**THERE IS A WAY OF ESCAPE**

**(short version)**

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**No Place** **to Hide?**

Military men fear what the next war will be like. They live with the realities of the nuclear age. At their fingertips are the buttons which could annihilate half of the earth's population in a matter of minutes - and make the entire planet unfit for human habitation for 100 years! They frankly confess they know of no place to hide. Think of it! No place to which man can flee on his own. But is there really no hope of escape?

These men - aware of the realities of military science - are totally unaware of the greatest reality of all-God! Isn't it time we sought to discover Him - to find out what He has to reveal about the way to peace, about the frightening events before we have universal peace? Isn't it time we looked into His revealed knowledge the Bible - to find out why we have wars, and how we can escape utter human extinction, and live in a world of peace at last?

**It Is Time We Knew**

Scientists now admit that the world is racing on to the catastrophic climax of nearly six thousand years of misguided human civilization! It is time we awakened to these frightening events. Your future-your very life-is at stake. It is time we recognized that civilization hasn't much time left, unless God intervenes to stop men from destroying all life on earth in their crazed dreams for world conquest.

There is a reason why this world is in chaos-with nations leaping like wild animals at each other's throats. But almost no one seems to understand. It is time we looked to the source of all knowledge and found out the Plan being worked out. It is time we looked to the revelation of God to man-the Bible. The cause of chaotic world conditions is made plain In Jesus Christ's startling prophecy about the“times of the Gentiles.”

**Jesus' Amazing Prophecy**

Let's notice Jesus' prophecy of the "times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24. Jesus told His disciples that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This prophecy is not speaking of a period of peace, but of war. It is a message for our day, a time when the Gentiles are conquering and destroying, when they are ruling themselves contrary to the way of God, who is Creator and Ruler.

Remember that one of the keys to understanding this prophecy and all prophecy is DUALITY. There is always a forerunner which is a type of another final great fulfillment. The original fulfillment occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem which climaxed in 70 A.D. Exactly what did Jesus mean by the“time of the Gentiles”? When did they begin? How long will they last? When do they end?

**Common Teachings in Error**

It is the common assumption that the times of the Gentiles are a period of blessing on the nations. It is argued that since God took away the blessing of being great and dominant nations from Israel and Judah, and since the Gentiles for centuries have been dominant nations, that human rule is a blessing bestowed upon the Gentiles. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Then again, many claim that the times of the Gentiles are synonymous with the times of Judah 's punishment, -that the Gentile times have already ended, some say in 1914, others say in 1917 or 1936. But all these supposed dates for the ending of the times of the Gentiles are mere guesses!

The truth is that almost no one really knows what the times of the Gentiles are. And yet without an understanding of the meaning of this prophetic period, you cannot grasp the real significance of world-shaking present day events or understand what’s going to happen. Let's not assume; let's study the Bible itself to see what these times really are.

**Times of Israel's Punishment a Key to Understanding**

The House of lsrael (not to be confused with the modern nation of " Israel ," which is descended from the House of Judah) was promised great national blessings, including national greatness, if they would obey God. But God also promised that if they obstinately refused to obey Him, if they refused to follow His laws and let Him rule their lives, then He would punish them for a period called seven times Lev. 26.

The Bible itself defines this period of seven times for us, If you turn to Revelation the twelfth chapter, and compare verses 6 and 14, you will see that the word "time" in prophecy simply means a year. Seven “times” would be “seven years,” each containing twelve 30-day months or a total of 2520 days. 7x12x30.

Now let's notice another key, In Numbers 14:34, God said Israel would bear their iniquities in the wilderness after the number of days they searched Canaan, forty days, each day for a year, then seven times or 2520 prophetic days would equal 2520 literal years! This period of seven times or 2520 years punishment did come upon Israel because they went their own ways and would not submit to the rule of God.

Israel went into captivity after a three year siege from 721-718 B.C. and did not become a great people again until their times of punishment ceased, A.D.1800 to 1803, At that time the descendants of the ancient House of Israel - especially America and Britain - began to rise to such wealth and power as the world has never enjoyed before - all because of the promises made to Abraham. You can absolutely prove this "seven times" prophecy refers primarily to our English speaking peoples.

