

**Considerations Concerning
the
Times of the End**

by

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Considerations Concerning the Times of The End

As the times of the end are nearing we see prophecy being fulfilled with more prophecy still to be fulfilled. As we consider these many things that must still happen, our hope is built steadfast in Christ, the solid rock, and we look forward to that day when our salvation will come.

It was John the apostle of Christ, in the vision that He saw “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9)

For the purpose of this booklet we consider this that John saw in this vision concerning this great multitude, and what is to come in the times of the end.

Be Fruitful and Increase in Number

After Yahweh had created man Yahweh blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number,” saying, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Genesis 1:28)

We learn after this that Adam sinned against God and everyone who was born after Him became fruitful in sin and multiplied in this sin. Adam and Eve bore children and from them came all the people of the earth.

Though men lived in sin, God still found mercy in some and bestowed favour on them. But as human beings increased in number, they also increased in sin; however Yahweh, in His eyes and in His standard, found Noah to be the only righteous person on earth.

The Lord God therefore destroyed the whole human race saving only Noah and his family and established a covenant with Noah. (see Genesis 6-9)

We see after the flood Yahweh repeated the same blessing that He had given to Adam. To Noah and his sons the Lord God said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.” (Genesis 9:1) We see in this repeated blessing that the intentions of God were that men should increase in number and fill the earth.

Sometime after this blessing was spoken, as men were still speaking the same language, he shows his sinful nature again which is always hostile against God. The people travelled towards the east and settled in Babylonia, which is present-day Iraq. The Lord had instructed man to “fill the earth”, but we see the people agreeing to do what is contrary, saying to one another, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” (Genesis 11:4)

The Lord therefore caused confusion and scattered the people over the surface of the earth just as the Lord had intended. (see Genesis 11:7) Henceforth came the nations of the world.

I Will Make You a Great Nation

Everyone who is alive today; and every nation that has ever been born traces their beginnings back to Noah. The Lord decided beforehand when each nation should rise and fall and He determined their boundaries. We have seen over time nations rise and fall, and we are yet to see the rise and the fall of nations, the Lord having determined their appointed time and their boundaries. (see Acts 17:26)

Noah had three married sons who were saved with him, namely Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Genesis 7:7 & 10:1) We see that in choosing Shem, Noah said, “Blessed be the God of Shem.” (Genesis 9:26)

After this God chose the lineage of Shem, where His chosen ones would come from. Ten Generations came from Shem when the Lord said to Abram, “Go away from your country, and from your relatives and from your Father’s house, to the land I will show you and I will make you a great nation.” (Genesis 12:1-2) Abram in obedience followed the Lord’s guiding and went into the land of Canaan. It was in Canaan, (which encompasses modern day Israel and its surrounding areas) that the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” (Genesis 12:7) Abram travelled throughout the land building altars to the Lord.

Abram then went down to Egypt to escape famine (Genesis 12:10). It was in Egypt that the Lord sent forth severe plagues and Abram was sent away with sheep, oxen, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. (Genesis 12:16-20)

Abram came out of Egypt very rich and went back to Canaan. It was in Canaan that the Lord re-confirmed His promise to Abram, the LORD saying to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” (Genesis 13:14.17)

We see through this adventure Israel in the loins of Abram foreshadowing what was to happen in the future and that which is still to happen.

The Lord had promised Abram that the land would belong to his seed forever, however Abram was still without a child and He was advancing in years. Abram said to the Lord, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’ And Abram said, ‘You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.’

Then the word of the LORD came to him: ‘This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.’ He took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars - if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:2-6)

The Son of the Flesh and the Son of Promise

The Lord had promised that Abram would have a son of flesh and blood, who would be the heir to all that God had given to Abram, including the land. When Sarai realised that by her own natural abilities, she could not have a child, she gave her Egyptian servant to be with child, and Ishmael was born from Hagar - a son born through man’s natural attempts to bring about God’s will, born of an Egyptian servant.

We see today those who are born of Ishmael having great zeal for God, trying to bring about God’s will through their natural attempts. Yet God’s promise of an heir to the land was to come through Sarah and only by God’s supernatural doing, because Sarah had passed childbearing age. Naturally it was impossible for her to have a son at her age, therefore, it was up to Him who promised to bring about the promise.

It was 13 years after Ishmael was born that the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:4-8)

Abraham the Father of Many Nations

We see the Lord making Abraham the father of many nations, not only the father of a nation but also of many nations. And it was through the son of promise that this would be fulfilled. It was not to be through Ishmael but through Isaac who was a shadow of the one through whom Abraham would become the father of many nations.

