

# NOAH'S ARK 2



BY COLIN HUDSON



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by  
Colin Hudson

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Although this is the first printing of Noah's Ark 2, I actually wrote it in 1995. Apart from a few grammatical changes and some minor additions, it remains basically the same.

Many thanks to Hazel for helping to tidy up the manuscript.

I would like to thank Hal Lindsay for his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which was instrumental in my coming to know the Lord over 14 years ago.

Colin Hudson, March, AD 2000

Cover Design by DAWN HUDSON

## PREFACE

*"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."* - Isaiah 42 v8-9

Prophecy - the foretelling of events before they happen - is a large and vital part of the Biblical writings. All through Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, we find God speaking through His servants about things that would come to pass. And while history provides the full accuracy of many Bible prophecies, there is still much that is foretold in the Scriptures that has yet to take place. Much that is now becoming clearer as this modern era advances relentlessly on to the exact prophesied fulfilment at the end of the age.

Many prophecies dealt locally in time and space, while others spoke of events on a grand scale - the coming and going of empires, and the coming and going of ages.

Often the same theme is taken up by successive generations of prophets as God gradually reveals further details of His plans. These revelations 'litter' the pages of Scripture almost like scattered jig-saw pieces. But they do all fit together to give us a picture of the world's and mankind's progress, past, present, and future.

A picture we ignore to our cost.

All prophecy concerning the 'end times' revolves around the actual return of the Lord to the earth.

The doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ is not some fanciful myth or 'iffy' possibility; it is a safer 'bet' than the ground under our feet, an indispensable, inescapable foundation of Christian belief.

*Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* - 2 Peter 1v20-21

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### **EPILOGUE**

## INTRODUCTION

People everywhere can sense the changes. Things are happening too fast and in an uncontrollable and unstoppable manner. There is an increasing air of foreboding. Wherever we look we see serious problems crowding in; each one with its own potential for total catastrophe. There is growing tension and shrinking security in the lives of everyone. Command of events is slipping from our feeble hands, and reason is no longer reasonable.

Something is very, very wrong.

Politicians, intellectuals, scientists and false prophets by their thousands voice their opinions and ideas, but nothing really helps. Nothing eases the fear that something very big and very unwanted is coming our way.

This unseen monster has been marching toward us for a long time. Now he has our scent, and what was a few years ago just a steady jog, is today turning into a determined run. He'll be here soon.

Can we escape? Can we find a safe place to hide? Is there anywhere this monster cannot reach us? Relax! There is one safe hiding place — only One. We'll talk more of this singular Safe Haven in the following chapters.

For some reason many of us would prefer to hear anything but the truth, and the world is full of false prophets (I use the term very generally to include all the many experts and professors of most things) who tickle our ears, and their own vanity, with countless feathers of fanciful notions; and this while the true story has been lying around, gathering dust, for centuries. But will anyone who is in charge pick it up and say, "Hey! This is what it's all about! This is where we are going wrong!" No such luck.

Of course, I'm referring to the Holy Bible, the record of which, for telling it like it is and as it will be, is unbeatable and incomparable.

For thousands of years the Bible has foretold events that later happened, not in vague generalisations, but in exact detail. A truly great amount of prophetic Scripture has already been fulfilled to the letter, and that which remains, as yet unfulfilled, informs us where the world is now heading.

There is no book like it, and whether we agree or disagree, every jot and tittle of the Bible prophecy will be perfectly realised.

I am aware that many people have been turned off Bible eschatology (the study of end-time events), and don't wish to discuss it or read about it, because of the sad abundance of ridiculous and plainly unscriptural interpretations put out by those who are misled or misleaders or both. But, where there is a great prize to be won, there will always be much purpose-built confusion clogging the pathways.

This book is, in many ways, frightening, and some may accuse me of scaremongering. However, it has not been written with the intention to frighten just for the sake of it, but rather, to shake some out of their complacency and unbelief, and enable them to do something about it. To warn them of the possible danger they are in - - to be forewarned is to be forearmed, someone said. We all do a similar thing: we tell our children about the dangers of going with strangers, and the police visit schools to warn our kids of the same. We hope this will have a powerful enough effect on the children to cause them to fear having anything to do with strangers and thereby save them from possible harm.

Campaigns against drinking and driving deliberately set out to shock some sense into us, as do many similar campaigns like those against drug and solvent abuse, smoking, cruelty to children and animals, and those opposed to exploitation, poverty and disease throughout the world.

Jesus Himself did not hesitate to speak words which can be very scary, depending upon our relationship with Him; and all the words of Scripture in the following chapters are His not mine.

The topic covered within the pages of this book are in no way claimed to be complete or exhaustive in subject detail or in Scripture examples - - far from it. Whole volumes could be written on the subject matter of each separate chapter. My desire for this book is to give the reader a general feel of things and to give, hopefully, a true and impressive picture of where we (the world and its history) are at and where we are going. I hope to do this with God's help and with the light and backing of Scripture.

I pray that this book will bless, encourage and strengthen many who already know the Lord, and help lead others to a saving faith in Him.

I pray that this book will testify to, and glorify, my Lord and Saviour — — Jesus Christ.

*"Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone : Watch!" ..... Mark 13 v33-37*

## NOAH'S ARK 2

Many truly amazing, miraculous and supernatural events, events not dreamed of in man's wildest imaginations will, in the not too distant future, shake and devastate the whole world. Most of mankind will be taken completely unawares, even though these things were foretold and written down thousands of years ago in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures — — the Holy Bible.

I believe the first of these fantastic happenings will be the unexpected and instantaneous removal of the Church from the earth. If you will permit me a certain amount of artistic licence : We (the Church) will, one day soon, rocket off the face of the planet faster than the speed of light, punching a hole in the heavenlies (the lower spiritual realms), causing the devil and his demons to be spewed out upon the earth. Our striking departure will be the match that lights the blue touch-paper of the most terrible roman candle. Fireball after fireball will explode into the most terrifying events and disasters, culminating in the final cataclysmic detonation that is Armageddon.

This period of time will last for around seven years and will include that which is referred to in the Bible as — — *the great tribulation*. The Church will not go through this time of immense suffering and spiritual darkness.

So now we need to know exactly what is and who are — — the Church.

## THE CHURCH

Well. Firstly, we are not talking about buildings made of stone, brick, wood or any other such materials. Jesus didn't die for buildings however fancy they might be. It is true that buildings of all types and shapes and sizes are known as churches, but these churches are not living persons redeemed and regenerated by the Spirit of God, and they will certainly not suddenly disappear from the earth when the Lord calls, as will the living Church. On the contrary, these buildings will all remain when the real Church is taken away and rescued from the fearful events that will ensue. One of the saddest things about this is that not only will the buildings remain, from the meanest to the most magnificent, but many of those congregations and ministers who attend these churches will stay behind as well.

The word *church* can also be used to designate different denominations (Methodist, Baptist, Church of England, etc). But the real Church is not signified by, and does not consist only of, any single denomination. In all churches, or homes, or huts, or igloos, indeed, wherever people meet to read or to hear the full gospel of Jesus Christ, there may be found members of the real, living Church.

Now, it is still possible for us to be a regular attender of such a church (where the full gospel of Jesus Christ is preached), and yet not be a member of God's Church. To be a part of God's Church we must be born into it — — not by natural birth, or by tradition (just because our parents and grandparents attended the same church), but by our own personal, spiritual rebirth :

*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no-one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

*In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

*"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"*

*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be*

*surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*" ..... John 3 v1-7

Nicodemus, to whom Jesus is speaking in the above passage, was a Pharisee, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He was a man of religious authority, a teacher of religion, and his whole life was guided by and subordinated to his religious beliefs.

The Pharisees in general, didn't like Jesus at all and so, apparently, Nicodemus crept out under cover of darkness so as not to incur the displeasure of his peers by meeting with Jesus.

Nicodemus had obviously heard of, if not seen, the miracles of Jesus. He recognised something special in Him and told Jesus that he believed Him to be a teacher sent from God.

So Nicodemus, a religious leader and no doubt believing himself to be a man of God, might have expected comforting words of praise and recognition of these things. He might have expected Jesus to pat him on the back and say something like, "Fine! Well done! You're doing alright yourself. Keep up the good work!"

Instead, what Jesus did say perplexed Nicodemus. Jesus basically told him that it doesn't matter who we are or what position we hold in the religious hierarchy, if we are not born again, born of the Spirit, then we cannot enter nor even see the kingdom of God, and our traditions are worthless.

These words of Jesus still stand today and everyday for everyone.

The word *church* in the Greek of the New Testament is *eklesia* which means literally, 'called out'. This refers to our being called out by God and spiritually separated from the rest of the world.

The real Church consists of these people, of all types and nationalities, who have been called out of the spiritual darkness and death of the world, into the spiritual light and eternal life of Jesus Christ :

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!*  
..... 2 Corinthians 5v17

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God*  
..... 1 Peter 1v23

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*  
..... 1 Peter 2v9

There were saints (those set apart by God and belonging to Him) before the Church we are speaking of here came into being. There were saints in the ages before the flood and after the flood; before the law through Moses and after Moses; and there will be other saints during the tribulation period yet to come. But the Church is, and will be, composed of all the saints since the day of pentecost (when God started a new thing in His dealings with men by giving His promised Holy Spirit to all who would trust in His Son — — Jesus Christ) until the day of the rapture (the sudden, swift and miraculous taking of the Church from the earth prior to the appearance of the antichrist).

This Church, this body of believers, though in part, separated in time and space, language, culture and denomination, is actually united in and by the Spirit of Christ. We are a part of God's household and of the living building of God's holy temple, of which Jesus is the foundation and chief cornerstone. We are the prodigal sons, who have at last come to our senses and returned to our all-forgiving, ever-loving Father (Luke 15 v11-31). We are the once lost sheep, who now hear the Good Shepherd's voice and follow Him only (John 10 v1-30). We are the bride waiting to be carried over the threshold of heaven by our beloved Bridegroom (Rev 19 v7-9). We are one body

with one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

We are indeed — Christians. But what a greatly misused and abused title this is. The Bible does not recognise anyone as a Christian unless that person is born again; unless that individual has passed from spiritual death to spiritual life by possessing a saving faith in Jesus Christ and receiving God's Holy Spirit as a guarantee of that salvation, in reality, by possessing Jesus Himself.

The nations of the western world have for a long time been considered as Christian nations. So it is generally thought that almost everyone belonging to these nations must be Christian, but this is, and always has been, far from the truth. The truth is: there is no such thing as a Christian nation.

No nation on earth consists of only Christians, or anything approaching this idea. Christians, in the correct sense of the word, are almost always only a very small percentage of the total population of any country — even in Great Britain.

Many people who have attended a church for years and many who hold high office in the church may not know Christ. They may call themselves, and be called by others, Christian, but in truth, it is not so.

The world (those not re-born by the Spirit of God) cannot possibly understand who or what is truly Christian :

*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned*

..... 1 Corinthians 2 v14

Throughout history, right up to the present day, we hear of many terrible things committed by, so called, Christians and Christian nations. People who torture and kill in the name of Christ are very far from Christ, whatever their mouths might declare. Talk is easy, and people fool themselves, as well as others. Anyone can call themselves *Christian*, but God looks into the heart, and cannot be fooled by mere words :

*These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.*

..... Isaiah 29 v13

If you do not belong to God's Church. If you do not belong to Christ, or if you are not certain whether you do or you don't but really desire to, then you will find further help and guidance on the matter at the end of this book (see VITAL FOOTNOTE).

Now it is the true Church, belonging to Jesus Christ, that will be taken from the earth — *in the twinkling of an eye*. Everyone else will be left behind.

Multitudes, who themselves and others thought of as Christian, and all the supposed Christian paraphernalia will remain here, and the world will not understand what has taken place. But the consequences for the earth and its inhabitants when the Church has been taken out, will be immediate and truly awful.

## CALL ME GONE

Surely all true Christians believe in the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. Also many Christians believe in the actual physical removal of the Church from the earth to meet the Lord in the air (the rapture). The main area of disagreement between Christians concerning the rapture, seems to be the relative timing of the event with regard to the appearance of the

antichrist, the tribulation, the second coming of the Lord and His millennial reign on the earth. Yet Scripture, when pieced together and placed in context, is really quite clear about these issues. However, before considering the relative timing of this fantastic disappearing act, let's concentrate on the actual fact of it.

Commonly, Christians understand and refer to this taking-out of the Church by the term — — the rapture (coming from the latin verb, rapere, meaning, to change from one state to another).

The apostle Paul must have spoken about the rapture many times, and he mentioned it in his letters to the churches. When he wrote to the believers at Corinth, he spoke of this event as being a wonderful mystery :

*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - - - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.*

..... 1 Corinthians 15 v51-53

Paul says here: we will not all sleep. This is the 'sleep' of physical death, which millions of Christians will not go through. The generation of believers who are alive at the Lord's return for them, while going about their daily tasks, or asleep in bed or whatever situation they may be in, will disappear in a flash — — too fast for the eye to see. In the same instant they will lose their fleshly bodies in all their various states of weakness, sickness and decay (mental and physical). Bodies otherwise destined to die and return to dust; and in their stead, they shall be clothed with glorious, immortal bodies.

The signs that speak of the Lord's fast-approaching return, also hold promise that some of the saints alive today may be in the group of believers referred to above.

At a time when we are not expecting it, we will be instantly in the direct presence of our Lord — — He in His glorified body and we in ours.

And where will this ecstatic meeting take place? It will not be on the earth. It will not be in heaven. Seemingly, it will be somewhere in between - in the air:

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

..... 1 Thessalonians 4 v16-18

So, pulling the last two pieces of Scripture together, we get a picture of a very swift, miraculous event taking place at the Lord's return for His Church - - before - - He makes Himself visible to the world or sets foot on the earth.

Those asleep in Christ (Christians who have already died physically) will receive their new, undying bodies. Those Christians still alive will put on their immortal bodies, then both of the above parties will come together in the clouds, and meet up with the Lord in the air, to be with Him for ever.

As fantastic as this seems, it will happen. God has said it and sealed it by His word. And, as Paul says, we should encourage each other with these facts.

So, be encouraged, know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, and one way or another your place is booked for the most amazing 'away day' in the history of the universe.

## IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME

Well, it will be the first time on such a vast scale, but we can find a couple of other occasions in

the Bible where God's people have been taken up to heaven without first tasting physical death

The first we hear of is Enoch, the great grandfather of Noah, and obviously a man of God and a prophet. He named his eldest son Methuselah, whose name means something akin to 'when he dies it will come' in reference to the flood. In Genesis 5 v21-24 we read :

*When Enoch had lived 65 years he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with god 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*

Enoch was still in his prime when God took him away. He was still only a young 'un, relatively speaking. This was during the time from Adam to Noah when people lived hundreds of years, some to 900 years or more. Methuselah, the oldest of the lot, made it to 969 years of age. He died and the flood came. Noah, Methuselah's grandson, was then 660 (Genesis 7v6) and he went on to live a further 350 years after the flood.

The New Testament, in Hebrews 11v5, confirms to us Enoch's sudden disappearance :

*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*

Note! ... *by faith* Enoch was taken, and it will be by that same faith in the same living God and in His Son, Jesus Christ, that we will be taken at some time in the not too distant future.

The other occasion of a similar happening concerns the mighty prophet of God, Elijah. Towards the end of Elijah's ministry, God chose an apprentice prophet for him. They called the apprentice, Elisha. He was to learn from his master, Elijah, in order to take over as Israel's prophet after Elijah's retirement.

In 2 Kings 2v7-11 we read how Elijah left the earthly scene :

*Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed. Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"*

*"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.*

*"You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours - - - otherwise not."*

*As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.*

We can see then, that God has already shown His ability (as if we should doubt that) and His willingness to take men from the earth without their needing to die first. There are other places in Scripture where the rapture of the Church is implied. I will mention one more here and some others later on.

Surely, the transfiguration of Jesus, as related in Matthew, Mark and Luke, is a representation of the Lord's return to set foot on the earth with His Church at the end of the age; Moses representing the risen and glorified dead in Christ; and Elijah, those who are still alive, taken from the earth and changed in a flash. While the disciples who witnessed the event could be said to represent the remnant of Israel, still alive on the earth at the Lord's coming.

Let's see what Luke 9v28-31 says :

*About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious*

*splendour, talking with Jesus.*

We are encouraged in our belief that the transfiguration is a preview, in type, of the Lord's return with His saints by the context of the preceding verses.

Jesus is speaking to all of His disciples and a crowd of people, when He starts to mention His return to earth at the end of the age. Then He adds that some who are standing there listening will not die before they see, according to Matthew 16v28 : *the Son of Man coming in his kingdom*, or Mark 9v1 : *the kingdom of God come with power*, or Luke 9v27 ; *the kingdom of God*. Then each of these three writers go into the account of the transfiguration, which took place some six days (about eight days according to Luke) later. And we read that only three disciples (Peter, James and John) were present to witness, to get a glimpse of, that future event about which Jesus had spoken to them six or eight days previously. Only three (*some*) of all who were standing there; listening to Jesus about six days earlier, ever managed to see a vision of the coming kingdom of the Son of Man in power to the earth.

The Lord will indeed set up His kingdom over the whole earth when He returns accompanied by His saints — those who died in Him (Moses); and those whisked off the planet while still alive (Elijah) — — to also restore the fortunes of Israel (Peter, James and John).

#### BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER?

Those of us who agree that the rapture, the appearance of the antichrist, the tribulation, the second coming of the Lord and His millennial reign on earth are real events that will sometime take place, tend to disagree on the relative timing of all these things. So, let's look closer at the rapture and its timing in relation to the other events mentioned above, particularly the coming of the antichrist and the ensuing tribulation.

Does the Lord come for His saints (according to Scripture all true believers in Christ are saints) before, during or after the time of the tribulation? It is my opinion that the Bible teaches emphatically that the Church will be taken from the earth before the onset of the tribulation and before the coming to power of the antichrist — — one of the beasts of the book of Revelation.

We can begin by looking at a piece of Scripture that, even taken on its own, is quite precise about this :

*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

*Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work, but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.*

..... 2 Thessalonians 2 v1-8

The apostle Paul had already mentioned in a previous letter to the Thessalonians the fact of the Lord returning for His saints (1 Thessalonians 4 v16-18). And, as we can see from the above passage of Scripture, Paul had also spoken to them in person on this topic. Now here he is again writing on this same subject, apparently in response to certain rumours going around that the Lord had already returned for His Church. This was obviously causing some alarm among the Thessalonian Christians, who must have feared that the Lord had left them behind. Paul is now putting the Thessalonians right on the matter. And in this section of Paul's second letter to the

Thessalonians, we can glean some very significant information regarding the timing of the out-taking of the believers.

In the above Bible verses only three main parties and their relative movements, or positions, are represented. These being: the Lord - and His coming (verse 1); the Church - being gathered to the Lord (also verse 1); and the man of lawlessness - being revealed (verses 3, 6, 8).

The man of lawlessness is the antichrist. He makes a seven year covenant of peace with Israel and breaks his word half way through. He leads the world into the great tribulation and eventually, Armageddon. He can only be stopped by the Lord's return, as we read in verse 8, but more about the man of lawlessness later.

In verses 7-8 Paul says that although the power of lawlessness is always at work in the world, something or someone is holding back the worst excesses of satanic spite from the earth.

Now Paul calls this power of lawlessness a *secret* power, because the real power behind lawlessness is a spiritual power that cannot be detected by our natural senses. The world is oblivious to the fact that there is, and always has been, a very deadly plan of battle; a battle plan schemed up in the realms of spiritual evil, and carried out by demonic influence on mankind. The objective is to bring mankind and the earth under Satan's complete control. So, for a long time now, the devil has been able to really mess things up on earth, but he has not been allowed to run the show totally; he has always been held in check to some extent. (Let's not forget that Satan was completely and utterly defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that any influence that he may, for a time, have in the affairs of men, will in the end prove to have been fully subordinated to the sovereign will of God). However, the spiritual power of evil cannot be controlled by natural efforts; it takes the spiritual power of good, of God, to successfully combat demonic forces. "Ah!" you say, "Then it must be the Holy Spirit that is holding back the evil." And this is true but would God, as some Christians believe, take His spirit from the earth. Then no-one could believe in His Son at all, and Scripture says that many will believe in Jesus during the reign of the antichrist. However, this time of worldwide evangelism and conversion does appear to take place during the last three and a half years of the final seven years of this age. Maybe, for the first three and a half years, after the Church leaves, God's Holy Spirit is deliberately silent. I believe the obstacle restricting satan from coming in like a flood is the spiritual power for good, the praying power of millions of Christians worldwide, God's Holy Spirit working in the Church. The true Church is the barrier of light holding back the darkness at its blackest. And Paul surely is saying this in the above verses. He is saying that whoever or whatever is holding back the antichrist must be removed before the antichrist can be revealed. Now, in the context of the preceding verses, only two possible movements are mentioned : the *coming* of the Lord; and our *being gathered* to Him. The Lord —towards — the earth, and we — away from — the earth. The only thing being taken out of the way is the Church. And remember when the Lord sets foot upon the earth it will not be to reveal the man of lawlessness, but to destroy him, as we read in verse 8.

The physically living Church needs to be physically (and spiritually) removed from the earth to allow evil in its awful fullness to come in and reveal the antichrist.

Imagine : A very large and very dark dungeon, and in a far corner an everlasting candle burns. The light from the candle holds back the blackness from that small corner. You can almost feel the tension where the edge of the flickering pool of light meets the black and fights to keep the darkness at bay. You can sense the heavy, hungry blackness waiting eagerly to devour the only remaining threat to the dark's total dominion in that place.