Also the Holy Land, after a punishment against the House of Judah that began 604 B.C., was taken from the Gentile Turks on December 9, 1917 - exactly 2520 years later, when it came under the control of Great Britain, and finally the Jews. The seven times of Israel's punishment was a period of great privation and suffering, of slavery and war because they would not submit their wills and their ways to God, because they would not allow Him to rule their lives by His perfect laws, which could have brought peace and prosperity.

**The Original Prophecy Found in Daniel**

Now that we understand the seven times punishment on Israel, let's understand the meaning of the "times of the Gentles." The original prophecy to which Jesus had reference is found in the fourth chapter of Daniel. Jesus understood that this prophetic vision of the great tree had reference to the times of the Gentiles, as well as to Nebuchadnezzar's literal punishment.

Notice Daniel 4:17, This striking vision was not only to teach Nebuchadnezzar that God rules, but it is also "to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, andgives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men."

So the Bible itself interprets this prophecy to have reference not only to the king of Babylon in that day, but also to teach the living - yes, all of the nations today - that God is Supreme Ruler.

Now notice verses 20 and 22 of Daniel 4. The great tree represented the king, And what was to happen to him? “Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him” (verse 16). The king was to lose his understanding, to become insane - he was to act and think like a wild animal until he learned that the Creator rules over the affairs of men, till he learned that the only way to peace and security is through submission to the rule, and laws of God, instead of yielding to human pride.

The world and its leaders have not yet learned this needed lesson. The nations today still devour one another in war like wild beasts, as they struggle to gain world conquest.

**The King Represents the Kingdom**

Most of the misunderstanding about this important prophecy results from not realizing that the seven times or years that passed over King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon were an example of the seven prophetic times of punishment upon the Gentile system.

In Daniel 2, verses 38 and 39, this is clearly explained. The king saw a great image composed of different metals and clay. The head of this image represented the kingdom of Babylon, Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar, "You are this head of gold, And after you shall arise another kingdom…"

The divisions of the great image represented various kingdoms of the Babylonish system down to our day, Yet Daniel designated the first kingdom by its supreme dictatorial king, Nebuchadnezzar, The king, then, represented the kingdom of Babylon, because he had absolute power, Also by comparing Daniel 7:17, 23 you will see that king and kingdom are used synonymously, This prophecy is a living message for all time - down to the twentieth century! One of the punishments on the king was that his heart should be changed “from man's, and let a wild animal's heart be given him,” What does this punishment mean?

**Why Punished Seven Years?**

God was dealing with the Gentiles in Daniel's day. The Gentile King Nebuchadnezzar had been living contrary to God's laws. He had been taking his people on the road to world conquest and the enslavement of other nations and peoples, He had been traveling the way of war, not of peace, Godhad sent His warning. The king did not heed. So God punished King Nebuchadnezzar seven years (apparently about 569 to 562 B.C.) till he acted and thought like an animal.

No punishment like that had ever come on any king before! No ruler had ever been so cursed!After these seven years, Nebuchadnezzar's mind returned to sanity. He now admitted that his ways were wrong, and actually wrote a great public document admitting before all nations what had happened to him and to his people!

After those seven years of punishment, the kingdom of Babylon was given the heart of a man. The leaders began to think in ways of peace instead of war. Notice Daniel 7:4. The kingdom of Chaldea(or Babylon ) - here symbolized by a ferocious lion - stood “upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." Notice the parallel. Now he saw himself as he really was- nothing but a wild animal. He saw his world conquests as slaughter.

But just as the king had a change of heart, so did the Chaldean kingdom - very temporarily. It, too, stood on its feet like a man! The kingdom ceased to attack, conquer and destroy other nations. But the nation did not continue to recognize God or His way. The people and their leaders continued to break God's laws. At the end of seventy years of Chaldean world rule, God intervened. He sent a terrible punishment upon Babylon and its king, Belshazzar.

The Bible and ancient secular historians tell the frightful story of the fall of Babylon. They reveal a vivid picture of the terrible slaughter that the Medes and Persians under Cyrus imposed on Babylon in the night of the feast during which Belshazzar the King was slain. Daniel 5:24 -30. The facts, exactly in order as they occurred, are preserved in the writings of Xenophon.