Abraham in amazement said, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers (princes or sheiks), and I will make him into a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." (Genesis 17:17-21)

Isaac was born and through Isaac Abraham proved to believe in the death and resurrection of the Son, for he reasoned that If the Lord could put to death the one through whom the promise was to be fulfilled, the Lord could also raise Him up from the dead. (see Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:19) He reckoned if God required a burnt offering, God would provide the lamb.

After this the Lord said to Abraham, "Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed." (Genesis 22:17-18)

We see then that the Lord would make Abram the father of a great nation, then He would also make Abraham the father of many nations, causing his descendants to take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through the seed of Abraham all the families would be blessed. This was the promise to come through Isaac.

The Three Abrahamic Faiths

Speaking to Hagar - “And the angel of the Lord said to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.” (Genesis 16:11-12) And - “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation” (Genesis 17:20)

Isaac in due course bore twins Jacob (who was to be named ‘Israel’) and Esau, whilst Ishmael had 12 sons (modern day Arabians). We see that although Ishmael, not being the child of Promise through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed, the Lord still blessed Ishmael making Him a great nation and a father of 12 princes. Ishmael being born of an Egyptian servant would marry an Egyptian thereby continuing the Egyptian link in his lineage. Israel would be chased out of the land given to them by God because of disobedience, with a promise of being fully restored to the land, a promise still to be fully fulfilled by Yahweh. Ishmael would grow into a great nation, from which the devotees of Islam have their heritage.

The Israelites were given the Law which would serve as their guide until the promised Messiah would come to restore the Kingdom. It was however that when Christ appeared, He brought the Kingdom of Yahweh instead of restoring the kingdom of Israel and Judah. Jesus Christ came preaching the Kingdom of God. It is in this Kingdom that all the families of the earth are blessed; it is in this Kingdom that Abraham is the father of many nations, for in this Kingdom many people of all nations enter by faith. It is a spiritual Kingdom which is entered by faith, but will in the coming age be visible on earth and Christ will rule in it from Jerusalem. In the land which God swore to Abraham when God said, “All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.” (Genesis 13:15)

As outsiders observed the people of the Kingdom of God, they termed them Christians, for they observed that they were different, being like Christ who came and taught the ways and principles of the Kingdom of God. (Acts 11:26) Through the embrace of the Romans, what was termed Christianity became a secular religion. Therefore Judaism, Islam and Christianity claim their heritage from Abraham.

However we know that the Messiah, the son of Abraham through Isaac, the one known as Yeshua, the one they call Isa did not come to bring a secular religion called Christianity, he came to bring the Kingdom of God and to provide entrance into the Kingdom of God, and many from the nations are finding entrance into this Kingdom. We therefore see a contest between these three, the Christians being sons of Abraham by faith in Christ who is the promised seed through whom all the families of the earth be blessed. We see Christianity being made up of people who are naturally from many nations. We see the Israelites of whom most are still scattered among the nations of the world, being sons of Abraham through the natural lineage of Isaac, and we see the Arabians who have their faith through Mohammad who is said to be a descendant of Ishmael (some through natural lineage and some through conversion to Islam) being sons of Abraham. Yet we see that though being blessed, Ishmael was cast away. It was through Isaac the child of miraculous birth that the promise would be fulfilled, and it was to Isaac that the land was given. This was to Isaac and His descendants.

Isaac was a foreshadow of Christ who was born miraculously through the virgin, for both of their births are naturally impossible, but Christ's birth is even more impossible in that naturally a virgin cannot give birth.

Secondly, Christ Jesus is the Word of God who existed before all things. He was there with God in the beginning and through Him all things were made. He was born of a virgin however. His conception was divine and supernatural for the Holy Spirit filled the virgin and the virgin gave birth to a child. He was born as child, given to us, a Son, and the government shall be upon His shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6) He will yet rule the nations with a rod of iron. (see Psalm 2:9) The Word became

the Son of Man, everything was created through Him and though being God in very nature did not think of equality with God as something to hold on to. He took the form of a servant and a body was prepared for Him (see Psalm 40:6).

As Abraham reasoned that God could raise his son back from the dead, when the Lord asked him to offer his only son, his son of promise, his heir. Abraham believed that God could raise his son from the dead, and indeed when Christ laid down His life, giving His body as an offering, God did raise Him from the dead just as Abraham reasoned and believed. God did raise the Son of Man from the dead.

