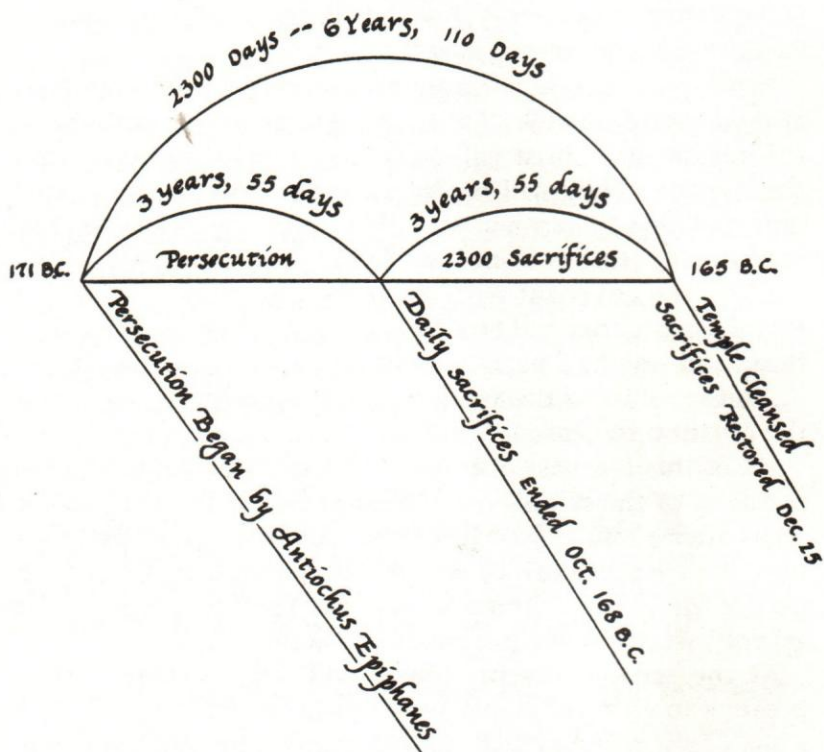
In this connection, we note that some prophecy teachers also connect Daniel 9:27 with the teaching of the antichrist. It is taught that Christ will come and take the saints up into the heavens. They will be there for a period of seven years during which the antichrist will be in power on earth. The seven year period is from Daniel 9:27 where it says “he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week” . It is said that this antichrist will be sitting in a temple as God and after three and one half years he will end a system of sacrifices. “...in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...” .

All of this is a vast distortion of scripture. Daniel 9:27 is speaking of the ministry of Christ and how He died on the cross after a ministry of three and one half years. And then how the special work of the gospel centered on the Jewish people for another three and one half years to complete the seventy weeks of the prophecy of Daniel 9:24.

At the second advent, Christ will destroy that wicked power known as the eighth head or the “beast” . At that very time, Christ will establish His kingdom on the earth and rule from Jerusalem during a special time of one thousand years. We will study this in the chapter on Revelation Twenty.

We emphasize that there are just **two** advents of Christ. The first was His coming to minister on earth, and at the second advent He will again come all the way to the earth. The saints rise to **meet** Him as He comes and descend with Him as His glorious reign on earth begins.

The 2300 Day Prophecy of Daniel 8  
involving Antiochus Epiphanes



# CHAPTER FIVE

## Daniel Eight: The Twenty-Three Hundred Days

The prophecy of Daniel Eight begins like that of chapter seven. The historical setting is given for the time when the prophet received the vision. In this case, it was in the third year of king Belshazzar. This is significant only as it indicates that the things given in the prophecy are all after this time.

It is very important to note and identify the prophetic foundation in the first part of Daniel Eight. Daniel is living during the time of the empire of Babylon. In the symbolic vision he sees the rise of Medo-Persia and its overthrow of Babylon. He sees the rise of the Greek nation and Alexander the Great, and then his downfall. This is background for the prophecy to be given of events **after** the downfall of Alexander. This preliminary prophecy of history all came about exactly as prophesied. We must believe that the historical basis of the next part of the vision is also accurate and important in identifying the meaning of the prophecy. We will now examine the details of the vision and the explanation of its meaning.

“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...” (Daniel 8:3,4). “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia”

(Daniel 8:20). This described the rise of the Persian empire and showed that it would conquer Babylon, since no nation would be able to stand before it.

“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 8:5). The next verses tell that the he-goat destroys the ram. The explanation in Daniel 8:20,21 shows this meant Greece would conquer Persia.

“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. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power” (Daniel 8:8,22). In history we find that after the death of Alexander the Great, four of his generals divided his empire among themselves. They were Ptolmey, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Selucus. They had the territory of the empire of Alexander but certainly not his power.

And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understading dark sentences, shall stand up (Daniel 8:9,23).

In verses five and eight we find Alexander symbolized by a very large or great horn. We are told that out of one of the four divisions of the empire there would later arise a “little horn”, indicating a king of lesser power than Alexander. Any minor king may be symbolized by the term “little horn”. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that every time this phrase is used it refers to the same king. In Daniel 7:8 a ruler is termed a “little horn”, but he comes up among ten horns and is a power out of the Roman Empire. We noted this in a previous chapter. The little horn of Daniel Eight comes out of one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander. That empire was to the east of Greece and did



not include Italy. At the time of the rule of the four generals of Alexander, the Roman Empire did not exist as a prominent nation. The areas where it did exist were never part of any of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. This little horn of Daniel Eight cannot in any way be the same as the little horn of Daniel Seven.

### **Very Great and Exceeding Great**

In Daniel 8:8 it is said that the he goat "waxed very great". We have noted that this refers to Alexander the Great. He conquered a great empire stretching all the way from Greece to India. He was a very powerful king in his time.

In Daniel 8:9 it is said of the little horn that he "waxed exceeding great". Therefore some have concluded that this little horn has to be a greater power than Alexander the Great. After Alexander's time, the only great power was that of Rome or perhaps the pope. The little horn of Daniel Eight did not come out of Rome but instead came up in the latter time of the division of the kingdom of Alexander. And since none of these divisions included Italy, this little horn **cannot** refer to the pope who arose in the city of Rome in Italy! How then do we explain the terms "very great" and "exceeding great" ?

First we must carefully examine both verses. In verse eight, the "very great" is not limited in any way. Alexander was very great as a ruler, as a general of his armies, and as a conqueror of a vast territory. But the little horn of verse nine is "exceeding great" in his actions toward the south, east, and toward the land of Israel (the pleasant land). For our identification of this power we must search history to see if any ruler came out of any of the four divisions of the Empire of Alexander and exercised power in the directions mentioned in the verse. Any such power or king must fit the additional descriptions given.

## **Antiochus Epiphanes**

In the year 170 B.C. a king reigned in Syria, a part of the division of the empire of Alexander the Great taken by Alexander's general, Selucus. This king of Syria was named Antiochus IV. He was the fourth in that line of kings, but he is of special importance in our study because his life and activities fit the description of the "little horn" of Daniel Eight.

Antiochus IV took the title of "Epiphanes" as a surname. It has the meaning of brilliant or great but in many ways he was the opposite. The prophecy of Daniel Eight declares that this little horn would come out of one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander. In its activities, this horn or king would be "exceeding great" in certain areas — toward the south, east, and the "pleasant land", Israel. Antiochus went south and invaded Egypt, and might have conquered and ruled that land had not the rising power of Rome forced him to withdraw. Antiochus took his armies against Persia in the east. But his greatest exploit was against the Jews in Palestine or Israel. This is the key point of the prophecy.

The Bible mentions nations in prophecy in their connection with Israel or the Jews. Alexander took over the land of Israel peacefully and it became a part of his empire without any great events or trouble. Thus he "waxed great" toward it. But Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem, killed many of the people including the high priest. He stopped the services of the temple, polluted it, and dedicated it as a temple for a pagan god. The true Bible scriptures were not to be used. Heathen Greek customs were enforced; the Greek gods were to be worshipped. For a time Antiochus was successful in this. Truly, he seemed to "wax exceeding great" in his activities "toward the pleasant land", the land of Israel.

We have noted the extensive historical foundation of this prophecy. Alexander the Great is plainly described, then his death and the taking over of his empire by four of his generals. Then we see the little horn power or king arising from one of the four divisions and doing terrible things against the land of Israel and its people. Many details con-

cerning this wicked king are given, and every detail is fulfilled in the life and actions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Let us notice some of these details.

“And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them” (Daniel 8:10). Taken literally, this would seem to say this wicked king was able to destroy some of the angels of heaven. But in the explanation it is revealed that this is symbolic. In Daniel 8:24 we read: “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.” Thus it is clear that the “host of heaven” of verse ten refers to the people of Israel. Of them God had said “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6).

We now see how this symbolism is continued in Daniel 8:11: “Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.” If the “host of heaven” was the Jewish people, then the “prince of the host” would be their leader, and that was the High Priest. During the time when Palestine was a part of the Syrian empire, the High Priest was both the spiritual and secular ruler at Jerusalem. At the time of Antiochus, the high priest was Onias, a very godly man. He resisted the desecrations of Antiochus, and as a result was killed.

The harsh rule of Antiochus against the Jews began in 171 B.C. and lasted for seven years and one hundred and ten days, or a total of twenty-three hundred literal days. During this time many things happened in the progression of time. The oppression grew worse and worse until in 168 B.C. the regular morning and evening sacrifices at the temple were stopped. A hog was boiled and the broth was poured over all the objects used in the temple worship (table of showbread, candlestick, altar of incense, the veil and the most holy place). Then another hog was offered as a sacrifice on the

great altar of burnt offering, and the temple was dedicated to Jupiter. Thus the temple was brought to a very low and polluted condition and "...the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Daniel 8:11)

It was also during the rule of Antiochus that he entered into the city of Jerusalem with his army and declared he was entering peaceably, the people had nothing to fear. When many of the people came out into the streets, Antiochus gave a command and the soldiers massacred a large number of the people. The prophecy said "...by peace shall destroy many" (Daniel 8:25). Antiochus could not long maintain his harsh rule. He suffered many defeats, and finally contracted a terrible disease and died. Had he died in battle, it would have been by the **hand** of someone, but it came as the scripture said "...he shall be broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25).

### **The Two Thousand Three Hundred Days**

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (Daniel 8:13,14).

The word "saint" is in other translations given as "holy one" and evidently means an angel. In a vision the prophet saw one angel speak to another angel. The sanctuary or temple was to be "trodden under foot" and polluted for a period of twenty-three hundred days. The word "days" is here translated from the Hebrew "evening and morning", the term used in Genesis for each literal day of creation. It is true that in most Bible prophecy a day represents a year, but there are exceptions. Jonah prophesied the destruction of Nineveh after forty days. The context shows this did **not**

mean **years**. Also, Jesus said He would be put to death "and after three days rise again". We know He did not mean three years. This prophecy of the desecration of the temple could not mean a period of twenty-three hundred years, for the temple was not in existence that long. The phrase "evening and morning" refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. This is actually stated in verse fourteen and emphasized in verse twenty-six "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true..." .

### **A Double Fulfillment**

In comparing the prophecy with history we find there was a two-fold fulfillment. The "waxing exceeding great" of the oppression of Antiochus toward the Jews began in ~~91~~ <sup>171</sup> B.C. and lasted three years and one hundred and ten days or a total of twenty-three hundred literal days. But the prophecy includes the question, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice..." This was a sacrifice each morning and evening. Twenty-three hundred sacrifices would be made in eleven hundred and fifty days. From the time Antiochus stopped the daily sacrifices at the temple until they were again restored was eleven hundred and fifty literal days. This was from 168 to 165 B.C. The temple was cleansed, restored and rededicated the 25th of the Jewish month Chisleu, which corresponds to our month of December. The Jews still celebrate this event with Hannukah, which they observe for eight days the latter part of December. Its importance is seen by the reference to it in John 10:22 where it is called "the feast of the dedication" .

The double fulfillment of the prophecy is truly remarkable. The "sanctuary and the host" were "trodden under foot" for twenty-three hundred literal twenty-four hour days. And also twenty-three hundred daily sacrifices were "taken away" . Then the temple was cleansed and restored by Judas Maccabeus and the Jewish people.

### How Important Was It?

Are these events in connection with the temple at Jerusalem of any importance in the plan of salvation? Why are they recorded in the prophecies of Daniel and why were they so accurately fulfilled? Let us consider the matter.

The sacrificial system in connection with a tabernacle, and then with the permanent temple, was given by God to Israel through the great prophet Moses. The book of Hebrews shows that the sacrifice of animals and their shedding of blood upon the alter was a type of the sacrifice of Christ. They foreshadowed the work of Christ. And they were to **continue** until they were fulfilled at the death of Christ on the cross. The type must meet the anti-type. This took place as Christ died on the cross. At that very time the great veil of the temple, dividing the Holy place from the Most Holy, was torn in two by an unseen hand. No longer would the people of God have to go through a human priest to come to the heavenly Father. When Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to heaven, He was seated at the right hand of God, with God on His throne. Where God the Father is, is always the very most Holy Place. God's people are now their own priests and go to God the Father through the great High Priest, Jesus.

The great fulfillment of the type was possible because the temple with its sacrifices was at Jerusalem. But Satan attempted to thwart the plan of God and cause confusion by eliminating the temple and its sacrifices about 167 years before the first advent of Christ. We thus see how important it was that the temple, the sanctuary, be cleansed and restored, and the sacrificial system re-established before the ministry of Christ. That service continued to be the way of atonement for sins until Christ died upon the cross. Then, in the sight and plan of God, it ended.

"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:37,38). That veil represented Christ and its rending signified His death for us. The rending of the

veil took away the separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. This ended the ceremonies and types, and ushered in a new reality. We no longer need priests to burn incense upon the alter with the smoke going through the veil to represent our prayers. Now Christ is at the right hand of God in heaven as our high priest, and our prayers go directly to God through Him. The sins which could not be atoned for by the blood of sacrificial animals, have been atoned for and blotted out by the sacrifice of the Son of God. Jesus made that great atonement when He died on the cross and ascended to the right hand of God. The apostle Paul could say, "...we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11).

### **Problems in Understanding Daniel Eight**

It was a misunderstanding of this prophecy of Daniel Eight which brought about the William Miller movement, proclaiming that the second advent of Christ would be in October of 1844. How could the prophecy have been so misunderstood?

In Daniel 8:16 we have a voice saying to Gabriel that he should make Daniel understand the vision.

So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be (Daniel 8:17,19).

In other parts of the Bible the phrase "time of the end" refers to the time just before the second advent of Christ. So it may be reasoned, that the "end" mentioned in verse nineteen is the end of this age or the time of the second advent. This is the conclusion reached by William Miller. He decided that the "time appointed" for the end referred to the end of

the twenty-three hundred days, and that therefore, the twenty-three hundred days would last until the second advent of Christ.

This line of reasoning completely ignores the historical setting of the prophecy. We must never lose sight of the fact that the "little horn" of verse nine came out of one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander the Great. This is clearly shown in Daniel 8:21,22. Thus the setting of this prophecy is at the time of the end of the Grecian power, before the Roman empire became great. The prophecy cannot possibly refer to events at the end of the age, just prior to the second advent of Christ. A comparison of the thoughts in verses seventeen and nineteen shows that the "end" referred to is the conclusion of the desecration of the temple. This is the subject of the entire prophecy — oppression of the people of Israel, desecration of the temple, taking away the daily sacrifice, and then the cleansing of the temple and the restoration of the sacrifices. The chapter includes a complete historical foundation for the prophecy, and it is essential that this history be used in the correct interpretation.

All the details concerning the little horn power given in verses twenty-three to twenty-five were fulfilled in the life and death of Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a "fierce" king, he dabbled in the occult, his power was limited by what the rising power of Rome would permit him to do. He destroyed many of the Jews, the "holy people", and at one time came into Jerusalem under pretext of peace, and then directed a massacre. He stood up against the High Priest (the Prince of princes) and caused the priest to be killed. After returning to his own land, he died of disease "broken without hand". The fact that the priests may be called "princes" is shown in Isaiah 43:28, calling them "princes of the sanctuary".

### **Why the Great False Teaching?**

The meaning of Daniel Eight is clearly and easily understood by comparing the historical references it con-

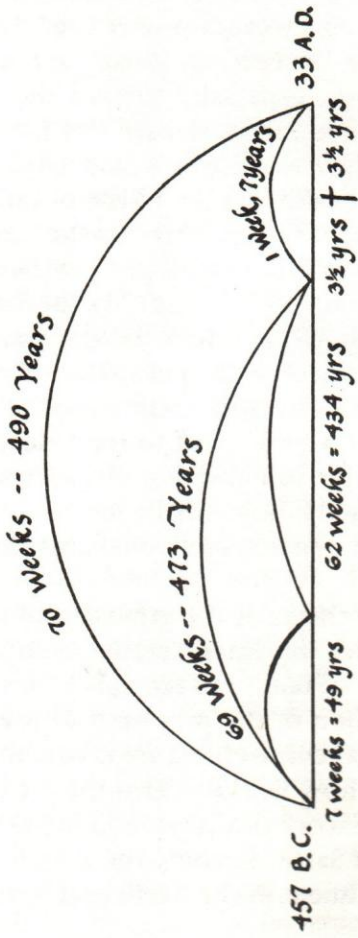


tains with history. It is strange how some have distorted the meaning. It is said that since the "he goat" of verse eight referring to Alexander the Great, is "very great", and the little horn of verse nine is "exceeding great", therefore the little horn of verse nine must be greater than Alexander. And so it could not possibly be Antiochus because he was a much smaller and weaker power than Alexander. We pointed out that the "exceeding great" refers to specific actions and directions, especially toward the land of Israel. There Antiochus did far more than did Alexander.

Taking the false position, that the little horn must be greater in all ways than Alexander, it is held that it must refer to Rome. It is then held that the "prince of the host" in verse eleven is Christ. The daily sacrifice taken away refers to the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. To get in the twenty-three hundred days as years, they begin at 457 B.C. and declare the period lasted until 1844 A.D. It is taught that the meaning of "sanctuary" changes to refer to heaven. It is said, Christ went to the "Holy Place" or outer room of the temple in heaven at His ascension. In 1844 He entered the Most Holy room in heaven, "cleansed" the sanctuary there of accumulated sins, and thus completing the atonement.

All of this is of the utmost confusion and violates the true principles of interpreting scripture. It all came about because of failure to recognize and hold fast to the historical foundation of the prophecy as it is clearly given. When the historical connections are made, the meaning becomes clear. We see how God revealed the great attempt of Satan to confuse the work of Christ, and how God's people thwarted the work of Satan, keeping the temple service intact until it met its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

# The Seventy Week Prophecy of Daniel Nine



# CHAPTER SIX

## Daniel Nine: The Seventy Weeks

The prophecy of Daniel Nine begins with an historical reference which establishes a date. The prophecy of the previous chapter is dated in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar of Babylon. Belshazzar reigned for a number of years before his downfall as described in the fifth chapter of Daniel. Historians have determined that the time between the two chapters was about fifteen years. After that rather long period of time, Daniel is still in the land of Babylon, but it is now ruled by the Medes and Persians with Darius as the king. Daniel is now quite an old man. According to Bible dates, it had been sixty-nine years since he had been taken captive to Babylon. We do not know how old he was when taken captive, but if he was fifteen then, he would have been about eighty-four as we come to the prophecy of chapter nine.

It is apparent that Daniel had copies of the scriptures, and as a godly man, he read and studied them. In Daniel 9:2 we find Daniel reading these "books" and noting that the captivity was to last just seventy years, this period of time was almost at an end. Thus far however, he had seen no evidence of the end of the captivity and this concerned him greatly. What did Daniel do?

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes..." (Daniel 9:3). On through verse sixteen we find Daniel in earnest prayer, confessing the sins of the people. In Daniel 9:17,19 he begs God to hear his prayer and "...cause thy face

to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate...defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name”.

The subject of the prayer of Daniel is very important in understanding the rest of the chapter. The last verse of the previous chapter ended with the statement that Daniel “was astonished at the vision, but none understood it” . (Daniel 8:27). There is nothing to indicate that Daniel continued to be concerned about the meaning of that prophecy. As we begin chapter nine, his thoughts are on an entirely different matter. The people of Israel are still in captivity and there is no temple at Jerusalem. Daniel prays earnestly that the prophecy of Jeremiah may be fulfilled, the captivity ended, and the temple rebuilt. He does not know how this may be accomplished but he pleads with God to let it come to pass.

### **God's Answer to Daniel's Prayer**

Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding (Daniel 9:21,22).

The angel Gabriel is mentioned in many places in the Bible as the special messenger of God. Daniel mentions that this is the same messenger that he had seen in the previous vision. This evidently means the vision of Daniel Eight. But there is no other mention of that prophecy or of any further desire of Daniel to understand it. Rather, the angel Gabriel has come to bring an answer to the prayer which Daniel had just concluded.

“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (Daniel 9:23). What matter was he to understand and what vision was he to consider? Certainly it was the matter about which he has just been praying! Daniel is now in a vi-

sion with the angel and a revelation is about to be given. Daniel is to give close attention to it. He has been praying about the restoration of his people, Israel, and the holy city, Jerusalem.

### **The Seventy Weeks**

“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 New American Standard version translates the beginning of the verse: “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city...”.

Daniel had prayed concerning the restoration and future status of Israel and Jerusalem. The prophecy is now given of a certain period of time to be allotted, decreed, cut off or allowed for certain things to take place, all of which have a direct bearing on God’s plan of salvation. The word “determined” or “decreed” may also be translated “cut off”, but there is no hint that this means it is a part of any previously mentioned time period. This period of seventy weeks is decreed, or cut off from time itself. It is as it were, a parcel of time specifically designated, with a definite beginning and ending. During this time wonderful things are to be accomplished in connection with Israel and Jerusalem. Six things were to be accomplished in this time period and so we will consider each.