The light burns on, and the black exerts an almost smothering pressure on that one bright area. But while that light remains, the authority of the black is undermined, and he cannot set up his empire in the dungeon. That shining spot is a no-go area for Mr Dark. His forces can never overrun that territory. It is forever denied him - - until, an unseen hand removes the candle; the ferocious black panther pounces; the dungeon belongs to Mr Dark.

## SAME AS IT EVER WAS

Jesus says that at His return the world will be carrying on as normal :

*No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the*

*Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come*

..... Matthew 24 v36-42

And in Luke 17v28-30, 34-35 :

*It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. — — — — I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.*

We have, in the above passages, been given a picture of normal, everyday goings on in the world at the time of the Lord's return.

But listen to this :

*The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky, huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible*

..... Revelation 16 v19-21

*For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — — and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened*

..... Matthew 24 v21-22

And there's more :

*This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation, a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth."*

*At that time those slain by the LORD will be everywhere — — from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground*

..... Jeremiah 25 v32-33

*See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; — — — The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered — — — The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up and very few are left*

..... Isaiah 24 v 1,3,5-6

And there's lots more, but we'll finish on this one, last, vital piece for the time being :

*Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not*

*give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*

..... Matthew 24 v29-30

Now then, does all that sound like everyday carryings on? Definitely not.

Look again; in the first set of Scriptures (Matthew 24 v36-42, Luke 17 v28-30, 34-35) the Lord says that things will be as normal at His return, and yet, in these last few examples, we find that His return is not until after the total devastation of the planet. His return is *immediately after the distress of those days (verse 29) when At that time — — they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory (verse 30).*

In the above Scriptures, we are given two completely different pictures concerning the Lord's return. In the first, we see life on earth continuing in the same old, familiar pattern — people getting married, drinking, planting, building, partying etc, just as we see today. In the second picture, the scene is vastly changed - - not only is the earth and its inhabitants devastated and burned up, but even the sun, moon and stars are powerfully affected.

This is certainly not a situation where people will be contemplating marriage, planting potatoes or building house extensions - - no way!

Instead, all their efforts and concentrations will be taken up in trying to find the nearest and deepest hole to hide in :

*I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.*

*Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

..... Revelation 6 v12-17

So, without doubt, we are given two absolutely opposing scenes for the time of Jesus' return. Both these scenes are true and are wonderfully reconciled only when we understand that God's word is showing us two very different aspects of the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus comes from heaven, unseen by the world, to meet His Church in the air; and at a later date in the world's history to actually set foot on the earth, when everyone shall see Him.

The Bible, as it so often does, telescopes two or more separate events or meanings into one phrase or small portion of Scripture.

The Lord's gathering of His Church in the air (1 Corinthians 15 v51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4 v16-18, 2 Thessalonians 2 v1-8, Matt 24 v37-41 etc) takes place simultaneously with, or just prior to, the revealing of the antichrist and the onset of the final seven years of this age which will include the great tribulation. Then, as we read in Scripture, immediately after the distress of those days the King of Kings will, with his previously gathered saints, set foot on the earth to establish His kingdom.

Just as happened when Noah entered the ark and when Lot left Sodom, the unsuspecting world then came under God's wrath. Sometime in the near future, there will be a type of repeat performance.

Once again Noah will enter the ark; once again Lot will leave Sodom; once again the saints will be

spared God's wrath. We will leave to meet our Lord and be led to the homes He has already prepared for us :

*In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

These two verses from John 14 v2-3 are self explanatory. But let us now turn to a passage from the Old Testament ;

*But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. Go, my people enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins.*

..... Isaiah 26 v19-21

The above three verses from Isaiah speak quite clearly of the Lord's return. He is obviously speaking to His saints. In verse 19 the dead who will wake up and shout for joy can only be those who died in Christ. According to Scripture the rest of the dead will not be raised for another 1000 years, and, even then, it will not be a time for joy, but fearful judgement.

Verse 20; the Lord telling His people to enter their rooms. Are these the rooms spoken of in John 14 v2-3? Quite possibly. Also, we are hidden away from God's wrath, which is the time of tribulation under the antichrist.

Verse 21 is quite clear; speaking of the Lord's physical return in the air to put an end to all opposition to His rule.

We say again: The saints who are alive when the Lord returns in the air will be gathered to Him and kept safe from His wrath — as He promised :

*For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. .... 1 Thessalonians 5v9*

*I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*

..... Revelation 3 v10

Some say that this verse from Revelation was only meant for the Church at Philadelphia, but this cannot be. The hour of trial was not to be just a local event involving one part of the Church, but a massive worldwide happening to test all those living on the earth. The Lord then knew that the hour of trial He was speaking of would not come for at least another 2,000 years, so if He meant that they would be kept from it because they would be dead long before it occurred - - that not only seems an unfair way to put it, but He could have promised it to the other Churches as well, because none of them would live to see it either.

The fact is, that these letters to the Churches hold powerful truths for the universal Church across the centuries, and the above verse is specifically for the saints who are alive on earth just before the start of the hour of trial - - the tribulation.

I make no apology for labouring on this subject, as I believe it to be of great importance to the Church. Sadly, it is a subject much misunderstood, maligned and mistaught. It is even, by a very large part of the Church, totally ignored. But what does the Bible itself say about this topic? If we look in Revelation, the book that pulls in end-time prophecy from all over the Bible and locks it together in a marvellous wholeness, we read :

*Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near..... Revelation 1v3*

This is the only book in the Bible that begins with such a promise (I do not say this to make less of other books in the Bible - all of Scripture is God-breathed and of eternal, priceless value). I believe that part of the promised blessings for reading and taking these things to heart, especially since the time is near, is that a right understanding of God's plan for mankind and the earth helps us to keep from going on all sorts of strange and dangerous paths. Many in the Church are now being swept away by totally false teaching and immense deceptions, which a correct understanding of what God has said will happen in these days would prevent.

One Church leader, who believed that the rapture would not occur until the tribulation period was over, told me that he felt it to be for the best to continue to prepare the flock for the terrible persecution of that coming time, even if he was wrong about the timing of the rapture and the Church missed the tribulation altogether. In other words to continue to teach the congregation to expect to go through the tribulation in spite of what Scripture might say to the contrary. I believe there are dangers with that approach.

Obviously it is not safe to teach one thing if the Scriptures say another. Also, I'm not convinced that people can really be prepared for persecution by talking about it. To be prepared for any such thing, we need to be living close to God, and to have as much confidence in Him as possible. Now I feel that most of us would be more inclined to clean up our act and draw nearer to our Lord if we felt He could come for us at any moment, and not sometime in the distant future. Otherwise, there is a danger that some of us might become lax, keep hold of our favourite sins a bit longer, or even start to fall away.

To be expecting our Lord at any moment, must surely be the greatest incentive to our living more holy lifestyles — now! There can be no better way to prepare the saints for anything, in this world or the next, than to have us walking in constant, close communion with our risen Saviour.

Also, many saints might be needlessly robbed of much of their joy in the Lord because of their unfounded fears of going through the tribulation.

*Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect Him*

..... Matthew 24 v42-44

Warnings such as the above should keep us on our toes and expecting our Lord suddenly and at any time.

## YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

The Lord says several times that we will NOT know the day of His return for us, and this must be true. However, if we go through the tribulation period, Scripture makes it quite clear that we WILL know the day of His coming.

Let us now consider the above statement more fully. We are told that the antichrist will come to power and form a seven years peace treaty with Israel, but he will break that agreement half-way through the seven years.

*He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed and poured out on him.*

..... Daniel 9v27

It is at this time, half-way through the 'seven', that the antichrist is given complete authority and full satanic power over all the earth. The time when people everywhere will be given the mark of the beast.

We also know that at this mid-point of the seven years period, the antichrist will only have three and a half years (*42 months, 1260 days, a time, times and half a time*) left to carry out his evil schemes.

*The beast was given a mouth to utter words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months*

..... Revelation 13v5

And, as we read earlier (Dan 9v27), it is at this mid-point of the 'seven' that the antichrist will set up the abomination that causes desolation. This is also the time when the remnant of Israel (those who will be saved) will flee for their lives and be given God's protection for 1260 days (the remaining three and a half years).

*The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260 days.*

..... Revelation 12v6

(Please read all of chapter 12 in Revelation to see how the woman in the above verse represents Israel).

We also know from Scripture that only the Lord's return puts an end to the antichrist :

*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no-one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written : KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

*Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.*

..... Rev 19 v11-16, v19-21

And we are given further confirmation that only the Lord's return will bring about the destruction of the antichrist. 2 Thessalonians 2v8 says :

*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.*

So, from the middle of the 'seven' when the antichrist breaks his treaty with Israel, he will only have 1260 days left in which to do his worst, and the remnant of Israel will be hidden and protected for that period.

The suffering of that time, worldwide, will be absolutely horrendous. Many will be hanging on by their fingernails, in holes in the ground, in rocks and caves and anywhere that might offer shelter and concealment. Yet the Lord in His mercy, has actually told the people how long they will have to endure before His return. But a very great number of those who come to know Jesus during the tribulation will not physically survive to the end of it.

No-one can know in advance when the tribulation period will start, but one thing does seem clear; Jesus will return to the earth as soon as the 1260 days from the abolition of the daily sacrifice have ended. This day will also be seven years after the initial signing of the treaty between the

antichrist and Israel. It will also mark the end of the seventy 'sevens' - an amazing prophecy in Daniel 9v24-27 (we look at this prophecy in more detail in The Final 'Seven' - chapter 4).

Only those who go through the above events will have any possible idea concerning the timing and actual dating of these things.

Regarding the rapture of the Church, it cannot and will not be known in advance on what future date this will take place. However, we are given many signs to look for, to know when we are in the season. We consider, many of these signs in another chapter.

Again, these seeming contradictions (the Bible telling us we cannot know when the Lord will return, and yet also giving us the exact number of days leading to His return) only become clear when we understand that the Lord's return to gather His Church in the air, and His personal return to the earth to destroy the antichrist and set up God's kingdom, are two separate parts of a whole. Two stages in between which a timespan of at least seven years pass on earth. Whether that same length of time, or none at all, passes in heaven is probably irrelevant - the things of earth and the physical universe are trapped in time - not so the things of heaven.

Many Christians, without realising it, have their feet in two different camps at the same time, and are really standing on confused ground. Many who say that we will never have any real idea of when the Lord will return, also state their belief that the Church will go through the tribulation. Now they also believe that the tribulation will last for a period of seven or three and a half years (depending on their viewpoint), and they agree that this period is brought to an end by the Lord's return. Therefore, it should be obvious that if the Church does go through that *hour of trial*, then those who do so will know quite precisely the time of the Lord's return.

Very clear markers are given in Scripture for anyone going through the tribulation to know its exact start point, mid-point and ending. If you believe that you will go through a seven or a three and a half year tribulation, you should expect the Lord's arrival at the end of that period.

It cannot be scripturally correct to say that we will never know when to expect the Lord IF we are going through the tribulation.

We cannot have it both ways!

1260, 1290, 1335?

We have already seen how the antichrist and his rule come to an end seven years after he makes the treaty with Israel. Of course, when he abolishes the daily sacrifice half-way through the 'seven', then he will only remain in power for a further 1260 days.

Also concerning this time of the end, we read in Daniel 12 v11-12 :

*From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up will be 1290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1335 days.*

Now we see here an initial addition of 30 days after the antichrist's allotted time of 1260 days, taking us to 1290 days. And then a further addition of 45 days, bringing us to the total of 1335 days.

What can be the significance of these extra days?

Well, is Daniel saying that the daily sacrifice will be abolished, and the abomination that causes desolation (the image of the antichrist himself) will be set up in the temple, and this abomination will remain there for 1290 days (30 days after the destruction of the antichrist)? I believe this may be the explanation.

Then we see 45 more days adding up to the 1335. This gives us an overall addition of 75 days to

the 1260; and the words :

*Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1335 days.*

Immediately upon the Lord's return, the antichrist will be put down, and the remnant of Israel will start to come out of hiding and make their way back to their homeland.

As can be imagined, there will be a lot of tidying up to do and much to sort out before the new age can start properly. This sorting out will not just happen overnight, but will take two and a half months (75 days).

During these 75 days, it appears that the Lord will be judging those on earth who survived the tribulation period. This is a judgement to separate those who will be allowed to enter the new kingdom (the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth) from those who will be cast into eternal punishment.

This separation of survivors, the righteous from the unrighteous, is foretold in the parable/ prophecy of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 v31-46 :

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

*Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*The king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

*Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. I needed clothes and you did not clothe me. I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*They also will answer, 'Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

*Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.*

In this passage, *All the nations*, in verse 32, are all the Gentiles (the non-Jewish people of the earth), while *these brothers of mine*, in verse 40, are Jews.

The sheep are those Gentiles who will have shown their love for Jesus by, in various ways, having helped His brethren, the Jews, during the terrible persecution of Israel and the Jews worldwide in the time of the tribulation.

These sheep will survive this judgement by the King, and they will take their place in the new kingdom at the end of the 1335 days, when the sorting of the sheep from the goats will have been completed.

So, to recap: the Lord will return and destroy the antichrist at the end of the 1260 days period which began with the abolition of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination. 30 days later the temple will be cleared of the abomination, and preparations for the 1000 years kingdom age will continue for a further 45 days.

Not all who are alive on the earth at the Lord's return will be so at the end of the 1335 days, so blessed indeed will be the *one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1335 days*.

\*( I found the excellent book, THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MESSIAH, A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events, by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, to be a great help in my understanding and interpretation of the 1290 and 1335 days).

## THERE, THE VULTURES WILL GATHER

As we have already seen, at the return of Jesus for His Church, it will be business as usual on earth, as *it was in the days of Noah*. Noah and his family were the 'Church' of his day, and God lifted them above His wrath (the flood) by closing them safely into an earthly ark. This time also, God has promised to lift His Church above the coming wrath, by providing great safety and comfort - in a heavenly 'ark'.

Matthew 24 v40-41 surely speaks of the sudden taking away of the saints, at a time when people are going about their normal everyday business on earth, and the leaving behind of the unbelievers:

*Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.*

And in Luke 17 v34-37 :

*"I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." "Where, Lord?" They asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."*

Some Christians may wonder, "Who does the dead body belong to, the saint or the unbeliever?" Well, the living saints who are translated (raptured) don't die physically or otherwise, but are instantly removed from the scene and changed. Remember Enoch and Elijah; they left no body behind. That's how it will be at the rapture.

Obviously, not everyone who is left behind will end up as a dead body, but certainly, an exceedingly great number will.

After the flood of Noah's time, also after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, there may have been plenty of rich pickings for the birds of prey. But the Scripture that really seems to answer the question can be found in Revelation 19 v17-18:

*And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."*

## THE WHOLE PICTURE

Much confusion about the relative timing of the rapture is caused by our choosing certain parts of Scripture that seem to say one particular thing, and deciding to build our case on that. For instance, in Revelation 13 v7, we read this about the beast :

*He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.*

It is obvious from this verse and others that there will be a number of God's people on earth during the tribulation.

It is also obvious that the gospel will be preached, powerfully, all around the world at that time :

*Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth - to every nation, tribe, language and people. .... Revelation 14v6*

But it is not so obvious, without much detailed study throughout the whole of Scripture, that for the final seven years of this age (from the revealing of the antichrist and during the tribulation period) the responsibility for proclaiming the gospel will have been given back to the Jews.

It requires hard work to study this complex subject, and many of us have neither the time or the inclination to do so. We get so far and then give up in frustration at trying to make the pieces fit. Often we bounce backwards and forwards in our viewpoints, not knowing where to settle. But usually, we do settle in a place that tends to agree with our pre-conceived ideas and prejudices on these issues.

We may try to base our doctrine on certain parts of Scripture, while ignoring other parts that don't fit. Not only does this leave us feeling uneasy, but it is really unacceptable, and very likely wrong.

Before leaving this section, more weight can be added to our belief in a pre-tribulation rapture by the following :

When Jesus returns to set foot on the earth and put an end to the antichrist, He will be accompanied by the armies of heaven.

*He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses ....*

..... Revelation 19v14

And we are told that the bride of Christ (His Church) is given this clothing for the wedding of the Lamb :

*And the bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

..... Revelation 19 v7-8

The wedding ceremony and supper of Jesus Christ and His Church take place in heaven just prior to them coming back to earth together (Rev 19 v7-9)

So, about seven years after the rapture of the Church, the gates of heaven will open wide, and the Lord Jesus Christ will lead out a truly righteous army of such splendour and invincible might as to be beyond imagining.

In blazing power and glory, they will arrive at the earth and encircle it. They will take complete dominion over the whole planet. And Jesus will be enthroned as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

**SURPRISE, SURPRISE!**

Let's now consider some possible effects of the rapture on a world left behind.

Remembering those words from Luke 17v34, *I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.* Some married partners will lose their husbands or wives while in bed together. Some will, undoubtedly, be awake at the time and may see their partner vanish. It is hard to imagine what might go through the unbeliever's mind at that time. Others will not notice, until the next morning, that their spouse has gone, without trace or even a goodbye note.

On the daylight side of the globe, millions will simply be gone from every conceivable situation of workplace, leisure, strife, persecution, hospitals, deathbeds, childbirth, flying, driving, sailing, etc, etc.

The possible effects of train drivers, car, bus, truck drivers, airline pilots, doctors, nurses, construction workers and the rest just disappearing while carrying out their various tasks, is mind-boggling and horrific to contemplate.

What would the world make of such a thing? How would the news media cover it? They would be totally swamped with the staggering amounts of unbelievable information pouring in from everywhere. The telephone services and police departments would not be able to cope with just the missing persons enquiries, never mind anything else.

Thinking of these things in the cold light of day, they seem utterly far-fetched and of such staggering supernatural import as to be entirely outside the realms of possibility. But think again! We have a God to whom the working of mighty, earth and history changing miracles is no difficult thing at all. What about the parting of the Red Sea? What about a man being told to build a boat in which to save himself and his family and a collection of every type of creature on earth from a supernatural, cataclysmic, earth-shattering event - a world-wide flood? (And the Lord says, *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man* - - another incredible, supernatural, once in the history of the universe, happening).

And what about the most amazing, mind-blowing, heart-sifting, heart-breaking, heart-changing miraculous event in all eternity - when GOD took on human form and frailty, and lived with us for about 33 years, and willingly died here and was raised from the dead here, so that all who might believe on Him would be saved from yet another supernatural situation - an eternity in some fearful existence far from good and God.

However, back to what the world might think after the rapture. They will be clamouring for answers, and they will be given answers. Indeed, the antichrist will come up with some very pat answers for those who do not desire to know the truth but are willing to follow him and his lies :

*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

..... 2 Thessalonians 2 v9-12

Those left behind at the rapture, who do not want to believe what the event really means, will be given over to a powerful lie, sent from God via the antichrist.

Now, we know that these things (events related to the disappearance of the saints) will happen worldwide, but I don't think they will be evenly distributed. Not all nations have the same ratio of Christians per head of population, and some nations are more rural, less densely populated and less technically developed and/or dependant than others. Some nations may lose more saints than, maybe, the U.K., but if they are mainly rural, agricultural, thinly populated nations, the immediate results for those countries might not be as catastrophic. And, as things stand at the moment, regarding the growth of the Church throughout the earth, some countries would still hardly be affected at all by the rapture.

Personally, I believe that the nation which would feel the greatest impact if the saints were to be taken away in the very near future, would be the U.S.A. There are said to be tens of millions (some estimates go as high as 50 million) of real Christians in the U.S.A. This is a very high proportion of believers per head of population. Many of these are in positions of authority and power; in almost every area of finance, government, military, banking, industry etc. The U.S.A.. and the U.K. are increasingly turning their backs on, and walking away from, their Christian heritage - with dire consequences!

On the other hand, we have nations such as China and Russia; large, powerful nations, which at today's estimates, would hardly notice the translation of believers. Yes, it is true, the Lord has His people in these countries also. But these comparatively few saints are only a small part of the total population, and they are very rarely, if at all, in positions of any authority or national importance. I'm sure that these nations could function fairly normally after the sudden loss of their saints, whereas, the U.S.A. would be on its knees - like the aftermath of a nuclear war - with a possible 50 MILLION of its people gone.

To conclude this chapter: The gathering of the Church from the earth will enable the antichrist to make his entrance, and with him the many horrors to come. With the sudden and complete removal of the greatest power for good from the world, this planet will rapidly become a seething cauldron of the grossest evil.

You don't need me to tell you that this place is already ramped up (and becoming more so every day) with hatred, intolerance, greed, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lawlessness, vanity, conceit, wars, disease, poverty, injustice, everyone seeking after their own pleasures, ambitions and deceptions, instead of seeking the one true God; and we are surrounded by every kind of suffering - physical, mental and spiritual. Look around! The world is drowning in this evil mess. Watch the news! Read the papers! It is truly sickening.

Yes, things are bad now, but compared to what they will very quickly become when the Church leaves — things are really quite 'pleasant'.

## ISRAEL V GOG

It is certainly possible that the Lord may care to camouflage the rapture from non-Christian eyes and minds in any number of ways. One such way might be to take out the Church in the midst of a terrifying war. The rapture, itself, could even trigger off such a war. This, of course, is only speculation, although I do believe the Scriptures speak of a massive battle involving Israel around the time of the saints' departure. But before going any further, let's have a closer look at Israel.

### ISRAEL?

Without an understanding of the Holy Bible, Israel and everything about it, past, present and future, is a great mystery and a frustrating puzzlement. And, in ignorance, nations and peoples rise up against Israel to their own hurt. However, in the light of Scripture, Israel and its history become a mighty testimony to the power of God.

As to Israel's history, we can only give the very briefest of outlines here.

God raised up Israel to be His witness to the world. A witness to the one, true God. All the earth, at that time, worshiped idols and practised all kinds of debauchery, depravity and witchcraft in the name of their gods. For mankind to have any hope of salvation, or even long-term survival on the earth, he had to come into a knowledge of, an understanding of, and a love for, his Creator. So God raised up Israel.