The Contrast between Adam and Abraham

How could an unholy people have a relationship with a holy God? Adam, before he sinned against God, had a relationship with God. But when he sinned, he was chased out of God's presence. Sin separated him from God and because of this sin everyone who is born after Adam is born into this separation. By God's grace God chose to walk with Abraham, and Abraham by faith pleased God and was called a friend of God. He was given precious promises, promises not only for himself but for all people, for God promised him children from many nations.

All have sinned and have come short of God's glory. Adam forsook the glory of God that he was dressed with in the garden; therefore he fell from the glorious standard. Anyone who is born after comes short of the splendour of the presence of God. It is not that their righteous deeds are not good enough; it is not that they cannot keep the law of God. It is that they have all come short of the glory of God, as Isaiah said, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." (Isaiah 64:6)

How then can they come to this glorious standard? Is it through their good works? Is it through obedience to the laws of God? How can it be when it is their sin that has robbed them of this glorious standard? How can they atone for their sin? Is it through their good works? Is it through

the obedience to the laws of God? How can it be when they are born into the inherent nature of sin?

The laws of God say without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Time and again the blood of animals failed, for although the blood could temporarily cover the sin, man's transgression was too great. Therefore God sent Christ to accomplish what the blood of animals could not achieve. Christ was born of God. He lived blamelessly and gave His life by God's instruction to put down the sinful nature that caused separation and hostility between a just God and unjust people. Christ became sin for us. He took sin upon Himself, and upon Him God put the punishment.

The Israelites and the Romans crucified a blameless man, not knowing that it was God's justice to do so, to deal with sin once and for all by punishing this one man on behalf of others, so that all others may no longer be guilty of unrighteousness and ungodliness. When God's justice was done, Christ was buried in the grave and He rose to life to show that God's justice was done, the death sentence was served. Thereafter all who come to Christ God gives them life. Their sins are no longer counted for God has removed the sin that caused separation. They are now accepted and pleasing to God, because the thing that made them unacceptable and unpleasing has been removed.

They are now sons of Abraham who believed God and was counted as being righteous. He did not do any good work to be counted righteous, He did not obey any law to be counted righteous. He believed all that God had told Him, and for his believing he was credited with righteousness. In like manner it is not through doing any good work or obeying any law that the sons of Abraham through Christ are to be counted righteous. It is by believing what God says that they are righteous. It is by believing in Christ.

Instruction or Promise

To Adam God gave the instruction, "You must not", to Abraham God gave the promise "I will".

We see therefore that the first was based on an instruction; the latter was based on the promise. Adam had to obey God's instruction, but he failed; Abraham had to believe God's promise, which God fulfilled. God cannot fail Himself and what He promises, He fulfills.

The Contest for the Land

We see today the contest for the land between those who are considered sons of Abram through Ishmael and those who are the sons of Abraham through Isaac. Ishmael was blessed but he was rejected of the promise. The promise was given to Isaac and to the promised seed of Abraham. The land was given to the promised seed of Abraham. As we see today on the Temple Mount, an Islamic dome and fallen walls of the old the temple co-existing in contention for the site, we might wonder how it will all end.

God has promised that all Israel will return to the land, and that Christ will return to rule from Jerusalem for 1000 years. (see Revelation 19:16 and Revelation 20:2-7) In that day the land will no longer know the shedding of blood. The knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole earth. Christ will rule in God's justice. (see Psalm 68:31.32, Isaiah 2:2-4, Isaiah 11:4-9, Isaiah 25:7.8, Isaiah 65:20, Habakkuk 2:14) It is those who come out of tribulation that will reign with Christ. (see Romans 8:17) They are heirs of the promise. It is these sons of the Kingdom of God who will come and reign together with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 2:26). They will be given seats from which to judge, fulfilling the promise to Sarah, "Kings of nations will come from her." (Genesis 17:16)

We see that from Ishmael would come 12 princes who would become a great nation, but from the son of Sarah would come kings of nations, as the Spirit of the Lord revealed to the apostle Peter concerning those who believe the Messiah, Yeshua; "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." (1 Peter 2:9) As Yahweh had said to Israel, "You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6)