The first one mentioned is “to finish the transgressions”. Daniel had confessed the sins of the people as a reason for the calamities which had come upon them. The sins of the people would continue even though God would allow them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. These sins reached a climax in the rejection of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this they “finished” or brought to a head all of their sins.

The second thing mentioned is “to make an end of sins”. In other words, to complete the atonement. When the high

priest entered the most holy place of the tabernacle or temple on the Day of Atonement, once each year, he sprinkled the blood of a lamb on the mercy seat. This symbolically transferred the sins of the people to the sanctuary. The forgiveness of the confessed sins of God's people, from Adam to the time of the ministry of Christ, were dependent on the sacrifice of Christ. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12). When Christ shed His blood on the cross, arose, entered heaven, and presented His sacrifice to God, the great atonement was made. All the sins of God's people for which confession had been made and a sacrifice offered, were blotted out never to be remembered again. Ever since Christ made that atonement for us, the sins which we confess, repent of, and ask forgiveness for, are blotted out of God's records. Yes, Jesus truly made "an end of sins".

Thirdly is mentioned, "to make reconciliation for iniquity". During His ministry, Jesus explained the plan by which His followers could have forgiveness for their sins. Under the Law of Moses, Israel had no access to God except through the priests who officiated at the sacrifices. That was the **old** way. Jesus made a new way of access to God for us. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us..." (Hebrews 10:19,20). Thus Jesus made "reconciliation for iniquity". "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Fourthly we find, "to bring in everlasting righteousness". We have no real righteousness of our own, but depend on the righteousness of Christ. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9). The righteousness of Christ is everlasting and it is imputed to us by faith.

The fifth thing mentioned is "to seal up the vision and prophecy". All the many prophecies of the first advent of Christ met their fulfillment in His birth and ministry. The visions of the prophets concerning it were completed — sealed, and in effect ended by His birth and life and His sacrifice for us.

The sixth and final thing in this list is "to anoint the most Holy". When Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to heaven, He became our great High Priest. By the power of God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus was anointed to be High Priest for us. This was the final thing to be accomplished as the time of seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years came to a close. During this period, the plan of salvation centered upon the people of Daniel, the Jewish people of Israel.

### **The Beginning of the Time Period**

Daniel had prayed for the return from captivity and the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. Now the angel declares a definite time when there would be a command to restore Jerusalem. "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).

The return from captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem took place during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. This came after the defeat of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. At first the Medes were dominant, with the King Darius. Later the Persians became the leading faction with their king, Cyrus.

The book of Ezra begins with his proclamation.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord

God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah (Ezra 1:1,2).

There follows, the wording of the permission for Jews to leave Persia and go to Jerusalem. About fifty thousand went under the leadership of Ezra. They began the work of restoration but soon enemies put a stop to the work. King Cyrus died and a following Persian king, Artaxerxes, signed a decree that the rebuilding work at Jerusalem must cease. "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia" (Ezra 4:24).

The temple was finally finished in the sixth year of the reign of Darius, but the city of Jerusalem was still mostly in ruins. The seventh chapter of Ezra records another decree, this one by another king of Persia named Artaxerxes. This decree or command was made in 457 B.C. and is evidently the one referred to in Daniel 9:25. The rebuilding of Jerusalem took a great deal of time, stretching out over about fifty years. The prophecy says it would take place in "seven weeks". It is very clear that these are weeks of years, thus seven weeks would be forty-nine years. Generally in Bible prophecy a day means a year, but this must always be checked with the context. In Daniel Eight we found that literal twenty-four hour days were meant in that prophecy. But in Daniel Nine, the prophecy would have no meaning if literal weeks were meant. It took much longer than seven literal weeks, or forty-nine days, for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It took forty-nine years.

### **The Prophecy of the Messiah**

In this prophecy, we find the most complete and exact revelation of the time for the advent of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. From the time of the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, until the coming of the Messiah was to be "...seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:", or sixty-



nine weeks. Taking a day to represent a year we have a span of 483 years. Subtracting 457 B.C. from this, we arrive at the date 26 A.D. or the year when Christ began His ministry.

Daniel 9:26,27 should be considered together. First let us examine verse twenty-seven, "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...". This refers to the time of the ministry of Christ. The one week is seven years. In the middle of the week, that is after three and one half years, Jesus died on the cross and ended the sacrificial system. This was shown by the rending of the veil in the temple, as we have previously explained.

Note that the seventy weeks lasts three and one half years beyond the death of Christ. The prophecy was that the work of God would center on the Jewish people for that entire length of time. We find that is exactly what happened. The beginning of the work of the church was at Jerusalem. The book of Acts records that many thousands were converted and the church at Jerusalem became very large. This continued for three and one half years which brings us to 33A.D. Acts Eight records the sermon and stoning of Stephen, and what then happened to the early church. "...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria... Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:1,4).

With the stoning of Stephen, the seventy weeks came to an end. The people of Israel had been given their full opportunity to serve God and accept the Messiah. In spite of their rejection, God gave them the full period of time He had promised Daniel. This prophecy is of special importance because it is the only part of the Old Testament which exactly foretells the time of the first advent of Christ. It is proof that Jesus of Nazareth was really the Messiah. Jewish people today who will study this chapter must see this.

### **A False Interpretation to Avoid**

There is a popular, but false, teaching today concerning the last verses of this ninth chapter of Daniel. It is held that the second advent of Christ will be seen only by those who are saved, and that all of a sudden the wicked people of the world will wonder why and where the Christians have disappeared. It is taught that there will then be a period of seven years during which a great wicked ruler will arise, called the Anti-christ. A temple will be built at Jerusalem and this false ruler will occupy it. It is taught that the Messiah of Daniel 9:26 is that wicked ruler. The "week" of verse twenty-seven is the seven years of the rule of the Anti-christ. It is said that sacrifices will be offered for three and one half years and then cease. Terrible things will then happen in the world.

This teaching should be utterly and completely rejected as false. We believe the last verses of Daniel Nine are about the true Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have already noted how He carried on His ministry for three and one half years. We noted how He then caused the sacrifices in the temple of God to end when He became the great sacrifice for sin. We also noted that for three and one half years after His ascension, the work of God through the gospel centered at Jerusalem among the Jewish people. After the end of that time, the gospel spread all over the world.

Daniel 9:26 also tells of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman armies, "...the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary...". Verse twenty-seven reveals there will be no temple of God at Jerusalem before the second advent of Christ. "...and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Jesus lamented over Jerusalem because they would not receive Him. He said, "Behold your house is left unto you

desolate" (Matthew 23:38). So it has been, since the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. no replacement temple has been erected. In spite of claims to the contrary, the Jews have no plans to build a temple and are making no preparations for such. God's Word will hold true.

### **No Connection with Daniel Eight**

There is a teaching that the seventy weeks of Daniel Nine are the first part of the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel Eight. This is based on the false premise that the twenty-three hundred days are twenty-three hundred years. It is held that the word "determined" in Daniel 9:24 should be translated "cut off" and that it therefore must be cut off from something. It is said that in Daniel 9:22, the angel Gabriel has come to give Daniel understanding about the vision of chapter eight and that he shows how to find the beginning of the twenty-three hundred year period.

We have already pointed out that such interpretations are utter confusion. They fail to take into account the historical foundation of chapter eight and to consider the prayer of Daniel in chapter nine. The two prophecies were given about fifteen years apart. Daniel Eight deals with literal twenty-four hour days and was fulfilled about 265 years before the first advent of Christ. Daniel Nine deals with the ending of the seventy year Babylonian captivity and it reveals that from the command to restore Jerusalem, there would be four hundred and ninety years given to the people of Israel. The exact year of Jesus' coming as Messiah is clearly shown, including the three and one half years of His ministry, and the time following His ministry to the end of the four hundred and ninety years. There is absolutely no connection between the prophecies of Daniel Eight and Daniel Nine. The only similarity to note is that the same angel, Gabriel, reveals both prophecies to Daniel. Centuries later the same angel revealed to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus, as recorded in Luke 1:26.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Prophecies Concerning Israel

Much of the Bible is about the special people of God, Israel. Bible prophecy is very closely connected to this people. Indeed it may be said, that Israel is the main key to understanding the prophecies of the Bible. The great nations in the prophecies of Daniel Two, Seven, Eight, and Nine are all directly linked with the history of Israel. We found this to be especially true of chapters eight and nine. Now we shall go back to the beginning of Israel's history, and see how prophecies relating to it, reach down to our present time and to the second advent of Christ.

The Bible from the first chapter of Genesis through verse nine of the eleventh chapter is about the development of the people of the earth up to the great flood, and then of the descendents of the two sons of Noah, Ham and Japheth. The first part of chapter eleven tells of the confusion of the languages at Babel, and its result in scattering people over the earth. Then with chapter eleven, verse ten, we find a record of the descendents of Shem down to and including Abraham. Here is where the story of the special people of God begins. With chapter twelve, we have the beginning of the special prophecies of the coming Messiah in the lineage of Abraham.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 13:1-3).

We read "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. ...for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 22:18; 21:12). In these verses we have the promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in the lineage of Abraham through Isaac. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made...And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

There is also another promise made to Abraham. This promise is of a temporal blessing to the literal seed or descendents of Abraham, through the lineage of Isaac.

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:... And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession... (Genesis 15:18; 17:8).

These temporal promises to the literal seed or descendents of Abraham are very important in the history of Israel and in the fulfillment of prophecy. They are the basis of the claim of modern Israel to the land of Palestine.

Isaac was the son of Abraham by his wife, Sarah. Ishmael was also the son of Abraham, but by the servant-wife Hagar. Ishmael married an Egyptian, and the modern Egyptians and all Moslem Arabs claim to be his descendents. However, the special promises of God to Abraham were to be through the son God had promised, Isaac. Jacob and Esau were the two sons of Isaac and the special promises of blessing were through the "seed" or lineage of Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel and he had twelve sons. Each son became the father of one of the twelve families or tribes of Israel.

### **Israel History**

The book of Genesis records how Jacob, his sons, and their families journeyed to Egypt, and how their descendents became slaves there. In Exodus, we have the record of the deliverance which God brought about using Moses as the

leader. Joshua led Israel across the Jordan into the promised land where the twelve tribes or family groups were given land areas. The period of leadership by the Judges covers about four hundred years and then Israel becomes a kingdom. Saul, David, and Solomon were the rulers of the undivided nation of Israel. In the reign of Solomon the nation came to its highest level of prosperity and power. It seemed that the blessings promised in Deuteronomy Twenty-eight were a reality. But the continuation of these blessings depended on obedience to the laws of God. In the time following the reign of Solomon, the kingdom divided and the kings and people departed from the true worship of God.

The promise had been made that if Israel was faithful and obedient, the kingdom would continue with a king on the throne. The first promise to David concerned only the throne. "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (II Samuel 7:16). When David was about to die he stated the full meaning of God's promise to him thus: "That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (I Kings 2:4). We also find this promise recorded in Second Chronicles 6:16. "Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me."

We notice in these verses that the promise is strongly conditional on obedience to God by Israel, and the descendants of David. Soon after the death of Solomon, Judah and Israel and their rulers began to depart from the laws of God. The kingdom was divided, and in 721 B.C. the northern part, called Israel, went into captivity to Assyria. In the time from

606 to 585 B.C. the southern kingdom, called Judah, went into captivity to the same geographical region. By then this region was controlled by the empire of Babylon since it had conquered Assyria. The throne of David was at Jerusalem and the last kings to sit on that throne were Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. In Second Chronicles Thirty-six we have the record of how the kingdom and the sovereign throne were lost in three stages. The first two of the above named kings suffered increasing loss. The final end came when Jerusalem was captured and destroyed along with the temple, and the king was taken captive to Babylon where he died. The reason for this calamity is given thus: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (II Chronicles 36:16).

The prophet Ezekiel declared that the downfall of Jerusalem and the throne would be in three stages and God's promise would be fulfilled. He wrote,

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ezekiel 21:25-27).

The promise to David was that the throne, the position of kingship, would remain perpetually. It would continue to be occupied by a man, a visible king, as long as the people of Israel and their kings were obedient to God. Because of disobedience, the throne became vacant, but that position is held in existence and is ready to be given to the one "whose right it is".

This is further brought out in the following:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up un-

to David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel (Jeremiah 33:14-17).

The "Branch of righteousness" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. At His second advent He will occupy the throne of David at Jerusalem. He is the one "whose right it is".

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:32,33). Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever... (Isaiah 9:7).

### **The Babylonian Captivity and Return**

The prophet Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem during the reign of Zedekiah. The book of Jeremiah records many events of that time. Jeremiah was persecuted because he foretold that Jerusalem would be captured, and advised the king's surrender to prevent suffering and bloodshed. Through Jeremiah, God gave a prophecy concerning what was to happen.

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place (Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10).

This prophecy of a return after seventy years was fulfilled in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Medo-Persia had conquered Babylon, and the Persian king, Cyrus, gave permission for the return.



Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom... The Lord God of heaven...hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah... (Ezra 1:1,2,3).

The second chapter of Ezra records names of the leaders and families of Israel, and the number who returned. Most of these people were descendants of those who had lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. They were mostly then of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the Levites, the priestly tribe. But there is abundant evidence in the book of Ezra, that of the fifty thousand who returned, there were people of all twelve tribes of Israel. Their first work was to rebuild the temple of God.

And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel (Ezra 3:1,10).

The new temple was completed and dedicated, but the walls of Jerusalem had not been rebuilt. The king of Persia appointed Nehemiah governor of the Persian province of Judea, and under his leadership the walls of Jerusalem were built. The land of Palestine continued to be a province of Persia until Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great. Palestine then became a Greek province until it became part of the Roman empire. Palestine continued to be part of the Roman Empire until the fall of the Roman empire, and its takeover by other people.

The so-called "prophet" Mohammed proclaimed Jerusalem a holy city of his new religion. It was said that he ascended to heaven from there. It is claimed that the Dome of the Rock, also called the Mosque of Omar, is built over a

rock which was the altar on which Abraham tried to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Various Mohammedan people ruled Palestine under the leadership of Omar, then Othman, and then Ali to 661 A.D. Subsequently there was the Umayyad empire of Islam, followed by the Abbasids in 750 A.D.

The Abbasid caliphs, who had once ruled the great Mohammedan empire from Bagdad had lost their power... In the middle of the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks took over what remained of their empire... Jerusalem was captured by the Turks in 1071 (*A Survey of European Civilization*, pages 203,204).

The Crusades began in 1096 A.D. with the object of recovering Jerusalem from the Moslems and making it safe for pilgrimages to the holy places there. The Turks had almost completely expelled the Jews from the land and few if any Jews lived in Jerusalem. The kings of Europe succeeded in taking over Jerusalem in 1099 A.D. and establishing what they called "the kingdom of Jerusalem". This was in no sense a restoration of the throne of David. The kingdom of Jerusalem was **not** a kingdom of Israel, but of European people. In 1187 A.D., Saladin conquered Jerusalem. He was a Turkish ruler. Jerusalem and the land of Palestine continued to be ruled by Moslem Turks until captured by the British general, Allenby, in 1917. It was ruled by British occupation until 1922 when the League of Nations authorized Britain to rule there by Mandate. Under British rule, Jews began to return to Palestine in greater numbers.

A movement to return had begun about 1897 when the Jewish leader Theodore Herzl called the first Zionist Congress in Switzerland. There was some immigration of Jews to Palestine from 1905 to 1914. World War I brought immigration to a halt. The Turkish regime expelled many Jews, others left because of bad conditions. Significant return of Jews began after 1917 and especially after 1922. The British governed the land until May 15, 1948. During that time tension between the Arabs and Jews increased. The Arabs demanded that the British stop the immigration of Jews. In answer to this, the British established quotas and issued a

limited number of permits for legal entry of Jews to Palestine. This came in the 1930's when Hitler of Germany was trying to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Jews tried every way to escape, including crowding into old ships. When the British found such a shipload at sea, they forced it to Cyprus where the Jews were placed in concentration camps. Those who made it to Palestine without a permit were called "illegal immigrants". If caught they were deported. One shipload of Jews was even sent back to Germany to face almost certain death.

### **Why the Zionist Movement?**

The Jewish people were scattered among nations all over the world. The term "diaspora" refers to this dispersed condition. Throughout all the centuries, most Jews have longed to go and live in Israel. Whenever Jews were able to go, they always referred to it as a "return" to that land, even though personally they had never been there before. Each year at the celebration of Passover, most closed the service with the words, "next year in Jerusalem". Still there seemed no possible chance that this could occur. How and why did it happen then, that in this century the return was made possible and Israel was established as an independent nation? To find the answer we must turn to the prophecies of the Bible.

### **Jeremiah Thirty**

We previously noted that the prophet Jeremiah in chapters twenty-five and twenty-nine predicted the Babylonian captivity of the Jews would last just seventy years. We read in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah how this was fulfilled and how the temple was rebuilt at Jerusalem along with the walls of the city. All who returned at that time came from the same region within the Persian empire. This was just about due **east** of the land of Palestine. By the permission and sponsorship of the king of Persia, about fifty thousand Jews returned

at the time of Ezra and a smaller number with Nehemiah. Palestine was part of the Persian empire and continued to be so, the returning Jews were governed by an appointee of the Persian king. The Jews at that time did **not** establish a nation and the land did not become theirs.

It is remarkable that after the prophecy in Jeremiah Twenty-nine regarding the return from seventy years of captivity, the next chapter would tell of another and very different return.

Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it (Jeremiah 30:2,3).

Note that this concerns **all twelve tribes**, Israel and Judah. They will return to the land given to their "fathers" and would **possess** it. In Genesis 15:18 we find the promise to Abraham, "...Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates..." At first reading this may seem to mean from the river Nile to the Euphrates, which would include a large part of Egypt. However the verse itself shows the true meaning. It indicates that the "river of Egypt" is a **smaller** river than the Euphrates. It is fact that the Nile is a much **greater** river than the Euphrates. Just south of the present land of Israel is a small river often labeled on maps "the brook of Egypt", otherwise the "river of Egypt". The promised land is thus from this small river to the much greater river, the Euphrates. This promise of the land was repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac, in Genesis 26:4, and to Isaac's son, Jacob, in Genesis 28:13.

The prophecy of Jeremiah 30:3 not only identifies this land, but states that at this return they would **possess** it. This is the first clue that it is a different return than the one during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. At that time the land was not theirs, but in this return it was to be their own!

## **A Time of Great Trouble**

As we read on in Jeremiah Thirty, we find that the conditions of this return would be vastly different from those of the return sponsored and protected by the king of Persia and recorded in the book of Ezra.

For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

Right in connection with the prophecy of the return, we find this description of a great time of trouble, a greater trouble than ever before, a time of trembling and paleness. Reading on down, we find a further description and a reason for the travail,

For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured... For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wound... (Jeremiah 30:11,15,16,17).

When was the time of Jewish trembling and when were they literally being "devoured"? Just at the time when it appeared conditions were most favorable for the Jews to return to Palestine, Hitler came into power. He was determined to solve once and for all what he called the "Jewish problem". By this he really meant the existance of the Jews. Having gained control of most of Europe, Hitler arrested Jews in much of Europe and loaded them into freight trains headed to Germany. There, along with German Jews, they were

systematically put to death. The Jews call this the "Holocaust". Over six million Jews lost their lives. Many tried frantically to escape, some were able to reach the land of Palestine. Truly it was one of the greatest times of trouble for "Jacob" — the people of Israel. But as scripture said, those who destroyed the Jews were themselves destroyed, Hitler and those with him met their deserved fate.

After all the suffering, those who made their way to the land of Israel were filled with joy. As they landed, most, if not all of them, actually got down and kissed the ground. They sang and danced to show their happiness. This is a fulfillment of Jeremiah 30:19: "And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small".

The return of Jews to their homeland in recent years is further described in Jeremiah 31:8, "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither".

In the time of Ezra they returned from **one** country which was **east** of Palestine. But the return described in the above verse is from the **north** and from the "coasts of the earth", indicating many lands. The greatest migration in recent years has been from Europe which is directly **north** of Palestine. They have also come from many other nations of the world, and in various conditions of health and other circumstances.

The prophecy further indicates that not only would the land be theirs, but they would have their own government. In Jeremiah 30:21 we read, "And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them...".

The last verse of chapter thirty shows the surety of its fulfillment and the time it would take place. "The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it".

## **Israel Becomes a Nation**

\* Early in 1948 the organization of the United Nations adopted a plan for the division of Palestine. Part was to be given to the Jews and part to the Arabs. The Jews accepted the plan, but the Arabs rejected it. On May 15, 1948 the British withdrew from Palestine. The surrounding Arab nations immediately attacked the Jews. On the very day of the British withdrawal, the Jewish leaders met and issued a declaration of independence for the new nation, to be called Israel. The United States was the first nation to give recognition to this new nation, the Soviet Union was second. The Jews had very few weapons with which to fight the attacking Arabs. In battle after battle, the Jews began with very little and ended with many weapons and much ammunition captured. The war continued into 1949 until the United Nations was finally able to get a cease-fire and later an armistice agreement. The Arab nations, although unable to defeat or destroy Israel, were unwilling to make a peace treaty. Technically they continued to be in a state of war although the actual fighting had stopped.

The 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war ended with Israel having conquered about a third more territory than had been allotted to it by the United Nation's plan. But, the Old City of Jerusalem remained in the Arab nation of Jordan. The Jews built a new city of Jerusalem just to the west of the Old, and there constructed an imposing capitol building. The Zionist movement had been successful in the establishment of the nation of Israel, but it was without Zion, the temple area of the Old City. The most sacred place of the Jews, the Western Wall, often called the wailing wall, remained in Arab control. No Jews were permitted to come to it. This wall is part of the foundation of the Temple built by Herod the Great just previous to the ministry of Christ.