Xenophon, the Greek historian who wrote the Cyropaedia in the fourth century before Christ, says that “when Cyrus reached Babylon ” 539B.C., he dug channels for the dispersal of the water in the river Euphrates, which ran under the gates of Babylon. Then he and the Medo-Persian army secretly entered the riverbed, climbed stealthily through the gates along the river and rushed to the palace “when he heard that there was a festival in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians drank and reveled the whole night." Upon reaching the palace where Belshazzar had seen the handwriting on the wall, they “burst in, and, pursuing those who fled, and dealing blows amongst them, came up to the king, and found him in a standing posture with his sword drawn. (They) mastered him." So Belshazzar the king inBabylon was killed that night exactly as Daniel said.

God is no respecter of persons. As He punished Israel and Judah for seven prophetic "times"- 2520 years-so would be the punishment of the Gentiles! God began by punishing King Nebuchadnezzar for seven literal years. Then, because the nation of Babylon did not repent, God punished the Gentiles to teach them the consequences of their horrendous ways. This punishment began with the fall ofBabylon and is to continue for 2520 years. Their rulers have ever since had the minds of wild animals - seeking to attack, conquer, and destroy other nations! But in the meantime, the Gentile rulers with the minds of wild beasts have come into possession of the atomic and hydrogen bombs, nerve gases and bacteriological weapons by which they plan to conquer all humanity! God must intervene before it is too late!

**Punished for 2520 Years**

King Nebuchadnezzar, because of his continued stubborn refusal to submit to the rule of God - the only way that would have brought him peace of mind and satisfaction was punished seven years by having his mind changed to that of a wild animal, until he learned that God ruled. He was dethroned and lived among the wild beasts.

In like manner, the Chaldean Empire, typified by its king, was defeated and its dominion was taken away. Just as Nebuchadnezzar lived seven years like a wild beast, so the Babylonish system has been cursed for seven prophetic times - 2520 years - with leaders having: the minds of wild beasts. The Persians, Greeks, Romans - and Europeans even to the days of Hitler and Mussolini - have all been cursed with leaders who think and act like wild animals, leaders who glory in war and conquest.

Not one of the beasts which followed the Chaldean Empire, as described in Daniel 7, was given a man's heart. They all were like ferocious wild animals - conquering, pillaging, destroying one another by intrigue, alliances and war. But this is not all. Consider, Nebuchadnezzar was forced to live among the wild beasts just as the successor nations of the Babylonish system have had to fight and struggle constantly against other Gentile nations who are also cursed with the same mind - the same desire to conquer and rule the world. That is why Hitler and Mussolini struggled against Russia.

The ancient Chaldean Empire would not submit to God's rule and ways, but wanted to rule its own way - the greatest curse that could happen to any nation. As a punishment God has allowed even to this very day the Gentile nations to rule themselves until they learn that; only His ways are right and that He rules in the world ruling kingdoms of men.

Self-rule is a dire punishment! Just as Nebuchadnezzar finally regained his right mind and acknowledged God's authority, so the Gentile nations when their punishment is over, will soon come up to the Kingdom of God and ask to learn of His ways (Micah 4:1-3), so that they also may receive God's Spirit and finally enter His kingdom as members of the Family of God. What Good News there is ahead!

**Amazing Prophecy for Today!**

Notice how present-day events are explained by this prophecy. All nations have been made drunk with the false teachings of the Babylonish system which has gripped this world for thousands of years until this world has become so confused and divided that people don't know which way to turn Rev. 18:3.

Yes, these times are close to completion, close to the second coming of Jesus Christ to rule the nations and to teach them the ways of peace. But many catastrophic world events are going to happen between now and the time that this frightful punishment upon the Gentile nations is finished! These terrifying, world-shaking events will take place in this very last generation that is destined to live in two worlds! Remember what Jesus said in Luke 21:24? That Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the completion of the times of the Gentiles! Consider the fulfillment of this prophecy. The prophesied "times of the Gentiles" are not yet completed. Let's understand why.

JERUSALEM is at the crossroads of the world! Many nations have fought for its control and trodden it underfoot. Canaanites, Amorites, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, Crusaders, Turks. When Christ foretold Jerusalem's future, it was populated mainly by Jews. Only 39 years after that time, the Romans besieged the city, slaughtered many thousands of its inhabitants or sold them into slavery, burned the temple, and leveled most of the city to the ground.