We see the Spirit of God declaring the same to those who are in the Messiah, Yeshua; "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth." (Revelation 5:10) This includes, Jew, Greek, Arab, and all who believe, for they shall reign through the Messiah, Yeshua, the one they call Isa, the one known to the many nations as Jesus. He is the promised son of Abraham, He is the Lamb of God, for Abraham the father of both Isaac and Ishmael prophesied that the Lord shall provide the lamb, and was thereby called 'Yahweh Jireh'. (Genesis 22:8)

God did provide this lamb and it was to John the Baptist that this lamb was revealed in the baptism of Jordan; "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) We see that the son of Abraham was substituted by a ram. (see Genesis 22:13) Christ the Lamb of Yahweh Jireh became the Lamb of our substitution just as the son of Abraham carried the wood and lay on the wood, with the father having the fire and the knife, (see Genesis 22:6) we see that Christ carried the wood, with the Father having the fire and the knife (see Isaiah 53:10 and Psalm 22:1) It was God's will to crush the Messiah, the one known as Yeshua, the one they call Isa, it was God's will to crush Him, not for any wrong He committed, but our sins He bore so that through His resurrection we might become the righteousness of God. (see Isaiah 53)

We see that in the age to come all nations will come to the light of Jerusalem. (see Isaiah 60:3) Although in the present age nations are coming to the light which is Christ, we the sons and daughters of Jerusalem will come from distant lands, every one of them coming home - carried home. The merchants of the world will come to Jerusalem bringing their wealth there, and the temple of the Lord will be made glorious. We see that this is fulfilled in part, but will be fulfilled fully, even beyond the 1000 years of Christ's reign into the New Jerusalem. (see Revelation 21:1-8)

Considerations of God's Plan

As we consider these things, we see that God's plan has centred around Israel and the Middle East, although many of the Israelites are still in disbelief, their disbelief being a blessing to the many nations. Through their disbelief many are finding entrance into the Kingdom of God. The time for the salvation of the entire house of Israel is yet to come. In like manner we find that many in Islam are resistant to the message of the cross although some do believe the message of the cross, yet in fear.

The end-time prophecies focus on Jerusalem where those who are of Judaism and those of Islam contest for the land. We see from the beginning of time that this contest has been between Ishmael and Isaac.

When Joseph was sold by His brothers, we see that Ishmael was in God's plan; it was the Ishmaelites who bought Joseph and sold Him in Egypt, from where God called Israel after 400 years to go and possess the land He promised to Abraham through Isaac, (Genesis 15:16).

Might it be that the last contest will be between the one who was born from the lineage of Isaac and the one who is of the lineage of Ishmael? Might it be that the prince who is to come will be born of the lineage of Ishmael - having grown up as a Muslim, will he seek to devour Judaism and persecute those who have the testimony of Jesus the Messiah? Might we see this one devouring everything that is religion and set himself up as God? That everyone should worship him and those who do not worship him will suffer many things? (see 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5)

This prince will set up himself up as king and take his seat in Jerusalem and rule from there for the appointed time. Failing to conquer those who have the Law, He will go after those who have the testimony of Christ Jesus? And thereby cause great tribulation such as has never been seen before. (see Revelation 12:13-18) This prince will come in the power of Antiochus Epiphanes. (see 1 Maccabees 1 and Matthew 24) Satan will endue this evil ruler with all his authority and

power, and he will do many gruesome things in the power of Satan. The accuser of the brethren, having been cast down, will come down in great anger and wrath knowing his time is short. (see Revelation 12:12) He will cause great tribulation and he will receive what he has always lusted after - to be worshipped as God! (see Isaiah 14:14, and Revelation 12 & 13) Working with the False Prophet, who deceives the world with signs and wonders, he will hijack the current economic system. He will then trample upon it, setting up his own economy, causing those who do not receive his mark not to participate in buying and selling. (see Revelation 13:17)

It is during this time of great deceit and distress that a great harvest for the Kingdom of God will be reaped, however. The many Islamists, who seem to be resistant to the gospel, will in that time be found among the great harvest from all nations of the world. (see Genesis 35:10-12 and Revelation 7:14) Along with the many nations of the world they will come to the Messiah, Yeshua whom they call Isa, who is God's salvation for the multitudes of the world.

As the name Ishmael means 'God hears', God will hear the yearning of their hearts to know the truth that they eagerly search for, that this one that they call Isa is God's Messiah, not only to Israel but to all the nations of the world, and everyone who calls upon His name shall be saved (see Joel 2:32)

Knowing that the works of our hands are not enough to save us, we see God sent Christ, to save everyone who believes, to save them from sin and through faith be made righteous, righteousness to everyone who believes, just as Abraham was credited with righteousness, not for his good works, but for believing the promise of God.