## **From 1948 to 1967**

During the thirty years from 1918 to 1948 approximately 600,000 Jews returned to the land of Israel. After the nation of Israel was established, another 600,000 returned in only a three year period. Israel proclaimed "the law of the return" which stated that every Jew in the world had the right to freely return and live in Israel. Never again would there be any Jew called an "illegal immigrant" as had been the case while the British governed.

During the years from 1948 to 1967, Israel not only grew in Jewish population but also carried on a vast housing program. Jews, who had not been very active in agriculture in other parts of the world, now became some of the most efficient farmers. They began to make the desert produce many food crops. Besides the olive trees which had always grown in Palestine, the Jews now planted orange groves. Their "Jaffa oranges" became known throughout Europe. They developed a dwarf banana. It grows only about eight feet tall but produces a large bunch of bananas which rests on the ground. The Jews who came from all parts of the world brought with them many skills. Israel became, and still is, one of the most highly industrialized nations. They have more medical doctors in porportion to the population than in any other nation.

### **Israel's Armed Forces Develop**

After 1948, Israel developed the most efficient armed force in the world. Young men and women are conscripted and must spend several years in training. Israel has a highly developed air force. Although most of its planes come from the United States, some very advanced fighting planes are actually manufactured in Israel. The northern Israeli city of Haifa is the center of Jewish industry. It has the only natural seaport of the nation. Israel has not developed a navy of



large ships but has many fast gunboats. There are also a large number of commercial cargo ships under the flag of Israel. In this connection we may mention that the Israel commercial air line, El Al, operates safely and efficiently in all parts of the world.

### **The Six Day War of 1967**

During the spring of 1967, the Arab nations surrounding Israel carried on a campaign of hate against the Jewish nation. President Nasser of Egypt was a leader in this. He set up a blockade of the opening to the Gulf of Aquaba, cutting off Israeli access to its seaport of Eliat. This was an act of war and Israel protested in the United Nations assembly. Nasser massed war tanks and other war equipment along the border of the Sinai, ready to strike out across the desert toward Israel.

When it seemed war would break out at any moment, Israel struck first with an air raid on Egyptian airfields. Almost all of the Egyptian fighter planes and bombers were destroyed in this attack. The Egyptian war tanks and big guns immediately started across the Sinai to invade Israel. At the same time, the army of Jordan invaded Israel from the east and Syria invaded from the north. Israel was prepared, in just six days all three Arab nations were badly defeated.

Israel took hundreds of prisoners of war and captured a great number of Russian built war tanks and other war equipment. Israel also took the old city of Jerusalem and all the land west of the Jordan river. They took the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. The Gaza Strip was a part of Egypt next to the Mediterranean Sea. The Golan Heights was a part of Syria, north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Israel also took all of the Sinai peninsula to the Suez Canal. Egypt sank ships in the canal to block it and it remained closed until after the 1973 war.

In taking the Old City of Jerusalem, Israel regained possession of the Western Wall (wailing wall). Bulldozers cleared the area of Arab buildings. Israeli soldiers rushed to the wall

amid weeping, rejoicing, and much prayer. Israel regained its Hebrew University located on Mt. Scopus, an area of high land, which had been Arab territory since the war of 1948. Israel had built another Hebrew University in West Jerusalem and now had both campuses. In spite of the protests of Arabs and many other nations, Israel annexed the Old City of Jerusalem, declaring the whole city unified as the eternal capital of the nation. A fine new office building was built and is the location of the office of the prime minister. But the embassies of most of the nations, including the United States, are in Tel Aviv. This is an effort to keep peace with the oil producing Arab nations. King Hussein of Jordan declared, in the summer of 1981, that there would never be peace in the Middle East until the Old City of Jerusalem is returned to the Arabs, or made an international city.

### **The 1973 War**

I have neglected to mention that there was a brief war in 1956 in which England and France joined with Israel against Egypt. This was largely an attempt of England to retain control of the Suez Canal. Egypt was defeated but the United Nations forced a return to the situation before the conflict. The Suez Canal remained in Egyptian control.

In the fall of 1973 Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israel. It seems that Israel was caught entirely by surprise. The attack came on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, one of the Jewish High Holy days. Most of the army was on leave for that day of fasting and prayer. Syria also launched an attack from the north and actually invaded part of northern Israel. The Jewish armies hastily mobilized and soon drove back the Syrians. Meanwhile, the Egyptians were coming across the Sinai after destroying the Jewish fortifications on the east bank of the Suez Canal. For a few days it appeared Israel was being defeated; they had suffered heavy losses. But things changed and soon they were pushing back the Egyptians. Israel was able to surround the Egyptian army, oc-

cupy over 500 square miles of Egypt on the west side of the Suez, and were on their way toward Cairo. At this point, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Israel to immediately cease-fire and release the Egyptian army, or Russia would enter the war against Israel. The United States took the threat seriously and also insisted on an end to the conflict.

Israel released the captured army and withdrew to the high ground of the Mitla pass in the Sinai peninsula. But Israel retained an oil producing area of the Sinai and took the oil from it for several years. No peace treaty was arrived at as none of the Arab nations would negotiate with Israel. Israel continued to establish Jewish settlements in the West Bank area and in the eastern part of the Sinai. The Arabs constantly protested.

### **A Peace Treaty with Egypt**

In November of 1977, the world was surprised and startled at the astounding news of Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, going to Jerusalem. Up to that time, no Arab leader would consider making a treaty of peace with Israel. No Arab leader would even sit at the same table with a leader of Israel to talk about anything, and least of all to consider negotiations for a peace treaty. Now the leader of one of the most important and populous Arab nations, was not only willing to talk to Jews, but went to Jerusalem and made a speech before the Knessett (parliament) of Israel. He agreed to negotiate with Israel's leaders to arrive at a treaty for peace. Sadat invited the leaders of the other Arab nations to a conference at Cairo for this same purpose. However, none of the others accepted, but instead denounced Egypt and Sadat.

Later President Carter of the United States invited Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat to a conference at Camp David, his presidential retreat. There the details of a peace agreement were worked out. This peace agreement was ratified in Israel and Egypt, and diplomatic relations resumed between the two nations. Included in the treaty was a provi-

sion for Israel to gradually return all of the Sinai peninsula to Egypt. This was completed April 25, 1982. After the assassination of President Sadat, the new president, Hosni Mubarak pledged to uphold the peace treaty with Israel.

### **A Fulfillment of Prophecy**

Among all the Arab nations, only Egypt has made a peace treaty with Israel. This agrees with some indications in Bible prophecy. Until 1977 Egypt had been aided by Russia in its wars against Israel. But in the final conflict in which Russia will invade Israel, Egypt will also be invaded. This invasion is described in Daniel 11:41, 42. "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown...He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape."

In the light of this we will expect the peace treaty to be continued between Israel and Egypt and also for relations between Egypt and Russia to get worse.

### **The Nation of Israel to Continue**

The Arab nations continue to oppose the very existence of Israel and threaten its destruction. But the Bible shows clearly that after Israel is permitted to return from the dispersion and to restore their land and be a nation, that they will remain so until the coming of Christ. Note how the following passage shows that Israel would not take root in any of the lands to which they were scattered, but would return to the land of Israel and remain there.

For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God (Amos 9:9,14,15).  
Scattered among all nations and blended like the ingre-

dients of a flour mix, they did not take root anywhere. The Jews were in captivity in the nations, in the sense that those who ruled Palestine would not permit them to return. But at last, they were "brought again" or released from that captivity when their own people secured the land. A great company of Jews have returned and have built up the cities. They have planted olive trees and grape vineyards and all kinds of fruits, grains and vegetables. The world has marvelled at how productive they have made the land. God has said, that when all this has been accomplished, they will not be again uprooted or driven from their homeland.

All these things are also the fulfillment of a prophecy found in the Psalms. We read;

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory (Psalm 102:13-16).

Jews have called their return the "Zionist movement". By many miracles, they have obtained the land and have established their own nation. They have taken Mount Zion, the Old City of Jerusalem, and it is now truly "built up". When this happens the prophecy says that the Lord "shall appear in his glory". What is happening in the land of Israel is one of the great signs of the nearness of the second advent of Christ.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Jesus Foretells The Signs Of His Return

The prophecy of Jesus regarding signs of the nearness of His second advent are found in Matthew Twenty-four, Mark Thirteen and Luke Twenty-one. These are three records of the same message of Jesus. The disciples asked Jesus, "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). In His answer Jesus not only told of signs which would be before His second advent, but He also told of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which was fulfilled in 70 and 135 A.D. It is important to determine which part of the prophecy refers to these years and which refers to events almost 2000 years later, just before His second advent.

Matthew 24:1-14, Mark 13:1-13, and Luke 21:1-19 cover the time period of the Gospel era. The great world wars and disease epidemics are described along with deceptions and persecutions. But also described are the preaching of the gospel in all the world and then the coming of the "end" or second advent of Christ. The prophetic message changes with Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20. Each of these verses begins a description of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which took place in two phases.

In 70 A.D. the Roman emperor, Titus, destroyed the temple and a part of Jerusalem. The city continued under Roman rule until a great revolt led to its complete destruction by the Roman emperor, Hadrian, in 135 A.D. Both destructions were times of great distress for the Jewish people. In the second, the city was under siege for some time and finally star-

vation forced its surrender. Every structure of the city was leveled and its people were killed or sold into slavery. The ground was plowed and sowed with salt to indicate that it was never to rise again. The Romans built another city nearby, gave it a Roman name, and thought they had destroyed Jerusalem for all time. The city was later rebuilt, however, the temple was not. Jesus had said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:38).

The terror of the Roman destruction is vividly described in the Bible. The prophet Daniel had foretold the destruction of the temple. He wrote, "...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary... desolations are determined...and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate..." (Daniel 9:26,27). Luke declares, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" (Luke 21:22,23).

Matthew's description is even more terrifying. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:21,22). All of this must refer to the suffering during the destruction of Jerusalem, especially that of 135 A.D. under the siege of Hadrian's armies. Matthew 24:15-22 is a continuous narrative concerning that destruction and suffering.

### **Another Time of Tribulation**

Beginning with Matthew 24:23, the subject changes. There begins a description of events between 135 A.D. and the second advent of Christ. During this time there would be much false teaching. Many would claim to have the true message of Christ and would even do signs and wonders so great as to

possibly deceive true people of God. These things have occurred and continue to do so in our time.

During these centuries, evidently at the end of this time, there will be another time of great tribulation just preceding and leading up to the second advent of Christ. We read,

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:29,30).

Notice that it says "after the tribulation of **those** days". The days referred to here are not during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. They are during the time described, beginning with verse twenty-three, which refers to events just preceding the second advent. The tribulation of Matthew 24:29 is evidently the same as that mentioned in Daniel 12:1. In Daniel this time of tribulation is connected with, or just at the close of, the battle of Armageddon. Then comes the resurrection when the raised saints shine "as the brightness of the firmament".

The time of trouble in Matthew 24:29 is followed by great signs in the heavens, including the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of stars. The second advent of Christ will follow these signs. There is no indication of a lengthy period of time between the signs in the heavens and the coming of Jesus. We read in,

...[T]hose days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:29,30).

### **Signs in the Heavens Have Not Yet Happened**

There is a teaching that the heavenly signs all took place



over one hundred years ago. On May 19, 1780, there was a strange darkness in the New England states, the small north east area of the United States. It was said to have lasted for about fifteen hours and there seemed to be no explanation for it. That night the moon was a dark red color, indicating something unusual in the atmosphere. In the year 1833, there was a spectacular meteoric shower which was visible all over the Western Hemisphere. It came from the constellation Leo and was evidently the result of the breakup of a comet.

It is taught by at least one church organization that the above mentioned events were a fulfillment of the prophecy of Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12,13. This teaching is found in a book published in 1890 who's author evidently expected the second advent of Christ to have occurred long before now. A careful study of the Bible texts will show that these events of 1780 and 1833 were **not** the fulfillment of the prophecies of Matthew Twenty-four and Revelation Six. The signs of the second advent of Christ will be seen by **all** the people of the world. When the sun is darkened in fulfillment of the prophecy, **all the world** will know it, not just a small area of the northeast United States. The falling of the stars happens at about the same time as the darkened sun, not fifty years later. That sign will also be seen by all the world, not just the western hemisphere, and it will probably not be just a shower of meteors. In both Matthew 24:29,30 and Revelation 6:12-17, it is easily seen that the second advent of Christ will be immediately after, and in direct connection with, the signs in the heavens, not many years later.

### After 1967

The signs in the sun, moon and stars were evidently to come sometime **after the year 1967. We learn this from Luke 21:24,25. Verse 24 contains Jesus' prophecy that after the destruction of Jerusalem there would be a long period when the Jews would be exiled. Jerusalem would be ruled by Gentiles un-**

**til** that time would end. The Jews lost their rule of Jerusalem about 585 B.C. and regained it in June of 1967. It is **after** this event that Jesus mentions there would be "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars" . Luke 2:26 indicates a time of world trouble. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 2:27).

Now that Jerusalem is ruled by the Jews we can look for the signs in the heavens to come soon, and then the second advent of Christ. Along with these signs there will be a time of world trouble. We see this already in some areas, with omens of it everywhere. This is a time for careful study along with the watching of world events and prophecy.

# CHAPTER NINE

## The Manner Of Christ's Second Advent

During His ministry, the Lord Jesus taught that he would return to heaven, but later He would return to the earth. His first advent was humble; the second advent will be glorious and with power. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matthew 25:31). "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

The first chapter of the book of Acts records the ascension of Jesus. The disciples watched as He went up into the heavens. Suddenly they were aware of two men in white garments standing with them, evidently angels of God. "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

When Jesus was on earth for His ministry, that was His **first advent**. When He comes again it will be His **second advent**. The Bible clearly teaches just **two advents**. This is plainly brought out in Hebrews 9:28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation".

### **Secret to Some or Visible to All?**

Many believe and teach that the above text indicates only

the redeemed will see Jesus at His second advent. The verse could be understood to mean either that only those who look for Him will see Him, or that only to those who look for Him will He appear with salvation. To understand which is correct we need to look at other texts which tell of His second advent.

In Matthew 24:30 we read, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". Notice that there will be some of all peoples on earth who will "mourn" when they see Christ coming. But the redeemed are **not** going to mourn or be sorry at His coming. It will be a most joyous day for the people of God. Read the description of that joy in Isaiah 25:8,9. But the lost will mourn and be sad when they **see** Him coming. They will not be among those who are looking for Him, but they will **see** Him coming.

We also find the second advent of Christ described in Revelation 6:14-17. We read in verses fifteen and sixteen,

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men...hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

The people described above are surely not looking for Christ to come, they are not ready. But they all **see** Him coming. This point is further brought out in Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen". Every living eye will see Jesus come and many will "wail" when they see Him coming.

These verses prove that the second advent of Jesus will **not** be secret to anyone. There will be **no secret rapture**. Why then do most of the popular evangelical churches teach and look for this secret advent?

## **Like a Thief in the Night**

The phrase, "like a thief in the night" is found in several descriptions of the second advent of Christ, and has been often misunderstood. However, in each case, the Bible passages are written in a way which should make the meaning clear and prevent misunderstanding. In no case does the text indicate a quiet or secret advent, but rather at an unexpected time.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matthew 24:43,44). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief (I Thessalonians 5:4). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise... (II Peter 3:10).

It is taught that First Thessalonians 4:14-18 teaches the rapture. This passage describes the second advent of Christ and the resurrection of the saints from their graves. They, with the living, will rise to meet the Lord Jesus as He is descending to the earth. It says, "...so shall we ever be with the Lord". One teaching is that when the saints meet the Lord in the sky, they will return with Him to heaven and remain there for thousand years. The more popular teaching is that the saints remain in the heavens with Christ for seven years, during this time the Antichrist rules on earth. Both these teachings are false.

## **He Will Come In Like Manner As He Went**

As Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, the angels told the watching disciples, "...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Shall so come to where? From the place from which He ascended which was this earth. Jesus also said, "if I go, I will come again". He went from the earth; He will return **all the way to the earth!** He ascended from the earth into the sky; He will descend from the sky to the earth.

### **No Third Advent**

The secret rapture teaching and the thousand years in heaven teaching both require that Christ come to earth a **third time**. The Bible does not mention any such third advent. Jesus said he would "come again". We read in Hebrews 9:28 that Jesus will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation". In Revelation 22:12 Jesus says, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me..."

The description of the second advent in First Thessalonians Four shows the saints rising to meet Christ as He is on His way to this earth. What then happens is described in Zechariah 14:1-9. All nations of the earth will be in a war centering at Jerusalem. That city will be captured and suffer greatly.

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley...and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one (Zechariah 14:3,4,9).

This passage in Zechariah completes the picture of the **second advent** which begins in First Thessalonians Four. The saints rise to meet Christ. Christ then precedes the saints to the Mount of Olives which divides to make a great valley into which the saints descend. The kingdom of Christ is established and He reigns from Jerusalem. We will study the thousand year reign of Christ when we study the message of Revelation Twenty and other Bible passages on this wonderful subject.

# CHAPTER TEN

## Revelation One: An Introduction

The opening verses of the book of Revelation tell us that God gave this message to Jesus Christ who then "sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1). Verse nine tells us that John received this revelation while he was an exile on an island called Patmos. In verse five we are again told that the message is from Jesus Christ, "...him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen".

In connection with our study of the second advent of Christ we have used Revelation 1:7. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Everyone living on the earth will see Jesus coming at His second advent. In addition, all the saints who are in their graves will rise and will also see Him come. Among those mentioned are "they also which pierced him". This refers to the Roman soldiers who pierced the head of Jesus with the thorns, and pierced his side with a spear. Jesus prayed that the Father should forgive them. Their sin was not unpardonable. If they repented, accepted Christ, and lived in obedience to His Word, they will be saved. How wonderful is the love of God!

Revelation 1:10 is often misunderstood as referring to the first day of the week, Sunday. However, if it does refer to a day of the week, it would be the Sabbath day. Jesus declared

in Mark 2:28, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath". But, it is evident from what follows that the term "Lord's day" means "day of the Lord", the last days or time of the end. We will find that the book is prophecy concerning God's people, the church. The prophecies cover events from the Day of Pentecost in Acts Two, until the culmination of the plan of salvation after the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.

### **To the Seven Churches**

The apostle is told to write what is revealed to him and send it to the seven churches in Asia! These churches are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Chapters two and three are addressed to these churches.

The remainder of chapter one is a description of the glory of Christ in heaven. He is seen holding seven stars and He is in the midst of seven golden candlesticks. In verse twenty, it is revealed that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the candlesticks are the seven churches.

Who or what is represented by the "seven churches"? As we study chapters two and three, it will become evident that there actually were Churches of God in each of the seven cities mentioned. The churches may also represent seven periods of time, or the conditions found in God's church at different times. It is also evident that the situations and problems of the seven churches are to be found in the Church of God at any given time, including the present.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## Revelation Two and Three: The Seven Churches

### Ephesus

Revelation Two opens with the words "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write..." There has been much conjecture as to what is meant by the term "angel" of the church. We know there are a great many angels of God in heaven. The angel Gabriel is a special messenger of God in the book of Daniel. It has been suggested that here the word angel means "pastor", but we have no other record that these churches had pastors. In Hebrews 1:14 we are told that the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation". It would seem that an angel of God had a special ministry in each of the churches. This may yet be true in connections with the Churches of God today. In any case, the message is especially to the **people** of each church. The main value of the messages to the churches is to be found in their application to us today. These messages are prophetic of conditions to be found in these last days.

We find that Ephesus is reproved for having departed from their "first love". They still hated false doctrines but they did not have the love for God, for people, for the lost, as they had when they were first converted. We find this condition in the church in our time. Fervent love of God and fellowman is essential for us to be truly Christians.

### **Smyrna**

Smyrna is a church which suffers persecution and is admonished to remain faithful in spite of it. It is mentioned that its persecution would last "ten days" which may mean ten years. This may represent the persecution at the time of the Roman emperor Diocletian, the last attempt of the empire to stamp out Christianity. Many who have claimed to be people of God (Jews) were unfaithful and so are condemned. We find the same condition in the world today, many claim to be Christians but are not willing to follow Christ and the true Way of Life.

### **Pergamos**

The message to Pergamos is against those who profess to be Christians but who are immoral. All through the ages Satan has brought about the downfall of professed Christians by tempting them with sexual immorality. The danger was never greater than today.

### **Thyatira**

This church has charity (love), service, faith, and patience. They are active in the work of the Lord. But they are too tolerant. They permit Jezebel to teach and to seduce people to sin. The ancient queen Jezebel was wicked in every way. Open sin should not be tolerated among the people of God. Spiritual death will be the result if deception, oppression, and immorality are condoned.

### **Sardis**

The church at Sardis has a name that it is alive, but it is actually spiritually dead. Today we speak of "nominal" churches, those which teach the popular doctrines, have a strong social program, but do not really follow Bible truth, nor bring about the conversion of sinners to Christ. This

situation has been found in all ages but here we note it lasts until the second advent.

The church is urged to be watching so that the coming of Christ will not be unexpected as a thief. Note that these messages to the churches are especially for the end time. There is the repeated admonition to hold fast until the coming of the Lord.

### **Philadelphia**

The church at Philadelphia has the "key of David". This may mean it has the knowledge that Christ is the "son of David" and that He will reign on the "throne of David" at Jerusalem. It is a time of a great "open door" for the proclamation of the true message of salvation. There are still many who claim to be "Jews", people of God, but who are false. Those who are true will be preserved in the time of great trouble which comes on the world just prior to the second advent of Christ. As with the other churches, they are told to "hold fast" because Jesus is coming very soon.

### **Laodicea**

There have always been those who claim to be Christians but have no real zeal for the Lord. They are said to be "lukewarm", a condition repulsive to God. This condition is often found among professed Christians in these last days. With so much happening in the world showing the nearness of Christ's coming, many are still half-hearted in their faith. These may attend church, enjoy the music and the fellowship, but do little or nothing in the way of promoting the spread of the true gospel. They live comfortably in their fine homes and in the culture of their church. They say we are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". The admonition of the Lord is sharp and clear. The gold of true Christian character is to be sought, the eyes annointed to see, and the clothing of the righteousness of Christ is to be worn. The Lord Jesus is coming soon and only the over-

comers will be ready. The message is yet for us in our time, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:22).