He chose to reveal Himself through the nation of Israel. The Bible was written almost entirely by Jews. And Jesus Christ was, Himself, a true Israelite.

Through God's long, tempestuous and miraculous workings with Israel, the world has been given the written Word — the Bible; and the Word made flesh — Jesus Christ.

Despite being used to present such priceless gifts to the world, Israel has, on the whole throughout her history, been unfaithful to her God and Saviour.

The Lord obviously foresaw this. He warned Israel time after time, through His prophets, of the terrible consequences to the nation because of her unfaithfulness and hardness of heart towards Him. And yet God used this situation in His plan of salvation for all who will come to Him, not just the Jews. As Jesus had foretold, His gospel would be taken from the Jews (temporarily, for a length of time known only to God), because of their unfaithfulness and unbelief, and given to the Gentiles — every other nation on earth.

There are many Scriptures which speak of this, including some of the parables of Jesus. Such a parable is found in Matthew 21 v33-46:

*"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a wine press in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.*

*The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way.*

*Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

*Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"*

*"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."*

*Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures : The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*

*Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."*

*When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.*

In this parable, the *landowner* is God, the *tenants* are the people, priests and leaders of Israel, the *servants*, who are beaten, killed and stoned, are God's prophets; and the *landowner's son*, who was *sent last of all* and whom the tenants threw out and killed, is Jesus Christ.

And we see in verse 43 Jesus' warning that because of the continued unbelief and evil deeds of the Jews, the kingdom of God (the reality of the new life in God that comes through hearing and believing the gospel - the good news of Jesus Christ) would be taken away from them and *given to a people who will produce its fruit* (the Gentile nations).

It is not actually that the gospel, written or otherwise, is not available to the Jews, but that God has, for a time, taken away their ability to understand and believe it (apart from a very small minority, and this also was foretold in Scripture).

The apostle Paul says in Romans 11 v25-26 :

*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.*

So God has not given up on Israel, but has hardened their hearts *in part* to the gospel until all non-Jews that are going to be saved are saved.

And God's promise to save Israel is just one of a great number of wonderful promises of future blessings, found in the Bible, to the nation of Israel.

Let's review just a sample of God's promises to regather the Jews from exile among the nations of the earth back to their own land:

*Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?*

*You were shown these things so that you might know the the LORD is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today.*

*Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time*

..... Deuteronomy 4 v32-40

The Lord used Moses to bring the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. And after 40 more

years of wandering about in the desert, being tried, tested and taught by God, and being provided for by God, they were about to enter the promised land. Moses himself was not allowed to go any further, but was told to give them a final 'pep' talk, part of which we have just read. Yet even before they entered the land that was to become Israel, the people were also given several warnings :

*After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time — if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the LORD will drive you.*

..... Deuteronomy 4 v25-27

After they had settled in the land, the people of Israel, while they obeyed the Lord, had good times, even great times, such as during the reign of King Solomon. But, more and more, despite the many warnings from God's prophets, Israel turned her back on the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's warnings to expel them from the land and scatter them across the earth because of their disobedience started to become a reality. They began to be conquered, taken captive and dispersed by powerful enemies such as the Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans, so that by about the year AD 132 virtually every Israelite had left or had been removed from the land of Israel.

Israel was no longer a nation. Her people became aliens in just about every country on earth, and have since faced hatred and persecution everywhere.

God had warned them continually what would happen; and so it did. Nevertheless, the Lord did not leave them entirely without hope. He gave them a truly fantastic promise that in the last stages of history of this present age, He would gather them back from the nations and put them back in the land of Israel, for all time :

*This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountain of Israel.*

..... Ezekiel 37 v21-22

*For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.*

..... Ezekiel 36 v24-28

*And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me.....*

*Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel .....*

*Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

..... Ezekiel 39v23, 25, 28-29

For nearly two thousand years the Jews had no national homeland — then, in 1948, the State of Israel was 'reborn'. In less than fifty years, millions of Jews have returned; coming out from nations all over the world. If only the world realised the staggering significance of these things.

Even the Jews themselves, apart from a handful, are blind to what God is doing among them. And a great many non-Jews in the world will not see the meaning of such events until it is too late :

*"The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"*

..... Jeremiah 8v20

## IT'S GOOD NEWS WEEK

After the Scriptures, probably the most important thing for a Christian to be reading or listening to, is the news. Read it in the papers, watch it on TV, listen to the radio. However you do it, be informed of what is going on in the world. There are pointers flooding in from every direction, warning that the world is heading for deep crisis; for the sudden disappearance of the Church; for the appearance of the thoroughly evil world dictator; for the unthinkable tribulation period; and finally in this age, for the glorious return of the Lord.

Yes, I know people have been shouting, "The end is nigh!" for centuries, but never before with the backing of the evidence of the fulfilling of the prophetic Scriptures being seen as it is now.

The return of the Jews to the land of their forefathers is a powerful, comparatively recent, precursor to the events mentioned above. There are many more but let's just stay with Israel in this chapter.

Even as I write this book we see yet more end-time prophecy regarding Israel becoming a reality: The nation of Israel has already fought several wars, and has been in an almost constant state of war or hostility with her Arab neighbours (and others who are not her neighbours) ever since her re-formation in 1948. The world could not believe there could ever be peace between Israel and her Arab neighbours; but the Bible says the opposite. Therefore, what do we see in these end-times to confirm this?

We see Egypt sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1978 (the first Arab nation to do so), and thankfully it is still in force today. The peace with Egypt was amazing enough, yet only very recently Israel has made peace deals with Jordan and with the Palestinians. There are two Arab neighbours left to deal with — Syria and Lebanon. In the very near future these nations also will make peace with Israel. Then, as we shall read from Scripture, Israel will (for the first time since returning to the land) be at peace with her neighbours. Many people will clap their hands in celebration and say, "Great, we've done it! Peace at last!"

On the contrary; this is a very dangerous time indeed.

## ATTACKED!

Chapters 38 and 39 in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel speak of the re-gathered nation of Israel being attacked, suddenly and unexpectedly, by a massive coalition of armies, while they are living in an, otherwise, peaceful environment.

To confirm the above statement, let's look at several verses from chapter 38 :

*... , and now all of them live in safety.*

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. You will say, "I will invade a land full of unwalled villages. I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people — all of them living without walls and without gates and bars."*

*"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says. In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a*

*great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land .”*

..... Ezekiel 38v8, 10-11, 14-16

In one chapter, as we have just read, the Lord mentions three times that Israel is at peace with her neighbours: The people of Israel will be *living in safety — a peaceful and unsuspecting people and living without walls and without gates and bars* — at the time of the surprise attack from the forces of the *far north*. Three times in one chapter — the Lord does not want the warning to go unnoticed.

The Bible also tells us what nations make up the attacking armies :

... *‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army — your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops — the many nations with you.*

*‘Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them. After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate.’*

..... Ezekiel 38 v3-8

In the above passage we are given a list of the hostile nations, some of which are easily identified, while others are more obscure. Persia is modern day Iran. Cush and Put are generally considered to relate to the areas of Ethiopia and Libya, and are so named in the King James Bible.

According to scholars, old and new, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer and Beth Togarmah represent nations mainly to the north, east and south of the Black Sea. The reason for this imprecision in recognising these nations today, is that the names we are given here are actually the very root names from which modern countries have developed.

We can see in Genesis chapter 10, a table of nations that sprang from Noah’s descendants. Most of the hostile nations in Ezekiel 38 take their names from Noah’s grandsons. They spread across the earth with their tribes named after them, and the tribes eventually grew into nations large and small. There was much to-ing and fro-ing as tribes, nations, kingdoms and empires rose and fell and were moved around and influenced by one another. And languages (even after the confusion at Babel) mingled and altered to become very different from the original tongues. Just look at our own history — where is the true Englishman? We and our language are a broth of many diverse ingredients.

However, there is agreement as to the general areas now represented by these names given in Scripture.

Let’s continue :

*“Son of Man, prophesy against Gog and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel.’ “*

..... Ezekiel 39 v1-2

There are a couple of important clues in the above Scripture as to who the main aggressor might be. The first is fairly obvious — *I will bring you from the far north* — meaning and being rendered in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible as the *uttermost parts of the north*.

To the uttermost north of Israel is one very large and very powerful country. There is no other nation further north of Israel than — Russia!

I feel that the identification of this nation is made more certain by the following : In the New

International Version margins, we are told that where we read *O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*, we may also read *O Gog, prince of Rosh*. Now it seems to add up that the root name from which came Russia, should be Rosh. And especially when that same nation (Rosh) is described as being in the exact position, relative to Israel, as we find Russia today.

Now taking this a step further, we realise that Gog is not the name of a nation, but the name of a prince of a nation. The prince of the nation of Rosh. But this prince is not of human origin or form; he is undoubtedly an evil prince of the spiritual realms.

This is not fantasy. Listen :

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the ruler, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

..... Ephesians 6 v10-12

To believe the Bible, we must believe in the reality of demons. They do exist. But are there really evil spiritual princes (those more powerful than ordinary demons, but subordinate to Satan) who wield power over entire nations? Indeed there are; and where they rule, there is much darkness and despair.

Russia and her people have suffered greatly because of Gog's spiritual grip on that nation. The most rabid anti-God ideology ever (Communism) was nurtured and raised in that country, and it swallowed Russia whole. And through Russia's military might and political influence many other nations of the earth were consumed.

The extent of human suffering through torture, persecution and death, worldwide, in the name of this demonic religion, is incalculable. And, although Russia is no longer Communist, her problems are far from over. As time goes on, Christians who are watching as events unfold in this part of the world, will be able to discern that — Gog is still in control.

To find more evidence of the existence of these dark, spiritual princes and their control over nations and kingdoms, we now look at Daniel. In response to Daniel's three weeks of fasting and prayer, an angel appeared to him with these words :

*Then he continued, "Do not be afraid Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there, with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."*

— *Soon, I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;* —

..... Daniel 10v 12-14, v20

What we see in the above verses, is an angel sent from God to explain Daniel's vision to the said prophet. Daniel had been seeking understanding for three weeks, and the angel had set off to give Daniel the explanation on the first day, but had been held up in the spiritual realms by the evil prince of Persia. The Persian empire was, at that time, in full swing on the earth. Yet, in line with those three verses we read in Ephesians, the real battle of nations and empires was taking place in the heavenly realms.

Daniel was also told that the angel must return to continue the fight against the demonic prince of Persia; and afterwards, the prince of Greece will come to power in the dark heavenlies. This would, and did, result in dramatic changes in the earthly scene. As we know from history, Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, and the dominant power on earth then became the Greek empire.

Think again on those verses from Ephesians: Our struggles are not against flesh and blood, but evil rulers and powers in spiritual places. These are the deadliest of enemies; unseen and far stronger than any army of natural men.

But, here's the good news: There are men who already have the victory over these dreadful forces, men who cause these forces to tremble; and women and children who cause the powers of evil to quake. These people are soldiers in an army of inconceivable might. Their G.H.Q. is, likewise, in the spiritual realms, and their C.O sits at the right hand of God.

These people are a holy nation with an almighty Prince who rules over them; a Prince whose power is unapproachably awesome. He can create or destroy whole worlds with just the words of His mouth, and yet He is truly the Prince of peace. This Prince is also a King; a King who loves to commune with each one of His subjects personally, and wants only the best for them. His people call their Sovereign — Jesus.

We don't see this same unselfish love and concern among the dark princes for their subjects. Whichever nations Gog may have authority over, his intentions are not, and never have been, to do them any favours. In fact he would much rather do them a bad turn. There is only ever one way to escape the clutches of these spiritual monsters, and that is to enlist in the only army that can and will defeat them.

If you are still in spiritual 'Civvy Street', but have a heart that yearns to be a soldier of righteousness, then ask the main Recruiting Officer if He'll allow you to join — He surely will.

## THE RESULT

The Scriptures make it quite plain that the armies which attack Israel at this time will be heading for disaster. Apparently, their homelands will suffer as well :

*"Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand. On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD."*

..... Ezekiel 39 v3-6

That this battle will have widespread, possibly worldwide, effects can be seen from the last verse — the Lord will send fire on Magog (the land of Gog) and on those living in safety in the coastlands.

Whether the Lord will cause this destruction through supernatural events and/or modern weapons, we cannot yet know.

Since 1948 Israel has been delivered amazingly on several occasions from forces much larger than her own, but this time it will be a truly miraculous deliverance from totally overwhelming odds. And many in Israel, and elsewhere, will be convinced of God's hand in it, and will be drawn back to a saving faith in Him.

The Jews in Israel and around the world will begin to turn back to God in ever increasing numbers from this point onwards. I also feel that this particular time could be very near the beginning of the final seven years (Daniel 9v24-27), which God has allotted to the Jews to own Jesus Christ as their Lord.

To try and fix the relative timing of this battle, let's consider further, certain details :

That this battle has not already taken place is obvious. The State of Israel had to be re-established in the land, and this only happened in 1948; there has been no such battle since that time.

Israel also had to be living peacefully with her neighbours; this is just now starting to come about.

The particular mix of hostile nations mentioned have never before attacked Israel or, for that matter, anyone else.

It is clear then that this is a battle yet to come. It is also clear, as we read the Scriptures, that it is a battle in the end-times of this age.

This is also a battle that takes place before the millennial (1000 years) reign of the Lord on earth, because during the millennium Israel will be living in fulfilment of all the many promised blessings, and will be the nation that all other nations bow down to. There will be no attacks on Israel during the millennium.

It is also obvious that Israel will not know her God when this battle takes place, but only after it. This is not so for the millennial age, since only those who do know their God will enter that age.

We read also that Israel will make use of the discarded and left over equipment of her foes for a period of seven years (Ezekiel 39v9). This could not be the case if the battle is the final uprising of Satan at the end of the millennium, because we are told of the Great Judgement, and of heaven and earth passing away and being made new; all immediately following Satan's final removal (Revelation 20). Clearly then, this is a war that takes place before the 1000 years of peace on earth.

So is Ezekiel speaking of that terrible struggle with the antichrist and Israel that happens just before the Lord's return? I doubt it very much. These Scriptures in Ezekiel have a different atmosphere about them. They don't compare at all with the Scriptures in Daniel and Revelation relating to Israel and the antichrist.

Besides, Israel appears to come out of this battle unscathed, with her enemies being destroyed on the mountains and in the fields, maybe not even reaching the towns. Whereas when the antichrist turns on Israel he causes terrific slaughter, and a great number of Jews flee their land until the tribulation is ended by the Lord's return.

Then we have the list of nations who attack Israel at this time; they are relatively few compared to the number of nations gathered together for the battle at the end of the tribulation :

*"On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an unmovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves."*

..... Zechariah 12v3

*They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. —*

*— Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon*

..... Revelation 16v14, v16

Now, we have concluded that : The attack on Israel by Rosh and her allies has not yet taken place; it will not take place during, or at the end of, the millennial reign of Jesus on earth; and it is not the battle with the antichrist during, or at the end of, the tribulation. So where does it fit?

Let's read on :

*"Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up — the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel."*

..... Ezekiel 39 v9-10

Notice, that for seven years after the destruction of the hostile forces, the people of Israel will be gathering the masses of weaponry and every other war supply that will have been left on the mountains and in the fields by the defeated hordes.

There will be enough material to supply Israel's fuel needs for seven years, maybe more. But I believe that stated timespan of seven years to be very significant, since it seems to reinforce the belief that this battle takes place at, or some time near, the revealing of the antichrist. It is even possible that this battle is the main cause of, or justification, or pretext for, the seven years treaty between Israel and the antichrist. He may be offering Israel guaranteed protection from further attacks.

Anyway, we cannot ignore the fact that Scripture is giving us yet another timespan of seven years (the years of gathering the enemies' material for fuel) to go with the seven years of tribulation, which is also the final 'seven' of Daniel's prophecy regarding Israel. Each of these sevens are known to be in the end of this age, and are very possibly speaking of the same seven year period.

"But," some will say, "if Israel is going to hide in the desert wilderness for 1260 days (the last half of the seven years tribulation), they can only be around to gather the material of the defeated armies for the first half of the tribulation; only three and a half years."

I present two possible answers to this observation : The Jews will indeed flee from the land, in response to Jesus' warning, when they see the abomination set up by the antichrist. But not all of them, in fact only around one third of them will run for cover and safety (Zechariah 13v8); the rest will, because of unbelief or ignorance, stay put.

Now it may be that those who take flight, do so using the abandoned equipment, taking much of it with them to help get them through their time in the wilderness. Almost certainly a number of Jews will have prepared themselves and their families, in advance, for just this moment.

Now as for the Jews who do not flee, but remain in Israel after the abomination that causes desolation is set up; they will face a terrible time of slaughter and persecution. This will spread among the Jews worldwide, and will be much worse than any other time of distress in their history. And yet, there will surely be survivors even among those who remain in Israel. Apparently, the gospel will, somehow, continue to be preached in the cities of Israel right up until the Lord arrives :

*"When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the son of Man comes."*

..... Matthew 10v23

So, it may be quite possible that the people of Israel will still be able to gather (although under circumstances difficult for us to imagine) and use the left-over fuel and equipment from the battle with Russia and her allies, even if this time of gathering is during the worst period (the final 1260 days) of the tribulation.

## IS IT LIKELY?

As we look at the political situation in the world today, do we see any signs of the above mentioned war being a possibility in the near future?

Well, among the attacking nations listed in Ezekiel — none of them are friends of Israel, in fact very much the opposite. Iran makes no secret of its avowed intention to destroy Israel as soon as possible, and because of its backing of terrorism, Iran is regarded by many as an international outcast. But, guess which nation is helping Iran in vital areas of modern technology and weaponry, and even nuclear capability (supplying and building nuclear reactors) — Russia, of course.

Indeed, if we look into political, economic and military affairs of each of the attacking nations, we will find the Russian connection. Even now, in this present times, it is not so difficult to believe in an eventual coalition of these forces against Israel.

And it is believed by many that Russia's new found freedom will not last. Already things are falling

apart in that nation; they are crying out for a strong leader to halt their slide into chaos and to make Russia once again respected and feared by the world. There are such men waiting to take control. Sooner or later one will, and you can be sure — he will be no friend of Israel!

But, to ponder yet more on the coming battle: Would Russia ever dare to attack Israel without provocation (which is what the bible says will happen; Israel will be unsuspecting and peaceful at the time), while by far the most powerful country on earth (the U.S.A.) is Israel's closest friend and ally? Such a thing would be lunacy (admittedly this is not grounds to rule it out with the leaders of certain nations) and surely Russia would be taking a very deadly gamble, unless she was convinced of America's unwillingness or inability to retaliate. I doubt that anyone could be so sure of America's unwillingness to fight for Israel in such circumstances. But if the U.S.A. was known to be unable to respond, this might be a different matter altogether. And it is this thought of America's possible military impotence that takes us back to chapter 1, where we mentioned the lesser or greater effect the rapture of the Church would have on different countries. In short, the sudden rapture of the Church could immediately change the balance of world power. With the U.S.A. in total confusion and disarray, what a golden opportunity for certain powerful nations, still intact, to see the chance of a 'free lunch'.

We cannot prove from Scripture what has just been said about the rapture triggering off the attack on Israel. But I believe we can say: The antichrist will be revealed near the start of the seven years after the Church has gone. A time of tribulation will last for seven years, the second half being the *great tribulation*. The Lord will set foot on the earth with His Church at the end of the tribulation and destroy the antichrist. And I believe we can also say: The battle we have been discussing in this chapter will occur around the start of the tribulation period, and therefore, very close to the time of the rapture.

## ENTER THE DRAGON

*The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him*  
..... Revelation 12v9

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Many in the world laugh at the idea of the antichrist being real, and millions have enjoyed being frightened by him in a number of popular movies which have been very loosely based on the theme.

Strangely enough, people can 'enjoy' being frightened when they are sitting comfortably under no threat to themselves and knowing that they have a cosy, safe home to retire to, especially if what they are watching (or reading) is only fiction.

But the Bible tells us that the antichrist is definitely not a fictional character; he is a very real person. And those who are left to face the music when the real McCoy turns up, will find themselves trapped in their own personal horror movie from which they will not be able to escape by returning to the safety of home, or by changing TV channels. They will be stuck with it to the bitter end.

The spirit of antichrist (antichrist, meaning, against or instead of Christ) has always been at work in the world, but after the rapture of the Church, the full force of this spirit will no longer be held back. It will overwhelm the earth, and fill a particular person with its dreadfulness.

Let's read again 2 Thessalonians 2 v6-8:

*And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, —*

The *secret power of lawlessness* is the spirit of antichrist, and the *lawless one* is the antichrist himself.

Mankind is not aware of this *secret power* at work in the world. In our puffed-up pride and arrogance, we have been convinced that we are the makers of history. And in this conceit, we are blind to the devil's plans and schemes to rule the earth and to enslave men — body, mind and soul.

We have not recognised Satan's hand working us from behind like puppets. The devil has used our proud, selfish hearts. He has played, and is still playing, our hard-heartedness like an unseen manic maestro, to bring all his hellish desires to fruition.

Because these things are of the spirit, the unspiritual man cannot detect them; they are secret to him. Even when told, he will not believe. And the devil laughs, unheard, behind him; confident that the *secret power of lawlessness* will remain secret, until it feels mighty enough to come out of the closet and make itself felt in no uncertain terms. This will happen with the revealing of the antichrist and the time of tribulation that follows.

## ALIAS'

Although we tend to use the title of *antichrist* when referring to this character, the term is actually only seen on a few occasions in Scripture; such as in the letters of the apostle John (1 John

2v18-22; 4v3; 2 John 1v7).

Like many outlaws, this chap is also known under several other titles. The difference being that these titles are real ones.