About A.D. 132 the Jews again revolted against the Romans. This time, after their defeat in A.D. 135, the Romans barred them from Jerusalem (which was then called Aelia Capitolina). The city became predominantly Gentile populated and has remained so every century since! When the Jews in Palestinebecame a nation in 1948, they did NOT occupy the old city of Jerusalem. Instead, they occupied only the NEW city of Jerusalem, founded in 1860, on an entirely different site next to the original site of ancient Jerusalem. OLD Jerusalem on the original site was, and still is today, populated by Gentiles - not Jews or any of the tribes of Israel!

Even though the Jews now have political control over old Jerusalem, they have not driven the Arab population out of the city. They have allowed Arabs to remain on all the newly conquered territories. All the Jews have, at the moment, is an uneasy political control over the old city. The prophesied “times of the Gentiles” have not yet ended! Gentiles still walk the streets of the Old City.Next, however, the armies of other Gentiles will tread the streets of Old Jerusalem. When will the “times of the Gentiles” end? Zechariah 14 clearly shows that the Messiah will come and deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the Gentiles. This will put an end to the “times of the Gentiles.”

Notice what the ancient Prophet Joel says about that time: “So shall you know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers (warring Gentile nations) pass through her any more.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edam shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwells in Zion" Joel 3:17-21.

**A Way of Escape**

But in this end time of turmoil before this new world of peace, there is a place of safety for you- if you heed. It's a vital part of the gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom of God! Jesus said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved”? Matt. 24:22. But He went on to say that God would supernaturally cut short the days, for the sake of the elect. That is our only real hope for - the intervention of God. Jesus Christ promised protection to His own elect. He promised they would survive the prophesied holocaust to strike this unsuspecting world!

**WHO Are the Elect?**

He said, "fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke12:32). He promised that somewhere on this earth, right now, there would be His own work! That Work would be faithfully performed. He promised. By His Own true followers, who know his voice, who would be preaching, not some man-made "gospel" of grace, faith, hope or love, but “the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God on the earth” as a WITNESS to the whole world.

They would be preaching it, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, word-by-word, just exactly as it really is, not as they might interpret it to be, or any man, woman, or organization of men or women would like to have it preached. You need to find where that work is being carried on!

Because it is only those having a part in that Work who have any guarantee of safety! The very elect are those who are called, who have truly repented of their own ways, and have accepted the ways of God! They are the ones who have been made members of the body of Jesus Christ (l Cor.12:13) performing His work!

Jesus speaks of these faithful ones in the Book of Revelation. “And to the angel of the church inPhiladelphia, the prophesied end-time Church of God, doing the Work of God, write: ...‘I know your works: behold, I have set before thee an open door.’” Rev. 3:7-8. The Apostle Paul spoke of a door opened before him to preach the gospel. II Cor. 2:12.

Remember, Jesus promised, "This gospel of the kingdom SHALL be preached in all the world ...” Matt. 24:14, and promised to make a way for that message of hope and 'good news' to go - by opening the doors of radio, the printing press, television,- the internet- and evangelism. He promised those doors would REMAIN open. "... And no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name." Rev. 3:8.

Yes, the very elect would never become corrupted by false doctrines, be muzzled by boards of men - they would not deny the name of Jesus Christ, or His true doctrine! Later, Jesus gave the exhilarating GOOD NEWS to those faithful ones who put the WORK of God far above their own personal considerations. He said, “Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation (tribulation), which shall come upon ALL THE WORLD, to try them that dwell upon the earth"! Rev. 3:10. Yes, Jesus promised safety. He promises protection to His own elect- the Philadelphia era of the true Church of God.

**On the Wings of an Eagle**

God brought the ancient Israelites out of Egypt on symbolic “eagles wings.” Ex. 19:4. This symbolized the loving care and protection of God for His own children. Notice, now, an amazing prophecy. It is about the same Church of God addressed in the promise of protection we have just read in Revelation 3. “And to the woman (the Church) were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, when: she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Rev. 12:14.

In this end-time prophecy, John writes of the last, end-time remnant Church which is to ESCAPE the terrible WAR and tribulation that will soon strike our heedless people. They are, just as the ancient Israelites, carried to a place of SAFETY by God, their Protector! To those who will truly repent of wanting their own way, begin to keep the commandants including His true Sabbath day and who will come to God through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, He promises protection.