We have briefly summed up the essential thought of each message to the seven churches. We have not taken up many details in the messages or tried to explain them. The important thing is to consider the messages which apply to us in these last days, and to give heed to them.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## Revelation Four, Five and Six: The Seven Seals

The fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation provide an introduction to opening six of the seven seals, as recorded in chapter six. The fact that the message is to be prophetic is shown by Revelation 4:1, "...Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter". There follows a vision of God's throne in heaven and the beings which surround it. There are twenty-four "elders" and four "beasts" or living creatures, these have symbolic meaning. Since they surround the throne of God in heaven, they do not directly pertain to us on earth. They do help us understand something of the glory and the system of the court in heaven.

After describing the throne of God in chapter four, chapter five describes God having in his hand a book, sealed with seven seals. We were told in the introduction of chapter four that this vision concerns the future. Since we are told in Isaiah 46:10 that God declares "the end from the beginning", we conclude that this sealed book is of future events as of the time it was given. No one else in heaven or earth knows the future, and so there was much weeping because no one was found worthy to open that book. Then one of the elders declares that there is one worthy to open the book. Namely, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5). We recognize this as a description of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David. The remainder of chapter five is a scene of rejoicing and worship as the book is about to be opened.

## **The Four Horsemen**

As we begin chapter six, the Lamb, the Lord Jesus opens the first seal of the book to reveal what was to happen in connection with the people of God.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:2). The white horse and rider is believed to denote the true church for about its first one hundred years. It was pure of false doctrines. It was a church militant, everywhere spreading the true gospel of Christ.

The rider has a bow, but arrows are not mentioned. However, the bow implies that it is ready for use. It has the same meaning as the “sword”, a weapon with which to conquer. This sword is the Bible, the true Word of God. The gospel was carried to all the Roman world as the “white horse” went forth conquering.

## **The Red Horse**

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

During the first century of the church there was very little persecution. The Roman empire was at peace, Paul and other apostles were able to travel freely and preach the gospel. There was some opposition, but no great persecution until the time of the emperor Diocletian. He was determined to stamp out the religion of the Christ. Many thousands of Christians were put to death in all parts of the empire. This great persecution lasted from about 303 to 311 A.D. The persecution proved a failure, for the greater the persecution, the more the church grew. This was the last great effort of Satan to destroy the Church of God by direct attack.

## **The Black Horse**

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

What happened after the persecutions of Diocletian is well known in history. With the coming of Emperor Constantine, the attitude of the empire toward the Christians changed completely. Instead of trying to destroy the Christians, Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire. Many have considered this to be a very good thing, a blessing for the Church. But it was exactly the opposite. Since Satan could not destroy the church, he in effect joined it, and then real damage began.

Constantine changed the attitude toward the church, not because he accepted or believed the message of Christ, but because he wanted to unify the people to strengthen the empire. The people were divided, some were nature worshippers or pagans and others were Christians. Constantine was determined to blend the religions together by combining pagan teachings and practices with Christian teachings. The pagans had many gods and goddesses. These were prayed to in connection with every condition or problem of life. The "saints", both male and female, were now substituted for the gods and goddesses. It was taught that these "saints" acted as mediators to Christ and God. They could provide blessings for those who prayed to them. The "saints" included the apostles, Mary the mother of Jesus, and various other people who lived very good lives and had been declared "saints" by the church. This directly contradicts Jesus' teachings that the dead are in unconscious sleep, and that Jesus is our only mediator in whose name we pray to God.

The chief god of the pagan religion was the sun. The first day of the week was called "the venerable day of the sun". It was a time of rest, a holiday. The true Christians observed the seventh day, the Sabbath which God commanded. In 321 A.D., Constantine issued his famous Sunday law which called upon all people to observe the first day of the week, Sunday. It was said that the old seventh day Sabbath was Jewish and connected with the rejection of Christ. Thus a pagan practice was said to have become Christian. Another pagan celebration introduced into the church was the observance of the birthday of Christ. The Bible does not tell us when Jesus was born, and there is no record in the Bible of any of the apostles or early Christians observing any such celebration. But in 350 A.D. Pope Victor proclaimed the observance of December 25th as the birthday of Christ. This date was chosen because it was already a pagan celebration of the birth of the sun god. In the Northern Hemisphere the winter solstice, when the sun is lowest in the sky, is December 21st or 22nd. By December 25th it is evident the sun is coming back. Pagan ceremonies were conducted to cause this return. Every year they thought they were successful, and so for centuries before Christ they celebrated December 25th as the birthday of the sun god. Now the Roman church and empire named that day as the birthday of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus. There were many more pagan beliefs and practices incorporated into the church in the fourth century.

Throughout the Bible we find that God rejects any mingling with heathen beliefs or practices. In Jeremiah 10:2 God says, "...Learn not the way of the heathen". In Israel an altar built for heathen worship could not be rededicated for the worship of God. It had to be torn down and a new altar built. The mixing of God's teachings with those of the heathen is like mixing a little mud into a glass of clean water. The mud pollutes the water so that no one would drink it.

The black horse represents a black or evil situation for the church. The true Word of God becomes very hard to find. Christ used the symbol of grain for the Word of God. The

text?



term "penny" is used in the Bible to denote a full day's wages, and a measure of wheat was about a quart. The idea of this wheat costing a full day's wage means that it was very expensive. The Spirit of God was not in the false teachings. The oil and wine represent God's Spirit. The warning is given, do not "hurt" it, or drive God's Spirit away with false teachings.

### **The Pale Horse**

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

The mixing of pagan teachings and practices with Bible teachings continued during the Roman Empire and on into the Middle Ages as sponsored by the Roman Catholic leadership. The pope at Rome made great claims of authority over church teachings and over civil rulers. But God has always had true followers who would not accept false teachings. These were persecuted and many were put to death. Among those who refused to follow the false church system were the Waldensians and Albigensians. The Albigensians were accused of many evil teachings. Most of our knowledge of them is from their enemies who called them heretics. Pope Innocent III decreed a campaign to destroy them. In history this is called the Albigensian Crusade. Thousands of these godly people were killed and their land was devastated.

The persecutions continued, and included other victims who were loyal to the Bible. John Huss was burned at the stake in Bohemia in the year 1415. After the time of Martin Luther and his revolt against the Catholic church, the persecutions became a religious struggle. Eventually there was the Thirty Years War which lasted until the year 1648. The persecutions extended to England and resulted in many

becoming martyrs for their faith. The pale horse of death rode far and wide. The killing by "beasts of the earth" probably refers to the kings who were involved, perhaps including Emperor Charles V who sanctioned the death of John Huss. In other prophecies such as Daniel Seven, kings or nations are symbolized by beasts. Some persecution of true Bible Christians has continued wherever Catholicism is strong, but the period during which so many were put to death for their faith ended around 1700 A.D.

### **The Fifth Seal**

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled (Revelation 6:9-11).

The events of the first four seals cover a period of about 1600 years. The fifth seal, it would seem, will involve only about 300 years, approximately 1700 to 2000 A.D. This is considering that we expect the second advent of Christ to be near the year 2000 A.D.

The death of all the martyrs calls for retribution. We read that the souls of these who were killed for their faith are "under the altar", that is covered by the sacrifice of Christ, and that they "cry out". The Bible teaches that the dead rest in unconscious sleep, and so this must be figurative. In Genesis 4:10, after the death of Abel, God said, "...the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground". This figurative expression compares with that of the souls of the fifth seal. Souls do not have a conscious existence apart from the body. The dead in Christ are said to be asleep in Jesus. (Note First Thessalonians 4:14,15.

The fact that some have been murdered for their faith, calls for a final judgment. Until the second advent the martyrs sleep. But just prior to the second advent, it appears there will be another time when people will be put to death for their faith. This may be that great "time of trouble" spoken of in Daniel 12:1. In past persecutions, men who claimed to be religious persecuted those who held a different religious belief. In our time the world is becoming more and more irreligious. The people of Russia, and countries dominated by their power, are persecuted for holding **any** religion, even a simple belief in God. This may be the kind of persecution true Christians will suffer all over the world just before the second advent of Christ.

### **The Sixth Seal**

The opening of the sixth seal brings us to events that are apparently the same as those mentioned in Matthew 24:29 and Luke 21:25,26. Both of these passages mention the darkening of the sun and the falling of stars. They mention the great fear which will come on many people when the "powers of heaven shall be shaken" and a great time of trouble comes on the earth.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men...hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne... For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:12-17).

Comparing this passage with Matthew 24:30, it would seem that these verses describe the time immediately

preceeding the second advent of Christ. Tremendous things take place in the heavens and on earth. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn..." (Matthew 24:30). The "sign of the Son of man in heaven" apparently will be of some duration, and does not include the completion of the second advent. The seventh seal is yet to be opened, and many more things are to happen before the final culmination.

### **The Seventh Seal**

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound (Revelation 8:1-6).

The opening of the seventh seal introduces another series of events connected with angels sounding trumpets. We will see that the tremendous events of the seven trumpets all take place **after** the events of the sixth seal. The seventh seal describes the prayers of the saints, the people of God. Because of the vast tribulation, there will be a great need for prayer by the saints, that they will be able to endure.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## The Seven Trumpets and The Seven Last Plagues

The seven trumpets of Revelation Eight to Ten, and the seven last plagues of Revelation Sixteen, are very similar in the events they describe. There are some differences, but the similarities are so great that it is evident they are describing the same period of time. Both descriptions end with Armageddon and the second advent of Christ.

The descriptions of the trumpets and the plagues are highly symbolic. It is difficult to determine when they refer to literal events or are symbolic for movements in history. The time of the trumpets, they begin with the seventh seal, shows that they are future. If they are the same as the plagues, this would also indicate they are future. Being future, we will not be able to determine an exact interpretation for all the symbols. We will note some of the comparisons and differences between the trumpets and plagues.

The first trumpet causes hail, fire, and blood to be cast on the earth. A third of the trees and grass are burnt up. The first plague (Revelation 16:2) causes a terrible sore on the people who have the mark of the beast. It can be seen that these descriptions are very different.

The second trumpet causes a burning mountain to fall into the sea and a "third part of the sea became blood". A third of the creatures in the sea and a third of all ships are destroyed. The second plague is upon the sea "...and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (Revelation 16:3). Here is a noticeable similarity, but why under the trumpet does only a "third" of the sea become blood?

The third trumpet and the third plague concern "rivers and fountains of waters". With the trumpet, a third part of the waters become wormwood. With the plague, all the waters become blood.

The fourth trumpet and fourth plague affect the sun. With the fourth trumpet, the "third part of the sun was smitten", and the moon and the stars and the third part of the day. It is a reduction of light and heat. The plague has the opposite affect on **all** the sun, and causes it to scorch people on the earth.

The fifth trumpet causes an opening of the "bottomless pit", and locusts come upon the earth and torment people. The "locusts" are described in detail. They are shaped like horses with the faces of men, the hair of women, and with stings in their tails. This is also called the first "woe". The fifth plague is upon "the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain..." (Revelation 16:10).

The sixth trumpet sets loose "the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates". There follows a description of great destruction involving "the third part of men". The sixth plague causes the water of the river Euphrates to dry up "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared". Three unclean spirits come from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Revelaion 16:14,16).

In many ways, the first six trumpets and the first six plagues are very similar. In strange symbols, they describe vast suffering and trouble on the people of the earth. We believe they must refer to the same period of time, because each leads to a seventh event which is the second advent of Christ.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 11:15). And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath (Revelation 16:17,19).

In the record of the seven trumpets, we find Revelation 9:20 referring to them as "these plagues". In chapter ten an angel declares, "that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished..." (Revelation 10:6,7).

Many details of the trumpets and plagues are different, and we have no way of interpreting the meaning of the symbols. But, it is clear that the plagues and trumpets both describe terrible events on the earth immediately preceding the second advent of Christ. This is evidently the "time of trouble" in Daniel 12:1 and the tribulation of Matthew 24:29. These events plague the confused, wicked systems of this world, also called Babylon. Revelation Eighteen is a great lament over the fall of Babylon. In Revelation 18:8 it says, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine..." It has been suggested that the "one day" may mean one year since in other prophecies a day means a year. It may be that the seven trumpets and the seven last plagues all take place in the time of a year, just previous to the second advent of Christ.

The eleventh chapter of Revelation describes events included under the sixth trumpet. This is also referred to as the "second woe". Like the other symbols of the trumpets and plagues it refers to future things. We have no present clue as to its meaning or how it will be fulfilled.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## Revelation Twelve: The Church — God's People

The twelfth chapter of The Revelation is a beautiful picture of the people of God, the Church. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).

Throughout the Bible, a woman is used as the symbol of God's people. Here the woman is "clothed with the sun", the glorious light of God. The moon, or reflected light under her feet is the Old Covenant of the past. On her head is a crown of twelve stars, the twelve tribes of Israel. Verses two and five tell of the birth of Christ. Verse four tells of how Satan was ready to destroy Jesus as a baby. This refers to the attempt of King Herod as recorded in Matthew 2:13-18. "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne" (Revelation 12:5). Christ was born, fulfilled His ministry, and ascended to God.

Some interesting information is given in this chapter concerning Satan. He is described as "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" (Revelation 12:3). This refers to the nations which Satan has dominated. We will look again at this verse in our study of Revelation Seventeen.

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Revelation 12:4). Here we



note that a third of the stars of heaven were cast to earth **before** the birth of Christ. The "stars" cast to earth may refer to angels, as we will see in verse nine. If Satan is a "fallen angel", this may refer to his downfall before the creation of the world and before his appearance in Eden.

In the temptation of Jesus recorded in Matthew Four and Luke Four, Satan offered to give Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them". Jesus did not refute Satan's ability to deliver these. Later in his ministry, Jesus referred to Satan as the "prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30). By his sin, Adam sold out the human race to Satan. Christ came to redeem mankind from the evil one. Christ's death paid the penalty for man's sin, and Satan lost his position as the representative of this earth. After His resurrection Jesus ascended to heaven.

And there 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. ...the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night (Revelation 12:7-10).

The death and resurrection of Christ took away Satan's claim to be the "prince of this world". But Satan still tries to destroy the people of God by tempting them to sin. As we get closer to the second advent of Christ, those temptations become worse.

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child (Revelation 12:12,13).

The persecution of Christians began soon after the ministry of Christ. The fifth chapter of the book of Acts records the imprisonment of the apostles for preaching the gospel of Christ.

...and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:40,41).

In the eighth chapter of the Acts, after the stoning of Stephen, "...there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad..." (Acts 8:1).

The activity of Satan in persecuting the church began with the early Church and it has never ceased. The true people of God have always lived in a hostile world. To the people of God, this world is like a "wilderness" of false religion and atheism. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Revelation 12:14).

The true church is still in this "wilderness", and will remain there until the second advent of Christ. Persecution became widespread and severe after the papacy received temporal power in 756 A.D. The persecution of God's true people became great like a "flood" under Pope Innocent III around 1200 A.D. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water (people) as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (Revelation 12:15,16). During extreme periods of persecution, the people of God literally hid among the mountains of the earth, and thus many escaped death.

God's true church has survived and grown. True Bible teachings have spread. This has angered Satan and he has continued the persecution. "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). The true people of God base their entire faith on the "testimony of Jesus"

which is the Bible and only the Bible. They are identified as those who are obedient, keeping **all** of God's commandments. These include the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the day of rest God has commanded.

The "remnant" church is the true Church of God during these last days. In the wilderness of false teachings promoted by many popular churches, God's true people believe and teach that salvation is through faith in Christ and obedience to His commandments. They believe and teach great Bible truths such as the unconscious sleep of body and soul in death; the visible second advent of Christ to be seen by all who are living; the kingdom of Christ established on the earth at His second coming. The redeemed will rise to meet Christ as He comes and will descend with Him to receive their eternal reward on this earth, not in heaven. The wicked are utterly destroyed and burned up. This is the hell fire which is never quenched or put out. God's true people look forward to the glorious reign of Christ on the earth for one thousand years, a time to fully complete the work of salvation and the destruction of evil. At the close of the Millennium, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father and will then be subject to the Father "that God may be all in all". The redeemed will live eternally in that wonderful kingdom of God on a restored and beautiful earth. These are the things we may anticipate having a part in, if we are true people of God who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" .

# CHAPTER NINETEEN

## The Second Advent Of Christ

The Bible teaches that in God's great plan of salvation the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, comes visibly to this earth, twice. At His first advent, Jesus came to teach the way of salvation and to give His life as a sacrifice for our sin. The animal sacrifices called for in the Law of Moses were "types" of the great sacrifice which the Messiah (Christ) would make for mankind. By His death on the cross, resurrection and ascension, Christ completed the great atonement for the sins of mankind. He is now the mediator between us and God. Jesus taught us to pray to God in His name. We are told, "...if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). Jesus is seated in heaven at the right hand of God, on the Father's throne. But He has promised that He will return to this earth. He will come to complete the plan of redemption as king, reigning on the earthly throne of His kingdom.

### **Promises of the Second Advent**

There are in the Bible many promises of the second advent of Christ. Let us quote several.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory (Matthew 25:31). ...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:3). ...this same Jesus, which is taken up

from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:11). So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:28).

### **The Purpose of the Second Advent**

God's plan for the salvation of mankind would not be complete without the second advent of Christ. Salvation is life eternal and would not be possible without a resurrection. When Christ comes, there will be a resurrection of the redeemed. Christ will establish His kingdom on the earth for a great work for mankind. We will discuss this work in the chapter on the Kingdom of Christ.

The Bible teaches that when people die the whole person, body and soul, is in unconscious sleep. Conscious life and reward will come only after a resurrection.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (I Corinthians 15:21-23).

From this texts we see that the second advent of Christ is essential to our salvation. People do not receive their reward at death, but sleep in the grave until the second advent of Christ.

### **Comparing Scripture With Scripture**

To get the full picture of just what the second advent of Christ will be like, we need to compare several scriptures with specific information on the subject. Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives. The disciples watched Him ascend and as he vanished from their sight they continued to look up.

And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:10,11).

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:16,17).

These two passages reveal that Jesus will come back to the earth in bodily form just as He went. Those sleeping in their graves who were faithful will be resurrected, and together with the living saints, they will rise to meet the Lord as He is on His way to earth. When you go out to meet someone who is coming to your home, you do not then go somewhere else. After meeting, you together return to your home. How long the redeemed will be in the air with Christ is not revealed.

The rest of the second advent is pictured in the following verses.

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof...and there shall be a very great valley...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day... (Zechariah 14:1,4,5,9).

We have previously noted that Zechariah Fourteen shows that second advent of Christ to be at the time of the Battle of Armageddon. His coming will end that conflict. The nations of the world will to a great extent have destroyed each other. There will be further destruction of the armies fighting at Jerusalem as the Lord comes in His glory. This is described as follows,

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and

wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:15,16).

The verses which follow tell of the destruction of the kings and their armies. The redeemed rise to meet the Lord and are with Him as the great destruction comes on the wicked armies. Jesus comes ahead of the saints and descends alone, just as He ascended alone as the apostles watched. When His feet touch the top of the Mount of Olives, the Mount divides and makes a great valley. Evidently, the purpose of this great valley is to make a place to where the saints descend. Jesus will be on the "throne of David", reigning from the old city of Jerusalem. The great work of the Millennium will then begin. We will study this in our next chapter.

### **Summary**

The second advent of Christ will be visible to all who are living on earth at that time. It will **not** be a "secret" rapture. For most people it will be unexpected, "like a thief in the night". The second advent will bring an end to the conflict of Armageddon. Jesus will descend all the way to the earth, after a pause to meet the redeemed. There will be no **third** advent. We do not know the exact time of the second advent and do not set a date, but signs show it will be soon.

# CHAPTER TWENTY

## The Thousand Year Kingdom Of Christ

In the previous chapter noted that at His second advent, Christ will come all the way to the earth. The redeemed will be with Him for they will have risen to meet Him as He comes. The Lord establishes His kingdom. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth..." (Zechariah 14:9). Jerusalem will be the capital city and the living Word of God will go out from there. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem..." (Zechariah 14:8).

This kingdom which Christ establishes at His second advent is mentioned in many parts of the Bible and is described in various ways. We have already noted how it is referred to in the great image prophecy of Daniel Two.

### **The Stone Becomes a Mountain and Fills the Earth**

In the great image prophecy, the king dreamed of an image of a man that had feet of iron mingled with clay.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. ...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:34,35).

The meaning of this symbolism is given in verse forty-four.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The prophecy tells us that after the Roman Empire (legs of iron) there would never be another world dominating empire. Rather there would always be a mixture of strong and



weak nations. They would never be able to hold together as a strong union. The stone strikes the image on the feet which represent these divided nations. The stone represents Christ at His second advent. He will takeover and rule the nations of the earth.

The point in history of the first advent of Christ, was about the middle of the Roman Empire period. If the stone striking the image were to represent the first advent of Christ, it would stike the image in the middle of the legs of iron. But we read that it strikes on the feet and toes which represent the divided nations after Rome. The stone represents the second advent of Christ. It becomes a "great mountain" or kingdom which fills all the earth. This agrees with Zechariah 14:9, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth..."

Because of this and other prophecies of the kingdom, the Jews at the time of Christ's ministry expected Him to become king then. The twelve disciples were among those who believed this. Jesus found it necessary to explain to them that this would not happen at that time.

But Jesus did teach them of His coming kingdom and throne. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory...then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matthew 25:31). Jesus told about his receiving His kingdom in a parable. "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom..." (Luke 19:12,15). Christ receiving His kingdom from God the Father as described in the prophecy of Daniel.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days... And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him (Daniel 7:13,14).