The Heart of God and the Heart of the Dragon

When God created mankind, He clothed him with His glory. Man had the glory of Yahweh and was given dominion over all creatures of the earth, those in the heavens, those beneath the waters, and those that roam the surface of the earth. No angel was ever given this glory; no

angel was ever given this dominion. But that which was made in God's image and in His likeness, He gave authority.

We see Satan wanting to be like the Most High. (see Isaiah 14:14) At the time of the end we see that in the battle with Michael, Satan is cast down onto the earth. (see Isaiah 14:12, Daniel 12:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 and Revelation 12:7.9) Satan no longer accuses the brethren before God day and night. He goes to make war with the woman who gave birth to a male child, but we see the woman being protected and as such the dragon goes to make war against the rest of her offspring, those who obey the commandments God and have the testimony of Jesus (Yeshua). (see Revelation 12:7.17)

Although the casting down of Satan is traditionally thought to refer to the time the serpent deceived Eve in the garden. We see a double appointed time in this. The woman who gave birth to a male child is nursed for three and a half years in the wilderness away from the presence of the dragon. Failing to conquer the woman, the dragon goes after those who obey the commandments God and have the testimony of Jesus. These are those who the dragon has been accusing before God day and night. These overcome the dragon by blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, the testimony of Jesus. Having not loved their lives, and not renounced their faith even when faced with death, we see they overcome in the great tribulation. (see Revelation 12:1 and Revelation 13)

We see those who refuse to worship the beast are put to death and are not permitted to participate in the economy of the antichrist by buying and selling. (see Revelation 20:4) We see this antichrist receives power, and the throne of the dragon and great authority. This is the same dragon who wages war against the saints and is permitted to overcome them. (see Revelation 13:7).

We have seen this re-occurrence time and again throughout history where those who keep the commands of God and the testimony of Jesus are forced to renounce their faith or to be killed. We see this is the heart of Satan which was manifest in Babylon when the three Hebrew boys were forced to worship the image or to be put to death,

and refusing to forsake their faith and were thrown into the fire. (see Daniel 3) The same will happen again and the saints will overcome by the word of the testimony of Jesus, having not loved their lives unto death or renounce their faith in Christ.

This is Satan's wrath. He wants everyone to worship him as God. However those who have the testimony of Jesus refuse to do so and they are persecuted for refusing to love their own lives, for refusing to worship the image of the beast.

Although religion came by man's doing as the serpent deceived them into thinking they can find a way to God through their religious means, we see that Satan's ultimate intention is to be worshipped as God, not as one of the religious deities, but to be worshipped as God!

All these things happen as the Lord has permitted them, for their appointed time and in their set boundary. The Messiah Jesus is still in control and will put an end to the man of sin by the splendour of His coming and He will throw the dragon into chains for a thousand years before his eventual doom.

The Great Collapse

"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world is under the power of the evil one." (1 John 5:19)

Often humans think they are in control and that they have control of their own fate, yet it is the heart and intentions of the evil one that the world is unknowingly pursuing. With their agendas of globalisation, of a unity without Christ, ignoring God and upholding science as the solution to humanities problems.

All these intentions are reaching their pinnacle. We see in the building of the Tower of Babel man wanting to be his own God and do his own agenda which is contrary to God. Islam has its own system of life known as 'Shariah', (literally translated meaning 'the way') which encompasses religion, legislature, politics and economics. Therefore,

we understand that Islam is not only a religion, but within it is a system that encompasses all spheres of daily living.

Daniel in a vision saw a fourth powerful beast having ten horns and out of these ten horns came a small horn that had human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly. (see Daniel 7:7-8) Daniel received explanation that the fourth beast was a kingdom, an empire, and the ten horns were ten kings, and the small horn, a king that will emerge from these will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. They will be placed under his control for three and a half years. Then all kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. We know this pertains to the times of the end because a time has not yet come when all the kingdoms under the heaven are given to the people of the Most High. We also know that all kingdoms will be given to Yeshua in the 1000 years when Christ, together with the saints, reigns on earth.

In the Psalm of the prophet Asaph, the Lord reveals ten nations that having formed an alliance against God and against Israel, these nations forming a union and agreeing to “wipe out Israel as a nation.” (see Psalm 83:4-8) These nations are named as, “Edom, Ishmaelites, Moab, Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre and Assyria.” (Psalm 83:6) There is disagreement among researchers and scholars of who these nations are in our modern day, however the common agreement is that they are of Middle Eastern origin and they are commonly Islamic nations.