We have already seen how Paul calls him the *lawless one*. In the same chapter, he is also spoken of as the *man of lawlessness* and *the man doomed to destruction*.

Some other titles or descriptions are given below :

*The king of Babylon* (Isaiah 14v4)

*The little horn* (Daniel 7v8)

*A stern-faced king, a master of intrigue* (Daniel 8v23)

*The ruler who will come* (Daniel 9v26)

*A contemptible person* (Daniel 11v21)

*King of the North* (Daniel 11v28)

*The king* (Daniel 11v36)

*The beast* (Revelation 13v11)

*The beast who once was, now is not, and yet will come* (Revelation 17v8)

*An eighth king* (Revelation 17v11)

I do not claim the above list to be complete, and some of these titles occur again in other parts of Scripture.

So, we are told about this very unsavoury fellow turning up to do his ‘thing’ at a certain point in history. We are told that on several occasions; by the prophets of the Old Testament; the letters of the New Testament apostles; and, finally, in the closing chapters of the Bible — the book of Revelation.

The Lord has talked a lot about this guy and the horrific consequences of his rule on earth. The Lord did not intend these warnings to be easily dismissed, brushed aside or taken lightly. This ‘nasty piece of work’, his rule and the events leading up to, and during, that time, are not to be thought unworthy of serious study.

## THE POLITICS OF POWER

Like many politicians the world over, the antichrist will be devious, corrupt and totally self-seeking. He will have no intention of doing anyone any good but himself. He will be heavily into bribery and corruption. He will be an expert in political plots. He will be a *master of intrigue*:

*In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.*

..... Daniel 8 v23-25

Not just another politician — something much more than that. Not just a master of intrigue either. He will become very strong, *but not by his own power*. He will cause *astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does*. He will cause *deceit to prosper*, and he will even take his stand against the *Prince of princes* — the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will be so conceited; he will feel so superior; he will be so filled with the spirit of Satan, that he will attempt to usurp the throne of Christ and set himself up to be God.

This man will not and cannot be stopped by human efforts. But stopped he certainly will be — by

the magnificent splendour of the return of the Lord.

It is not, never has been, and never will be physically or spiritually possible for any being in any universe or realm to replace Jesus on His eternal throne. And quite soon all of creation, in the heavens and on the earth, will acknowledge this fact. The majestic reign of the great King of kings will last forever.

It is up to us to make sure we are on the right side; that we are eager to be willing and faithful subjects of the great King. Anything else is just foolishness, and the fighting of a battle that is already lost.

The devil has, and the antichrist will have, great power over men and the earth. But no-one! Repeat, no-one! — has power over Jesus Christ.

Even the devil knows he's lost, and that he's going down for the final count, but he's so mean that he won't tell his followers about this. He's such a self-seeking liar and a deceiver that he's kidding them on they can win. He has no love or loyalty for anyone, not even his own teammates and helpers. His desire is to take them all to destruction with himself.

*The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

*— — But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.*

..... Revelation 12 v9,v12

This coming world leader will attain his position of power after the rapture of the Church. The secret power of lawlessness, which will have been steadily growing stronger up to that point, will now be given a clear run in to put its man in charge of things. We have already seen how he makes a seven year treaty with Israel (and maybe other nations as well) at this time. Now that seems to fit nicely with the possibility of Israel having just come through a great battle (as we read in the previous chapter), and therefore eager to sign an agreement that promises to guarantee peace for the next seven years.

Now, think about this: at the rapture the world would be staggered by the sudden removal of hundreds of millions of Christians (although most people left on earth would not realise that only Christians had gone). And, as we have seen, if the Russian coalition then attacked Israel, this would cause even more chaos and devastation worldwide. Widespread confusion and panic would reign. Two of the world's greatest powers, American and Russia, would be neutralised: America, because of the rapture of so many of her citizens; and Russia, because of the destruction of her armies, and possibly even her homeland, due to her total defeat on the mountains and in the fields of Israel.

This would leave an evermore powerful Europe as top dog.

Several Bible prophecies, in the books of Daniel and Revelation, speak of a new and terribly powerful version of the old Roman Empire controlling the earth under the rule of the antichrist during the tribulation (see my first book, Europe and the Beast).

I believe that we are witnessing the emergence of this final world empire in the growth of the European Union. Other such economic communities are coming together worldwide. They will eventually come under the dominance of the E.U., and the whole earth will find itself in the grip of the antichrist.

Anyway, back to the confusion that will reign on earth after the rapture and, possibly, a devastating war; also the demise (as far as world power is concerned) of the U.S.A. and Russia.

The shell shocked earth will be crying out for a strong leader who can promise convincingly to sort it all out. And this he will swear to do — but, he'll be lying through his teeth.

Seemingly, this man will not be at his deadliest until half-way through the seven year period, when he will really start to make trouble for Israel and the Jews throughout the earth. It appears that the Jews will have rebuilt their temple, and resumed the offering of the daily sacrifice. But the antichrist now puts a stop to that :

*He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.*

..... Daniel 9v27

It will, of course, not only be the Jews that this latter-day Caesar will attempt to quench his raging bloodthirst on, but on anyone who might dare to challenge his authority, and especially on those who seek to worship the true God instead of the beast himself. Such people will be plundered, persecuted and put to death in their droves.

Three and a half years into the 'seven' that we read about above, things will get completely out of hand. At that point the antichrist will be fully taken over by Satan. And yet, even though his insane hatred will burn against Israel, he will not be allowed to destroy that nation :

*"So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel," declares the LORD.*

*"I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile.*

*Jacob will again have peace and security, and no-one will make him afraid. I am with you and will save you," declares the LORD*

*"Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."*

..... Jeremiah 30 v10-11

## THERE'S A THUNDERSTORM COMING

'One drop of rain on your window pane,' as the song says, 'doesn't mean to say there's a thunderstorm coming.' But, that one drop has become a continual downpour, and with the huge black thunderheads gathering in the distance, the long range forecast looks very bad; decidedly dangerous even. Indeed, a major aim of this book is to act as a DANGER! STORM IMMINENT! Warning, so that some of us may be able to change course in time and head for calmer waters. Others may leave it a bit late for that and have to batten down the hatches to try and ride it out. Sadly, many will take no notice at all and will carry on doing their own thing, whatever the cost. They will turn a deaf ear and a blind eye as the Captain of the heavenly ark urges them to come aboard and find safety. Yet, they will be enthralled as the demonic Long John Silver chortles, "Stay with me, me hearties! We'll be fine!" They won't even realise that as he takes their hand to welcome them aboard the already sinking ship, that he'll leave in their palm the dreaded black spot; or will it be *the mark of the beast*?

Just as the wind picks up and the rain gets heavier as the storm draws nearer, so spiritual evil, deception, confusion and many other problems connected with the time of the tribulation begin to make themselves felt; increasing in severity, and becoming more widespread.

We are warned of ever-deepening moral and social decline :

*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

..... 2 Timothy 3 v1-5

Just look at the above list! These signs can be seen on the increase everywhere. They will become so severe that people will be surrounded by hatred, anger and total selfishness even within their once-loving families and among their once-friendly neighbours.

Everywhere, there is rapidly decreasing respect for authority. In fact, there is rapidly decreasing

respect for anyone; the elderly, the lame, the police, the law, the government, teachers, the monarchy, etc.

Tied in with this is the alarming increase in intolerance, with fanatical pressure groups willing to go to any lengths to stop anyone doing, or even saying, anything such groups may disagree with.

Groups such as those all-out militants for animal rights, 'gay' rights, feminism and the Politically Correct squad, and those who are busy trying to bring in a 'new' one world order, a one-world, multi-faith church, and many other such groups and organisations, are all the fruit of the secret power of lawlessness, whose real aim is to turn God's social and moral order upside down and inside out; to bring to nothing His written word, and to eventually outlaw the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Children are no longer correctly disciplined in many schools and homes. It is so vital to teach children discipline and respect for people and authority; starting as early as possible, and continuing throughout their childhood. A healthy fear and respect for God is even better — even essential. We and our children need to know (as most unbelievers feel, but don't like to admit it to themselves) that even when no human eye can see what we get up to, our Father in heaven sees everything; and He hears not only our voices, but also our thoughts!

If, as children, we learn a respect for God, that is the ground from which everything else that is good can grow :

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

..... Proverbs 9v10

The alternative being :

*A man who strays from the path of understanding comes to rest in the company of the dead.*

..... Proverbs 21v16

The theory of evolution says that we all initially crawled out of an ocean of 'primordial soup'; transmuting over the aeons from amoebas to fish, to reptiles, to birds, to apes, and finally to man. Although some very clever people believe we are still evolving; that we will eventually become machines. What utter garbage! This and other scientific theories of how life and the universe came into being, teach false understanding and a false wisdom that is really only high-minded foolishness.

These ideas rip the heart and soul out of man, and make him no more than an incredible accident in the jumbling together of the chemical cosmos. What terrible sadness; it is taught to our children as absolute truth; and Christ is not given a look-in by those who wish to believe this rubbish.

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*

..... Psalm 14v1

Any theory, idea or teaching that denies God, has at the back of it the spirit of antichrist, and this same spirit is being constantly pumped into our children like some anti-truth drug, at school, through books, TV and other media. All with the full backing of our governments.

There is a continuous lowering of moral standards regarding sexual practices. The only criteria being, 'If it feels good, do it!'. And so we and our children are being bombarded with pornography and perversion.

How far will it go before someone calls a halt? Let me tell you — it will go right to the very depths! I believe that during the reign of the antichrist (and probably even before) the most depraved and sexually perverse antics will be televised and said to be good and liberating and acceptable; and our children will be so taught at school.

Look at the violence, horror, sex and foul language on film, video and TV and in books and magazines. It is now so prevalent and pervasive that in order to shield our children from it we

would have to send them to another planet. Even the youngest children, including many from so-called good homes, can be heard using the most vile language matter of factly. They are being fed on this devil's brew, and make no mistake about it — it will bear terrible fruit!

Look at the powerful grip the world of 'pop' music has on the young today. It has a great influence that can be, and is being, abused. Millions follow their idols like slaves. It is a huge, fertile arena for the spirit of antichrist to work in, and he is assured of a rich harvest. Certain pop idols openly sing his (the antichrist's) praises, and are rewarded with fame and fortune.

And what about drugs? If ever there was a great tool for the devil to work with, this must be one of his favourites. Not only do the addicts become slaves to drugs, but every type of crime is committed by the users to get money for their fixes, and also by those who control the supply and demand of them.

Even into our schools, right across the nation, this evil is penetrating. A thing unheard of and thought unbelievable just a few years ago. Now it will only get worse. Whatever the police or politicians try to tell, or promise us about getting on top of crime and drugs, these problems will continue to grow. I feel quite certain that drugs, hard and soft, will eventually be legalised.

Almost everyone involved in trying to stem the tide of drugs' supply and use; governments, police and other agencies, realise they can't win this battle, and far too much government money is being spent trying to do so. It will not go on much longer.

But legalising drugs will make things a million times worse. Satan, though, will be clapping his hands, because many people who might have used their minds to look at and consider what is happening in the world; many who might have looked for Christ as the answer, will instead, have their faculties deadened to reality, and will fall willingly into the antichrist's crushing embrace.

Then we have the occult :

*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

..... 2 Thessalonians 2 v9-10

The antichrist will be a top-class magician; a supernatural conjurer, par excellence. The same spirit that will empower him is already at work in the world, beaver away to prepare a believing, like-minded audience. This is being done through the massively growing interest in all things supernatural.

## THE KILLING LIE

The devil will not always openly deny Christ, in fact many of his greatest and most dangerous deceptions are actually carried out using the very name of Jesus. Satan knows that a very large number of non-Christians still have a certain respect for the name of Jesus Christ, and these people would be put off by open, outright denial and abuse of Jesus. So the devil just sort of quietly nudges the Lord, to the sidelines or, better still, right out of the picture, and captures many people with fanciful ideas like spiritualism, reincarnation, ufology (God was, or is, an astronaut), 'new age' (it's as old as the hills) mysticism and lots more. Ideas which don't, in so many words, deny Christ; but these ideologies cause people to believe that life goes on after death, therefore we need not fear our own demise. They say death is not the end and there is no such place as hell (meant in the traditional sense as a place of endless suffering). Of course, the great unspoken lie behind all this kind of teaching is —

"Therefore, we don't need Jesus Christ or His sacrifice."

What a 'beaut!' You've almost got to hand it to the slimy, old fox, that one's a real killer. Yes, exactly! Just what it was designed to be, a weapon of spiritual destruction — the ultimate killing lie.

If Satan can keep us from believing that we need the precious blood of God's sacrificial lamb — Jesus — to wash us clean from our sins, then he's played his ace card.

We, each and every one of us, need to bathe completely in the all-cleansing blood of Christ, or we meet our Maker in a filthy, unwashed state, with the blood of Jesus on our hands — not in a cleansing way, but showing our own guilty part in His murder on the cross.

But how can spirit guides and mediums tell us things that no-one could have known, unless it was our family or friends speaking from the 'other side'? How can regressive hypnosis seem to produce amazing details of past lives which can apparently tie in with historical facts that the participant claimed not to know? And what about all the so-called contacts, abductions and chats with strange beings from other worlds, or even 'angelic, heavenly' visions who often tell us that things will be fine on earth if we do such and such? Yet they never tell us about Christ. They never tell us we need Jesus! Their great and superior knowledge is no such thing. It is entirely bogus, and part of the monstrous, killing lie.

The devil knows many things about us, our families and our pasts. He has been around a long time and makes it his business to know as much about us as he can. For those whom you wish to destroy, it is good to gain as much intelligence about them as possible; search out and undermine their weak points; lull them into a false sense of security.

Satan and his angels are masters of disguise and impersonation. He looks around deciding how best to accommodate our fanciful notions and will 'feed' us almost anything we would like to take in, as long as it keeps us walking away from — The Way (the Truth and the Life); away from Jesus.

Let's get confirmation from the word of God about this demonic con-artist :

— *for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.*

..... 2 Corinthians 11 v14-15

Also ;

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, —*

..... 1 Peter 5 v8-9

So, as time grows shorter, we will see much more widespread interest and involvement in occult, other-worldly subjects. Even professionals including doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists are involving themselves and their work in occult practices; universities and certain government departments (particularly the U.S. Defence Department); people and places that wouldn't have touched these things with a barge pole not so long ago. In so many areas the old professional, scientific approach is being supplemented or even replaced by occult, mystical practices.

False spiritual teachers, even false messiahs are popping out of the woodwork everywhere, and deceiving many :

*At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' Or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible.*

..... Matthew 24 v23-24

The Church itself is one of the main targets for this deception. The last few years have been a staggering time for false prophets and false teachers within the Church. They are leading many astray with their lying words and lying signs and wonders.

As Christians in these times, we need to be extremely wary and to exercise great discernment in all things spiritual. The most repeated warnings of end-time deception speak of lying signs and wonders. We have just read one such warning. We have another in Revelation 13 v 13-14:

*And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to*

*earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth.*

And another in 2 Thessalonians 2 v 9-10 :

*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

And this next one should really sober us up; Matthew 7 v21-23 :

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!’ “*

These people thought they were Christians. They refer to Jesus as, Lord, and performed their ‘signs and wonders’ all in His name, but these ‘gifts of the spirit’ have had nothing to do with the Spirit of Christ or the will of the Father.

Several Scriptures warn us of false teachers within the true Church; and we are told that these people will preach a different Jesus and bring in a different spirit, and they will be accepted.

I must emphasise again: the Lord is not speaking about weird cults and sects where this will happen. He is warning of it happening within His Church. We now see its propagation at a frightening rate. And although it is true, such deceivers will be dealt with very severely at the Judgement, it will be no excuse for any of us to say we were just following our leaders. We are all responsible for working out our own individual salvation with *fear and trembling*.

All false teachers and false prophets are in the devil’s camp, and they are experts in using the killing lie and even making it sound righteous and good. Christians, beware the wolves dressed as sheep.

Also, in these days, there is phenomenal interest and fascination with astrology and related ideas. This is an age-old art which had its hey-day back in the ancient Chaldean (Babylonian) times. But, since the Bible tells us that the moral, social and spiritual state of mankind, just prior to the Lord’s return, will be as Babylon again, with magic arts and all kinds of divination proliferating, we can expect not only an increase in the promotion and usage of these things, but their gaining official respectability also — and this is certainly happening. Indeed, these practices are no longer regarded as loony, on-the-fringe superstitions, but are becoming part of the fabric of modern society.

We see astrological predictions in almost every type of newspaper and magazine and on TV, with several proponents of this art becoming celebrities, household names, even ‘gurus’ to some people. Many people get drawn into astrology this way and even direct their lives by it. I recently heard on the news about the rise in the numbers of large, well respected companies and organisations who only make vital decisions — after first consulting their astrologers!

Increasing millions are looking away from the living God to astrology for comfort and direction in their lives. They are looking away from Light and Life to something that is neither :

*All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let you astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by. That is all they can do for you — these you have laboured with and trafficked with since childhood. Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you.*

..... Isaiah 47 v13-15

## WHAT ME, SIN?

Many say that there is no such thing as sin, and that God is too loving to punish anyone for anything. Well, we can see the effects of sin all around us, and if we are born again, we know its deadly power and have an acute sense of it.

If sin didn't exist, Jesus could have stayed in His heavenly comfort and safety. He didn't need to trap Himself in a weak, begrudging body of flesh and allow Himself to be humiliated and tortured to death by a world of, supposedly non-existent sinners.

No, whatever the false teachers may say about sin, The Teacher wept, agonised and died because of sin's unbreakable grip on mankind. He knew its awful reality; and so did the Father who sent Him; and so did the Holy Spirit who upheld Him, enabled Him, strengthened, guided and comforted Him in His struggle to defeat the power of sin and the devil forever.

Make no mistake! If God blesses you with the gift of His Spirit, enabling you to look into your own heart, you will never again doubt the reality of sin. God takes sin very seriously. He says to those who trust fully in His Son's atoning sacrifice on the cross, that their sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ, and that death holds no sting for them. Physical death for the saint is an open door into the eternal presence of Jesus. But, if we die in our sins, death does indeed have a sting :

*"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, —*  
.....1 Corinthians 15 v55-56

Death only stings if you enter it in a sinful state.

Jesus gave other such warnings ;

*"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."*  
..... John 8v24

It is true, God is all-loving. He is also true justice and righteousness and holiness. He cannot allow unrepentant, sinful man to pollute His heaven. However, He has made a way for all men into heaven. But that way has to be His way — through Jesus.

As we come back to our heavenly Father, through His Son, we are forgiven our sins and clothed with the righteousness of Christ; and our place in heaven is assured. The way to heaven is not a route drawn on a map, and it is not found in trying to lead a good life, or by following man-made traditions and ideals — the Way is a Person:

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."*  
..... John 14v6

## POISONOUS PICNIC

Now Satan is a master of confusion. He knows that man, unlike the animals, has a spiritual nature, and this nature hungers to be fed. So the devil spreads around everywhere seemingly tasty, spiritual morsels. So many in fact that we really seem spoilt for choice. We don't know which to pick first, but we must choose something — anything that will satisfy our spiritual craving.

Of course, this is a God-given craving: man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1v26), and God is spirit (John 4v24). We were made to have fellowship with God and to be in constant loving communion with Him. But right at the outset, in the garden of Eden, we broke that precious communion through selfish disobedience, and even though sin has blinded us to these realities, our longing to be whole, spiritually and physically, has never left us.

Man has a deep need of God, but far too often we prefer what we don't need. Many of us who

feel this hunger will snap up any of the countless poisonous scraps which the deceiver throws our way, to gratify our appetites. We don't even bother to find out what the ingredients are, but none are the Bread of Life (John 6v35).

Old Nick picks an invitingly pleasant position for his picnics. A place with an air of peace and tranquility, because he knows that those he is about to deceive expect the surroundings to be sympathetic and in tune with their search for inner 'enlightenment'. And he will use an endless variety of props to set the stage.

He sends out his servants to bring people in from far and wide to his wonderful picnic; his message is: "Come, all who hunger and thirst after a whole basketful of 'truths' from which to feed on!" He opens his hamper and sets out the picnic in readiness for his 'guests'; hiding the labels attached to the abundant choice of food and drink. He must hide the labels because they all say, 'A dangerously long way past sell-by date', and a small maker's stamp hardly noticeable in one corner reads, 'Made in Hell'.

Then there's the fine print: on each label is a promise of a free trip that is out of this world, apparently there is a choice of destination because it says, 'Anywhere — except Heaven'.

There are many who say they would like to know the answers to the really great questions about life and death but find the confusion and the effort just too much, and console themselves by indulging the natural man and the flesh in a million and one diversions. But the devil doesn't mind that. It's fine by him, and he can say "Nice one!" as he chalks up another 'win'.

## GOOD GRUB

But the real good news is, that despite the devil's plans to put up a smoke screen thicker than the old London pea-souper, the proper nourishment is freely available, with as much as you can eat. All we need to do is to seriously want it and not to be content with anything less:

*"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.*

..... Jeremiah 29 v13-14

And it is not miles away or difficult to discover :

*Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea and get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it.*

*— that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: that if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

..... Deuteronomy 30 v11-14, Romans 10 v8-9

## AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Have you noticed that over recent years almost every former stronghold of security has been 'blown away'? Many do not feel safe in their own homes any more, and certainly not outside their homes after dark. An ever-increasing number of shops, garages, banks, building societies, post offices and homes are constant and repeated targets for thieves and robbers. Those who work and live in these places are in continual fear of robbery and violence.