Jesus told his disciples that they would have a special work in His kingdom.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

### **Description of the Thousand Year Reign in Revelation**

The most complete description of the reign of Christ is found in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. We are told here that those,

...which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands...lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Revelation 20:4,6).

In these verses we see that the redeemed of this age will be with Christ in His kingdom. They will reign with Him for the period of one thousand years. These people are those which have not been involved in the mixture of paganism and Christianity which has dominated the great nations through the ages. These are the redeemed who rise to meet Christ at His second advent.

The first part of verse four refers to martyrs who were killed because of their faith, but it then includes all who have rejected the mark of the beast. Verse five says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Here it seems evident that the phrase "rest of the dead" refers to those who **received** the "mark of the beast". It is these whom God judges to be wicked who will remain dead until the end of the thousand year reign of Christ.

There have been many millions of people who have never heard the gospel. They have never had the Bible to teach them. They did not have the "mark of the beast" because they did not mix false religion with the true. They tried to live the best lives possible with what knowledge they had.

They did not know the laws of God as given in the Bible, but did have their own moral laws. The apostle Paul speaks of this.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (Romans 2:14-16).

If no one but the redeemed live during the one thousand year reign of Christ, there would seem to be no purpose for that reign. But we will see there is a very great purpose. It is necessary for the completion of the plan of salvation.

### **The Gospel for All**

The first chapter of the gospel of John tells of Jesus coming into the world and what it means to mankind. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:4,9). Millions of people have lived, and now live, who have never heard anything about Christ. They have received none of His light in their lives. The above verses indicate that in some way, at some time, the light of Christ is to be made **available** to all. This does not mean that all who have the opportunity, accept it. It is sad that so many who could have the light of Christ, reject Him. It will also be so even in the Millenium.

We live in the gospel age. All who hear, accept, believe, and obey the gospel message will be saved. "...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). We read however of the dilemma of many. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). It is not the will of God that any be lost. In some way, **all** will have the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel. This appears to be the special purpose of the thousand year reign of Christ.

## **A Wonderful Time**

The Bible does not reveal all the details of who will be in the thousand year Kingdom of Christ or its exact nature. We are given some hints.

In Zechariah Fourteen we find a description of the final phase of Armageddon, of the second advent of Christ, and of His becoming king over all the earth. The redeemed who ascended to meet Him, have descended to the great valley made by the parting of the Mount of Olives. There will also be other people on the earth. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts..." (Zechariah 14:16). A punishment is decreed for those who refuse to take part in this worship of the Lord, indicating that there will be those who are not redeemed.

We find a beautiful description of this reign of Christ in Isaiah Two and Micah Four. The two passages are almost identical. We will read from Isaiah.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people... (Isaiah 2:2-4).

In prophecy a mountain represents a kingdom. Daniel refers to the Kingdom of Christ as a great mountain which fills the earth. Here in Isaiah Two, we have the Kingdom of Christ established over all the big and little kingdoms of the world. There will be many people who need to learn the ways of the Lord. The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem, the present city of Jerusalem. This agrees with Zechariah Fourteen where we read that "...living waters

shall go out from Jerusalem..." (Zechariah 14:8). Isaiah speaks of judging the nations and rebuking many people. This is speaking of people other than the redeemed. The redeemed will have a special part in the work of Christ during that time.

...[B]ut they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6). And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10). And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High... (Daniel 7:27).

We notice that this reign of the saints with Christ will be **under** the heaven, not up in heaven.

### **Some Mysteries Remain**

There are many details we would enjoy knowing about the thousand year reign of Christ. We would like to know exactly who will be there and what they will all do. God in His wisdom has revealed only a few answers and even these leave us with more questions. It is clear though, that the work of the plan of salvation does not end until the end of the Millennium.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (I Corinthians 15:25,24).

Yes, there are "enemies" to be put down during the reign of Christ. Christ is not now on His throne and His literal reign has not begun. If only the redeemed were present during the thousand years, there would be no enemies to put down. There will be both righteous and unrighteous people on the earth during that time.

There will be a special work in relation to literal Israel. For the most part they have been blind to the gospel.

...blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of

the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:25,26).

Zechariah 12:9 and Zechariah 14:2-3 both describe the second advent of Christ coming during the great conflict at Jerusalem.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him... In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness... And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends (Zechariah 12:9,10; 13:1,6).

This suggests a special work concerning literal Israel. It goes along with Jesus' promise to His disciples.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

Some might ask, "Does this mean we should not try to convert Jews to Christ since they will have an opportunity in the Millenium?" We note that only a part of literal Israel were blinded. Paul was a Jew and so were thousands of converts to the church at Jerusalem. Jesus commanded that the gospel go first to Judea. Paul said, "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile". We are to preach the gospel to all nations including the Jews. God is the great judge, He will determine for whom the "fountain" will be opened during the reign of Christ on earth.

### **Other People On the Earth**

There is a beautiful but rather mysterious description of the Kingdom of Christ in the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. In

verse seventeen we are told of "new heavens and a new earth". This is mentioned again in Revelation Twenty-one and Revelation Twenty-two. From the Revelation passages, it is clear that the "new earth" will be **after** the reign of Christ, or after He has turned the kingdom over to God the Father as described in First Corinthians 15:24. After referring to this time, Isaiah speaks of a time before, when present Jerusalem will be the center of the Kingdom of Christ.

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed (Isaiah 65:19,20).

From the rest of the verses in this chapter, it is clear Isaiah writes about things during the kingdom of Christ, not before or after that time. The people will build houses, plant vineyards, and "mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 65:22,25). People will not destroy each other, but they will die. The sinner will be there, and will be accursed after a hundred year life. This is all very mysterious and may be interpreted in various ways. When is this "hundred years"? Who are the "child" and the "old man"? This passage may help to explain how it will be possible for everyone who has ever lived to have the opportunity for salvation. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

Notice that while Revelation Twenty speaks of "the first resurrection" and "the second death", it never mentions a **second resurrection**. There is a resurrection at the end of the thousand years, but it is not called a **second** resurrection. This allows for the possibility of other resurrections between the two mentioned. If the people of Israel or others who have died never hearing the gospel, are to have the opportunity to hear it, there must be a time for their resurrection.

During the reign of Christ, the redeemed of this age are to be "priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years". A "priest" is a mediator and teacher. This was their function under the Law of Moses. If only the redeemed were on earth during the reign with Christ, there would be no purpose for priests. The descriptions of the kingdom in Isaiah Two and Micah Four indicate there will be people who need to learn the ways of the Lord.

The fact that not all will be obedient, is revealed in Zechariah 14:16-19 and in the mention of the sinner in Isaiah 65:20. The passage in Isaiah 65:20-25 suggests that those who have never had an opportunity to accept or reject the gospel, will be given a one hundred year life span in which to make their choice. This will include all who died as infants. They will be raised and grow up during the Kingdom of Christ. All will have the opportunity to hear the gospel, to know of the "fountain" of the blood of Christ. It seems that this opportunity for salvation would be much greater than people have now, especially since we are told in Revelation Twenty that Satan will be bound. But God who is just will make all things equal and right. In no case will this be a "second chance" for anyone who has had opportunity in this life to hear and follow the gospel.

A true understanding of the purpose of the thousand year reign of Christ, gives rich meaning to the gospel. All who accept Christ as their Savior, and live obedient to the commandments, will be saved. The apostle Paul asks the very important question, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). Throughout history there have been millions of people who have not believed on Christ, because they have never heard of Him. They die without ever hearing. A God of love desires that all might be saved. It would be a mockery to say this, if no opportunity were ever given to so many. How wonderful that God has



made a way for this opportunity, and that we who are redeemed in this age will have a part in that great work. In both Isaiah Two and Micah Four it is said,

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord...and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:3,4).

# CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## Events At The Close Of The Thousand Years

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them (Revelation 20:7-9).

Those who learned of the gospel during the thousand years will also have to withstand the temptations of Satan. Strange as it seems, there will be a great number who will allow themselves to be deceived. They will be organized into a great army, and will attempt to capture the city of Jerusalem and the "camp of the saints", perhaps that great valley made by dividing the Mount of Olives. The fire of God will then come down and destroy them. This is also spoken of in Malachi.

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts (Malachi 4:1,3).

It appears that those in Satan's army who attempt to take Jerusalem are only those deceived at the end of the thousand years. After their destruction, we read of great resurrection,

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (the grave) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Revelation 20:13).

This is the final resurrection, for those not previously raised. This may also be the time of judgment for those who lived and died during the thousand year reign of Christ. This last judgment is to be in front of the “great white throne”.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works (Revelation 20:11,12).

The redeemed who will have been reigning with Christ during the thousand years, will not be in this judgment. Neither will those who as part of Satan’s army attempted to take the city and camp. They have been utterly destroyed.

After the “white throne judgment”, the work of the plan of salvation will have been completely finished. Death and the grave will come to an end. “And death and hell (the grave) were cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14). This agrees with First Corinthians 15:25,26, “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death”.

The last two chapters of the Bible describe the glorious Kingdom of God on this earth. The Kingdom of Christ never ends, but enters its final phase as Christ turns it over to the Father.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God... And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Corinthians 25:24,28).

# CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

## The Eternal Kingdom Of God

After the fall of man, God put into operation the plan of salvation for mankind's redemption. The fall brought a number of curses upon man and upon the earth. Man was to live by the sweat of his brow. His work was made harder because of thorns and thistles, destructive insects, and rocky soil. After the work of man's salvation has been completed, God will also restore the earth. When first made, God said the creation was "very good". It will be restored to that same condition. God revealed this through the prophet Isaiah.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind (Isaiah 65:17). For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain (Isaiah 66:22).

We find this same message in the last two chapters of the Bible. Revelation Twenty-one begins with John's vision of "a new heaven and a new earth". Remember that in the creation of the earth, "God made the firmament... And God called the firmament Heaven" (Genesis 1:7,8). It seems evident that this "firmament" is the atmosphere which provides man with the air needed for life. Windstorms and the ability of airplanes to fly show that the air is substantial and material. When God creates a "new heaven", we do not think He refers to the celestial heaven, the place of God, Christ, and the angels. When all who live on the earth are immortal, not subject to death and not dependent on breath for life, there will be no need for the atmosphere. There will be

no wind, rain, or storms. These all began at the time of the great flood. We are not told how the space above the earth will be new, but it will surely be wonderful.

We are told in Isaiah 45:18 that God created the earth "...not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited..." When we read of a "new earth", we do not understand that this globe in space will be destroyed. Man sees only the surface of the earth, going down only a few thousand feet in mines and oil wells.

The apostle Peter declares that the flood of Noah's time destroyed the world as it then was. He compares that destruction to the one which is yet to come.

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire...  
(II Peter 3:6,7).

As the flood destroyed only the surface of the earth, so will the cleansing fires which make it new.

We read, "...and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1). About three-fourths of the earth is covered with water. When the earth is made new, all of it will be inhabited by the redeemed. There will be some bodies of water, and all will be very beautiful, but the curse will be gone.

During the thousand year reign of Christ the old city of Jerusalem will be standing, and will be the center of rule. Christ will be on the "throne of David" which was in the old city. But when the earth is made new, the old city is not mentioned. There is a "new Jerusalem". This new city descends from heaven to the earth. Revelation Twenty-one describes it in detail. It has twelve gates; The gates are of pearl, and the streets are of gold. It is said to be in the shape of a cube, twelve thousand furlongs in length, width and height. It is impossible for us to visualize such a place now, but it will be wonderful to enter that city. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

We are told of a "river of life" and of the "tree of life" in that kingdom. When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden they were not allowed to eat of the "tree of life" and live forever. The redeemed in the kingdom of God will be immortal. They will have no need for anything to sustain or prolong their lives. But in God's great plan, the tree of life is said to grow on both sides of the river of life. The tree has fruit every month and its leaves are "for the healing of the nations". We do not know how this will apply in the Kingdom of God since sin and sickness have been abolished. We do know that a healing process is always very satisfying. Perhaps the meaning is that the leaves are for the "pleasure" of the people. Everything in that kingdom will be joyous and glorious and so it must be with the river and tree of life.

These last two chapters of the Bible are very beautiful and inspiring. We should read and meditate on them often. The Bible is a complete book, revealing everything we need for our salvation. The final verses contain a warning against adding anything to this book or taking anything away from it. This applies especially to the book of Revelation, but it is also true for the whole Bible. It is truly the "Book of Life", and there is great blessing in the study of it. We will now consider just what the death of Christ on the cross means to everyone who believes and accepts it.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

## The Atoning Work Of Christ

We have studied about how the redeemed will reign with Christ on the earth during His thousand year reign. He will be "king of kings and Lord of Lords". Those who are with Him are said to be the "called, and chosen, and faithful". Those who are now His people are also referred to as the "elect". How do we become part of the chosen people, and when can we feel sure that we are? What is the order of events in this great plan of salvation for mankind? To find answers to these questions, we need to consider some of the prophetic types found during the time of the Law of Moses.

### **The Tabernacle or Temple of God**

When the people of Israel were traveling in the desert on their way from Egypt to Canaan, God instructed them to construct an important structure.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it (Exodus 25:8,9).

Instructions for the making of this tabernacle are found in Exodus Twenty-five through Twenty-seven. The construction is described in chapters thirty-six through thirty-eight. The erection and dedication of it is found in chapter forty. In connection with the tabernacle, there was established a system of leaders called priests, and a system of ceremonies to worship God. These things were both typical and prophetic in revealing the plan of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **The Parts of the Sanctuary**

The original tabernacle erected in the wilderness was surrounded by a fence. The fence was made with linen strips of cloth, and held in place with posts and stakes. It formed an enclosure called the "court". People did not assemble within this court, but as individuals, they could come inside to take part in the ceremonies. The regular working priests came in each day. They offered the animal sacrifices by burning them on the altar of burnt offering. This altar was the first object one would come to upon entering the court. The priests would wash their hands and their feet with water from the "laver", a large metal bowl between the altar and the tent of the tabernacle. Priests would enter the tabernacle, and each Sabbath day they would place fresh hot unleavened bread on the table on the right side of the tent. This was called the "table of shewbread". The bread which had been placed on the table the previous week was eaten by the priests. On the left side of the tent was the "candlestick", made of solid gold. It had a central straight part, three curved branches on each side, and bowls on the top of each. The bowls formed seven oil lamps which were continually burning.

The tent of the sanctuary was divided into two rooms by a heavy linen curtain or "vail". Next to the curtain in the first room, called the "Holy Place", was a small altar on which sweet incense was burned by a priest each day. The odor of the incense would fill the first room and would pass through the curtain into the second room, called the "Most Holy Place". In this second room there was only one object. It was the "ark of the testimony", a chest of wood covered with gold. Inside this chest were the tables of stone on which God had recorded the Ten Commandments. Later a pot of manna and Aaron's rod which budded were also placed in the ark. On top of the gold covered lid were figures of two angels facing each other with wings meeting over the space between them. The figures were of solid gold. The part of the gold covered lid between the angels was called "the mer-



cy seat". All of the parts of the tabernacle, or sanctuary, were typical and prophetic.

### **The Meaning of the Sanctuary**

The furnishings and ceremonies of the tabernacle, and later the temple, were prophetic of the work of Christ. As one approached the tabernacle and entered the court, he would come to the altar of burnt offering. In the fourth chapter of Leviticus, we are told that if one of the common people of Israel realized that he had sinned, he was to bring a kid of the goats or a lamb and lay his hand upon its head. The priest would then kill it and offer it on the altar as a burnt offering. "...and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 4:35).

When Jesus came to John the Baptist for baptism, John said, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The sacrifice of animals on the altar of burnt offering prefigured the great sacrifice Christ would make for us on the cross. We no longer bring a literal animal to an altar, but we accept the sacrifice of Christ for us. The altar of burnt offering represents the beginning of the Christian life through the acceptance of Christ.

As one went from the altar toward the tent of the tabernacle, he would come to the laver, a large container of water. Here the priests washed their hands and feet, the extremities of the body. This signified the cleansing of the whole body. This was prophetic of the institution of baptism.

After we accept Christ as the sacrifice for our sins and are baptised, we enter the Christian life. This is symbolized by the Holy Place or first room of the tabernacle. Here we find the table of showbread with its loaves of bread placed before the Lord. This bread was replaced with fresh bread each Sabbath. That of the week before was used as food for the priests. For us, the Word of God is the bread of life. As we read and study, we are digesting it as food for our spiritual

life. The seven branched candlestick with its seven lights was also in the Holy Place. In our Christian life, we walk in the light of the Spirit of God.

An important part of our Christian life is prayer. In the Holy Place, next to the dividing veil we find the altar of incense. Sweet smelling incense was burned on this altar and the smoke of the incense passed through the veil. According to Revelation 8:3, incense represents prayer. The veil represents Christ. Our prayers go through Christ, our Mediator, to the throne of God.

Inside the Most Holy Place was the golden ark, and between the figures of angels on the cover, was the mercy seat. This represented the throne of God. The Most Holy Place represents the place of God, which is Heaven. Thus we see that the altar, the laver, and the objects in the Holy Place all represent things in our Christian experience.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place to place blood on the mercy seat. He did this for the remission of his sins and those of the people. Christ is our great High Priest. After His crucifixion and resurrection He entered heaven, and with His own blood, He completed the atonement for us. We read, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

There were two rooms in the earthly tabernacle or sanctuary. One represented things on the earth, the Christian life. The other stood for heaven, the place of God the Father. There is no indication that there are two rooms in heaven. We will not find a "holy" place and a "most holy place" in heaven, for **all** of heaven is most holy. When Christ ascended He sat down with God the Father, on His throne. He became our High Priest. The High Priest never ministered in the outer room or holy place of the tabernacle. He entered directly into the presence of God, and where God is must always be the very Most Holy Place.

The tabernacle and temple stood as a symbol and a prophecy of the atoning work of Christ. Christ fulfilled that proph-

ecy when He died on the cross as our atonement lamb, ascended to the throne of God, and presented His shed blood at the "mercy seat".

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands... Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:11,12).

In this passage, the term "holy place" refers to the Most Holy Place as that was where the High Priest placed the animal blood on the mercy seat. The placing of the blood on the mercy seat, in a figurative sense, cleansed the sanctuary from the guilt of the people's sins.

When Moses directed the construction of the tabernacle he was told, "...See...that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5). The fact that Moses was shown a pattern did not mean that such a building was already in existence. No such two room structure has been or is in heaven. God showed Moses a complete pattern just as an architect shows a complete pattern of a building to be built. The beautiful prophetic symbolism of the tabernacle and temple portray our Christian life here and now. It shows how our prayers go through Christ our Mediator, to God the Father. The ceremonies of the Day of Atonement pointed toward the great atonement Christ made for us as He died on the cross and ascended to heaven. He went immediately to the right hand of the throne of God and is there functioning as our High Priest.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

## Revelation Eleven: The Two Witnesses

We will now look at part of Revelation we did not cover earlier. A most interesting, and yet puzzling section of Revelation, is the eleventh chapter. As the chapter begins, John receives a vision of the temple. This was almost thirty years after the temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed, but John sees it in the vision. He is told to measure it, but to leave out the temple court "for it is given unto the Gentiles". It is said of Jerusalem ... "and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Revelation 11:2).

This is the same period of time we find mentioned in Daniel 7:25; 12:7 and Revelation 12:6; 13:5. In two of these references it applies to the period of the papacy's special power, beginning about 750 A.D. In Revelation 12:6,14, it is the time when the "woman", representing God's true church, is protected from the "dragon" or Satan. But here in Revelation Eleven it is the period of the oppression of Jerusalem by Gentiles. In Luke 21:24, Jesus gave the prophecy that Jerusalem would be "...trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". We now know the exact date ending the Gentile rule of Jerusalem. In June 1967, the nation of Israel captured the old city of Jerusalem from the Arabs. Since that date, the city has been ruled by the people of Israel, and has been undergoing a process of building and restoring.

At the time of the ministry of Christ the city of Jerusalem was ruled by the Roman Empire. The temple and part of the

city was destroyed in 70 A.D. In 135 A.D. the city was completely destroyed by the Roman emperor, Hadrian. The site was plowed and sowed with salt. It was decreed that Jerusalem was never to be there again. However, in the plan of God, the city was gradually rebuilt. The Mohammedan, Arab power developed around 600 A.D. and by the 700's it had control and rule of Jerusalem. Counting back from 1967, 1260 years, we come to the year 707 A.D. This is about the time in history when the Gentile Moslems really gained control of Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock, or Mosque of Omar, had already been built there and the Jews there suffered persecution. Thus it is relatively easy to find the 1260 years of oppression of Jerusalem by Gentile people.

### **The Two Witnesses**

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth (Revelation 11:3,4).

Here we find the same period of time, but it is applied to the mysterious "two witnesses". Through verse twelve of this chapter, different things are described about these witnesses. From the information given, we will try to identify them.

They are called "olive trees". The olive tree in the Bible is often identified with its olive oil, used by the priests to anoint kings. It is considered that this oil represents the Holy Spirit of God. Olive trees are the source of the oil. Here the two witnesses are described as sources, or means of obtaining the Holy Spirit.

The witnesses are also said to be "two candlesticks". The seven-branched candlestick was in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and temple. It gave light to the priests ministering there. We are now our own priest and Christ is the light in our Christian life. Two candlesticks are two sources of light.

From these descriptions and those that follow, it has been

thought by many that the two witnesses are the two parts of the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments. This appears to fit well with the above thoughts concerning the olive trees and candlesticks. In verse three, it is declared that those who try to hurt the witnesses will die. In history we find men who have tried to destroy the Bible, have all died, but the Bible continues its witness for God.

The descriptions which follow in verses six through twelve are more difficult. That it is difficult to understand the symbolism, is probably because the events described are yet future.