In the Revelation John is also shown ten horns and he is told that these ten horns were ten kings who had not yet risen to power. When they are given power, they will hand over their authority to the beast. (see Revelation 17:12) John was told that the ten kings together with the beast hate the harlot and will destroy the harlot. This prostitute is said to be ruling over the masses of people of all nations and that she represents a great city that rules over the kings of the world. This great city is explained as ‘Mystery Babylon’. Although many cities are a representation of Babylon, in Genesis we learn that at the tower of Babel there was a city that man wanted to build in disobedience to

God. This city therefore represents everything that is contrary to God, it represents man's heart seeking to be his own God. As we study Revelation 18, we learn that this city is not just a city but it represents religion, commerce, politics and the economies of the world. We see that these ten horns who have been given brief power hand it over to the scarlet beast, and together they destroy what was known as normal life as they destroy the harlot. Those who participated in her and are rich, cry because no longer will they be able to trade in the normal way. We see then that a new normal will be introduced where anyone small, great, rich, poor, slave or free, is given a mark and without this mark he cannot participate in the new commerce. (see Revelation 13:16)

We know these incidents speak of the same happenings because in Revelation 13:14, which speaks of a beast that was fatally wounded and came back to life, (see Revelation 17:7-8) also speaks the same about the beast who was once alive, but will reappear again. A beast that was not alive at the time of John. This beast refers to a kingdom, an empire, that once was but lost its dominance but would re-emerge again at the time of the end, and would devour the harlot having colluded with the ten Islamic kings.

A time will come where life will no longer be as normal, but a 'new normal' will be put in place. To participate in this new normal, it will require man to sell his soul. Those who sell their soul will receive a mark of trade on their right hand or on their foreheads, they will enjoy momentary relief as they are now able to participate in the new commerce, but as the people of the world say everything is peaceful and secure, then in an instant the wrath of God will be poured upon them. Because they loved their own lives, and hated God, therefore they will drink of the cup of His wrath.

The Great Escape

The devil has no friends. He will use whoever he will use and when he is done with them he will devour them. As we see signs of one world agendas of globalisation, of a unity without Christ, ignoring God and upholding science as the solution to humans' problems, it is this very

one world agenda, this harlot, that will ride on the beast before he will turn against this system of oneness. (see Genesis 11:4.6 and Revelation 17:3)

We see in the book of Revelation the wrath of Satan which is against anyone who worships the true living God, and we also see the wrath of the Lamb which is against everyone who refused the salvation that was given at Calvary. The life of Yeshua was given from God, so that everyone who accepts the Way, the Truth and the Life might live in the truth and have the life of God in them so that they might escape God's wrath. It is only those who are born of God who will escape God's wrath, for God has not destined His sons for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Christ Jesus. (see 1 Thessalonians 5:9)

At the appearing of Christ, when the angels descend to gather the sons unto the Son, they will go into all the corners of the earth to gather those who are born of God. Just as the angel Identified those who were of Jacob in Egypt by the blood, these sons of Yahweh are also identified by the blood, redeemed and cleansed by Jesus blood and marked by the Spirit of the Son. They are no longer like the former man who was given the name Adam, but they are a new man - made in the image and likeness of God, looking exactly like the Father - therefore the angels recognise them as being sons of God.

Noah was the only righteous person in his day and therefore was saved prior to the wrath of God that fell upon the unrighteous. Because of his righteousness his whole family was also saved. Prior to the wrath of God that fell upon unrighteous Sodom and Gomorrah, righteous Lot and his family were saved, because God was merciful Lot in his reluctance finally believed the message of the Lord and he was saved. We however see one from his family who looked back as she lingered behind and was turned to salt! (see Genesis 19:26) We see in both cases these men were snatched just before God poured His wrath upon the unrighteous.

The Seven Seals

We see in Revelation 5, a scroll with seven seals that no one could open, for no one was found worthy to open the scroll to allow what was about to happen on the earth. But it was the Lamb who was slain, having complete power and complete knowledge, the one who is the Lion of Judah and the root of David; He took the scroll and broke the seals.

In Revelation 6, as the first seal is broken the one who had a bow and a crown, who went about conquering and to conquer was revealed.

When the second scroll was broken, peace was taken from the earth, and men began to slaughter one another.