And we see another subtle ploy of the devil in his attempts to turn society on its head: when the guilty are caught, they are given more sympathy and help than their victims. This creed of Humanism prides itself on being more Christian than Christianity, more gentle and understanding and loving (but more so to the guilty, than to the victims). It claims that the idea of sin and our own personal responsibility for it is an out of date and really un-christian-like myth. It says that we are

not responsible for our own wrongdoing and shouldn't be made to feel guilty for it. We are simply a product of our upbringing and environment. And most recently we have heard that in the U.S.A. certain very serious research is going on to find a criminal gene. If such a thing is claimed to be found, it will give scientific approval to the idea that no-one should feel guilty for doing wrong — it's just in our biological make-up, like a hereditary tendency to any other type of disease or problem.

What another great coup for Old Nick: sin is officially proven to be non-existent — “Thank you for your help Jesus, but you're no longer needed!”

The whole truth of the matter is: there is no such thing as a criminal gene in man, but there is undoubtedly a criminal spirit in him. This will never be collected in a test tube, but is highly visible under the Holy Spirit microscope.

People everywhere are crying out for justice, as they see those guilty of the most horrendous crimes given short-term prison sentences, or even none at all. People know in their hearts things are all wrong. Justice is a sham. The 'guilty' are making the rules.

There is no longer security in any form of employment for anyone. And many previously irreproachable people and organisations in government, banking, pensions, insurance, finance and many other institutions have lost our trust in them. All over the world people are realising that they can't rely on anyone, or anything, anymore.

I was watching a documentary programme on T.V. last night about life in Russia since the fall of Communism. Even though the rule of Communism was harsh, it turns out that the majority of Russian citizens would prefer to go back to it, because at least then people had jobs, somewhere to live, food to eat and society was generally well ordered and disciplined. Now, none of these things can be relied upon, and very many Russians are going without any of them. It seems that organised crime is increasing everywhere and the forces of law and order are powerless to stop it. And the Russian leaders have given the people no hope and no direction for the future.

Actually the above situation could now be said of many, if not all, nations.

There is no strong leader anywhere who is able to put things in order or to halt the growing chaos and unrest. Even the government of the U.S.A., the mightiest nation ever to exist on the planet, is unbelievably inept, morally weak and vacillating, showing no real leadership, and rapidly draining the world's confidence in and respect for that nation.

All the artificial walls of security that man has been building around himself for so long are falling apart; leaving him wide open to the enemy and the elements; leaving him naked and lost. This will continue to happen, so that just prior to the appearance of the antichrist, everyone will be crying out for a strong leader. The man of lawlessness, empowered by the devil, will, at the right moment, be ready to offer his services.

There is a good as well as a bad side to this breakdown of security, confidence and trust. We have already seen the bad side — a world eager to embrace the 'strong man'. But, as always, the Lord is able to bring good out of evil, and the good is this: When a man is stripped of what he considered were essentials, and his pride and confidence in himself is brought low, he can reach out and grasp God's waiting hand.

A man's pride must be humbled or he is unable to see God for looking at himself. A man's confidence in his ability to fully direct and control his own life and destiny must be wrecked before he can come to his senses (Luke 15 v11-32).

When a man eventually comes to his senses, he will realise that all the vain things that he used to put his faith and trust in are but punctured life rafts on a stormy sea. And as he takes his eyes off these false comforters, he will be able to see, within reach, a sheltering Rock — THE ROCK — which is Christ.

And in this Rock a man can rest assured that he has found true and eternal security. The sea and the storm can do their very worst, but this Rock, and all those who cling to it, cannot be moved. This Rock is a living Rock that will overpower the storm and grow to fill the sea and the land and the heavens. And to each one who seeks its security, He will be a dwelling place forever.

## TROUBLE FOR JACOB

*“Listen to this, O house of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel — — —“*  
..... Isaiah 48 v1

*“Listen to me, O Jacob, whom I have called — — —“*  
..... Isaiah 48 v12

*“This is what the Lord says: “Cries of fear are heard — terror, not peace. Ask and see: can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labour, every face turned deathly pale? How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of out.”*  
..... Jeremiah 30 v5-7

In Genesis, chapter 32, verses 22-28, we read how Jacob wrestled and struggled with God one night, and how Jacob eventually won through. God gave him a new name from that time on — Israel, which means, ‘he struggles with God’. This was a vital point in God’s purpose to raise up the nation of Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel are named after and descended from Jacob’s sons. And so we see, quite often, in Old Testament prophecy, the name *Jacob* being synonymous with Israel.

## JESUS WEPT

The Bible is replete with God’s threats of chastisement to an unfaithful and disobedient Israel (Jacob), and also with His promises to restore them, not only to the land of their forefathers, but back to a life-giving belief and trust in Him.

God has promised to bring Israel back into loving fellowship with Himself when He gives them a new heart, and causes them to look on the One whom they pierced, and to mourn for Him in sorrowful repentance.

They will weep bitterly as their eyes take in the bloody nail and spear wounds; and their hearts take in the fact that the Man they rejected and killed is the One who always was and always will be, their true Messiah (Zechariah 12v10).

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, knowing the awful consequences for the Jews because of their rejection of Him. He came, as He said, to bring salvation first to Israel. He came as their rightful King, but they didn’t want Him or recognise Him as such; except in a cruel, mocking way, with a crown of thorns on His head as He was led to the slaughter.

But, for Israel, the results of their murderous unacceptance of the Christ would be tragic. Jesus foresaw and foretold of these things, and was heartbroken at the thought of the agonies to come upon His own people — the Jews:

*As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “if you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and your children within your walls. They will not leave one stone another, because you did not recognise the time of God’s coming to you.”*  
..... Luke 19 v41-44

Approximately 40 years after Jesus had spoken the above words, the Roman legions, in AD 70, completely destroyed Jerusalem. Almost the entire population were either killed, captured or

scattered from the land.

## GIVING IT ALL AWAY

I have already mentioned, in chapter 2, that because of Israel's rejection of Jesus, salvation would be preached to the Gentiles. I now wish, under the above sub-heading, to restate these facts.

Jesus told, through several parables, that the message of salvation would be taken away from the Jews because of their unbelief, and given instead to the non-Jews — you and me. (If, by God's grace, the reader happens to be Jewish, and is not yet in the kingdom of God, then it is my hope and prayer that this book will help you to discover and to own Jesus as your Messiah)

Throughout Israel's history, God spoke to that nation by His prophets; trying to turn the people back to Him. But Israel would not listen, and they treated God's prophets very badly: some they beat; some they stoned; some they killed. They even killed God's only Son. And God's only Son warned the Jews what would be the outcome, regarding their acceptance into the kingdom of God, of their rebellious acts:

*"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. —"*

..... Matthew 21v43

And the kingdom of God was indeed taken from them and given to the nations. The gospel was preached, and it took root and bore fruit in every part of the massive Roman Empire.

Today Jesus is known as Lord and Saviour to an ever-increasing number in almost every nation, tribe, language and people.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet, Matthew 22, deals, in a similar way with the above realities:

*Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come in, but they refused to come.*

*"Then he sent some more servants — —*

*"But they paid no attention — —*

*"The rest seized his servants, ill treated them and killed them."*

..... Matthew 22 v1-6

The king in verse 2 is God the Father. The son is Jesus himself. The servants (verse 3) are God's prophets; and those who had initially been invited are the Jews — but they refused to come — so the invitation went out to everyone else:

*Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'*

..... Matthew 22 v8-9

All are invited to the Wedding Banquet to end all wedding banquets, but only those who are properly attired will enter into the celebrations (Matthew 22 v11-13). It won't be a case of 'no jeans allowed' or 'ties must be worn'. The only acceptable clothing for this happy get-together will be the righteousness of Christ:

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*

..... Galatians 3 v26-27

Please note: For those readers who may not know, in the above passage, *baptised into Christ* does not mean water baptism as a baby or at any other time of life. The only baptism that saves and clothes a person with Christ, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the new birth — being born again.

## IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK

Before going any further, let's come back to a vital point, previously mentioned, about the gospel being preached all over the earth immediately preceding the end of the age. We have here a powerful evidence to show that the Lord might come for His Church at any moment. When Jesus spoke about the signs of the end of the age, He added:

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

..... Matthew 24v14

Every minute of every day there are teams of Christian preachers, teachers, evangelists, doctors, builders, workers and helpers of every sort from almost every nation where the gospel has already borne fruit; and this people are taking the Good News into every possible corner of the inhabited globe.

They are using every conceivable type of modern technology and communications equipment to help them accomplish this task. One preacher alone, such as Billy Graham, using satellite link-up technology, can now, with a single sermon, easily reach millions of listeners throughout the earth. His 1995 (this year's) mission is hopeful of reaching — 1 billion people!

This is truly staggering. There has never been a time like it, where one man has the ability to reach almost one quarter of the earth's population with the gospel in one day.

Surely it cannot be much longer before the Good News of Jesus Christ will have been preached to every nation on earth — *and then the end will come.*

No, it cannot be very long now. Think of it! The whole of China could be reached with the message of the gospel in just one day. The preachers are here and the technology is here to make possible the preaching of the gospel to every nation on earth within an extremely short space of time. There obviously needs to be great political (and/or other) changes in the nations still opposed to the gospel before they will allow its promotion in their lands. But we have all seen how surprisingly and suddenly such changes can come about — the pulling down of the Berlin Wall, the fall of Communism and the break up of the Soviet Union are good examples.

So, we should be aware that those words of Jesus — *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come* — could become a reality with shocking suddenness. And this has startling consequences for the Church :

Hold on to your hats! Because the rapture of the Church will take place — AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS BEFORE the worldwide preaching of the gospel is completed! Now, if the above statement is correct, and I believe it to be so, then the gathering of the saints to meet the Lord in the air can happen at any moment, possibly — EVEN TODAY!

## JESUS JEWS

The Church should continue to preach Jesus when and where we can, but all the nations and tribes of the earth will not have been reached when the rapture occurs. The preaching of the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth will be completed during the final seven years (more especially the second half of the 'final seven') of this age and not before; in a time of the worst and most widespread persecution of believers ever. And the responsibility for seeding this last harvest will have been given back to the Jews — Holy Spirit filled Jews.

In Revelation 7, verses 1-8, we read of a time during the tribulation where God puts His seal on 144,000 of His servants — 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Again, in chapter 14, verses 1-5, we meet the 144,000 servants of God, and in verse 6 we read:

*Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people.*

And, apparently, as a result of the preaching of the 144,000 saints, we read in Revelation 7, verses 9 and 14, of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing in heaven. They are believers in Jesus and have come out of the great tribulation — they will have died for their faith.

Whether the figure of 144,000 is symbolic or actual, I don't know. But it is certain that they are from the nation of Israel and they have been especially enabled by God to proclaim the gospel to many during this terrible period.

We must now look at other passages of Scripture to support the above view.

## THE FINAL 'SEVEN'

The prophet Daniel gives us the real evidence about the full length of time of the tribulation period and of it being a particular and unique time for Israel; with the Lord giving that nation a special purpose and responsibility during those years.

Let me just add that although the Bible speaks of the *great tribulation* as a three and a half years period (the 42 months when the beast has power over the saints — Revelation 13 v5-7), it must be obvious that the whole time of the antichrist being in power — seven years — will be time of rapidly worsening tribulation. In other words, the first half of the seven years will be 'tribulation'; the second half will be 'great tribulation'.

Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, was taken captive to Babylon in 604 BC. The Jews of southern Israel were held in captivity for 70 years (the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken captive many years before and its population dispersed throughout the earth), and during this time Daniel had several visions concerning the time of the end. He usually found the visions very disturbing and difficult to understand, so God sometimes sent an angel to Daniel with a further explanation.

On this occasion it was Gabriel :

*He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding."*

*"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."*

*"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens', and sixty-two 'sevens'. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty two 'sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."*

..... Daniel 9 v22, 24-27

Each of the 'sevens' is a period of seven years, or a 'week' of years. And Daniel is told that his people, the Jews, have been allotted by God seventy of these 'sevens' to *put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy*. What this all means is that the Jews have been allowed this length of time to come back to God by proclaiming Jesus Christ as their Messiah. But the seventy 'sevens' don't all run consecutively. They are broken up into unequal portions, and the countdown starts, stops and restarts at certain points in Israel's (and the world's) history: *From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven*

*'sevens', and sixty two 'sevens'.*

So the counting off of the seventy 'sevens' started when the Medo-Persian empire took over from the Babylonians, and Cyrus, the Persian king, issued the decree to restore Jerusalem. A decree for all the Jews who so desired to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple (2 Chronicles 36 v22-23, Ezra 1 v2-3).

The time of captivity in Babylon was now over. The rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem took 49 years. — seven 'sevens'. We then have the sixty two 'sevens' (434 years) which lead up to the coming of the Anointed One (Jesus Christ). So by the time of the Lord's death on the cross — *the anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing* — a total of sixty-nine out of the original seventy 'sevens' have passed.

Now up until this point in history, the responsibility of witnessing and testifying to the world about the one true God had been placed upon Israel's 'shoulders', but as we read earlier, with the Jew's rejection of Christ, they forfeited their right to this task which was now given to the Gentiles, and the Church, and it has remained the Church's responsibility for almost two thousand years. However, when the time of the rapture arrives and the Church leaves the scene, in line with God's revealed plans, the onus on preaching the kingdom of God will be given back to the Jews for the final 'seven'.

The Jews, as a whole, had not at that time, and still have not yet, recognised Jesus in the way that Thomas, also a Jew, did :

*Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"*

*But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."*

*A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

*Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

*Then Jesus. Told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

..... John 20 v24-29

Thomas was a true Jew, brought up to believe in the one true God of Israel. He would have heard these words proclaimed every Sabbath in the synagogue: "hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God". He would have been acquainted with the many passages of Scripture written by the Old Testament prophets concerning the one true God of Israel. Passages such as those found in Isaiah, all emphasising that same vital truth:

*"This is what the LORD says — Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.*

*"Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."*

..... Isaiah 44 v6,8

*"I am the LORD, and there is no other."*

*"And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me."*

*— — — for I am God, and there is no other."*

..... Isaiah 45 v18,21,22

*'Before me no God was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no saviour."*

..... Isaiah 43 v10-11

And there are many more such Old Testament verses. Thomas was steeped in this undeniable truth — there can only be one God. What an unspeakably glorious revelation, when Thomas saw the risen Jesus that very same, one true God.

At the end of the final 'seven' a great many of Thomas' descendants will look on Jesus as he did; and that multitude of men, women and children will repeat the words of their brother Thomas — *"My Lord and my God!"*

There is now one 'seven' left to complete the original seventy 'sevens'. And we are given a definite starting point from which we can begin this final seven year countdown. Once more reading from Daniel 9v27: *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'*. The start of the final seven years of this age is here mentioned, and it's the antichrist who confirms the covenant with Israel. We observe that the Jews have at this time brought back the use of sacrifice and offering in their temple worship, and the antichrist allows this to continue until the middle of the 'seven' when, still in verse 27 : *In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And — — he will set up an abomination that causes desolation.*

This is where the real trouble for Jacob starts, half-way into the final 'seven'. With the abolishing of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination, the *great tribulation* begins in earnest.

Now, God is not going to allow this final 'seven' to be frittered away and Israel's allotted time to run out without their recognising their Messiah once and for all. The Lord is going to do a mighty work in turning Israel's heart back to Himself. He is going to raise up an army of Jewish saints who will be greatly empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth.

#### THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE — — ?

Undoubtedly, the great tribulation will be time of tremendous supernatural events and power — both good and evil:

*Then I saw another beast, — — And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.*

..... Revelation 13 v11,13

*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.*

..... 2 Thessalonians 2 v9-10

And on the good side ;

*And I will give power to my two witnesses, — —*

*If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. — — These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

..... Revelation 11 v3, 5-6

And although the following verses from Old Testament prophet, Joel, were used by the apostle, Peter, in the New Testament (Acts. 2 v16-21), to describe the supernatural happenings at Pentecost and beyond, it is clear that this prophecy remains only partially fulfilled. There is great power and significance still left in this prophecy, particularly for the time immediately preceding the return of Jesus :

*"And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

*I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The*

*sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord — “*  
..... Joel 2 v28-31

And especially for the sake of any non-Christians reading this book — whatever opinions you may take away with you — let the verse that follows on from the above burn an everlasting imprint into your heart and mind :

*“AND EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED;”*

(Capitals Mine)

..... Joel 2 v32

The tribulation and, even more so, the great tribulation will be a time of the most intense spiritual activity ever to be played out on the earth. For the last three and a half years Satan and his hordes will live on the earth:

*— — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, — — He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

*But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.*

..... Revelation 12 v9,12

Satan will completely take over the antichrist, giving him terrific power over men; while the devil's angels (demons) will infect and control countless people.

Picture yourself waking up one morning to find your once-loving family or your once-friendly neighbours fully demonised and in any number of demented states. Family, friends and neighbours suddenly filled with irrational and uncontrollable hatreds and murderous lusts for one another. Such scenarios are the stuff of nightmares and horror movies, but this is what we are bringing on ourselves if we don't repent and turn to Christ. God will give us over to the depraved desires of our hearts; and Old Nick will have a field day.

Nothing is more depraved, more vile and perverted, or more frightening and terrible than when the spiritual powers of darkness are allowed unrestrained influence on men's hearts and minds. And, during the reign of the antichrist, the earth will be their playground.

But the devil will certainly not have it all his own way, as we see from Daniel 11v32 :

*“ — — but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.”*

## A NEW TEMPLE

It seems clear from Scripture that, during the time of the antichrist, the Jews will once again have a temple in Jerusalem in which to worship and offer the daily sacrifice. Those things have been denied them for almost two thousand years, since the destruction of the last temple by the Romans in AD 70.

For some time now a growing number of Jews have been preparing materials and garments in the hope of eventually rebuilding their temple.

Many Christians are aware of this and believe that the rebuilding of the temple is one of the warning signs they can watch for, and expect to see, before being raptured. But this is not necessarily so.

We know from Daniel 9v27, that the temple is already in regular use at the start of the tribulation, because in the middle of the 'seven' the antichrist puts an end to the daily sacrifice and sets up the abomination that causes desolation. So three and a half years into the last 'seven' the temple sacrifices are stopped, but we have no way of knowing how long they had been going on for before that time — 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, maybe 3.5 years?

It could depend on how long it takes to build the new temple. It took King Solomon, nearly 3000 years ago, only 7 years to build the original (1 Kings 6v38) without the help of modern equipment and techniques, and we've seen how fast very large buildings can be erected today — 8 months for a large, fully equipped, modern hyper-market!

Now, supposing work was started on the new temple quite soon after the rapture; as long as it could be completed in under 3.5 years, which would almost certainly be the case, then the daily sacrifice and offering could be in full swing by the middle of the 'seven', exactly as foretold in Scripture. Yet those saints who were not expecting to meet the Lord in the air before first witnessing the rebuilding of the temple, would have been taken by surprise.

What I am really saying is that we Christians cannot take it for granted that we will see this, that or the other take place before the Lord gathers us all to Him. The stage is set, and the rapture could occur at any moment. We might see the temple rebuilt first — but don't bank on it!

Either way, the prophetic sirens are screaming out at us from every direction that the world is ripe for the Lord's return; first in secret FOR His saints, and then, seven years later, WITH His saints, when :

*For as lightning that comes from the east and is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, — They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*

..... Matthew 24 v24,30

And He will set foot on the earth again, to change it forever; and the 'day' of Jacob's trouble will be over.

## MORE MATTHEW

Already, throughout this book, we have looked at several verses from chapter 24 of the gospel according to Matthew. But since this chapter is so pregnant with information on the events of the end times, we must look deeper ;

*Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings."Do you see all these things?" He asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

..... Matthew 24 v1-2

Jesus must have known at this point that He was going to tell his disciples and through them, the rest of us, details of what to expect as the end of this age closed in and His return became imminent. So He leads in with a prophecy of relatively small proportions, concerning mainly the Jews and not the rest of the world. Also these first two verses are speaking of an event in the, then, very near future — only about 40 years away — the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (not one stone was left on another) in AD 70.

Now this had apparently whetted the disciples' appetites for more and so :

*"Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"*

..... Matthew 24v3

In answering them, Jesus' prophetic insight looks away from the local and the near future events, and sweeps across the centuries and across the nations :

*Jesus answered: "Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth-pains." .....* Matthew 24 v4-8

Jesus is, here, speaking to all believers, warning us of a worsening world situation as the end draws nearer; a worsening situation on the moral and spiritual side of things, and people everywhere looking for answers in a world falling apart.

He warns of a plethora of false Christs, and that they will deceive many who are only too eager to step into their deadly snares of deception. There has never been as many false Messiahs as are now revealing themselves. So-called spiritual teachers who claim to have all the answers, yet, somehow or other, deny Christ. They are leading millions astray — and there's worse to come.

He warns of wars continuing and increasing. And in the words *nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*, as well as predicting the many wars, including two world wars, that have followed His words, Jesus surely speaks of all the ancient tribal hatreds boiling up again. We are constantly seeing the horrific consequences of 'tribe against tribe' throughout the world. People are reverting back to their tribal roots and killing their neighbours in the name of nationhood, which is really tribalism.

In Europe (in particular the tribes of former Yugoslavia), in the Russian republics, in Asia, in Africa and elsewhere there is almost constant inter-tribal slaughter going on. Even in the U.K. we see a growing threat of national division, and a growth in Celtic religions, interests and aspirations. Is it really possible that Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will break away from England and each other? Well, maybe. Could it be significant that only England and Wales out of these four nations was part of the original Roman Empire? The modern version is the ever-increasing, ever-more powerful European Union.

"Ah! But what about the European Union?" I hear you say. "That must be a positive sign, showing that different nations or tribes can get on together for the good of everyone!"

Well, the reality is, if the E.U. and the other fast-forming power blocks of nations around the globe are to unite to form the final world empire, then this is for a very unfriendly purpose indeed. And the 'togetherness' is, and will be, only superficial and temporary.