### **Clothed in Sackcloth**

Let us go back and note what is said in verse three. There we are told that the two witnesses are to "prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth". If the witnesses are the two parts of the Bible, we know that it has presented prophecy for thousands of years. But this verse indicates 1260 years when they would be "clothed in sackcloth". In ancient times, when one was in mourning or if one was very poor, he would wear this material. It indicated a very low condition. In one sense, the Bible has been in this low condition ever since the rise of Catholic power.

Catholicism has many pagan teachings and practices that deny the truths of the Bible. The Protestant churches with their millions of members generally follow many of these false teachings. They observe Sunday, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. None of these are found in the teachings of the Bible. In the great commission found in Matthew 28:19,20, Jesus said we are to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you". He did not command the observance of any of the practices listed above. They all came from paganism. They are a mixture of Bible truths and pagan beliefs. These teachings and practices have been strong since the time of the Roman emperor Constantine, but have had greater strength since about 750 A.D. when the papacy gained tem-

poral power. During our time, and until the second advent of Christ, truths of the Bible are hidden from most who claim to be Christians. In this sense, the Bible has been and now is clothed in sackcloth. Its true teachings are not honored.

To many people it may seem that the opposite of this is true. The Bible has been translated into a majority of the languages and dialects of the world. New and supposedly "improved" versions are now in wide use. One of these is a "condensed" version which leaves out more than half of the original. It is becoming more and more difficult to find the complete, pure Word of God, and especially, to hear it in the churches. And so it will be until the second advent of Jesus. In spite of all the fancy bindings and many versions, in the eyes of God, the Bible is "clothed in sackcloth". When a prophet of old wore the sackcloth, his message was as powerful as ever. This is also true of the Bible.

### **An Enduring Witness**

The two parts of the Bible are the "olive trees" in the sense that they impart the Spirit of God. Olive oil was used to symbolize the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is also the "two candlesticks", always giving forth the true Light of God. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). We can see how the Bible fulfills Revelation 11:4, "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth".

Verse five explains that no man can hurt or destroy the Word. We read that "fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies". Powerful forces on earth have tried to destroy the Bible, all have failed and are dead, but the Bible remains. The fire of God and the second death will be their final end. It is God's word that has foretold droughts and plagues, through the prophets, as mentioned in verse six.

## **Difficult and Future Prophecy**

In this eleventh chapter of Revelation, from verse seven through verse thirteen, the events are all future. Therefore we cannot now explain just how they will happen. What is said in these verses seems difficult to apply to the two parts of the Bible.

It is said that they will be killed and that their dead bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem. People will see their bodies there three and a half days, and then God will raise them and they will ascend to heaven. This must be symbolic and we have no way of now knowing just how it will be fulfilled. After the two witnesses ascend to heaven, there will be a great earthquake, a tenth of the city will fall, and seven thousand men will be killed. This completes the "second woe". It also completes the message of the sixth angel, or the sixth trumpet.

### **Events of the Seventh Trumpet**

From verse fifteen on of this eleventh chapter, we have described the events which come with the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

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

This finality of thought compares with the description of the events of the seventh plague (Revelation 16:17-21), and with the second advent of Christ as described in Zechariah 14:1-9. In Revelation 11:18 we read: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come...and that thou...shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth". The destructive forces of the nations in conflict at Armageddon will be destroyed as the Lord takes over and sets up His kingdom on the earth. He will rule from old Jerusalem as described in Zechariah Fourteen.



We note in verse nineteen of Revelation Eleven that at this time "...the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament..." This is a view of the "most holy place". The temple is actually heaven itself as is brought out in Hebrews 9:24. As we noted in a previous chapter, there is no description of two rooms in heaven with one being more holy than the other. In Revelation 8:3 we are told of a "golden altar which was before the throne". Incense was offered on it, representing the prayers of the saints. In the earthly tabernacle and temple, the altar of incense was in the "holy place" before the veil which separated the two rooms. There is no such "veil" in heaven, and the golden altar is in the same "room" with God, directly "before the throne". The events of Revelation Eight, in connection with the opening of the "seventh seal", are similar to the events of the seventh trumpet and the seventh plague. In Revelation 8:5 we have, "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake". We find the same in the last part of Revelation 11:19, "and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail". Wonderful and terrible things will happen as the Lord Jesus takes over the rule of the nations of this world. But for the redeemed, it will be a most happy and glorious time with Christ in His kingdom.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

## Ezekiel Forty To Forty-Eight: The Temple And The Prince

The book of the prophet Ezekiel is of special interest to us who live in this latter time before the second advent of Christ. The book contains many mysterious visions in which the prophet sees strange creatures, wheels, and mountains, but his principal charge from God was to reprove the people of Israel for their sins. Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon. This was before the final captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Through him, God foretold the siege and destruction of the city and the temple.

The vision of the eighth chapter shows how far Israel had gone into idolatry, and how they were practicing sun worship. Ezekiel saw "five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east" (Ezekiel 8:16). This reminds us of the Easter sunrise services held by many churches. They in effect, turn their back on the prophecy that Jesus would be a full three days and three nights in the grave, and that while it was still dark, early the first day of the week, the tomb was empty. The resurrection of Christ occurred just before sundown at the close of the weekly Sabbath, not the following morning. The observance of Sun-day is a mixing of pagan sun worship with the resurrection of Christ, something which God has always rejected.

Through Ezekiel, God emphasized the observance of the Sabbath. "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). The Bible Sabbath is still the special sign which sanctifies, or separates the true people of God from other people.

In Ezekiel we have many prophecies about the scattering of the house of Israel to all nations, and their subsequent regathering in the last days. This is especially brought out in Ezekiel 36:16-24. He declares that the people of the house of Israel defiled themselves by idolatry when they were in their own land.

Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them (Ezekiel 36:18,19).

In verse twenty-four God says He will then gather them out of all the countries back to their own land. This is being fulfilled in our time. Jews from around the world are, from the standpoint of Israel, free to return there. Several million from all nations of the world have done so.

Perhaps the best known prophetic chapter in Ezekiel is the thirty-eighth. This describes the invasion of the land of Israel by “Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal”. We have studied this part of Ezekiel in connection with the conflict of Armageddon. It reveals that only after Israel has been permitted to return to its land, when it dwells safely and securely, that the invasion of Armageddon will begin. The main part of this prophecy is yet future, but the stage of the world is certainly being prepared for its fulfillment.

### **The Temple and the Prince**

Ezekiel gives the prophecy that after the three stage overturn of the throne at Jerusalem, “...it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him” (Ezekiel 21:27). This shows that no king will reign in Jerusalem over

the people of Israel until the second advent of Christ. Through Hosea, God also reveals that there will be no temple until then.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice... Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days (Hosea 3:4,5).

Fourteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Ezekiel was given a vision of a great temple. In chapters forty through forty-five a great and elaborate temple is described as being at Jerusalem. After that description was written, a temple was built at Jerusalem following the return from Babylon under the leadership of Ezra. But that temple was small and in no way elaborate. Later it was rebuilt and enlarged by Herod. It was this temple which was at Jerusalem during the ministry of Jesus. The temple described by Ezekiel does not fit the size or other details of Herod's temple. In chapter forty-three the glory of God fills the temple and we read,

And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my hold name, shall the house of Israel no more defile... (Ezekiel 43:7).

This seems to be a future prophecy.

In these chapters there is also the mention of "the prince" who is to enter into the temple.

And all the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings...in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths...and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel (Ezekiel 45:16,17).

It is difficult to say where this all fits in. It surely does not apply to the ministry of Christ in connection with the temple of Herod. It appears to have some symbolic meaning concerning what happens during the thousand year reign of Christ.

The following verses are of special interest.

Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

In the present wall of the temple area, there is a gateway which is closed with masonry. Tourists who look toward the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives can see this closed gate which faces toward the east. It has been suggested that when Christ comes to Jerusalem, as described in Zechariah Fourteen, that He will be the Prince who will open that gate and enter through it. If this is accurate, it would place the temple, described in these chapters, in the coming Kingdom of Christ.

This brings us to another problem. In these same chapters, the prince and the priests offer animal sacrifices. All the animal sacrifices of the Law of Moses ended when Christ died on the cross. The veil of the temple was torn wide open, signifying that the time for the services of the temple had ended. It does not appear that any temple will be built at Jerusalem before the second advent of Christ. According to Hosea 3:4,5, there will be no temple until Israel will "seek the Lord their God, and David their king...in the latter days". Here "David" must refer to Christ who will, in His kingdom, sit on the throne of David. In some mysterious way, which we cannot now explain, these last nine chapters of Ezekiel may refer to events in the coming thousand year reign of Christ. We may look forward to learning all about this at that wonderful time.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

## The Prophecy Of Obadiah

The book of Obadiah is very brief consisting of only twenty-one verses. But this small book in the Old Scriptures contains a very important message for our time. A casual reading of this book would seem to indicate that it is the prophecy of a war between Israel and the Edomites. The Edomites are descendents of Esau, who lived on the east side of the Jordan river. It might be thought that this describes a conflict which resulted in the utter destruction of the people of Edom by Israel, something in the distant past. If this were the case, we might wonder why its record is preserved in our Bible. It would seem to have little relevance to us in these latter days. In order to get a better understanding of the events described, we need to consider some facts of history.

### **The Conflict Peoples**

After the flood, the record of God's special people begins with Abraham. He becomes known as the "father of the faithful". The promise was made to him that in his "seed", or descendents, "shall all families of the earth be blessed". It was of his descendents that the Lord Jesus Christ was born. The human mother of Jesus was of the tribe of Judah.

We find the prophecy has a double application. All who believe and follow the Lord Jesus Christ are said to be heirs to the promise made to Abraham. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

The inheritance is through Isaac, the child of promise. He was born to Abraham's wife, Sarah, in her old age by a

miracle from God. But Abraham also had another son, Ishmael, born to his servant-wife, Hagar. Ishmael was a child of natural birth in that his mother was of childbearing age. Isaac was the miracle child of promise. In the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, it is explained that these two sons represent the two great covenants of God. We are like Isaac as we become Christians, the spiritual seed of Abraham by a miraculous "new birth".

In the record of Abraham and his two sons, we find a conflict developed. Ishmael persecuted his half brother, Isaac, and Sarah saw it. She demanded that Ishmael and his mother be sent away. God told Abraham to "hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12). This represents the ending of the old covenant in favor of the new. It also marked the beginning of a conflict between the two brothers and their descendants that has persisted until the present time. Today we see it in the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs. It is easy to see that the Jews are descendants of Isaac, but how are the Arabs related to Ishmael?

We find that Isaac had two sons, twins named Jacob and Esau. They were in conflict before they were born, and the animosity continued through their lifetimes. Since both were sons of Isaac, how can they be connected to the conflict between Isaac and Ishmael? Our answer is found in Genesis 28:9, "Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael...to be his wife". The entire thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis is a record of the descendants of Esau, which includes his son by the Ishmaelite wife, and his sons. Thus conflict between the descendants of Jacob and Esau also becomes a part of the conflict between Jews and Ishmaelites. The Koran, the sacred book of the Mohammedans, declares that Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba, the Moslem sacred building at Mecca. It is taught that the Arab people are descendants of Ishmael. And so in the book of Obadiah, we find a great conflict between the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob. In our time, this conflict is between the Jews and the Arabs.

Another of the wives of Esau was a Hittite. The Hittites lived north of Israel in the area which is now Syria. As descendants of the Hittites, the Syrians also have a connection with Esau. The conflict mentioned in Obadiah between Israel and the Edomites, the descendants of Esau and Ishamael, may include all the modern Arab nations.

### **Conflict Description in Obadiah**

The book of Obadiah informs us that the descendants of Esau aided and abetted the captivity of Israel and Judah, and especially of Jerusalem. They are reproved for doing this.

But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not...have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity (Obadiah 12,13).

In the description of the destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of the people by Babylon, nothing is mentioned in Second Chronicle Thirty-six about Edomites or other surrounding peoples rejoicing in the fate of Israel. But there is some hint of it in the descriptions of Jeremiah. In the forty-eighth and forty-ninth chapters, we find prophecies against the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, and also against Damascus. The persecution of the people of Israel is not given as a reason for their punishment, but the pronouncements are made in connection with descriptions of the captivity.

A more direct description of the persecutions of Israel by its neighbors is found in the book of Nehemiah. "But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us..." (Nehemiah 2:19). The record goes on to describe how these three tried to thwart the work of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Note that one of these enemies is the "Arabian" or Arab. As we have seen, he may be a descendant of Esau, an Edomite. The book of



Obadiah is a description of a great destruction of the descendants of Esau by the people of Israel.

### **All Israel against Edomites**

In the book of Obadiah, the destruction of the Edomites is by the "house of Jacob" and the "house of Joseph". The house of Jacob includes all Israel. Jacob had twelve sons, they and their descendants are the people of Israel, the new name given to Jacob. Why the tribe of Joseph is especially mentioned is not clear. In this latter day time of the return, the people of Israel are from all twelve tribes. They are mingled together however, so that as individuals they do not know to what tribe they belong. Apparently, the mention of Joseph is made in connection with the various areas of Israel that will be in the conflict. Joseph would be in the northern area where the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were located.

And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines...and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites,...Jerusalem...shall possess the cities of the south (Obadiah 19,20).

This indicates the retaking of all the areas which were included in the kingdom of Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon. In this great conflict, Israel is said to be "...a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it" (Obadiah 18).

That this will happen before the second advent of Christ is seen in the words of the closing verse. "And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obadiah 21). This could be read, "the savior shall come...", because it is when He comes that Christ will establish His kingdom and will rule from Mount Zion (Jerusalem).

### Similar Prophecy in Ezekiel

Prophecies similar to that of Obadiah are found in Ezekiel Twenty-five and Thirty-five. Ezekiel Twenty-five includes prophecies of the destruction of the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Edomites. The denunciation of Edom and its eventual fate is very similar to that in Obadiah.

Thus saith the Lord God; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom... And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger... (Ezekiel 25:12-14).

The thirty-fifth chapter gives a similar message with more detail. It is said to be against "Mount Seir". This is the name of the area where the Edomites lived, another way of saying the message is against Edom. The reason for the destruction is clearly stated.

Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end: Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood... Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate... I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return... Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the Lord was there (Ezekiel 35:5-10).

This is the situation we find today between the Arab nations and the nation of Israel. The Arabs want the land which Israel now has. The Palestine Liberation Organization of Arab people has as its main purpose, the driving out of all Jews from Palestine. This is the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the days of Israel's kings, Israel was divided into two nations called Judah and Israel, but now these two are united in the present nation of Israel.

Israel will never be driven out of that land. Their being there fulfills Bible prophecy. It shows that the second coming of Christ is near. Even though the Jews have not accepted Christ as the Messiah, God is caring for them. Yes, "the Lord is there".

### **No Previous Fulfillment**

Obadiah describes a great destruction of the descendants of Esau, by the people of Israel. The descendants of Esau are Ishmaelites, or Moslem Arabs. Has there ever been such a destruction by the people of Israel? The answer is that there is absolutely no record of this happening at any time in history. Thus, this destroying of the descendants of Esau must be future. It follows that there must still be descendants and we believe there are, in the Arab nations. Israel has been in a state of war with the Arab nations ever since 1948. No Arab nation, except Egypt, has signed a peace treaty with Israel. While there may not be open conflict, there is also no peace. As this is being written, there is great tension between Israel and the nations of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. There is danger that war may break out at any time.

We know that just before the second advent of Christ, there will be a time of apparent peace in the world, especially concerning Israel and its surrounding nations. We are told in Ezekiel Thirty-eight, that just before the great invasion from the north which leads to Armageddon, that Israel will be dwelling safely. This could only happen if there is a peace treaty with the Arabs. At this time, it seems the only way the Arabs would ever make such a treaty, is if they were defeated in war and forced to make peace. The book of Obadiah describes just such a war. When it takes place a great peace treaty will end it. The world will believe that world peace has been achieved. But we are told "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..." (I Thessalonians 5:3).

We watch the great efforts being made to bring peace to the Middle East. We also see the buildup of tension between Israel and her Arab neighbors, with whom technically a state of war exists. We have previously noted that the prophecies concerning Egypt reveal that this nation will be separate from the other Arab nations. The other Arab nations are on the side of the invading nations, but Egypt will be attacked along with Israel (Daniel 11:42,43).

# CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

## The Prophecy Against Damascus

Damascus, the capital city of Syria, is one of the oldest cities in the world. In fact it is said to be **the oldest** continuously inhabited city in the world. As such, it has never suffered complete destruction. The servant of Abraham was from Damascus. The city is mentioned many times in the Old Scriptures and about ten times in the New. Syria is one of the greatest enemies of Israel. It is backed and armed by Russia. In any war with Israel, all of the Arab nations, including Syria, would be involved. Egypt would be excepted as we have noted. Obadiah foretells of a destruction of an Arab nation by Israel, but that nation is said to be of the Edomites. They lived in the area now ruled by the Arab nation of Jordan. The Syrians of today are Arab peoples and are mostly Moslems. As Moslems they probably claim to be Ishmaelites and may be descendants of Esau. But in any case, we find that Damascus, the capital city of Syria, is especially mentioned for destruction.

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts (Isaiah 17:1,3).

A marginal reference in some Bibles says that this destruction took place in 740 A.D. However, authentic history records that this was one of the times the city was captured and "ravaged". The city itself was not destroyed. The Bible

quotation says it will be utterly destroyed and that this destruction will have a connection with the people of Israel.

The context of this chapter deals with a destruction involving **many nations**. It appears that this prophecy is of end time events. We are now in the end time, and Syria, with its capital at Damascus, is much in the news of the Middle East. Syria has been heavily armed by Russia which has pledged to aid Syria in any war with Israel. Israel can never be “dwelling safely”, as described in Ezekiel Thirty-eight, while Syria is constantly threatening them. Since Israel will be dwelling safely before Armageddon, it follows that the destruction of Damascus will come before that conflict. Russia will be held back from any attack on Israel until Armageddon. No matter what they or any other nation may say they will do, they can only do what God allows. God’s Word will surely be fulfilled. God’s people will continue to watch, pray, and believe as that fulfillment occurs.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

## Daniel Twelve: End Time Prophecies

In our study of the battle of Armageddon, we noted that one description of it is found in Daniel 11:40-45. Verse forty-five tells of the success of the invading power as it gains a foothold in the "glorious holy mountain", and then of the end of that wicked power. Comparing this with Zechariah Fourteen, we find that the end of the wicked power is brought about by the second advent of Christ. As we begin Daniel Twelve we will find reference to events connected with the glorious second coming of Christ.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:1-3).

There is disagreement as to the identity of the "great prince", Michael. He is mentioned in Daniel 10:13 as "one of the chief princes", the margin says "the first" or greatest prince. Verse twenty-one calls him "Michael your prince". In Jude, verse nine, we read of "Michael the archangel". It has been suggested that Michael is another name for Christ, but in the rest of the Bible, Christ is never called an angel. It would seem that the term "archangel" refers to a leader or

overseer of the angels. When Christ comes at His second advent, He comes as a king and all the angels will be with Him.

Michael seems to have a special responsibility for the people of God, under the direction of Christ. The angels are said to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). Michael has a special ministration or help for the people of God in the great time of trouble, just before the second advent of Christ. The mention of the people being "delivered", could mean that they are taken away from the scenes of the trouble, or that they would be cared for during that time.

The great time of trouble spoken of here, comes during the great conflict described in the last six verses of chapter eleven. The invading power from the north comes "with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many". The conflict which begins in the land of Palestine, spreads to all the world. The great destruction will probably be brought about by the use of atomic weapons. The devastation thus caused is vividly described in the twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. There we are told that "the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isaiah 24:6). The wicked, destructive, invading power or nation, persecutes the true people of God.

We have observed that this is the power described as the "eighth head" of the beast in Revelation Seventeen. In connection with the invasion of Israel by this power there are, described in Ezekiel Thirty-eight, other nations in alliance with the evil power. In Revelation Seventeen it is revealed that there will be ten kings, or nations in that alliance. We will watch to see how this develops.

### **How Delivered?**

We read, "...and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1). A popular teaching is that deliverance will be by a "secret rapture" to heaven. This would be secret in that the



unsaved would see or hear nothing. They would just know that the Christian people had disappeared. The Christians would not be on earth during the great time of trouble. There is no Bible basis for such a teaching. The deliverance mentioned here will be God's care for His people during the troubled time.

The end of this age of the world will not come until the second advent of Christ, and the establishment of His kingdom. Jesus said, "...he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Matthew 24:30-44 is about the second advent of Christ. It states that there will be a "sign of the Son of man in heaven" and all people on the earth will see it. People of all nations of the earth will "mourn" or be in fear. At that time, when people of the world see Christ coming and are fearful because of what they see, the redeemed will be caught up to meet Christ. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31). This is the gathering of the saved from all the earth. The expression "from one end of heaven to the other", refers to the horizons where the heaven seems to meet the earth. Its meaning is "from all the earth", "from horizon to horizon". This is the same gathering described in First Thessalonians 4:13-17. Here is also described the resurrection of the redeemed of this age, and how they, with the living saints, will rise "...to meet the Lord in the air".

The redeemed will be taken from among the people in the world. In Matthew Twenty-four this is described as, people who are "taken", and others who are "left". Some will be working in fields and others will be working in factories. The Christians and the unbelievers will be working side by side. This shows that Christians will not segregate themselves in colonies or in remote places of the earth. They will be mingled with the others in the world right up to the time when Christ returns.

Since there will be a great time of trouble just before the second advent, it follows that Christians will be on earth during the trouble. God's deliverance of them, will first be His care for them during the time of trouble, and then their deliverance as they rise to meet Christ when He comes. There is nothing to indicate that the redeemed go to heaven. Rather they are to continue to be with Christ. As Christ is on His way to the earth, the redeemed rise to **meet** Him. They then descend **with Him** to the earth, as we have noted in our previous study of Zechariah Fourteen.