As the third seal was opened the economy was affected and food prices rapidly increased.

When the fourth seal is broken the one representing death and pestilence, whose name is death and hades following him were given authority to kill with the sword and with famine and with plague.

As the fifth seal is broken those who have been killed because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained are seen asking how much more time remained before God would judge those in the earth and avenge the martyrs. They were told they would have to wait until the number of their brothers who maintained the testimony of Christ were to be killed, would be completed.

When the sixth seal is broken we see, "There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the moon turned blood red, and stars in the sky fell to earth, like figs dropping from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled 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 everyone else, both slave and free, 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 withstand it?” (Revelation 6:12-17)

Understanding the Sixth and Seventh Seal

“Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.” (Isaiah 13:9-11)

“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. Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” (Matthew 24:29.31)

“If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, He has shortened them. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. But in those days, following that distress, 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 people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And He will send his angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.” (Mark 13:20.26)

We can see that before the wrath of God and of the Lamb is poured upon the unrighteous including those who had killed the believers, the sign of the Son of man is seen in the cloud, the sun turns black, the

moon does not give light, the stars fall, there is an earthquake, and only then does the Son of Man appear in the clouds and His angels are sent to gather the elect.

Prior to this event there is great distress or tribulation, such as there has never been since the beginning of the world, such as there will never be. And for the sake of the elect the days of this distress are cut short. We see in Revelation 6, prior to the appearing of this day the sun turns black, there are six seals of distress. Furthermore, Paul had the understanding that this day of the 'sun turning black' would not occur until the man of sin who exalts himself publicly, proclaiming himself to be God. (see 2 Thessalonians 4) This agrees with the same person who is called the beast in Revelation 13, who is given power by the dragon, the same dragon that makes war with those who keep the testimony of Jesus in Revelation 12, The same ones who overcome by the blood and by the word of their testimony, who are martyred in Revelation 6, when the fifth scroll is opened before the day the sun turns black. When the sun turns black the Son of Man comes with His angels in the cloud to gather the elect. However, to the world, this is a day of terror, a day of the wrath of the Lamb. We see in Revelation 6:17, the people of the world wanting to hide from this wrath of the Lamb asking each other who can stand it?

Speaking of the same day Paul says, "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." (1 Corinthians 15:52) Further explaining that on the same day, "According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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 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 forever.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18) We see this speaks about the same day when the sun will turn black, when the Lord comes in a cloud and His angels are sent to gather the saints. The saints are then taken up to meet the Lord in the air and those who had died in the Lord and for the Lord, are raised to life, and together with those alive are changed and taken up in the air to meet the Lord. This includes those who died for their testimony in Revelation 6 who were seen as souls wearing white robes when the fifth seal was broken.

We see that to the believers this day when the sun turns dark will be the day of salvation, of victory and of great joy, however for the unrighteous this will be a day of the wrath of the Lamb. This is the day of the sixth seal. The elect are taken up to meet the Lord, the angels having gathered them from all corners of the earth, and the dead in Christ having been raised to meet the Lord in the air.

We see four angels sealing Israel on their foreheads. The number is said to be 144,000. Whether this number is exact or symbolic we are not told. However, these angels are stationed at the four corners of the earth, and are four angels of destruction, for they have been given power and authority to harm the earth and the sea. The Israelites remain on the earth, having been marked with the seal of God, (see Revelation 7:1.8) as we see those from the great tribulation in heaven, those who were raised from the dead and those who were changed and caught up in the air with to be with the Lord. They were multitudes from every nation, tribe, language and peoples, standing before the throne wearing white robes, with palm branches in their hands (signifying victory). No one could count them.

These are all descendants of Abraham; they are the ones of the covenant of Abraham, the covenant of justification by faith. They have been saved by their faith in the Son who shed their blood and the word of their testimony is their confession that Jesus the son of God is the Christ who died, and God raised Him from the dead. Like their Father Abraham they believed and were credited as righteousness. With a loud voice their cry in heaven is, “Salvation belongs to our God and to

the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:10) This is their testimony; they have been saved by God through the Lamb who is the Lion of Judah, the root of David. John is asked and is told that these are those who come “out of the great tribulation.” (Revelation 7:14) These are the ones who met the Lord in the air when the sun turned dark. They came out of the trouble that they had to endure. They will hunger no more, nor will thirst, nor the sun or heat beat them down. They did not receive the mark of the beast to sell their souls, so they were excluded from commerce and could not buy or sell because they refused the mark. (Revelation 13:17). Now they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more.