Speaking about this final empire, Daniel says :

*Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of bake clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united any more than iron mixes with clay.*

..... Daniel 2 v41-43

I feel that the ten toes represent ten power blocks similar to, and including, the E.U. These ten power blocks will encompass the whole earth, with the revived Roman Empire — the E.U. — in dominance. They will come together, for a time, under the control of the antichrist. However, as we have read in verse 43: *the people will become a mixture and will not remain united*. (This subject is dealt with more fully in my first book, 'Europe and the Beast').

So, getting back to Matthew. The Lord tells of famines and earthquakes. Once again, these things are not new, but the increasing regularity and severity is new. *All these things are the beginning of birth-pains*, and just before the 'birth' they will become almost unbearable.

I believe the world, today, is still in the above prophetic process, and is rapidly. Moving into the next phase :

*"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come....."* Matthew 24 v9-14

From verse 9 to 14 we sense a different tone from what has gone before, but it feels familiar also — being hated and persecuted by all nations; many will turn away from the faith and betray each other; false prophets (a continual plague); the love of most grows cold because of the increase in wickedness; those who stand firm will be saved; the gospel of the kingdom preached to all the nations; and then comes the end.

These verses read like a compilation of Scriptures from Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy and Revelation, particularly the passages relating to the moral climate leading up to, and under, the rule of the antichrist. The belief that Matthew 24 verses 9-14 relate, at least in part, to the reign of the antichrist, is supported by verse 15:

*“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’, spoken of through the prophet Daniel — “*

We know from this verse that the prophecy has now reached the period of half-way through the final ‘seven’. It is three and a half years since the antichrist made the covenant with Israel; the ‘abomination that causes desolation’ is about to be set up in the temple; and we are entering the period of the terrible *great tribulation*.

The death and destruction throughout World Wars 1 and 2 will not be able to hold a candle to the compressed carnage of these last three and a half years. This is the ultimate World War; this is, no doubt, nuclear weapons tossed around like atomic confetti; this is cataclysmic natural and supernatural disasters; this is not the, approximately 50 million deaths (occurring over a combined period of ten years of fighting) during the past two World Wars; but, this is billions of fatalities over a much shorter timespan. This is, at the end — Armageddon!

Events will turn extremely fast when the ‘abomination’ is put in place. There will be no time to take stock of the situation. No time to pack — just head for the hills!

*— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in the winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equalled again.*

..... Matthew 24 v16-21

The above verses impress the importance of the study of ‘end time’ prophecy, and of keeping watch on world events. When the ‘abomination’ is placed in the temple, no-one will have time to hang around trying to figure out what it all means. Because of the urgent need to take flight, people will need to know in advance what to watch out for so they can react immediately.

Jesus expects His people to take serious notice of ‘end time’ Scripture, not brush it under the carpet or ignore it because we can’t decipher it, and therefore don’t think anyone else can either. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the Lord intended all these prophetic Scriptures to be understood, especially as the time of their coming to pass draws nearer.

Those who are wise and forewarned, and those who have taken the trouble to find out, will know what to do when they see *standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’*. A knowledge and understanding of such prophecies as these will help many, and bear much good fruit during the reign of terror yet to come.

As Daniel says. (11v33) : *Those who are wise will instruct many, —*

And again (12v10) : *None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand*

The Lord gives us clear commands to keep watch on events and on His word so we are not left in the dark about future developments; so that Christians are not caught completely unaware and unready by the rapture; and so that those who are believers during the tribulation period, will not be ignorant of what is happening. They will be able to encourage, strengthen and prepare both

themselves and others because of their understanding of God's plans and His timetable.

Although the desolation which proceeds from the action of the antichrist, in setting up the 'abomination', will undeniably be of global extent, Jesus is, here, speaking in a Jewish context: *let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains — Pray that your flight will not take place — on the Sabbath.*

The nation of Israel, and the Jews around the world, will suffer tremendously during the reign of the antichrist, and the above verses speak of the final, anguished moments of — trouble for Jacob.

## THE ROAD TO HELL

We are all very aware of the extremely serious environmental problems facing us in each of the three vital life-support systems which this planet provides for us, namely : air, water, and land. There are many organisations around the world devoted to preventing and correcting these problems. There are mountains of books written about the deep environmental trouble we are getting into. A truly vast amount (growing larger by the minute) of sad, upsetting and frightening information is to be found regarding these issues.

My aim in this chapter, is to give a very brief overview of the situation in the light of Bible prophecy.

### AIR TODAY — GONE TOMORROW!

Although air, water and land are separate systems and are dealt with as such in the following pages, they are, of course, very much interrelated; that which affects one of these three, generally has some effect on them all.

Air pollution from radiation leaks can occur in various ways. Wherever there is the use or storage of nuclear material there is this danger. Nuclear reactors are in use in a big way in these modern times. We see them powering ships and submarines, and we see them on a massive scale, all over the world, running electricity generating stations. There are also many atomic research establishments and very many nuclear weapons. And whatever changes happen in world politics, the use and proliferation of radioactive materials just continues to increase.

In 1986 there was an accident at a nuclear power plant in Chernobyl, a city in the old Soviet Union. Massive quantities of highly radioactive particles escaped into the air and were spread over parts of the Soviet Union and over a very large part of Europe, even reaching Britain. Large areas of land and water were dangerously polluted. Animals grazing on these lands had their milk and meat contaminated and rendered unfit for human consumption, crops could not be eaten, and ten years on — this is still the case in several areas. Certain villages, forests, farms and fields (particularly in the vicinity of Chernobyl) have been cleared of human habitation, and are considered too dangerous to re-occupy within the foreseeable future. In the less polluted areas many young Ukrainians have died from, and many continue to develop, radiation-induced cancers.

Deadly radioactive particles, caught up in the atmosphere, produce an insidious form of airborne pollution. It is totally undetectable unless some type of Geiger counter is used, and yet it can lethally pollute lakes, rivers, springs, reservoirs and even seas. It can, and has, polluted land used for living on (towns and villages), land used for crop-growing, and land used for rearing livestock.

National boundaries and laws are no safeguard against this menace; it goes where the wind takes it. This type of pollution can be very long-lasting and impossible to clean up. Certain radioactive particles can remain deadly for hundreds of thousands of years. The world's scientists and politicians have no idea what to do with the ever-growing mountains of high level radioactive waste. It is not, in the long term, safe to put it anywhere.

Of course, when the water and the land become poisoned, the toxins get into the food chain via fish, birds and other animals.

Acid rain is another well documented form of air pollution. It is a result of gases such as sulphur dioxide (produced in large part from coal-fired power stations) and nitrogen oxide (emissions from vehicle exhausts) being released into the atmosphere and combining with droplets of rain, to produce sulphuric and other acids in highly damaging concentrations. Tens of thousands of lakes

have become acidified and are devoid of fish and other life-forms, and millions of trees have been killed. Also, this kind of air pollution, before it becomes acid rain, is very injurious to human health. Lung diseases are increasing at a worrying rate in built up areas, but so widespread is this pollution that scientists have discovered pollutants, from the earth's cities, on the ice fields around the Poles. The entire earth is becoming clothed in an ever-thickening shroud of poisons.

Then we have the problem with the so-called 'greenhouse gases'. There is no such thing as a 'greenhouse gas', rather it is the effect (the greenhouse effect) which these gases have in warming up the atmosphere (by acting like a blanket which traps the sun's heat in) and stopping the heat from escaping into space.

The most feared outcome of too great a build-up of 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere is the effect known as 'global warming'. The gases responsible, this time, are mainly carbon dioxide and CFC's (gases used in the production and operation of aerosols and refrigerators). CFC's are also thought to be the major culprit in the formation of the ozone holes.

The main concern about 'global warming' is that even a very small rise in the worldwide average temperatures could have catastrophic results. Icecaps could melt and sea levels rise. This has, in fact, been the reality for at least the last four or five decades. The ice fields at the Poles have been receding consistently and dramatically over this period of time, and sea levels are steadily rising.

There are well-founded fears of unpredictable and devastating changes to the world's weather patterns, which might cause any number of floods, famines, droughts and deserts in places that have never experienced such things. All possible because of an overall average temperature rise of only a degree or two. We are beginning to find out, too late, how very finely balanced the natural world is.

When we speak of the ozone layer and its problems, we are not speaking of the air we breathe, rather the upper atmosphere of the earth. However this particular problem has the potential to harm, even destroy, life on land or sea. The common term for this developing complication is known as 'ozone holes'. This refers to the depletion of the ozone layer high above the earth.

For several years now scientists have detected a thinning of the ozone layer, mainly over the North and South Pole regions, although these depleted areas are also encroaching over inhabited parts of the earth from both ends of the globe.

The ozone layer was put there for very good reasons; the one that most concerns us here is its ability to filter out a very harmful strain (wavelength) of ultra-violet radiation and prevent it from reaching the earth. This dangerous short-wave radiation is a component of the sun's rays, and if it is allowed to reach the earth's surface undiluted and for any length of time, it would be life threatening to most living things. The greatest danger that humans face when exposed to such radiation is skin cancer.

## WATER WAY TO GO

It is obvious that polluted air, particularly where acid rain is a by-product, and polluted land, due to numerous causes, can have a seriously detrimental effect on the earth's water resources.

Even the thinning ozone layer could become very destructive to the minute plant and animal life inhabiting the surface regions of both seawater and freshwater. These minute aquatic plant and animal life-forms are an extremely important part of the food chain for higher animals. They also play a vital part in helping to balance the correct amounts of oxygen and carbon-dioxide gases in our atmosphere. There is no telling what the end result might be if the sun's deadly short-wave radiation is allowed to penetrate the ozone layer and wipe out, or radically change, the algae and planktons of the world.

And who knows what havoc might be caused to life in the seas as the global warming threat, via

the greenhouse effect, becomes more obvious; diluting the salinity of the oceans with billions of tons of freshwater from the melting ice fields. This will also create a dramatic rise in sea-levels, submerging large numbers of islands and drowning vast areas of low-lying, inhabited and agricultural land; and spreading great fear and panic throughout the world:

*“On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea”*  
..... Luke 21v25

We are being constantly bombarded by news items and TV documentaries telling of yet more polluted and poisoned rivers and lakes, and of the sickening destruction of sea-life and bird-life, due to various forms of ongoing pollution.

Some pollution incidents come about accidentally, such as spills from oil tanker disasters. Others are more deliberate, like the illegal flushing of oil tanks at sea, or the constant discharge of sewage and all kinds of industrial waste either directly into the sea, or indirectly, into the rivers first. The indirect route is poisoning many of the world's river systems before going on to sicken the oceans.

Of course, it is not just rivers and seas; no stretch of water on earth is safe from the ravages of pollution. Tens of thousands of lakes are now lifeless because of acid rain, while other types of pollution account for many more.

There are a great number of lakes, rivers and other bodies of water that are dangerously polluted, yet still contain life — life, which is itself highly polluted. Living (for the moment) in Canada's St Lawrence River is the Beluga whale, and it has so many poisons stored up in its body fats, that this very same animal could meet the classification of, and be considered as, toxic waste.

The seas and rivers of the world's are being (in fact, have been for a long time) attacked by another highly lethal pollutant that is neither chemical nor biological, but radioactive. Radioactive waste from the fast growing number of nuclear power stations floods into rivers and seas. The people in charge say that the levels of radiation in this waste are too low to be of concern (they will find out too late, that they have got it wrong). There can be no safe level of radioactive waste when it is constantly, in ever greater quantities, being poured into sensitive, and already ailing, water (and food) resources.

Parts of the Pacific Ocean are off limits to native fishermen because of pollution from nuclear bomb tests. And it is now known the Russians have been dumping high-level nuclear waste directly into the sea for decades — and still are!

There are sunken nuclear-powered submarines, still equipped with nuclear missiles, lying on the sea bed rusting away. The engine reactors and the missile warheads contain what is probably the most toxic substance on earth — plutonium. Even minute particles of plutonium are deadly and stay that way for a very long time. Plutonium 239 has a half-life of over 24,000 years. 'Half-life' is the term which denotes the length of time taken for half of the atoms in a given radioactive substance to decay and become stable. The rest of the atoms continue to emit radiation until another similar period of time, the half-life, has passed, when again only half the atoms will remain radioactive. Uranium 238 has a half life of — 5,000,000,000 years!

I could go on and on. There is a truly massive amount of well documented evidence concerning every type of water pollution on the planet, but you should have had a fair taste of it by now (metaphorically speaking, I hope!), so let's move on.

Other very serious circumstances are arising in the world as a result of water related problems. Water is not just for drinking, washing, farming and industry, but healthy water, freshwater and seawater, is indirectly an irreplaceable source of food.

Millions around the world rely for their food on the fish and other protein stocks found in the seas, lakes and rivers. Worryingly, these food stocks are being reduced by pollution, and they are being relentlessly plundered by the world's fishing fleets. Apparently, in 1987, the critical sustainable

level of 100 million tons of fish caught annually was passed. This is thought to be the maximum allowable tonnage in a year, of fish taken worldwide, above which the global fish stocks will start to collapse, leading to extinction. This limit was not only reached, but exceeded several years ago, and conservation measures are not working!

The time is coming quickly when popular fish, such as Cod and Haddock, will no longer be available. We will then turn to other species, which will rapidly go the same way, though many do not yet accept it — the fishing industry, throughout the earth, is already a dying trade.

Supplies of freshwater are another cause for great concern, and this time not through pollution. Freshwater supplies are drying up, and being used up, frighteningly fast. Many large cities in China, and even in the U.S.A., obtain their freshwater from massive underground lakes. However in recent years these supplies have been falling dramatically, and levels are now dropping by one to two metres every year. An increasing world population demands more and more freshwater, but instead, this life-sustaining resource is decreasing alarmingly.

It is quite possible that, in the near future, there will be wars fought over the right to freshwater. The river Euphrates is a critical source of freshwater for several nations. It starts its journey in the mountains of Turkey then flows through Syria and Iraq, but its flow has been much reduced over the years by a number of dams built by the Turks.

In 1992, Turkey, while constructing its largest ever dam project, the Ataturk dam, turned off the river Euphrates (they are able to do this at any time) for a whole month, causing much consternation in Syria and Iraq.

Every new dam and irrigation system further reduces the flow of water downstream, yet even more such schemes are planned, and severe water shortages in this area seem certain.

A similar situation exists with Ethiopia wanting to control the Nile and its flow into Sudan and Egypt.

Throughout countries on the continents of Africa and Asia, a greater number of people are having to travel further and further to reach ever-dwindling supplies of water. Soon we will begin to realise that we can no longer take our water supplies for granted; even in nations such as ours. There will be metering in every home, and water will become a very expensive commodity. Even so, the time is coming when citizens in all the nations will have no choice but to swallow the bitter 'pill' of bitter (poisoned) water — or none at all!

## DOWN TO EARTH

We now come to the last of the earth's three major life-support systems — the land. I have already written about land poisoned by radioactive fallout. Farm waste, industrial waste and even domestic waste are well-known culprits also. But a process even more sinister and much less controllable by mankind than the above situations is taking place around the earth — desertification. Land that was once used for growing crops or farming animals is turning into desert.

And this is not only an African problem; it is happening in the Americas, Australia, throughout Asia and (would you believe) it is a very serious problem in Europe, especially in southern areas of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Across Europe 10% of all agricultural land is already affected by desertification, and it continues to expand its barren boundaries.

Countries that already have deserts cannot afford those deserts to grow larger and overrun precious farming land, or to have new deserts created where there were none previously. Yet this is exactly what is happening in many nations.

What makes this problem of desertification so scary is the fact that the earth's population grows

yearly by about 100 million. 100 million extra mouths to feed every year. We need an increase in available farming land, not a continual decrease. Just this process of desertification, on its own, has horrific implications for the world.

There are numerous causes of desertification. Soils are eroded or washed out by rain, often because of another problem — deforestation, or they are overused or overgrazed. In certain areas, irrigation is causing high concentrations of mineral salts to rise to the surface rendering the land useless for any type of farming. Large areas of Australia, and elsewhere, are turning into desert for this very reason.

Finally, in this section, we'll have a very brief look at deforestation.

The extermination of trees and grasslands has been well publicised for several years now. But despite all efforts by many environmental groups and others, it still goes on at an alarming rate. Approximately four square miles of rainforest are burned down every thirty minutes. Think about that! From where you are now sitting cover the ground in your mind's eye. Think of the houses, streets, roads, fields etc., as you gaze out in one direction to a distance of two miles, then make a right-angle turn and travel two miles along that course. Now just complete the square and imagine that area full of lush, green trees with all the animal and insect life they contain and sustain. That amount of rainforest is destroyed every half-hour — 48 times every day! And the world's grasslands are suffering a similar fate.

The rainforest have been termed the 'lungs of the world', because they add millions of tons of vital oxygen to the earth's atmosphere. They also act as a gigantic carbon-dioxide 'sponge', soaking up vast amounts of the stuff, and thereby helping to control the 'greenhouse effect'. Since carbon-dioxide is considered to be the major culprit in the 'global warming' case, we are not doing ourselves any favours by destroying the earth's natural system for limiting the build-up of this gas; especially when we are pumping ever-increasing quantities of it into the air.

## THE GREEN DECEPTION

There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of 'green' or environmental type groups around the world. Lots of people are taking seriously the mess we are making of our planet. And things would, undoubtedly, be much worse in many areas if not for the concern, dedication and action of some of these groups. We all have a responsibility to take good care of our world, and not to wantonly abuse it as if there were no tomorrow, because there is a tomorrow — and it is terrifying!

The 'green' groups, scientists, politicians and intellectuals of all types believe we still have time to sort all these problems out, or at least to get on top of things and start to reverse the process. All the mass of writings about environmental problems tell us that, although things are extremely serious, we are still in with a chance to change conditions for the better if we act quickly enough. Countless TV documentaries say the same thing. Children are taught at schools about the dangers facing our environment; and in universities and colleges 'experts' in environmental studies teach their students in a similar way. All are given, or giving, the same message that it is not yet too late, when really — it always was too late!

Whatever success the 'greens' and others may have, it will only be a minute drop of calming oil in an out of control ocean of trouble. Yes, we should certainly continue to fight against destroying our precious environment; but we dismiss what the Bible says about this subject to our definite peril.

While we continue to trust in our own abilities to solve these problems, we are deceiving ourselves and others. We think we can see what is happening, when, in fact, we are blind to what the real situation is and to where it is all heading. We are only seeing a small part of the picture, and making totally wrong assumptions. Like watching just the beginning of a great mystery movie, then contentedly leaving the cinema with no idea of what the ending was, or even what the plot was about.

In so many words, we are saying: “We got ourselves into this mess, and we are able to get ourselves out of it. We don’t believe its anything to do with Jesus, and we don’t need Him to sort it out anyway.” — Wrong!

The Scriptures have been telling us for almost 2000 years (much longer in Old Testament prophecies) of the things we have begun to notice in the last four or five decades, and have become acutely aware of only very recently. So let’s find out where our planet is really going — environmentally.

## FROM BAD TO WORSE

During the great tribulation environmental disasters will be a whole new ball game. What we see now is a setting up of the process; a sort of getting everything ready for the ‘off’. The table is being laid, but the meal is yet to come.

Environmental problems will gradually increase from now until the appearance of the antichrist, then they will very rapidly go from bad to much worse. We see this in Revelation 8 v8-9:

*The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

Now compare the above with Revelation 16v3:

*The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died*

In the former verse we read that only a third of the sea is turned to blood (I believe ‘blood’ may here be signifying the death of the sea by poisoning — pollution. And this is tied in with some devastating event which even destroys a third of the ships on the seas. Could this be the result of nuclear battles between certain naval forces or maybe the impact of an asteroid?), and only a third of the life-forms in it die. Whereas in the latter verse, we are told simply that the sea (not just a part of it) turned to blood, and that ALL life in it died.

That alone, without all the additional problems, is too awful to contemplate. All the oceans and seas of the world — lifeless! Two thirds of the area of this earth covered with a vile, noxious and probably stinking liquid. An incalculable loss of food resources, not only to mankind, but to countless animals and birds also. And, seemingly, as we have already read in Luke 21v25 (*nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea*), this global-wrap of toxic soup will not just sit there quietly; it will take on a far more vicious nature than ever before.

And again, if we compare Revelation 8v10-11 .....

*The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water — the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter*

..... with Revelation 16v4:

*The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

Here we see, in Revelation 8v10-11, a *third* of the freshwater supplies poisoned, quickly becoming, and in Revelation 16v4, *the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood* — no exceptions this time.

In Revelation 8v7, we also hear that a third of the earth, a third of the trees and all the green grass is burned up. Although there is no further mention of these in chapter 16 in connection with the ‘bowls of wrath’ judgements, it is quite possible that things in the earth and trees ‘departments’ will have become even worse. It doesn’t seem possible for the situation with the green grass to have become any worse.

These chapters in Revelation also speak of tremendous changes in celestial and atmospheric conditions:

*The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.*

..... Revelation 8v12

*The fifth angel —*

*When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.*

..... Revelation 9v1-2

And somehow the above 'trumpet' judgements, announced by the fourth and fifth angels, are connected with the fourth and fifth angels of chapter 16 pouring out the 'bowls of wrath':

*The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.*

..... Revelation 16v8-9

*The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness.*

..... Revelation 16v10

It is possible that Revelation 16v8-9 (the sun scorching and searing people) may, in part, be a consequence of the depletion of the ozone layer, the previously mentioned, ozone holes?

Jesus spoke of many terrible events leading up to the close of this age and to His return. We see His words powerfully reinforced throughout the book of Revelation.

Among the prophesied happenings were wars and famines, and as we look at Revelation 6v1-8, we see these taking place in dreadful proportions.