### **What Resurrection?**

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). This description of resurrection seems to differ from that found in other parts of the Bible. This verse seems to imply that there will be just one resurrection. It implies that some of the raised will be saved, and others raised at the same time, will be lost. But other Bible passages indicate at least two resurrections. Jesus described these resurrections in John 5:29, “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”. In Revelation Twenty, we are told that these resurrections are separated by a period of one thousand years. When Christ returns, the redeemed who are in their graves, will come forth as described in First Thessalonians Four. In Revelation Twenty this is called “the first resurrection”. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power...” (Revelation 20:6). A comparison of Bible texts shows that the redeemed and the lost do **not** come up in the same resurrection. Daniel 12:2 is simply stating, that when the resurrections take place they will include the saved and unsaved in their own times.

## **The Time of the End**

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). This verse indicates that the prophecies of Daniel would not be fully understood until the “time of the end”. This might mean the “end” of many different things, but the meaning is identified in the latter part of the verse. Some might think that this explanation has very little significance. People have always traveled, and knowledge has always increased with the passing of time. But if we look at history, we see that there has been a wonderful fulfillment.

From the time of Noah until about 1800 A.D. travel was by the same means. Relatively few people traveled, and then usually not far. Transportation was by foot, horse, or camel. George Washington traveled in much the same manner as did the patriarch Abraham.

Things began to change around the year 1750 when the steam engine was developed. From 1800 to 1900 was the great age of steam, steam ships and steam trains. Many more people began to go “to and fro”. Automobiles were being developed by 1900. It was shortly after 1900 that the first flight of an airplane took place. In 1927 the first flight across the Atlantic Ocean took place, the plane carrying only one person. Now at any given moment thousands of people travel in great airliners over the oceans and the continents. Our superhighways are filled with autos, buses and huge trucks.

We are in the atomic and computer age. The increase of knowledge from the time of Noah until 1800 was very slight. But since 1800, and especially since 1900, the increase has been tremendous and is constantly accelerating. In a very wonderful way the prophecy of Daniel 12:4 is being fulfilled. It identifies the “time of the end”.

## **Mysteries Remain**

Daniel 12:6-13 remains much of a mystery. In verse six a heavenly being asks, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The other being answers, "...it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Daniel 12:7).

We find this same period of time mentioned in several other prophecies. This is the period of the special power of the "little horn" in Daniel 7:25, and of the "mouth speaking great things" in Revelation 13:5. It is also the time the "woman", representing God's people, is said to be "in the wilderness" in Revelation 12:6,14. In our previous study of this time period, we have considered that it reaches to the second advent of Christ. This interpretation seems to fit very well with the details in the last part of Daniel 12:7. It is said that the finishing of the time, times and a half, will be when the power of the holy people is scattered. This seems to mean when it is ended.

The "holy people" must refer to Israel. Israel continues to be in power over its land until the final conflict of Armageddon. We noted in the previous chapter, the invasion of the "king of the north" into the "glorious land". The same conflict is described in Zechariah Fourteen where we find that Jerusalem is overthrown and half the city goes into captivity. It is then that Christ descends at His second advent. The end of the power of the "holy people", Israel, will be just prior to the second advent of Christ. This agrees with other references to the time period of "time, times and half a time" (1260 years), showing that it will extend to the second advent of Christ.

Daniel did not understand what all this meant. The Lord declared that it was not then time for it to be revealed, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till

the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9). We are now in that time and the meaning seems quite clear.

In verses eleven and twelve of Daniel Twelve, we are given some mysterious time periods.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days (Daniel 12:11,12).

The ending of the "daily sacrifice" is mentioned in Daniel 8:13. We believe that there it refers to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes about 160 years before the birth of Christ. The ending of the "daily sacrifice" is also mentioned in Daniel 9:17. Here we feel that it refers to the rending of the veil in the temple when Christ died on the cross. At that time, the "type" met the "antitype" and the temple sacrifices ceased to have further significance.

The time period in Daniel Twelve does not seem to have any connection with either of the passages about the ending of the "daily sacrifices" mentioned previously. The following verse calls for waiting until the "thousand three hundred and five and thirty days". No beginning of this time is stated. Numerous methods of figuring have been used in connection with these times. They have resulted in various dates being set for the second advent of Christ. Verse thirteen tells Daniel that he will "rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days". This seems to say that Daniel will die, and then will receive his reward at the end of the 1335 year time period. Daniel will receive his reward among the redeemed at the second advent of Christ. It would seem that if we could find a beginning for the 1335 year period, we would be able to know the year of the second advent of Christ.

A desolating power after the time of the Romans was Islam. The Moslems captured Jerusalem and built their Mosque on the temple site. People have attempted to begin their figuring from this date. The Mosque of Omar or Dome of the

Rock was built in 637 A.D. When this is added to 1290, we arrive at 1927, a year of no special significance. Adding the year 637 to 1335, we arrive at 1972, a year some people expected the second advent of Christ. Thus far, all attempts to use these time periods to set the time for the second advent have failed. We simply have no clue for the beginning of these time periods. It is possible that they may refer to literal twenty-four hour days, thus their fulfillment could be future. In any case, the time periods are now a mystery. As we watch the signs of the times, we may have the answer in due time.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

## British-Israel: Why It Is False

In our study of Bible prophecy, we see that God has revealed many things concerning the history of the world's great nations. These nations have in some way been connected to the special people of the Bible, the people of Israel. The nations we have considered include Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. We have observed the rise of the papacy after the fall of Rome, and have found general references to many nations of the world. Jesus said that before His second advent there would be wars, with nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom. In Revelation Seventeen, we find mention of ten kings or kingdoms which will unite under the leadership of a wicked power in opposition to all religion, both false and true. We are watching to see how this may be fulfilled.

What about other great modern nations such as the United States and Britain? These nations have dominated the history of modern times, having become great "superpowers". Their wealth has been very great. They have been blessed with natural resources and abundant agriculture products. They have published and distributed the Bible, and have sent missionaries all over the world. People have said that surely these nations would be mentioned in the Bible and would have a direct connection with the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. This has led to the development of a theory that the Jews are only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, the other ten tribes are to be found in the nations of northern Europe. It is declared that England is the tribe of Ephraim,

and the United States is the tribe of Manasseh. Thus many prophecies relating to Israel, may actually be referring to the United States and England. We believe that a careful study will show that this "British-Israel" theory is entirely false.

### **History of the Twelve Tribes of Israel**

The twelve tribes, or families, of Israel had their beginnings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, God called Abraham to leave his ancestral home in "Ur of the Chaldees", and to journey to what is now called Palestine. Two lines of prophecy-promise were made to Abraham. In Genesis 12:1-3 we have the prophecy-promise that through Abraham and his seed would "all the families of the earth be blessed". This is understood to be a prophecy of Christ who would come in the lineage of Abraham. This prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Christ by a human mother who was of the tribe of Judah. Judah was one of the sons of Jacob, who was a grandson of Abraham. The people from all the families (nations) of the earth who accept Christ as their Savior, have the ultimate blessing of salvation. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

### **The Other Promise to Abraham**

As Christians, we are heirs of the spiritual promise to Abraham. We are a part of spiritual Israel. But God also made promises to Abraham that were to be fulfilled to him and to his literal blood-line descendants. These promises concern a homeland.

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,



the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Genesis 17:8). ...and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies (Genesis 22:17).

Isaac and Ishmael were both sons of Abraham, but Isaac was the child of promise. It is stated that the special promises regarding the "seed" were to be through Isaac, "...for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12).

The land of Canaan or Palestine is the promised homeland for the literal seed of Abraham. That land is, and always has been, an important crossroads of the nations. It was a gateway between Egypt and Assyria-Babylon, enemies to Israel. It was also a gateway of Rome to the East. In modern times Palestine has been the land desired by the Arab nations, the special enemies of Israel. The gateway which Israel possesses is not Gibraltar, but Palestine. The enemies of Israel have wanted and still want that land. Their desire for the "glorious land" will eventually lead to Armageddon.

### **Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh**

Just before his death, Jacob called his sons to him to give them his blessing. Joseph brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and Jacob gave both of them a special blessing. In doing this he placed the younger son, Ephraim, above Manasseh. He declared that both would be great, but that Ephraim would be the greater, and that his descendants would become a multitude or fulness of nations. The British-Israel theory holds that the descendants of Ephraim became the British empire which controlled a number of different nations. It holds that the descendants of Manasseh became the United States of America. This teaching has no real Biblical or historical basis, and the facts refute it.

Jacob had a special love for Joseph which was even increased when, after thinking Joseph was dead, he was reunited with him in the land of Egypt. His love for Joseph, carried over to Joseph's two sons.

The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth (Genesis 48:16).

Ephraim and Manasseh were born in Egypt of an Egyptian mother. Jacob made it clear that he counted them as part of His people with the name of Israel. Their descendants were to become a large number. In Numbers Twenty-six, we find listed the number of men in each of the tribes of Israel. The tribe of Joseph is made up of Ephraim and Manasseh. Their total number is 85,300, largest of any tribe.

In blessing Joseph, Jacob said he would receive great blessings, "...with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under...unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph..." (Genesis 49:25,26).

The British-Israel theory maintains this is fulfilled in the great natural resources of the United States and the British empire. This proves nothing, as many other nations also have rich natural resources. The blessings to Joseph were found in the lands allotted to the tribes in the days of Joshua. Half of the tribe of Manasseh stayed with the tribes of Reuben and Gad on the east side of the Jordan, where there were rich grasslands for their many cattle. The rest of the tribe of Manasseh, received an area which included the rich coastal plain of Sharon where many of the citrus groves in Israel are now located. Ephraim received the central area from the Jordan, including Shiloh and Gilgal. The descendants of Joseph had much of the best land as their inheritance. Truly they had ..." precious fruits brought forth by the sun,...chief things of the ancient mountains, and...the lasting hills..." (Deuteronomy 33:14,15). In modern Israel, where the tribes are not divided as such, the nation has many natural blessings. With scientific agriculture, Israel has beautiful Jaffa oranges, enough for its own people and for export. The banana groves of Israel furnish an abundance of this delicious fruit. The tourist will also see hills covered

with olive trees, grape vineyards, and lush vegetable crops, even in the southern region which was formerly all desert. Surely the promised blessings have come to the real people of Israel, the Jewish people.

### **The Blessings and the Cursings**

In the chapter on Israel, we have studied of how God dealt with His people in ancient times. God does not change. He still deals with His people, the true Christians, in the same way. Enthusiastic gospel singing and testimonies of praise are good, but they do not take the place of faithful obedience to the commandments of God. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy we find the "blessings and cursings".

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee...if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God (Deuteronomy 28:1,2).

There follows a list of great blessings, all of which we as God's people desire today, and receive if we are faithful. Besides obedience to the moral laws, God requires that we obey the "testing" commands such as the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the eating of only those meats He has given for food, and the returning of ten percent of our increase to His cause. God asks that we believe and teach the truth about heaven, hell, death, resurrection, the second advent of Christ, and the thousand year reign of Christ that completes the work of salvation. He asks us to love God and our fellowman, and to show this by good works. Some may be call this "legalism", but the careful student of the Bible will find that God still requires obedience to His commandments. Our motivation for this should be our love for God, but it still requires a daily consecration and deliberate choice.

Many who count themselves to be true Christians, say that God is not particular, and that it really does not make any difference to our salvation whether or not we obey His laws. God will be the judge, even as He was of Israel.

Israel was God's special people, chosen to represent Him on earth. But when they failed to be obedient, He brought the great curses and the calamities upon them. All twelve tribes departed from the way of obedience during the time of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The warning of Moses became a prophecy which was fulfilled.

The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies...and...removed into all the kingdoms of the earth... And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee (Deuteronomy 28:25,37). And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them (Jeremiah 29:18).

The verses in Deuteronomy were spoken by Moses to all twelve tribes in the wilderness before they entered Canaan. The prophecy of Jeremiah was also spoken to the people of both Judah and Israel who were in the area of Jerusalem and Judah before Judah's captivity. Note how this is brought out in the following verses.

Know that thus saith the Lord of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon (Jeremiah 29:16,20).

When the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive to Assyria, to the land which later became Babylon, many people from all the northern tribes were not taken. There were many people from **all** the tribes of Israel **in Judah** when it was conquered by Babylon. In Babylon, these people min-

gled with others of the northern ten tribes who were already there. When the opportunity was given to return in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, those who returned were from all twelve tribes. They are referred to in the book of Ezra as "all Israel" (see Ezra 2:70 and 6:17).

In the book of Nehemiah the people are often referred to as being of Judah and Jerusalem, but it is clear that there were among them, people of all the tribes. We read, "And **all Israel** in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers..." (Nehemiah 12:47). (Bold type is ours for emphasis.) Since the time of Nehemiah, the people called Jews have always included some from all twelve tribes of Israel.

This was true at the time of Christ's birth, as is evident by the mention of the tribe of Asher. "And there was one Anna...of the tribe of Aser (Asher): she was of a great age..." (Luke 2:36). The apostle Paul was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, but he states that the Jews of his time were from all twelve tribes.

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews (Acts 26:6,7).

Note that Paul refers to the "promise" made to "our fathers". Clearly he means the fathers of the Jewish people. He then declares that his people are made up of twelve tribes, that existed as such, at the time he was speaking. In our present time, we find Jewish leaders, scholars, and historians agreeing that the Jewish people represent all twelve tribes of Israel.

We have noted the prophecies that the people of Israel would be punished for their disobedience. They would be scattered to all the nations of the world to be persecuted and to become "an astonishment" and a "byword". It is well known that this has happened to the Jewish people, and to no other. The prophecy was to all twelve tribes, and it has been fulfilled in the history of the Jews.

## **Judah and Israel**

The confusion over the identities of Judah and Israel comes as a result of the division which occurred after the death of King Solomon. Solomon was succeeded by his son, Rehoboam, who wanted to continue the expensive ways of his father. To do this he would need to continue to exact very high taxes. As a result of his announcement of this tax, people of the northern area of the country rebelled and seceded. They organized into a separate kingdom which they called Israel. It consisted of ten of the tribes.

The remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin, along with the tribe of Levi, made up the southern kingdom which was then called Judah. Judah included the city of Jerusalem with the temple. It therefore also included the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe which was not given any separate area of land. (The tribe of Joseph became the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh to maintain twelve tribes possessing land.)

It is thought by some that the name "Jew" originated with the kingdom of Judah and thus it should refer only to those descended from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. But we have seen that the apostle Paul regarded his people, the Jews, to be of all twelve tribes. This is true even though Judah and Israel were for a time separate nations which were taken into captivity at different times.

### **The Times of the Captivity**

The northern kingdom, called Israel, was oppressed and taken captive by the empire of Assyria, but not all at one time. This captivity was evidently completed during the reign of Hoshea in 721 B.C., but it began as early as 726 B.C. We can see this by studying the record of events during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. Hezekiah instituted a reform and a return to the true worship of God at the temple

in Jerusalem. In connection with this reform, he called for the observance of the Passover by the people of Judah and those of the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel had not yet been made completely captive.

So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria (II Chronicles 30:6).

It is evident that at this time, as well as later, many of the people from the northern kingdom of Israel lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. At the time of Hezekiah's great passover, many of the northern ten tribes came to Jerusalem. Some apparently remained in Judah.

And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced... And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe... (II Chronicles 30:25; 31:6).

Those who hold the British-Israel teaching, admit that some of the ten tribes of Israel lived in Judah. But they say there were only a few who did so, and that this small number is of no importance. We find that the scriptures do not reveal how many of Israel lived in Judah, but there were enough for it to merit special mention. This is proof that people of all twelve tribes were in Judah when it was taken captive to Babylon. At the time of Hezekiah, some of the northern kingdom of Israel had already gone into captivity, but there were others of all ten tribes who came to Jerusalem. Here in Judah, they kept the passover and some stayed to live.

### **Later Mentions of Israel in Judah**

Many years **after** the captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel, there is mention of people from Israel living in

Judah. We read of this during the reign of King Josiah at Jerusalem, eighty-seven years after the captivity of the northern kingdom.

And when they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin... (II Chronicles 34:9).

King Josiah held a passover observance, and we find recorded who was present, "...and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and **Israel** that were present..." (II Chronicles 35:18). (Bold type is ours for emphasis.)

### **Interchangable Use of Names Judah and Israel**

The people of Israel were descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. When they entered the "promised land", of Canaan in the time of Joshua, the people of Israel were allotted lands according to their tribes. Each tribe was made up of people who, through the male line, traced their ancestry to one of the sons of Jacob. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin received land near the city of Jerusalem. The lands of the other ten tribes were north of Jerusalem. All twelve tribes were one nation, the nation of Israel, during the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon.

After Solomon, the northern ten tribes seceded and organized as the kingdom of Israel while the two southern tribes became the kingdom of Judah. These names were used to distinguish between the two divisions of the people of Israel. They may sometimes be confusing to us. Some have taught that "Israel" or "the house of Israel" refers only to the ten northern tribes. It is often taught that the name "Judah" always refers to one tribe or to the two tribe nation with Jerusalem as its capital city. Both of these teachings are inaccurate. A careful study and comparison of texts will show that "Israel" may refer to the northern kingdom of ten



tribes, or to all twelve tribes. Likewise, the name "Judah" may refer to one tribe, or the two tribe nation, or to all twelve tribes. The terms Israel and Judah are sometimes used interchangeably.

The teaching of British-Israel denies that "the Jews" are from all twelve tribes. It maintains that after the captivity, the people of the ten tribes dispersed over Europe. Those who returned from Babylon were only of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. This teaching is entirely false. We have already noted in Ezra, that people from all the tribes of Israel were among those who returned from Babylon. The idea that the people of northern Europe and England are descendants of the ten tribes is based on legend. It has no valid historical background. Jewish people have been scattered to every part of the world, but have to an amazing degree kept their identity.

In fulfillment of Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 28:25, the twelve tribes were dispersed among all nations, but also, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Amos 9:9, they did not take root or become melted into these countries. Even in the "melting pot" of the United States while many immigrants from Europe intermingled and lost their separate identity, the Jews have remained separate and distinct.

Jerusalem was the capital city of David and of all Israel through the reign of Solomon. The temple, the center of worship, was at Jerusalem. When the nation was divided into two kingdoms, those of the north who were faithful to God still went to Jerusalem for the Passover and other worship. The people of Jerusalem are sometimes referred to in the Bible as "Judah" even though they included all the other tribes of Israel as well. We will note some examples of this as found in the Old Scriptures. In the second chapter of Zechariah we have a message directed to Jerusalem and Judah. There is a call for the scattered people to return.

Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord... After the glory hath he sent me

unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye... And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again (Zechariah 2:6,8,12).

The fact that these references to Judah also include all Israel is shown by the following:

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem... And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen (nations), O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing (Zechariah 8:7,8,13).

Again in the prophecy of the tenth chapter of Zechariah, we find all Israel included.

And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them (Zechariah 10:6).

The phrase "house of Joseph" refers to Ephraim and Manasseh which were of the northern ten tribes often referred to as Israel. Thus a comparison of the verses in Zechariah shows that references to Judah and Jerusalem actually include all the people of Israel.

In the twelfth chapter of Zechariah it would appear that Judah is singled out as separate from the rest of Israel. To really understand this we must compare it with other Bible passages on the same subject. It describes the time when armies from the nations of the world will go against Jerusalem. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:2). There will be only one time when a conflict involving the nations of the world will center in Palestine and Jerusalem. This is the time described in Ezekiel Thirty-eight when a northern nation invades Israel. There is a great conflict as the invaders

are challenged by the "young lions" and other nations of the world. "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days..." (Ezekiel 38:16). In that conflict the invading nations are defeated and destroyed, and God is glorified. "So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel..." (Ezekiel 39:7). Comments follow on the results of this conflict.

So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity... Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel... Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land...for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God (Ezekiel 39:22,23,25,28,29).

Note that the term "heathen" is in other versions translated "nations", it refers to people other than Israel. From the above references, we see that the great latter day conflict, centering in Palestine and Jerusalem, concerns all Israel, not just Judah. But in Zechariah Twelve, which evidently refers to the same conflict, it speaks of the:

...siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem... In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood... The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah (Zechariah 12:2,6,7).

Some feel that these verses show the Jews are Judah, and the present return of the Jews to Palestine is the saving of Judah first. This would imply that a regathering of the other tribes of Israel would follow later. But if we continue to read in the twelfth chapter, we find it goes at once to a description of events at the second advent of Christ.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son... (Zechariah 12:9,10).

The rest of this chapter, and chapters thirteen and fourteen, are further descriptions of the second advent of Christ. The saving of "the tents of Judah first" comes just before the second advent of Christ. There is no indication of any other gathering before that event. Thus the reference to Judah must refer to all the tribes of Israel. We read of this latter day gathering in Jeremiah.

For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. ...in the latter days ye shall consider it (Jeremiah 30:3,24).

Many Bible references speak of the return of both Israel and Judah to Palestine together. The Bible speaks of only two returns of Israel to their homeland during this age (before the second advent). The first was at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the second is in the latter days just prior to the second advent of Christ.

There is not a separate regathering of Judah, and later a regathering of Israel. The prophecy is that they will return together as we now observe it in the present nation of Israel. Note again Jeremiah 30:3, "...I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it". And in Ezekiel 36:10 we read, "And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded".

### **The Jews are Israel**

The apostle Paul tells us that he is a Jew. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus..." (Acts 22:3). He declares that his people are the twelve tribes. "Unto which promise

our twelve tribes...hope to come" (Acts 26:7). Again we find Paul asking "What advantage then hath the Jew?" He answers "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1,2). It is generally agreed that the oracles refer to the word of God, the Bible as found in the Old Testament. This word of God was not given to just the tribe of Judah, but to all the tribes of Israel. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, were given to the twelve tribes while they were on their way from Egypt to the promised land. The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah were addressed mainly to Jerusalem and Judah. But the entire Old Testament was given to and preserved by the Jews, and Paul declares they include twelve tribes.