As this is happening in heaven John is taken back to the scene on earth, where the Israelites are sealed with the seal of God. And the people of the world are pleading for the mountains to hide them, asking who can stand the wrath of the Lamb?

We see in heaven the seventh seal is broken by the Lamb and there was silence in heaven because of God’s coming judgement (see Revelation 8). Seven angels are given seven trumpets and the saints are allowed to participate in this judgement that is about to fall on the people of the earth with the Israelites still being protected. The saints’ prayers are taken and mixed with incense and taken to the throne and mixed with fire then the incense burner that contained these was thrown to the earth and there was a great earthquake.

The first four angels blow trumpets and terror falls on earth against nature. When the fifth trumpet on the seventh seal is blown, locusts that sting like scorpions sting those on the earth who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads, (see Revelation 9:4). The Israelites during this period were sealed with the mark of God (see Revelations 7:3). Those who had the mark of the beast therefore suffer the wrath of God, for they worshipped the beast and said who is like the beast and who can make war against the beast (see Revelation 13:4) When the sixth trumpet of the seventh seal is sounded one third of the earth is killed, however those who are still alive in these plagues of the wrath of

the Lamb, refuse to repent of their wickedness. (see Revelation 9:20-21)

We see clearly therefore the distinction between the terror of the wrath of the Lamb and that which is done through the man of sin, by Satan having great anger, anger which is set against all those who refuse the dragon because of having the testimony of the Lamb - Christ Jesus. The wrath of Lamb is poured on all those who worship the dragon, those who accepted the mark of beast. We see these two events being separated in their timing by the sun turning black. The one comes before the sun turns black; the other comes after the sun turns black.

Let the reader therefore not confuse the distress that is caused because of the anger of the dragon as allowed by God, with the wrath of God and the Lamb which is against all unrighteousness.

Harvesting in a Time of Distress

At the beginning of the church age it was through great persecution that the preaching of the Kingdom of God went out of Jerusalem into all places. (see Acts 8:1-2) When we look through church history, we learn that this persecution has continued throughout the centuries and the church flourishes the most during these times of distress. Persecution always achieves two things. It exposes the tares among the wheat as in times of persecution those who profess to be believers but are in fact not, they desert the faith and chose the cares of this life. Secondly it is in times of persecution that the church is awoken from her slumber.

Speaking of the end time distress, Daniel was told that it was in this “time of distress” that those “who have insight will shine brightly like the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness [bring in the harvest], like the stars for ever and ever.”(Daniel.12:1-3)

Christ Jesus spoke of this “harvest” which He explained to His disciples is “the end of the age.” (see Mathew.13:39) This is the harvest which John saw as a “great multitude which no one could count, from all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues... who had come out of the great tribulation.” (Revelation 7:9 &13-14) This agrees with Jesus’

description of the “harvest... the end of the age” when He says “the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” (Matthew 13:39&43) This is when the “gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end [of the age] shall come.” (Matthew 24:14)

The Last Contest of the Righteous

So we see that the last 2000 years of ‘tribulation’ of the saints will culminate in a time of ‘great tribulation’. John records in the book of Revelation that he sees a “great multitude” in heaven “which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” It was explained to John, that “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.” (Revelation 7:9&14) After Revelation 7:14, when the saints are in heaven, the term, ‘tribulation,’ does not appear again in scripture, but the term, ‘wrath,’ appears thirteen times from Revelation 6:16 to 19:15, with the phrase, “they did not repent” appearing four times.

The Attitude of The Saints In The Hour of Tribulation

In the coming hour of the final tribulation, the saints will, like Paul, say, “My life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work of Christ.” (Acts 20:24) And the words of the Lord Jesus Christ will become a reality in each believer’s life for the Lord said, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate... even his own life he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26) The saints will not only be ready to be jailed but even to die for the sake of Christ. (see Acts 21:13) With the understanding that our citizenship is not of this world, they will conquer in the joy of the Holy Spirit. They did not love their own lives even unto death. The Holy Spirit will empower them for that one great last move of God on earth; they will walk in the demonstration of the might of God, which is the humility of the heart. They will overflow in the love of God, having been filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith, and with boldness to stand for the word of truth.

This is the final tribulation, after this there shall no longer be any suffering for those in Christ. This is the final move of the Holy Spirit, after which the wrath of God will come upon those who refused the truth.

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Khotso Mokoena – 2020