I am convinced that with the opening of the first 'seal', we are witnessing the antichrist setting out to conquer the world:

*I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.*

..... Revelation 6v1-2

We see the results of the antichrist's urge to conquer in the following verses:

*When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.*

..... Revelation 6v3-4

So, in this four-horse race of death and destruction, we now see a fiery red horse. Its demented jockey is given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. He carries a LARGE sword, which he wields like a supernatural, satanic Samurai; and he's a hot favourite to win this rabid race across the earth.

Already we can sense this inflamed steed at the starting gate; snorting, champing at the bit and pawing the ground, impatient and eager to be let loose. Then comes famine:

*When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a*

*day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine."*

..... Revelation 6v5-6

And that famine will be immense. Remember! There will be no food from the seas; vast areas of former agricultural land will lie useless; there will be no grasslands remaining and not many trees left. On top of all this, the world will have nothing to drink but poisoned water — men will certainly slay each other!

We can get some idea of the monstrous mortality rate of this period by reading the following verses:

*When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.*

..... Revelation 6v7-8

Look again! During this particular period a quarter (*a fourth*) of the population of the entire earth is killed by war, famine, plague and wild beasts. At today's estimates (world population, approx 6 billion) that equates to around 1.5 billion people.

Famine, plague and pestilence are often nasty by-products of war, but this time, due, in part, to the worsening environmental situation, the above horrors will have their own deadly momentum, and war will only serve to increase their potency.

Despite the undoubted power of medical science, we are seeing new, and very fatal, diseases spreading; as well as old ones coming back to haunt us — this time in drug-resistant strains.

Dangerous animals of every sort, even deadly poisonous snakes, are now protected by law. The people who live or farm in the habitats of these wild beasts are no longer allowed to kill them, even though, in many cases, their livelihoods and their lives are threatened by these animals. In this world of increasing upside-down morals and standards, it seems that the wild beasts are more important than humans.

These dangerous beasts are increasing rapidly upon the earth, and, according to verse 8 above, a large part of humanity will come to regret the policy of protecting dangerous animals 'at all costs' — the cost will, no doubt, be high.

## THE POLITICAL LANE

Now this 'Road to Hell' is a very wide road, with many lanes. It is by far the biggest and busiest road on earth; and the 'hell on earth' that it leads to is of our own making.

We've had a look at certain environmental problems and related aspects on our journey along the 'Road to Hell', so let's switch lanes for a moment — into the 'political lane'.

The Bible speaks of the world being under the control of one man — the antichrist — during this time; it speaks of the most terrible and powerful empire the world has ever known; and it speaks of this empire being, somehow, connected to the old Roman empire.

As we look round the world today, can we see anything emerging on these lines? I believe it is staring us right in the face, in the growth of the European Union and other less powerful trading/power blocs, that are forming up around the globe.

The nations of the earth are metamorphosing into the empire of the 'beast', and the European Union will be the main mass in the centre — the nucleus — attempting to pull the lighter power blocs into orbit around itself. Eventually, the less powerful groups of nations will have to succumb

to the full attractive-force of the 'central mass'.

The all-pervading feeling in the air is of a coming New World Order, a New Age, a One-World Government, Globalisation — it will be realised in the not too distant future.

## THE TECHNICAL LANE

Technology has given the world many truly amazing benefits, affecting every conceivable area of our lives; but there are also many worrying side-effects. Technology has given us great power to treat illnesses and injuries, and to save lives — but far greater power to take lives.

Untold fortunes are spent on equipment with which to kill each other; from the 'humble' handgun to intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. Some of the world's most underdeveloped and poorest countries prefer to spend their money on weaponry, rather than educating, housing and feeding their people. And these same nations, in their insane desire to be expert dealers in death, are making serious attempts to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction.

Imagine all the weapons in the world placed in one big heap. All the small arms — rifles, pistols and bullets alone would make a very large mountain. Then we have the artillery and mortars, the tanks and other armoured vehicles, the shells, mines (land and sea), rocket launchers and rockets, grenades, fighter and bomber aircraft, bombs, warships, submarines, torpedoes, depth-charges, missiles etc, etc. What a truly gigantic pile! And all that time and effort and ingenuity and expense gone into making and supplying them. But cheer up! It won't all be wasted — they will be used!!

To think, we could have used all that money, time and effort to feed the hungry, clothe and house the poor, and to heal the sick. We've got something wrong somewhere. The Lord thinks so too. He has this to say:

*Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally Destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter.*

..... Isaiah 34v1-2

It is not only weapons technology that is destructive, all types of industry and technology are, somehow, harmful to us and our environment. All human activity pollutes the earth and its atmosphere; and the graph of human activity and world population rises ever steeper; while the graph of food, land and water resources falls ever more sharply.

Greedier and greedier grows the world; smaller and smaller the vital resources.

## THE 'IT' LANE

Information is power. The more you know about a person, the more able you are to control or manipulate that person. This is certainly true for governments and people already in positions of authority.

Today, Information Technology (IT) is very, very big business. This technology is not, on its own, a bad thing, but it is open to abuse by those with bad motives; and there lies the problem.

Every part of the world, potentially everyone in the world, can now be linked together by the Internet and the Information Superhighway. Every financial establishment, every place of business and employment or shopping and trading outlet, every kind of institution, every home and every person is being screened, and their 'vital statistics' tucked 'safely' away in computers. And a computer no longer has to live on its own. Every computer can now be part of an almost living entity, an electronic monster growing to embrace the world, and each computer can now 'talk' to every other computer — about you!

In keeping with the above, is another important 'in word' for today — networking — the linking up of computers, telecommunications systems (telephones, satellites etc), radios and TV's, in business and pleasure modes; a worldwide multi-media system where everything and everyone is electronically joined, apparently for all our benefits.

Now there are many ways in which this communion of mankind in electronic togetherness could be used for the good of all of us. But, what if some power-mad dictator was able to take control, because that's the 'rub' — it will happen. The global electronic network will then become a global electronic cobweb, holding the prey captive, until the spider chooses to bite.

Instead of wages etc, being paid in cash, we will soon see everyone paid by electronic credits. This has already started, and it will certainly continue, even in Europe where we are heading for one currency — the ECU (now known as the Euro). Any type of cash now in circulation, or due to come in later, is only a stopgap measure leading to full electronic currency. Eventually cash will be a thing of the past, and plastic cards will enable us to use our electronic credits until someone comes along and does away with plastic cards. They can be damaged, stolen and forged; much better (many will be persuaded) to have an invisible mark, quite possibly a type of bar-code, on the right hand or the forehead.

The people, or person, controlling the computers will control the electronic credits and debits. There will no longer be the relative freedom to buy and sell anonymously that cash can still give. Instead, the man in control can know where you are and what you are doing, and if he doesn't like it, he can easily switch off your credits. You will not be able to feed your family, or pay the rent, or keep a job — or anything else!

*He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no-one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is a man's number. His number is 666.*

..... Revelation 13v16-18

Many very clever people who are involved in these fascinating computer and information technologies will laugh at what has been said here, but what I say to everyone is, "Watch this space!" Events will definitely continue on this path.

One computer expert, recently speaking in a TV documentary, told how he was now living in a kind of electronic information vacuum. He had erased all the data held on computers about himself, so that, as far as electronic information concerning him personally, there was none to be gleaned anywhere. Therefore to the powers that be, and their electronic 'intelligence' to find out everyone's basic details (and more), he no longer existed. He said it wasn't the computers he feared, but the people behind them.

This global electronic information network is now so advanced that, it is said, if part of the system 'goes down' (fails) for any reason, then it can automatically reroute and 'repair' itself.

Yet again, we see the world being put in harness, ready for the antichrist to take the reins.

## LET'S GET TOGETHER

There will be a continuing growth in the multi faith, one-world church movement that either does not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, or perverts it grotesquely. This church will have its 'faith' firmly rooted in humanistic new-age and, no doubt, occult ideals. I believe the church of Rome will play a leading role in this movement (I also believe that many true Christians have been, and many still are, Roman Catholic).

This end-time false church will be extremely powerful and will remain on the earth when THE Church goes. It seems the antichrist will initially use this organisation to further his own vicious

ends, until he sets himself up to be worshipped as God:

*One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls. Came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:*

*MYSTERY*

*BABYLON THE GREAT*

*THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES*

*AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*

*I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.*

.....Revelation 17v1-6

Scripture calls her a prostitute because of her unfaithfulness to the true religion of Jesus Christ, and although in verse 3, we see her sitting on the back of the beast, the antichrist eventually turns on her and destroys her:

*The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.*

..... Revelation 17v16

## OPENING THE WINDOW

In the book of Revelation, we read in chapters 6-16 of the appalling judgements, natural and supernatural, to come upon the earth immediately preceding the Lord's personal and visible appearance in the world.

Seven seals are opened, seven trumpets are blown, and, finally, seven bowls of wrath are poured out. Each seal, trumpet or bowl presaging some dreadful occurrence on the earth and its inhabitants. So we are given twenty-one descriptions of coming events, but I don't believe these are twenty-one separate events following on from one another. I feel, rather, we are seeing a different, and sometime worsening, side to each of seven closely related happenings. The whole thing is really one picture broken down into at least seven major components. These events don't seem to all happen at once, but over a period of a few years, maybe only three and a half.

Our journey on the 'Road to Hell' is, even now, in progress. We already have a slight foretaste of some of the long-ago prophesied judgements, and we are hurtling down the road at breakneck speed into their full horrific intensity.

In the chapters of Revelation, I feel that we are viewing three different aspects of each major component. Obviously the longer that war, famine, pollution, drought and plague continue, then the greater will be the related problems.

It's a bit like opening an electronic window, document or folder on a computer; or maybe opening up a harder level of a computer game. We are still in the same game or folder, but the screen fills with different pictures and information.

Another point that might be of interest regarding the three separate views (seals, trumpets, bowls) of the same event; in Genesis 41, we read of the Pharaoh of Egypt having two different dreams concerning the same matter. Now, Joseph, to whom God had revealed the meaning of the dreams, gave Pharaoh the interpretation, and then added:

*The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms. Is that the matter has been firmly*

*decided by God, an God will do it soon.*  
..... Genesis 41v32

And, of course, the dream became reality soon afterwards. God, by showing the matter in two different, but related, dreams, was emphasising the fact that these things would certainly come to pass — He was rubbing the point in.

It seems to me, in Revelation, He tells us about certain things, not twice, but at least three times. Anyway, however we may explain it, let's make no mistake — He means business!

Looking again at the relationship between the three sets of judgements, we can see another correlation; this time between the sixth trumpet — —

*The sixth angel sounded this trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.*

..... Revelation 9v13-16

— — and the sixth bowl:

*The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the rest river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.*

..... Revelation 16v12

It seems the above two Scripture references are speaking of the same event. Combining the two, we get a picture of the river Euphrates being dried up (or could it be — turned off?), allowing the 200 million troops of the kings of the East to cross and to slaughter a third of mankind.

China, with a population of well over one billion could, on its own, muster an army of the above proportions. Although it say here kings of the East, might this be an alliance between China, India and/or other eastern nations?

Whichever nations are represented by these verses, the toll of human life they take is terrible. One third of mankind is killed by this massive army. Now we have already read of one quarter of the earth's population being wiped out earlier (the fourth seal, Revelation 6v8), which would have left, once again at today's estimates, approximately 4.5 billion survivors. So is Scripture, here, speaking of yet more great carnage in addition to the above — the extermination of a third of those 4.5 billion survivors? If so, then we have reached the situation where one half of the people who were alive on the earth at the start of the tribulation period, are now dead. And, believe it or not, there is still much more death and destruction to come.

Does this really seem likely — most of mankind annihilated within a few short years? Well, according to Scripture, the answer has to be a definite — yes!

*See, the day of the LORD is coming — a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger — to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.*

*The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.*

*I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins.*

*I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.*

*I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.*

*Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.*

..... Isaiah 13v9-13

Ans as we saw in an earlier chapter:

*Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.*  
..... Isaiah 24v6

In Matthew 24v22, Jesus speaking of this unique period in the history of the world, says:  
*If these days had not been cut short, no-one would survive —.*

These verses are examples of many similar expressions throughout Scripture, concerning the time of the tribulation. Seemingly, there will be relatively few people left on earth to enter the New Age.

All the problems mentioned in this chapter, and elsewhere in this book, are fairly new problems, if not in type, then certainly in severity. They will continue to increase in scope and intensity.

Many highly respected minds will put forward their ideas and opinions on how to solve the various problems (of course, they won't see all the things mentioned as problems anyway), but apart from some minor, apparent successes here and there, nothing will better the situation.

Just keep your eyes and ears open, things will get worse on every front — events will speak for themselves. History, time and all creation has no choice, but to fall inline with the word of God.

## HERE COMES THE JUDGE

*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no-one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

..... Revelation 19v11-16

### JUSTICE — JUST ISN'T

Great Britain has been regarded for a long time as one of the few nations in the world, where a person could expect justice through our courts and legal systems. However, as we look around our, or any other society today, we find the alarming situation that justice certainly isn't what it used to be. It never was perfect. Perfect justice is not possible under man's rule; but now we hardly ever see even the semblance of real justice meted out to the guilty or the innocent. It makes us almost want to throw our hands up in despair. Yet, once more, it is our own doing; disappearing justice is, in a way, a sad by-product of declining moral standards which leads to a lack of respect for authority. No-one wants to stand up for what's good and right and clean and pure any more. When morals go and respect for authority go, everything good goes, and then — anything goes!

The criminally-minded no longer have any fear of justice; its teeth have been pulled, and it can't even give a nasty suck.

Justice is rapidly losing any credibility, and everywhere people are attempting to take the law into their own hands, forming vigilante and other groups, because they cannot look to the government, police or courts for justice or for help.

Day after day people literally get away with murder, and young criminals almost have a licence to commit crime. They can offend time after time after time, and still not be locked up. We can allow them to terrorise the elderly, and to make the lives of law-abiding citizens a misery, but at all costs, we cannot allow these young hooligans to lose their freedom for a while — can we?!

The law seems more concerned with upholding the 'rights' of the guilty, in preference to those of the innocent. Sadly, this is a trend likely to continue. Don't expect any justice whatsoever when the *man of lawlessness* (the antichrist) gets here. He may even empty the prisons and have the inmates working for him.

We all know that whatever the crime, people can and do, get away with it. Even when found guilty of murder, the perpetrators often serve no more than ten or twelve years in prison. A 'life-sentence', so-called. What a ludicrous description! It just shows the totally shallow superficiality of the law, when it pretends to be what it so obviously is not.

The murder victim's nearest and dearest have to serve the real life sentence, while the victim received an all too real death-sentence. But, it's not fair to keep the killer locked away for too long — is it?

And probably all of us know of someone who has committed murder, and if they have been sent to prison at all (because, unbelievably, some who have committed premeditated murder, have

been let off with probation), will have served a derisory sentence of about eighteen months.

Of course, the breakdown of law and order does not just come about by the appearance of more criminally-minded people; there is the satanic subtle ploy of undermining, from within, the ideals of justice and of legal authority and discipline. There are those people in positions of authority imposing their morally-inverted humanistic ideals on the system. And they actually believe they are benefitting everyone, when in fact, they are being manipulated by the spirit of antichrist — the *spirit of lawlessness* — whose 'job' is to bring moral degeneration and anarchy to society.

It is not a matter of wanting vengeance, as many who are actively helping to destroy all true values of law and order will bleat. But justice need to be seen to be done, by both the law-abiding citizen and the criminal. To give the innocent confidence in the rule of law, and to cause the criminal to fear the consequences to himself of his proposed actions, and hopefully deter him.

Wherever we look on earth, we find injustice in all its evil forms. Hundreds of millions in nations around the earth are living under extreme injustices, and have no court of law (however unsatisfactory) to turn to.

At best, man's justice is seriously flawed. Yet, in the heart of mankind, God has placed a real and unquenchable desire for justice; a yearning that is almost a physical pain, for justice, not only for ourselves, but for everyone. We shed tears of frustration, and our hearts ache as we witness the terrible suffering and injustices that we inflict on each other.

We have a voice deep within that screams out for — JUSTICE! But there is none. And many who would like to believe in a just God, find it difficult to do so as they look around and see such flagrant evil-doers flourishing, and apparently getting away with it.

Let's listen to the Lord:

*"You have said harsh things against me," says the LORD. "Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?' "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'"*

*Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.*

*"They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "In the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who's serve God and those who do not."*

..... Malachi 3v13-17

The truth of the matter is that God is perfectly just, and no-one will get away with anything. They may appear to, in this present life, but the courts of God hold their sessions after our life on earth is over. And there will be no skipping bail, no prison escapes or comfortable prison lifestyles, including conjugal visits; no remission for good behaviour or 'clever' lawyers able to get the guilty off the hook; no false witnesses or intimidated juries; instead justice will be well and truly done and seen, by all creation, to be done.

God is the perfect Judge, and everyone throughout the heavens will be in complete agreement with His wonderful summing up and sentencing. There will be no appeals to a higher court for reducing or increasing sentences. God's justice is as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth. Although at first sight, He might be thought of as the greatest 'hanging Judge' ever to ride into town, because He only ever has one sentence to pass whatever crime or sin has been committed — DEATH!

*For the wages of sin is death —*

..... Romans 6v23

Now please don't sit back thinking you're alright, and feeling good with yourself because you haven't committed any crime (you may not have in the worldly, legal sense). However, the most serious crime in God's eyes is SIN, and you've committed plenty of that — we all have:

— *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* —  
..... Romans 3v23

God is perfect Justice and perfect Holiness, and what we, in our sin-spoiled state, imagine to be a very small offence or no offence at all, is serious enough to keep us from God's heaven, and for us to receive the only sentence possible under God's law — the death-sentence (everlasting separation from God). Our only chance of being acquitted is to be holy, as our Judge is holy:

*The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them; 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'"*

..... Leviticus 19,1-2

*Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord.*

..... Hebrews 12v14

## PERRY MASON — EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

To be holy as God Almighty is holy, that's the target we each have to reach to keep us from being subpoenaed to the Heavenly High Court. Sadly, we've lost before we even start, since to be holy as God is holy means we must never, ever, in our whole lives, have sinned one iota in thought, word or deed. In our whole life we must not have had one unkind, selfish, lustful, proud, vain, arrogant, boastful, conceited, or greedy thought. And yet such things are not a crime in any human court; but the Bible teaches that even our wrong thoughts are sinful, and in the Heavenly Court sin is punishable by death. So, to be realistic, what chance do we have to ever attain the standard that the Great Judge requires? The answer must be an emphatic — NO CHANCE!

Unless, of course, we have a Lawyer who is truly out of this world; a Lawyer who has never lost a case from the beginning of time; a Lawyer who can convince the Judge of the universe not only to spare us from the death-sentence, but to throw the whole case out of court and pronounce us innocent, even though we were 'guilty as sin'. And this is no mockery of justice. Our Advocate Himself has never sinned. He is as pure and holy as God Almighty, and He clothes us in Himself, making us, in the sight of all God's creation and in reality, innocent. Now that's some Lawyer!

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

..... 2 Corinthians 5v21

The abilities of this Lawyer are truly staggering. He hasn't gained such a multitude of followers just because He wins every case, but because He has satisfied the justice of the Great Judge by personally paying the penalty (the death penalty) for all who ask Him to represent them in the Courts of God. And even the most poverty-stricken of us can afford His fee; He asks only that we believe in Him and that we trust Him with our lives:

*Whoever believes in him is not condemned* —

..... John 3v18

So now we see the heart-softening mercy and love of God as we realise that the Great Judge has Himself provided us with the Great Lawyer, and that He made it possible, by, long ago, holding secret conference with our Mighty Attorney so that we who, in repentance, would call out to Him in this life, could be set free; our penalty paid, and heavenly justice not only satisfied, but done and seen to be done.

## THIS SAME JESUS

The second coming of Jesus has, to some extent, been thought of as imminent in every

generation of the Church. And this thought has been a great encouragement and hope to a multitude of world-weary and beleaguered Christians. But much of the prophetic timetable of events leading up to the Lord's return has been totally or partially misunderstood, or even disregarded; and He has been away for so long that there are now many more who scoff at the idea of a personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Yet despite the scoffers and doubters and those who couldn't care less, and despite the fact that the Master has been gone a long time (which He foretold in several verses of Scripture), the pages of the prophetic calendar have continued to turn steadily until the world's history reached into this twentieth century. Then they were hit by a whirlwind that thrashed them over in a blur. The ongoing fulfilment and greater understanding of 'end-time' prophecy accelerated rapidly, and we are now living in a world and a time that is nothing more than a reflection and a growing realisation of such prophecy.

The world, at this point in its history, is just like a mirror bouncing back at us the frightening visions of 'last-days' Scriptures. These visions are not quite so fearful if we continue to concentrate our gaze on the One who constantly reflects His Father's glory:

*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being —*  
..... Hebrews 1v3

The calendar for this age is very nearly out of date, ready to be taken off the wall and replaced by a new one — Jesus is bringing in a new 1,000 year calendar with Him. (This is not a reference to the next millennium which starts with the year AD 2,000, and which millions of mystics and 'new age' believers are mistakenly expecting to be a real high point in the 'spiritual evolution' of mankind.)

Neither are we dealing, in this chapter, with the Lord's return to gather His Church in the air, but with His return to set foot on the earth — accompanied by — His Church:

*Then the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones with him*  
..... Zechariah 14v5

And this time, in full view of everyone on the planet:

*For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man*  
..... Matthew 24v27

*Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.*  
..... Revelation 1v7

Also the Bible makes it very clear that Jesus will come down from heaven to the earth — in person. It will not be just His unseen influence that leads the world into a new age, but the same Jesus who left the earth in full view of His disciples so long ago:

*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.*

*"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*  
..... Acts 1v9-11

Although His return to earth will be personal and visible, as was His leaving, this time the event will be infinitely more spectacular.