In the ninth chapter of Romans the apostle Paul is burdened for his people. "...my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law..." (Romans 9:3,4). Paul's kinsmen were Jews and the giving of the law was to all twelve tribes of Israel. Thus Paul is identifying the Jews as Israel.

Paul's burden for his people continues in Romans. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). Paul speaks of the zeal which the Jews had for God but how they were mistaken in seeking their righteousness by the law. It is evident here that when Paul speaks of Israel, he means the Jews.

In chapter eleven, Paul declares that he is an "Israelite". He tells how Elijah made "intercession to God against Israel", and that "...Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for". Paul shows that the failure of Israel resulted in the gospel going to the Gentiles. He states, "...blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (quotes from Romans 11:1,2,7,25).

The name "Gentile" is the opposite of the name "Jew". Paul refers to "...both Jews and Gentiles..." (Romans 3:9). The two terms "Jews" and "Israelites" are used by Paul interchangeably, as opposite of the term "Gentiles".

We have seen in both the Old and New scriptures, that the names "Judah", "Israel", and "Jews" often refer to the same people. The Jews of the time of Paul, and indeed of our own time, are from all twelve tribes of Israel. The latter day prophecies concerning Israel are now being fulfilled in the activities of the Jews.

The British-Israel teaching is based on legend and the misapplication of certain Bible texts. Zedekiah was the last king to sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem. God had promised that **if** the people and their kings were faithful to Him, that there would always be a man to sit on that throne. But they were very wicked. Therefore God allowed the throne to be overturned. No one will occupy this throne until "he comes whose right it is", the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Legend of Tephi Tephi**

There is a legend that a daughter of Zedekiah named Tephi Tephi was rescued by Jeremiah and taken to Egypt. Later, it is claimed, she came to Ireland and gave birth to a son who became a king. Some believe the present line of English royalty are directly descended from him. Thus it is taught that there has always been someone of the royal line of David living, and that his throne has continued until this time in England. There is no valid history for all this. It is based on legend and cannot be true because it contradicts the facts of the Bible.

There is no Bible record of any daughter of Zedekiah. It is recorded that his sons were killed as he watched and that his eyes were then put out. The Babylonian king "slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand" (II Chronicles 36:17).

We find that no woman is ever counted in the lineage of kings who sat on the throne at Jerusalem. One woman, Athaliah, usurped the throne when she thought she had kill-

ed all the males of the royal family, but one son of the previous king escaped death by hiding, and was later proclaimed king. The royal line of David could not be continued by a woman.

Scriptures used to prove the legend of Tephi Tephi are taken out of context and given very far-fetched meanings. In Ezekiel Seventeen, we find a that the kings of Egypt and Babylon are denounced for their deeds against Jerusalem and Israel. The fate of Babylon is described in verses twenty and twenty-one.

Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar... And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree... (Ezekiel 17:22-24).

The legend claims that the "tender one" was Tephi Tephi, but it is actually a prophecy of Christ. God is the high cedar and the tender branch refers to Christ being born as a baby. He will be exalted while the kings of the earth, such as the king of Babylon, will come to nothing.

### **Many Bible Texts Misapplied**

Some who teach the British-American-Israel theory are sincere and earnest Christians, but they misapply many Bible texts. We will examine some more examples.

It is claimed that the people of Israel cannot be limited to only the Jews because, God said that Rebekah was to be the mother of "thousands of millions" (Genesis 24:60). But let us read the text carefully. It was Laban, Rebekah's father, and others of her family who gave this blessing as she was leaving to be the wife of Jacob. They said "be thou the mother of thousands of millions". This was their way of

wishing her happiness and prosperity. This is **not** a prophecy that her descendants would actually be of that great number.

Another misinterpreted text is Ezekiel Four. The prophet is told to take a tile, to draw on it a picture of Jerusalem, and to symbolically lay a siege against it. It is said of that siege, "This shall be a sign to the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 4:3). The prophet is then told to lay on his left side for three hundred and ninety days. "For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity...so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 4:5). He is then instructed to lay on his right side forty days, "...thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year" (Ezekiel 4:6).

This text is interpreted to mean that Judah's punishment in captivity was to last forty years, but that of the house of Israel was to last three hundred and ninety years. Therefore Israel could not have returned at the same time that Judah did, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. How can any such meaning be found in this passage? It simply is not there.

This prophecy has to do with the wickedness of the two nations, Judah and Israel, during the time of their kings. The kingdom of Israel was far more wicked, and for a much longer time, than was Judah. Nothing is said about these time periods indicating a time of punishment. Rather the prophet was to lay on his side for these times to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel and the house of Judah. He was then to depict the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was in Babylon **before** the destruction of Jerusalem. God there gave him the prophecy of what was to happen to that city because of the sinful wickedness of Israel and Judah. The people of the northern kingdom of Israel had been in captivity for about a hundred years. Nevertheless, they were still in that region, the land along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the land of Assyria and later of Babylon. In chapter three of Ezekiel, the prophet is told to "...speak unto the house of Israel. But the house of Israel will not hearken



unto thee...for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted" (Ezekiel 3:1,7). Jerusalem was the location of the temple of God, and as such it was the beloved city of Israel and Judah. It was because of their sins that it was to be destroyed. There was only one period of return from this captivity. We have seen that people of all twelve tribes returned together. The many thousands who did not return, but remained in Babylon or were scattered to other lands, are not to be counted as the people of God from that time on. The people of Judah and the other tribes of Israel, who did return, are together referred to as Israel since that time. As we have seen, the names Judah and Israel are often used interchangeably. The context must be studied in each case to understand the true meaning.

### **The Seven Times Punishment of Israel**

We have noted the message to all twelve tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy Twenty-eight. It said Israel would be the most blessed people of the earth if they would remain faithful to God, but if they were unfaithful they would be the most cursed people. Because Israel became sinful and departed from the commandments of God, the latter became their prophecy. The twelve tribes were scattered to all the nations of the earth where they suffered greatly.

There is a similar message to all Israel in the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of Leviticus. First we read about the promises of blessing for faithfulness. "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase..." (Leviticus 26:2-4). There follows a list of blessings similar to those found in Deuteronomy Twenty-eight. The message continues, "But if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments...then I will punish you seven times more for your sins" (Leviticus 26:14,18). There follows a series of denunciations of the

people for their sins, the declarations that they would be punished seven times for them. This is mentioned four times. Then the prophecy states, "And I will scatter you among the heathen (nations), and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste" (Leviticus 26:33). This was spoken to all twelve tribes of Israel and it has been fulfilled in the history of the Jewish people. The period of time mentioned has had a very precise fulfillment.

Four times it is mentioned that the punishment would be "seven times". In other prophecies a "time" represents one year. Here we would have seven years. Nothing happened to fulfill the prophecy in that short period, but a day also stands for a year in prophecy. In most prophecy it seems that a year is considered to be 360 days. Seven times 360 days (years) would be 2520 years. If we consider a year to be 365 days (years), the total would be 2555 years. Let us examine each of these time periods.

For a time period to have meaning we must find its beginning. We find that in addition to natural calamities the punishments include "...and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy... And I will bring the land into desolation... And I will scatter you among the heathen..." (Leviticus 26:25,32,33). These things began to happen during the time of the captivity of Israel and Judah. They had their greatest impact with the loss of the king at Jerusalem. After the captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel, many people of these ten tribes had moved to Judah. When Judah was taken captive the people taken included some of all the tribes of Israel. While Judah remained free, all Israel could claim to be a nation with sovereign power. But that sovereignty was lost when the king of Babylon began his oppression in the three phases of the captivity. This began about 607 B.C. and continued for several years.

In the dates before Christ, the year numbers get smaller until the transition from B.C. to A.D. If we consider the 360

day year, the seven times is 2520 years. When we subtract 606, we come to the date 1914. This was the year the First World War began. A result of this war was the deliverance of Palestine and Jerusalem from the oppression of the Turks. If we take the full 365 day year, we have 2555 years as the period of the seven times. Subtracting 607, we arrive at the date 1948. This is the year when Israel again became a sovereign nation.

It was during the time from 1914 to 1948, that the people of Israel were returning, and the land was being restored from desolation to beauty. The seven times punishment came to an end as Jerusalem was delivered from the Turks, and the Jews returned from all nations to restore the land. Israel once more became sovereign.

From the time the king of Babylon took King Jehoichin captive, which apparently was about 607 B.C., until 1948 the people of Israel were always ruled by other nations.

First the people were carried away captive to Babylon, and Palestine became a part of the Babylonian empire. Persia conquered Babylon and permitted all the people of Israel, who so desired, to return to their homeland, but the land remained a part of the Persian empire. No king was restored to Israel. Nehemiah was a governor for the Persian king. When Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great, Palestine became part of the Greek empire.

During this time, the people of Israel were permitted some local leadership in the person of the high priest, but they were never a sovereign nation. No king sat on the throne of David at Jerusalem. It is true that at the time of the birth of Christ, Herod was king over Palestine, but he was a king **under** the emperor of Rome. Palestine was simply a province of the Roman empire. The throne of Herod was in no sense the throne of David. Instead of freedom and prosperity for the Jews it meant oppression. The Roman tax collector, the "publican" was greatly hated by the Jewish subjects. Israel was still suffering under the seven times punishment which God had decreed because of Israel's sins.

After the fall of Rome, conditions in Palestine became even worse for the Jews. The Romans had destroyed the temple in 70 A.D. and the entire city in 135 A.D., but their rule was followed by that of the Moslem Turks. Jews were driven out of their homeland and scattered into all the world just as God had foretold. There were very few Jews living in Palestine and in Jerusalem when it was captured by the British general Allenby in 1917.

In the peace settlement after World War I, the rule of Palestine was given to the British as a so-called "mandate". It did not become British territory, but the British had the responsibility of rule. They found this task to be extremely difficult. The Arabs claimed the land and did not want any Jews to be allowed to settled there. The British wanted to accommodate both Arabs and Jews so they greatly restricted Jewish immigration by setting quotas. Any Jews entering Palestine in excess of the quota were termed "illegal". Many hundreds were apprehended and sent to concentraton camps on the island of Cyprus.

The situation finally became intolerable for the British. On May 15, 1948 they withdrew their officials and army. In effect this said to the Arabs and Jews — fight it out. The Arabs were ready and sent in their troops determined to drive out all Jews, but God fought for the people of Israel. When the United Nations was finally able to arrange a cease-fire, the Jews had conquered a large part of Palestine. In general this was an area stretching north and south, all west of Jerusalem and reaching just up to that city. The Jews there proclaimed themselves an independent, sovereign nation, Israel. The United States quickly gave them official recognition as a nation, an example followed by most other nations.

For the first time since the captivity of Judah, the Jews actually possessed the land and were their own rulers. Exactly seven times 365 or 2555 years from the loss of their sovereignty and the beginning of their captivity, there was reestablished a place of freedom and safety for people of Israel. The times of their punishment came to an end.

This was made complete when they captured the entire old city of Jerusalem in June of 1967. They also captured all the west bank of the Jordan river and have held it ever since. The Jews have built many settlements there and continue to do so. It appears they will soon annex this territory. It is the land of Judea and Samaria, part of the "promised land". These things are happening, not because the Jews are so righteous, but because of God's promises to their forefathers, and because it is foretold in the Bible that Israel will return to their land as a sign of the second advent of Christ.

### **A Prophecy and Fulfillment to All Twelve Tribes**

Let us again emphasize that the prophecy of the seven times punishment was made or given to **all** twelve tribes of Israel. Moses gave this message of God to all of them. A prophecy to twelve tribes will not find its fulfillment in just one or two tribes. This prophecy has found its fulfillment in the Jewish nation of Israel at exactly the time predicted. The Jews today are the twelve tribes of Israel.

# CHAPTER THIRTY

## Ezekiel Thirty-Seven: The Dry Bones

In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, we find a remarkable prophecy concerning the people of Israel. In a vision, the prophet was taken to a valley filled with dry bones. We read that the bones were "very dry", and the Lord asked, "can these bones live?" Ezekiel answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest". So far as the prophet could see, life for the bones would be impossible. But the Lord instructed Ezekiel to "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ...Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live" (Ezekiel 37:4,5). Ezekiel did as the Lord commanded, and "prophesied", speaking the words God gave to him. The result was a miracle. We are told, "...there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them" (Ezekiel 37:7,8). Now the valley was filled with bodies which were complete, but which lacked the breath of life. This reminds one of when Adam was created, God gave to him the breath of life and he became a living soul. So here, when Ezekiel called for the winds to come, "the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet,, an exceeding great army" (Ezekiel 37:10).

Some of the visions God gave to Ezekiel are left unexplained. But with this prophecy of the dry bones, a full explanation is given. "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our

bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Ezekiel 37:11). Israel and Judah were in captivity, although the captivity of Judah was not complete, at the time of Ezekiel. But they were already in a hopeless situation. The "whole house of Israel" was in the country of Babylon, in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Those taken captive of the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, were still there when their brethren from Judah were brought to that same land. The prophecy declared that they would be brought up and taken out of that land, and would be placed in their own land of Israel.

It might be thought that this prophecy was fulfilled in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Many of the Jews then returned to Palestine. But if we read on through the chapter, we find that the prophecy goes far beyond that return. In verse twenty-one we are told, "...Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen (nations), whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land..." (Ezekiel 37:21,22).

Some of all the tribes of Israel returned in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, but they came from only **one** country or nation, that of Persia. They did not become a nation in Palestine, merely a province of Persia. They continued to be just a part of another country - Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then they were scattered to all the nations of the world. The return at the time of Ezra was only the **beginning** of the fulfillment of the dry bones' prophecy. The regathering we have seen in our present time, is also only a partial fulfillment of the prophecy of this chapter. But it does go much further than the preceding return.

We must now consider the "two sticks". The prophet was told to take two sticks and to write on one, "for Judah" and on the other, "for Joseph" (Israel). He was then to put both sticks in one hand where they would become united together as one stick.

This symbolized that in the return, there would be just one nation, truly united as the "whole house of Israel". Israel and Judah went into the original captivity as two nations,

but they return as one people. In our time they have become one nation. The land area which was Judah, was first occupied. The dwelling place ("tents") of Judah was first "saved" or liberated. But the people come as one, with no distinction of tribe. Some, like the apostle Paul, may have known from which tribe they were descended, but the other apostles do not mention any tribal affiliation. Paul declares of his people that they are "our twelve tribes".

They are now a nation, but the prophecy of Ezekiel Thirty-seven goes much further. It even reaches to the second advent of Christ and to His kingdom. The restoration and regathering told of in this chapter includes what we have seen in our time. It also includes a more complete restoration and regathering after the second advent of Christ.

There are actually three returns of the people of Israel to Palestine described in the Bible. The first is the return from Persia under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. The second is the present gathering of "a great company" during a time of persecution and trouble. This is described in Jeremiah Thirty and Thirty-one. In this second gathering, they do not have a king but,

Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them... (Jeremiah 30:20,21).

We see this fulfilled in our time with the establishment of the modern nation of Israel. A president and prime minister govern Israel.

The last part of verse twenty-one has also had some fulfillment, "...and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me...". The coalition government of Prime Minister Begin, and of that which succeeded him, was deeply religious. While they continue to be blinded to the gospel of Christ, they do approach God. They seek to obey God's laws, including the Sabbath. They believe that the land is theirs because of the promises in the Bible. While many Jews, both in Palestine and in other parts of the world, are not



religious and do not practice any faith, the trend seems to be toward a more religious faith. If persecution of the Jews becomes greater in the nations of the world, we can expect their religious faith to become stronger.

### **A Restoration Yet Future**

As we continue to read in Ezekiel Thirty-seven, we find a greater promise to Israel.

...I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd...and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. My tabernacle also shall be with them... (Ezekiel 37:23,24,25,27).

We find a similar prophecy in Ezekiel Thirty-six, after it tells about the dispersion and regathering.

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you... And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes...and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

We have seen, and continue to see, a gathering of the people of Israel from all countries of the world to Palestine. We observe that many of the leaders seem to be devout in seeking to serve God. But the population as a whole is not godly, and many are not religious at all. What we see at this time is the regathering of a "great company", also referred to as the "remnant of Israel" in Jeremiah 31:7,8. During this time only a relatively small portion of Jews return to Palestine. But the number is a "great company", and the return now fulfills the prophecies of Jeremiah Thirty and Thirty-one. We have noted above, that there are prophecies of a third return that includes a more complete regathering, and a time when the people will be more receptive to God.

# CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

## Isaiah Eleven: The Second Regathering Of Israel

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might... (Isaiah 11:1,2).

We recognize this as a prophecy of Christ at His first advent. Later in this chapter we find the prophecy changes to refer to events yet future.

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:4,6,8,9).

The "holy mountain" of verse nine must refer to the holy kingdom of Christ. The accompanying verses describe conditions in that wonderful millennial Kingdom of Christ which is established at His second advent. The kingdom will be on earth as described in verse nine. Notice the special reference to Israel.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left... And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather

together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim (Isaiah 11:11,12,13).

This will be the **second time** that the Lord will gather Israel from all over the earth. The **first** gathering is taking place now as the great company of Jews returns to Palestine. Never before in history has there been a time when the people of Israel came back to Palestine from all countries of the world. As they return now, we have noted that many, if not most of them, are not seeking to serve the Lord. But in the **second** regathering, which this chapter indicates will occur during the Millennium, there will be a great turning to God. Then will be the time fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:25,26 which says, they will have a new heart and will be clean from their sins. We do not know the details of this future gathering, so we cannot fully describe it.

Many other Bible passages indicate that in the Kingdom of Christ, there will be special opportunity given to the people of Israel. Their blindness will be turned away.

...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son... In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1,9).

Israel has for the most part been blinded to the gospel of Christ. In this condition, they had no opportunity to see and accept the salvation of Christ. The above passage indicates that God will judge a "third part" worthy to have that opportunity in the millennial Kingdom of Christ. The "fountain" of Christ's blood, which they could not see because of their blindness, will be "opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem". David ruled over all twelve tribes of Israel, and so the "house of David" is **all** Israel.

In the great commission, Christ commanded us to preach the gospel to all the world. It was to go "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile". We should always try to give the gospel of Christ to the Jews, even though we find that blindness causes most of them to reject it. There are always a few who accept, and for this we should rejoice. No one, Jew or Gentile, should put off accepting Christ to depend on a "second chance" during the Millennium. Those of Israel who will have opportunity then, will truly be getting their **first chance**. God will be the judge as to who will be included in that number. Scripture is very clear that there will be a greater regathering of Israel during the reign of Christ. For many of Israel the "fountain" will be opened. They will believe, accept, and be given the full benefit of salvation in Christ.

# CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

## Summary

We end this book, but the study of Bible prophecy should never end until all is fulfilled. Prophecies of the past have been fulfilled. The prophecies of future events are certain to meet their exact fulfillment. In this book, we have noted how history has fulfilled the prophecies of the Bible throughout the centuries. We are now in the closing years of this age, the Christian era, the time from the ascension of Christ until His second advent.

Two categories of prophecy are now in the process of fulfillment. These are the general prophecies and the specific. Many people see only the general, and we would not try to limit the importance of such. These include the great increase of knowledge, the many wars, the earthquakes and other natural disasters including famines and epidemics. The great increase in the frequency of these things fulfills last day prophecies, but the specific fulfillments are truly exciting.

### **Specific Prophecy Fulfillments**

Let us here briefly review the specific fulfillments we have studied in previous chapters. Perhaps the greatest of these is the regathering of Israel to Palestine. For centuries the people of Israel, the Jews, were unable to return to Palestine because of hostile rulers there. With the establishment of the sovereign nation of Israel in 1948, all Jews have been given not only the right, but the invitation, to make their home in

Israel. All are free to go, but many have not chosen to do so. The prophecy of this first return from the nations of the world is that it would be "a great company". The nearly four million who have done so are surely such a company. In 1967 they took over the old city of Jerusalem which includes Mt. Zion, the site of the ancient temple. They have declared Jerusalem the eternal capital of their nation and it has now been such for several years. The Arab world with their religion of Mohammed strongly objects, but they have been unable to do anything about it. The United States and other nations have suggested that Jerusalem be an international city, but it remains the capital of Israel.

At this writing, Israel continues to occupy southern Lebanon. This was the area of the promised land given to the tribe of Asher. Israel has said that it will withdraw from all of Lebanon if the Syrians will also withdraw. Zechariah 10:6-10 indicates that during Israel's return they would also be in Lebanon. It would seem that they may continue to occupy southern Lebanon until the coming of Christ.

The peace treaty with Egypt is another specific fulfillment of prophecy. Egypt had been closely allied with Russia and had been the greatest enemy of Israel. The Bible in Daniel 11:42,43 has all along declared, that in the final conflict the invading power, which appears to be Russia, will be against Egypt. This called for Egypt to, sometime before Armageddon, turn against Russia. This they have done. In making a treaty with Israel, they have placed themselves against Russia, and in line to be Russia's victim.

Another specific fulfillment of prophecy has been the development of Russia as a great world power, and an atheistic nation. Bible prophecy indicated that the great power in the final conflict would be a nation from the **north**. It also indicates, in Ezekiel 38:5 and Daniel 11:43, that Ethiopia and Lybia will be allied with that northern invading power. At this time Ethiopia and Lybia are allied with Russia. One part of the prophecy yet to be fulfilled is the lining up of Persia (Iran) with Russia, but world leaders in general expect this to happen soon.

Other specific prophecies yet to be fulfilled include the development of the ten nations to be allied with Russia. The development of the power of the "eighth head" of Revelation 17:11-14, includes these nations turning against and destroying the Roman church. The greatest of all prophecies yet to be fulfilled will be the second advent of Christ to this earth. He will establish His kingdom on the earth as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" . Let us continue to watch and pray and be ready for His coming.