When He ascended into heaven only eleven apostles (Judas Iscariot was no longer with them) were witnesses to the occasion. When He descends from heaven all of surviving mankind will witness the cosmic happening.

Some will be totally overcome with love and adoration and relief as they marvel at seeing their

longed-for Lord coming to rescue them. Others will be totally overcome with fear and horror as they realise that the Judge of all the earth is about to bring them to task.

Nothing will be allowed to distract, in the least little bit, from the magnificent, awesome splendour of Christ's return with His army of saints. Even the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars, will be blotted out or moved out of the way. Imagine! In the skies all around the earth the heavenly lights will be turned off; on the daylight side the sun will go out; on the night side the moon and stars will be extinguished. There is not the faintest light from the skies shining on the earth. The heavens surrounding the world have become a jet-black backdrop. Suddenly the skies encompassing the planet E-X-P-L-O-D-E with the light of a billion suns, not the natural chemical, nuclear light of stars, but the incandescent power and great shining glory of the Sun of Righteousness — — the Son of God.

*"Immediately after the distress of those days*

*"The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

*"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."*

..... Matthew 24v29-30

The antichrist and his followers will be destroyed; all wars will be brought to an end; the surviving Jews will all return Israel and to their Messiah; the nations will be judged, and a true new age will begin.

## LOVED TO DEATH

The most extreme distress and suffering ever to come upon the world will take place just prior to the Lord's return. The severest of God's judgements, of man-made and natural disasters, and of wars and other horrors will be about to wipe-out life on earth. And that would certainly be the case unless, as the Lord promised, that fearful time was cut short by His return.

As always, God's desire in all this is that we might still come to our senses, repent of our sins and call on Him:

*The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.*

..... Revelation 16v10-11

Yet many have said and will continue to say, "I don't want anything to do with a God who can cause so much suffering."

Now hear the truth of the matter! The suffering is not God's wilful doing; it is all of our own making. Our hearts are so sin-infested and deceitful, and hardened to God that we cannot even recognise the absolute depravity of sin as it is viewed by a perfect, Holy God.

The Lord wants no-one to suffer and die. Every day of our lives, even before we become Christians, He is trying to bring us into dialogue with Himself to discuss our situation and help us to understand:

*"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD.*

*"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

..... Isaiah 1v18

None of all the pain and suffering in the history of the world has been caused or inflicted by a

vicious, spiteful or hard-hearted God. The sinfulness of our own hearts has proceeded unerringly, as it always will, to produce horrible fruit. We are not aware of God's mercy and long-suffering patience in preventing that seed of evil within us from becoming the harvest of mankind's total destruction, which would have already been the case if not for the forbearance of God. Just as night follows day, suffering follows sin.

If we are to survive; if we are to commune with the Living God; if we are to receive the gift of eternal life then the lethal poison that is sin has to be purged from within us. And God knows that he cannot defeat sin in us by threats and thumping. He knows the human heart will never truly embrace a tyrant. He knows only one thing can burn the power of sin from our hearts and cause us to joyfully worship our Creator. He knows that only self-denying love can do it — sinful hearts must be loved to death to be born anew. He knows that the only way is for us to realise that the Creator of the universe so loves us that He brought Himself down to the lowest. The deathless Master of creation died for us even though He knew we hated Him — that's real love!

In the words of the hymn : 'Hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered.'

He takes our hard, vain, arrogant, proud, unbelieving, unfaithful hearts and loves them to death. By His Holy Spirit we are born again and our old, sinful self is killed off.

Look at Jesus! Beaten, mocked and spat on; going like a lamb to the slaughter. Look at Him! Nailed to a cross; nails through hands and feet — through hands that only ever healed and never hurt anyone. Look at Him! As He forgives His murderers.

One of the two thieves crucified alongside Jesus looked at Him and recognised real, unselfish love when he saw it. He stopped cursing and his hard heart melted:

*Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

..... Luke 23v42

Then came that wonderful reply from his dying Saviour:

*Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

..... Luke 23v43

Jesus loved that thief from darkness and death to light and eternal life. That thief had been confronted by pure, selfless, unadulterated, unconditional love, and it shattered his brittle heart to pieces. He was given new heart right there while nailed to a cross. He saw Jesus; he saw love — he saw God. So look at Jesus; God never has been, and never will be, a tyrant.

But God's universe will be a just universe. The reason that some of us see His justice as being too severe, even to the point of being unjust, is that we cannot in our sin-darkened minds, grasp the real evil of sin. To bring God from heaven and cause Him to live, suffer and die in a frail body of flesh, and at the hands of His creatures, all in order to rescue us from the awful power and consequences of sin — then sin has got to be deadly serious business.

The Lord dearly loves to save souls, but if we will not allow Him to come as our Saviour, He will come as our Judge.

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."*

..... Revelation 1v8

*"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."*

..... Revelation 22v12-13

*"Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*  
..... Revelation 22v20

## LET'S CALL IT A DAY

*And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.*

*I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until after the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

..... Revelation 20 v1-6

## PEACE AND PLENTY

The Bible is very definite about the fact that Jesus will come to reign on the earth with His saints for a thousand years. This will be the establishment of His earthly kingdom and rule, in fulfilment of many prophetic Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, that speak of these things.

The earth and its people will, at last, know a time of real peace and prosperity; one thousand years of peace and many other wonderful blessings. Even the curse on nature will end, so that animals will no longer hunt one another for food; and men will no longer hit each other to kill and enslave, instead we will turn our weapons into toys for good use:

*The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goats, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

..... Isaiah 11v6-9

*They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*

..... Isaiah 2v4

Everyone will have enough to eat and drink. Violence and crime, disease and poverty, and the hurt and fear all these problems bring will be a thing of the past. It will be a marvellous age, 1000 years — a prophetic 'day' of rest for all creation. Just as the Lord rested on the seventh day after His six days of labour, the creation has been labouring under the effects of sin, and will soon begin its 'day' of rest.

(Please take no notice of the nonsense taught under the guise of truth that mankind has evolved over millions of years and our distant ancestors are some type of ape. Man has only been one earth since the — creation — of Adam and Eve, and the Scriptures give us the honest timetable of mankind's history in the world. You can rest assured, the man — Jesus Christ — is not a descendent of apes or 'apemen'. Neither are we).

*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

..... Romans 8v19-21

The blight on the natural world will be lifted. A blight that, once again, was the result of our own sinfulness long ago in the paradise of Eden:

*To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you,'"*

..... Genesis 3v17-18

## GOOD TIMES BUT STRANGE TIMES

By today's standards, the millennial reign of Jesus on the earth will be a very strange and stupendous time indeed. Those people (Jews and Gentiles) who survive the great tribulation and the Lord's judgement at His return, will continue to live on the earth in physical, flesh and blood, bodies. This means they will still get old and die, although they (maybe more so the generations that proceed from them) will live considerably longer than we do at present:

*Never again will there be an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.*

..... Isaiah 65v20

Now, perhaps the most difficult idea to get our minds round in our present situation, is that during this happy age to come there will also be present on the earth Jesus and His saints — all with immortal bodies!

I imagine we will be able to ascend and descend at will, between heaven and earth. Like the angels using the 'ladder', in Jacob's dream (Genesis 28v12), because the Lord does tell us that we will be like the angels (Mark 12v25).

Maybe it is not so strange after all, since the Bible has many accounts of angels visiting the earth, seen and unseen, to carry out God's will. On occasions they even wash, eat and drink with those whom they visit. And, as you will read in the Addendum at the end of this book, times were very strange during mankind's early years.

One of our tasks as saints during this new age will be to help rule and judge the world, and at some time we will even judge angels:

*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels?*

.....1 Corinthians 6v2-3

Also, if we look to the Scripture at the beginning of this chapter, in verse 4 is a possible reference to the saints who arrive with Christ to judge the earth:

*I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.*

The remainder of the above verse speaks of the saints, who were killed during the great tribulation, coming to life and joining the rest of the saints to reign and rule with Jesus.

## JACOB RULES — OK!

Throughout the Bible, especially the Old Testament, there is a very large amount of Scripture

concerning God's promised blessings to the nation of Israel during this special 1000 years. There is promise of great spiritual, physical and material blessing at this time. Every unfulfilled kindness, sworn by God, to Israel will now come into being. And the city that once saw the execution of the Lord, will now be the crowning jewel and the ruling seat of all the world's cities and nations:

*This is what Isaiah son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:*

*In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

..... Isaiah 2v1-3

And all the countries of the world will pay homage to this gloriously restored nation and its King:

*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you —*

*Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn —*

*— the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.*

..... Isaiah 60, v1,3,5

And for the Jewish people, the long centuries of worldwide dispersion, persecution, hatred and slaughter; and the endless generations of hiding and living in fear will be wonderfully reversed and recompensed:

*"Hear the word of the LORD, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'*

*For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they.*

*They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD — the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds.*

*They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more.*

*Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.*

*I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty," declares the LORD.*

..... Jeremiah 31v10-14

## HE'S AT IT AGAIN

At the Lord's return, His first actions are to get rid of the antichrist and his followers, and to destroy all opposition to Himself and His people:

*Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophets who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse.*

..... Revelation 19v19-21

Also, as we read earlier, the Lord will lock up Satan for a thousand years. The devil will not be allowed to spoil that 'day' of rest for mankind and the natural world. For the first time in our entire history Satan will be locked away, unable to influence anyone to evil.

Why then, as we read in Revelation 20v3, should the devil be let out again when the thousand years are over? What can be the point of releasing Satan, at the end of one thousand temptation-free years, to do his dirty work once more?

Well, I feel that one possible reason is this: During the millennium many generations, probably billions upon billions of people, will have been born on the earth, and although they may have

been told about Satan, they will not have known his tempting power. They will have lived outwardly good lives, for, as the Scriptures say, Jesus will rule with an iron sceptre, not allowing open rebellion (this He will not need to do with those born of, and led by, His Spirit). But the true leaning of a person's heart will not be made manifest until he is given the choice of following God or Satan. So it seems that a very short re-appearance of Satan will be used as a final test of those hearts which have not been converted to God.

The whole of God's universal creation will be a witness to the fact that the true, heartfelt nature of a man does not, like so many sociologists, psychologists and other 'experts' try to tell us, always (if ever) depend on outward conditions of society or government. From the time of Adam and Eve mankind will have lived under every type of social system. Many downright evil ones, and finally, for a thousand years, a perfect one in which there could be no grounds for complaint.

On Satan's release, mankind will once again be given the power, if he so desires it, to rebel against God and His people, and, strangely enough, multitudes will do so, showing the precise character of their hearts. Up until Satan's release, these same people would have been living apparently good lives, but this brief and final test will find them out:

*When the thousand years are over, satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and false prophets had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

..... Revelation 20v7-10

As always, Satan and his followers are the losers, and this time things are wrapped up once and for all, with the devil being put away for ever.

There remains the final summing up before the great white throne. Ledgers are opened and outstanding accounts have to be settled. Untold millions are allocated their everlasting states and positions (the saints do not come under judgement at the great white throne; their accounts having been settled previously through their faith in Jesus, and their eternal position in Christ remains secure).

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books —*

*If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

..... Revelation 20v11-12, 15

The old heaven and earth pass away, and God makes all things new; taking His people into eternity and all the unspoken and unimaginable bliss which undoubtedly follows:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new."*

..... Revelation 21v1-5

## ADDENDUM

Since this book has been concerned, in large part, with the literal interpretation of Scripture, I feel the need to add the following:

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO OUR LOUIS

A while ago, I was telling two of my grandchildren, Emma, aged 8 and Louis, 6, the story of the time Jesus walked on the water (Matthew 14v22-32). I could see their imaginations conjuring up the scene as I described in dramatic detail the darkness of night, the howling wind, and the waves battering against the boat. When I spoke of the disciples fear at seeing Jesus, whom they thought to be a ghost, walking towards them through the stormy darkness, my grandchildren's eyes widened. The children listened closely as I told of Peter climbing out of the boat to walk to Jesus, and after taking a few steps and beginning to sink, crying out, "Lord, save me!"

At this point I looked at my grandchildren and asked, "And what do you think Jesus did next?" At once Louis shot his hand up in the air, as if in a classroom, and replied excitedly, "I know, I know, Grandad!"

"Go on then, Louis, tell us what Jesus did next," I said. Louis answered, "Jesus said to Peter, 'I'm sorry. I can't help you.'"

I couldn't help but laugh, and yet, at the same time, I was thinking of how different and how sad would be the gospel if Jesus had indeed said those words to Peter. How greatly diminished would be our mighty Saviour. Though, I feel that many in the Church, including some in authority, are believing in, and promoting, just such Jesus.

When I became a Christian, Jesus appeared powerfully real to me. I found it impossible to agree with a certain high-profile Bishop when he was reported as saying that Jesus had obviously got it wrong. The Bishop was referring to the prophecy we have been concerned with earlier in this book (Matthew 24), which deals with the signs of the end of the age. He was referring in particular to verse 34:

*'I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.'*

The Bishop, supposedly, had said something like: that generation (the one Jesus was speaking to) did indeed pass away before the prophecy was fulfilled. Hence, Jesus got it wrong.

I was incredulous. If this influential cleric had been quoted correctly, then what sort of Jesus did he believe in?

I was an new Christian, but Jesus and the truth of His words were as a mountain which filled my vision. It could not be got round or got over. I could not believe the Son of God misunderstood, misused or misquoted the oracles of His Father in Heaven; if so, then who could have faith in such a Saviour. If He had got this wrong, what else might He have got wrong? How could the Bible be relied upon at all? Are we really saved from our sins?

Of course, Jesus did not get it wrong, and the simple answer, for me, is that from Matthew 24v25-34 the prophecy is speaking of the last 3.5 years of this age. The generation which begins to witness these stupendous events will not pass away before the fulfilment of the whole prophecy of Matthew 24, at the Lord's return. (The Bible footnote says *generation* can also mean race; i.e. the Jewish race).

Make no mistake! Whatever Jesus didn't know concerning future events, He knew He didn't know:

*"No-one knows about that day or hour, not even one of the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."* ..... Matthew 24v36

He would not speak falsely or presumptuously. He would only speak as His Father spoke to Him.

We have many in the Church today, including many ministers, who find it hard to take Scripture at its word. Some say that in our 'enlightened' age we should not preach the gospel as it always has been preached in the past, when people knew no better than to believe in miracles like those our Lord performed. Those who were completely healed by a word or a touch from Jesus had only been suffering some kind of psychosomatic illness; it had all been in their minds, and they only needed to feel good about themselves again to regain their health. What rot! Lazarus had been DEAD for 4 days (John 11v17).

But we are told that by expecting people to believe in the supernatural parts of Scripture, we are guilty of putting before them a stumbling block to faith in Christ.

I am convinced that those whose hearts are sincerely seeking God will never be satisfied with the preaching of a sad and sickly gospel; a wishy-washy gospel nibbled away and watered down by our surrendering to the latest scientific theories and 'discoveries'. Only the true Christ, the Christ of miracles, the Christ who is God, will satisfy.

We see a similar situation regarding the Old Testament. Many churchgoers and leaders in the Church no longer accept the Genesis accounts of Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, the Tower of Babel, and more, as being literal. They say that in the light of our modern-day knowledge these accounts can only be myths which, at best, have some symbolic meaning. And, I must admit, for many years before I became a Christian my mind had been steeped in the belief that science had all the answers. I was an avid reader of science articles and magazines. So, when I came to read Genesis for the first time, I also felt that these stories must only be symbolic. Then my wife said something which helped overcome my difficulty in taking these accounts literally. She said, "Why did the author of these stories go to the trouble of recording all the names and the ages of birth and death, in an unbroken line, from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5) and from Noah (his son, Shem) to Abram (Genesis 11) if these events and people are not real?"

I also was aware that Jesus and, through Him, the Apostles who wrote the New Testament, all gave their backing to the authenticity of Old Testament characters and events.

Of course, the Bible gives us an unbroken line of descent from Adam right through to Jesus Christ. Ancestry which included Adam and Noah, and of which Jesus Himself, was fully aware. At which point in that line of descent does the Lord authorise us to begin calling the accounts of His ancestors fairy tales?

Oh but what about 'scientific facts'? Physics, geology, palaeontology, anthropology, history, evolution?

Well, for a start, none of these 'facts' are what they appear. Unlike the word of God, they are constantly changing, depending on new discoveries, or, more likely, on which particular scholar you listen to. There are professors who hold opposing views in all such subjects.

Physicists and geologists do their carbon dating; palaeontologists, anthropologists, biologists and historians all try to figure out when and where human and animal life started. Their theories are put forward as truth. Yet, none seem to be aware of some vital facts. We see nothing in history books or scientific publications about some real, astounding FACTS which ought to colour anyones way of thinking.

Facts like:

The physics of our natural world has not always been the same. There was a time when there was no rain; instead, streams of water or a heavy mist watered the vegetation (Genesis 2v4-6).

There was no such thing as a rainbow until after the flood (Genesis 9v8-17). This fact alone is enough to turn all accepted ideas of the history of man and his world upside down — what were the physics, the natural sciences, of a world without rainbows?

In Genesis 6v1-4, we find that angels (apparently, disobedient ones) lived on the earth, and their intercourse with women produced offspring who were giants (Nephilim). Historians, biologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, doctors and many others tell us we now live longer than ever before. This is another absolute fallacy. Humans, for several generations, lived to be hundred of years old, some almost to one thousand years of age (Genesis 5, 9v28-29, 11v10-32). This fact blows apart all our 'scientific' pet theories about so-called prehistoric humans.

There is so much more that could be added here. Maybe another book (if God wills).

All of the above facts are totally ignored by the sciences, and because of this we are presented with flawed imaginings and complete untruths concerning the developments of the earth, the environment, and of mankind, in ancient times.

Progress in all the sciences by our God-given intellect is undoubtedly a wonderful thing. `but we use intellect wrongly when we allow it, through pride and wilful unbelief, to blind us to the revelation of God. A revelation given us in science itself, in nature, in our conscience, in God's written word, and in Jesus Christ.

The intellect, however powerful, unless taught and guided by the Spirit of God, cannot grasp reality or any eternal truth, and will itself come to nothing in the end.

So often the simple, the humble, the poor in spirit find God, while those who bask in their own intellectual prowess miss Him completely. Intelligence without Christ is but dust.

God is not impressed with high IQs, but rejoices when those who are intellectual are willing, in the eyes of the world, to become 'fools' for Him.

*"Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder;  
The wisdom of the wise will perish, The intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.*  
..... Isaiah 29v14

## VITAL FOOTNOTE

COME!

If you are not yet saved, or if you feel uncertain about your relationship with God; if your heart's cry is for goodness and truth, justice and love; if your spirit is hungry and thirsty for righteousness and weighed down with the cares and troubles of this life; and if you would like to be sure that a loving God cares for you and wants you to care for Him, then read on:

*"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost —*

*Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

*Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live."*

..... Isaiah 55v1-3

*Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."*

..... Revelation 22v17

*Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

..... John 4v13-14

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

..... John 6v35

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

..... Matthew 11v28-29

LET'S PRAY!

In order to come to God in spirit and truth, as He constantly pleads with us to do, we must be aware of our need to repent of our sins. We need to recognise the fact that we can never be good enough to earn a place in heaven. While we believe in our own goodness and efforts as being sufficient to get us into heaven we not only make God out to be a liar, but show that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was pointless and not necessary in our case — remember the killing lie!

We need to humbly and sincerely ask the Lord to forgive us all our ungodly thoughts, words and deeds, and to make us new creations in Jesus Christ; to awaken our spirits from their deathlike slumber by the regenerating, eternal life-giving power of His Holy Spirit.

*"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

..... Ephesians 5v14

We need the new spiritual birth that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about (John 3v3) — we need to be born again.

So let's pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, please forgive me for the way I've lived my life up to now; for doing things my way and not yours; for not believing in, not trusting in, and not being obedient to, your Son, Jesus Christ, who you sent to die on the cross so that I might be reconciled to you and live forever through faith in Him. I believe the words of Jesus when He says: *"I am the way and the*

*truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.*" And I realise that only through faith in Jesus can I come back into a living relationship with you.

I repent of, and turn away from, my selfish and sinful ways; and I turn to Jesus for His help and guidance and fellowship from now on and forever.

I ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord. Amen

Of course, you don't have to use the above words in your prayer; just speak to God from your own heart. But remember that although the Lord is willing and eager to forgive, He will only do so if He sees in us a sorrowful and repentant spirit. We cannot expect God to hear us if we come to Him with a proud or insincere heart. He tells us that the only sacrifices He will honour, are a broken heart and a repentant spirit (Isaiah 66v2b).

If you have just prayed a real heartfelt prayer to the Lord, and are now a 'baby' Christian, you will need plenty of ongoing spiritual nourishment in order to grow strong and healthy. So find out where other Christians meet, whether in a church, a school or someone's house, and join them. Also, read your Bible and talk to the Lord regularly — at least every day.

Oh! And congratulations. You have now begun the greatest adventure possible.

## EPILOGUE

*God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.  
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

*The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

*Come and see the works of the LORD,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,  
he burns the shields with fire.  
“Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.”*

*The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

..... Psalm 46





**A few thousand years ago  
8 people were kept safe above the  
floodwaters of God's wrath in a  
physical, wooden ark.**

**Everything was 'business as usual' .....  
up to the time  
Noah entered the ark.**

**And again, many years later,  
life continuing as normal - - - - until  
the day Lot left Sodom.**

**At some time in the not too  
distant future, multitudes will  
be taken 'aboard' and kept safe  
from a time of terrible  
tribulation, in a type of  
heavenly ark.**

**Once again, 'Noah' will enter  
the 'ark' - - - -  
Once again, 'Lot' will leave  
'Sodom' - - - -**